

THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment

Revealing The Hidden



Foundation in The Teachings

Volume 3

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The author is donating 100% of all his proceeds from this book to charitable work to share The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

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Learn The Teachings of Gotama Buddha that lead to a stable, calm, and peaceful mind. A more peaceful and loving world where all beings have care and compassion for each other.

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THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment Revealing The Hidden

Volume 1

Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment

Volume 2

Walking The Path with The Buddha

Volume 3

Foundation in The Teachings

Volume 4

Exploring The Path to Enlightenment

Volume 5

The First Stage of Enlightenment
(Stream-Enterer)

Volume 6

The Natural Law of Kamma

Volume 7

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation

Volume 8

The Foremost Householders

Volume 9

The Six Sense Bases

Volume 10

The Buddha's Way

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Volume 13

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Foundation in The Teachings (Volume 3)

Journey through The Words of The Buddha from the beginning of his first Teaching until his “last words” prior to death.

The book, “Foundation in The Teachings” is select Teachings from The Buddha organized from the largest and most complete collection of The Buddha’s Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment - The Pāli Canon.

The Pāli Canon, or The Pāli Text, comprises forty-five (45) large volumes of books where Students from the lifetime of The Buddha captured his Teachings. The discourses of The Buddha in The Pāli Canon represent the largest and most complete collection we have of The Buddha’s Teachings in his own words. The Buddha’s Teachings are scattered over multiple volumes of books in The Pāli Canon making it challenging for the average Practitioner to glean the benefit of his Teachings.

The Words of The Buddha book series, has consolidated and organized his Teachings into a series of books, based on specific topics, with explanations of The Teachings from a dedicated Practitioner and Teacher.

You will find books such as Breathing Mindfulness Meditation (Volume 7) that are the consolidated Teachings in The Words of The Buddha related to meditation. The Natural Law of Kamma (Volume 6) provides Teachings directly from The Buddha related to the important topic of Kamma. The Foremost Householders (Volume 8) shares Teachings specifically for Household Practitioners who are pursuing The Path to Enlightenment where the mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

The Words of The Buddha book series will provide a beginning, middle, and end with detailed Teachings to develop your life practice and the ability to seek guidance with the author of the book series. Learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha, in his own words, with guidance from a Teacher - offered openly and freely to “all beings”.

BuddhaDailyWisdom.com

Note from Author

This book shares Teachings from Gotama Buddha to guide Practitioners on The Path to Enlightenment.

In various settings, Gotama Buddha is sharing Teachings with either a male or a female - a husband or a wife.

As you learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings from Gotama Buddha, you should consider The Teachings shared as multi-gendered. So while Gotama Buddha may be using a specific gender of he/she, male/female, or a specific title of husband/wife, son/daughter you can apply these same Teachings to all genders and roles of the opposite of which he was addressing his Teachings to in the setting in which The Teachings were originally shared, or use a gender-neutral pronoun.

If Gotama Buddha is sharing Teachings with a man of how to be a wholesome husband, you can relate this same Teaching for a female of how to be a wholesome wife. If he is sharing a Teaching with a male of how to be a wholesome son, you can relate this same Teaching for a female of how to be a wholesome daughter. You have the freedom to apply these Teachings using all genders and titles in use today.

Additionally, Gotama Buddha never used rebirth in the heavenly realm nor rebirth in the lower realms of hell, animal, or afflicted spirits as a way to guilt, shame, fear, or otherwise motivate people to learn and practice his Teachings.

When you come to understand Teachings shared by Gotama Buddha related to these potential future destinations upon rebirth, he is sharing the truth of what will or will not occur based on specific Teachings based on The Natural Laws of Existence. The truth he discovered, observed, and experienced as The Perfectly Enlightened One.

One should in no way consider these Teachings he shared as a way to guilt, shame, or fear one into learning and practicing his Teachings but instead, consider that he is sharing the truth of what will or will not occur ensuring that Practitioners understand the truth related to The Natural Laws of Existence. Gotama Buddha's Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment involve, among other things, the elimination of guilt, shame, and fear. He would not use guilt, shame, or fear to motivate someone to learn and practice his Teachings because his most core and central Teaching of The Four Noble Truths, and everything else he taught, makes it clear that the objective is to eliminate discontent feelings such as guilt, shame, and fear.

Gotama Buddha shared The Teachings as guidance for anyone who chooses to learn and practice without forceful influence. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing his Teachings, one comes to understand the truth as the condition of the mind and the condition of one's life gradually improve.

It is not possible to forcefully influence one to attain Enlightenment and that approach was never employed by The Perfectly Enlightened One, and should never be employed by anyone else. Learning and practicing these Teachings is through personal free will choice.

A Buddha only points the way, everyone else must strive.

While this book series contains "The Words of The Buddha" as the foundation and focus of study, the author has provided you content in which to understand and reflect on his thoughts related to The Teachings shared by The Buddha.

A reader and, thus, Practitioner should not rely solely on the author's content in their reflection on The Teachings from Gotama Buddha. The author's content is to provide you guidance towards understanding but it is you, the Practitioner, who needs to deeply investigate "The Words of The Buddha" to determine the truth for yourself. You should not be limited to only what the author has provided by way of meaning and understanding of "The Words of The Buddha". Instead, learn, reflect, practice, and seek guidance from a Teacher to support you in gaining wisdom. The mind is liberated through wisdom.

To gain the most benefit from "The Words of The Buddha" book series, it is suggested that you start with (Volume 1), "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment". That book will provide a framework to understand all of Gotama Buddha's Teachings in the entire book series. Without reading that book first, a Practitioner will find it very challenging to start with learning from "The Words of The Buddha".

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The Problem - The Wisdom of Enlightenment Has Been Lost

Gotama Buddha lived over 2,500 years ago sharing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

During his lifetime, it was well known to people who were learning, reflecting, and practicing with him as their Teacher, exactly what Enlightenment is and how to attain it.

This wisdom remained for 500 years after the death of The Buddha. But thereafter, this wisdom has gradually declined and diminished to the point where we are today, 2,500 years later. Gotama Buddha predicted this would occur.

The vast majority of the world does not understand what Enlightenment is and how to attain it. The Path to Enlightenment, while once was strong and vibrant during the lifetime of The Buddha, has now practically disappeared.

There are very few beings in existence today who understand what Enlightenment is and how to attain it.

The Universal Truth of Impermanence has drastically affected humanity's understanding of The Path to Enlightenment.

This occurred through the lack of focus and diligence to maintain The Teachings of The Buddha as vibrantly as existed during his lifetime. People gradually and slowly mixed and blended various traditions and thoughts into The Buddha's Teachings which, while perhaps well intended, have only served to dilute humanity's understanding of The Path to Enlightenment and, thus, have made it extremely difficult for countless beings to experience Enlightenment.

Enlightenment is a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy that is permanent. The Enlightened mind no longer experiences any discontent feelings. All discontentedness such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc., has been completely eliminated from the Enlightened mind.

Gotama Buddha's objective is for his Teachings to be shared worldwide so that all beings can experience the Enlightened mental state. However, during his lifetime, it was impossible to share his Teachings worldwide. It has now come to us to be able to actively learn, reflect, and practice his Teachings, in such a way, that they are restored and shining in the world so that countless

individuals can attain Enlightenment today and in multiple generations to come.

But, in order to accomplish this goal, we will need to stay determined, dedicated, and diligent to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha that he shared over 2,500 years ago. We will need to be diligent to ensure that we are not diluting his Teachings through mixing various traditions and practices that are not part of The Path to Enlightenment.

Every Practitioner will need to decide, are they interested in being part of the problem or part of the solution.

The solution takes time, effort, energy, and resources to be committed enough to restoring The Buddha's Teachings back into humanity, in such a way, that is highly beneficial to countless individuals today and long into the future.

Remaining part of the problem requires no time, effort, energy, or resources. It just requires continued complacency and lack of attention to the active learning, reflecting, and practicing of "The Words of The Buddha". I suggest it would be unwise to remain part of the problem as one will continue to experience discontentedness and the suffering it causes.

The Solution - Restoring The Buddha's Teachings Back into Humanity

If you would like to be part of the solution, I would like to encourage you to actively learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha, in such a way, that does not include the diluting or mixing of his Teachings with other traditions. It is The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment, not those that are blended and mixed that only serve to dilute The Path to Enlightenment for all those who aspire to experience Enlightenment.

The primary obstacle or obstruction that hinders Practitioners from the attainment of Enlightenment is ignorance (unknowing of true reality). This is a taint/pollution of mind where the Practitioner lacks wisdom to understand the true Path to Enlightenment. This unknowing of true reality creates an obstacle or obstruction that keeps the mind trapped in the unEnlightened state continuing to experience continued discontentedness and the suffering it causes. The only way to remove this hindrance is to seek guidance with a Teacher in the true Teachings of The Buddha using The Words of The Buddha. It is The Teachings of The Buddha that will awaken the mind to Enlightenment through independent verification of his Teachings to acquire wisdom, thus, removing this obstruction to Enlightenment.

Through dedication to restoring The Teachings of The Buddha within your own life practice by acquiring wisdom using The Words of The Buddha, you are doing your part to contribute to restoring his Teachings back into humanity for the benefit of countless beings that exist now and long into the future. All of humanity can evolve so that everyone can attain Enlightenment creating the most peaceful world we have ever imagined. It will be like “heaven on earth”.

You are invited to join this Community to only learn and practice “The Words of The Buddha”, in such a way, that leads to your Enlightenment and the restoration of The Buddha’s Teachings so that you and countless beings can experience the peacefulness, liberation of mind, and complete elimination of discontentedness and the suffering it causes, known as Enlightenment.

The Words of The Buddha Book Series

<https://www.buddhadailywisdom.com/freebuddhabooks>



“Thank you” for choosing to learn and practice Gotama Buddha’s Teachings.

You are making the world a better place through developing your life practice based on “The Words of The Buddha”.

Continue to read and understand “The Words of The Buddha - The Path to Enlightenment - Revealing The Hidden” book series that has been laid out for all of us to achieve a better way of life.

You can connect to a group of people in a supportive environment for discussion, sharing, and learning through the Facebook group.

Daily Wisdom - Walking The Path with The Buddha

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DailyWisdom999/>

All members are accepted without judgment. It is a healthy place to talk, discuss, learn, and grow. There are resources to help you further on this Path to Enlightenment accessible online through a Group Learning Program.

Group Learning Program: LIVE Interactive Online Classes, Books, Audiobooks, Videos, Podcast and Personal Guidance are available for you.

Preface

Foundation in The Teachings

This book is dedicated to “you” and the complete elimination, destruction, and cessation of suffering or “discontentedness” of the mind. Thus, this book is dedicated to the elimination of discontentedness and the suffering that it causes in the entire world.

The Teachings in this book series, with some effort on your part, will lead you to everlasting peace - a peaceful mind and a peaceful life. It's your personal choices, with these Teachings serving as a guide, that will bring you these results.

We are all walking towards the darkness or towards the light. Which direction you walk is completely your choice.

This book and Teachings are meant to guide you in learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha who lived over 2,500 years ago.

The Teachings of The Buddha are timeless, meaning they are just as applicable today as they were 2,500 years ago.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings are not a religion but instead, a “better way of life”. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to independently verify the truth, the mind will acquire wisdom awakening to Enlightenment.

It is suggested that you first read “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) of this same book series while seeking guidance from a Teacher. It is that book that provides a Practitioner with a solid foundation in developing a life practice that will lead to the Enlightened mind.

In order to progress on The Path to Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need a Teacher to receive guidance. One would not be able to only read a book and attain the results of an Enlightened mind.

Nothing in Gotama Buddha's Teachings is based on belief. A Buddha has already done the hard work of figuring out how to attain Enlightenment. You just need to learn and practice his Teachings to improve the condition of the mind and your life.

All his Teachings can be learned and practiced to independently observe the truth as the mind “gradually” acquires wisdom through independent verification of his Teachings and through practice of his Teachings.

This new found wisdom “gradually” improves the way the mind functions in the world through eliminating discontentedness of mind. The mind can completely eliminate all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha’s Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

Only a Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without Teachers. These are some of the criteria that make a Buddha a Buddha is that they discover The Teachings on their own attaining Enlightenment without help from a Teacher, shares their independently discovered Teachings to guide countless others to Enlightenment during the remaining time of their life, and they leave their Teachings in a condition that they guide countless others to Enlightenment after their death.

The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

That means you and everyone else will need Teachers on this Path to Enlightenment.

Your journey to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings is significantly improved through making the choice to learn directly with “The Words of The Buddha”.

Today, there are many resources for Teachings described as Buddhist or originating with The Buddha. But, it is only when a Practitioner chooses to investigate “The Words of The Buddha” being sourced directly from the original source, The Pāli Canon, that a Practitioner will come to understand the truth of what The Buddha actually taught and be able to implement these Teachings into your daily life to experience the results of Enlightenment.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha's Teachings, in his own words, The Perfectly Enlightened One's wisdom can penetrate the mind and you can experience the breakthrough to realizing the Enlightened mind.

I have significant gratitude, appreciation, admiration, and respect for Master Teacher Gotama Buddha as his Teachings lead exactly where he said they would. To a steady, calm, stable, and unshakable mind, known as Enlightenment.

There are countless unknown and unnamed individuals who are responsible for these Teachings reaching you in this book series. These Teachings have been preserved throughout history over the last 2,500 years through the tireless efforts of Ordained and Household Practitioners. These Teachings have been preserved and shared from one generation to the next because they work.

It is now up to us to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the Enlightened mind, so that we may benefit from an improved existence while also preserving these Teachings for future generations in our hearts and minds.

While books are an outstanding tool to capture The Teachings and share them worldwide, there is nothing more significant than having massive numbers of Enlightened beings in the world who can directly share these Teachings with those who choose to seek guidance in developing their life practice on The Path to Enlightenment. Each of us individually and collectively, are just one link in a long chain of Practitioners and Teachers spanning over 2,500 years.

What we choose to do in this time and place will determine how vibrant and sustaining these Teachings are for future generations. It is our work and effort to seek our own Enlightenment that we will experience results for our own mind and lay the groundwork for countless more beings after us to experience the same freedom of mind that you are now choosing to pursue.

Many people are interested in improving the world, but do not know how. It is only when we are dedicated to improving our own wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline that we will improve the world. Through improving our own life practice through learning "The Words of The Buddha" then, we will have collectively improved the world.

The problem that the unEnlightened mind is experiencing is not the outside world, but the inner world. Training the mind, the inner world, is what produces a peaceful existence. You can't control other people and what they

do. You can only decide to train your own mind to be unaffected by what others do.

It is a real struggle to exist in a world that the mind does not understand. It is “The Words of The Buddha” that explains The Natural Laws of Existence guiding the mind to acquire deep wisdom to make better free will decisions through a purified mind.



**Master Teacher Gotama Buddha
(The Tathāgata)**

Teachings for Daily Life

Chapter 1

One Who Points Out Treasure

Ānanda, I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay. Repeatedly restraining you, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. Repeatedly guiding you of what to avoid, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. The truly dedicated will stand [the test].

Regard him as one who points out treasure, the wise one who seeing your faults guides you of what to avoid. Stay with this sort of Teacher.

For the one who stays with a Teacher of this sort, things get better, not worse.

(Reference: MN 122 & DHP 76-77)

In order to share The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment, a Buddha or any Teacher, would need to help Students uncover unwholesome qualities in the mind and in their life practice while pointing out the cultivation of wholesome qualities. A Student will need to put their trust in the Teacher while investigating the areas of improvement the Teacher identifies and shares with the Student.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares with one of his closest Students Ānanda that he will not “repeatedly restrain” him, but instead he will guide him in what to avoid in regards to unwholesome mental, verbal, and bodily conduct along with all the other Teachings that are needed to experience Enlightenment.

The Buddha shares that “I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay”. “Raw damp clay” would need to be constantly shaped and molded by “the potter” (i.e. Teacher). The potter would need to form the clay into the ideal object. So The Buddha is sharing that he is not going to “repeatedly restrain Ānanda” attempting to shape him into the ideal person. Instead, he will speak to him and guide him letting him make his own decisions rather than being constantly shaped by The Teacher.

It is a real “test” of the Student’s mind to understand, acknowledge, and improve their life practice based on a Teacher’s guidance pointing out areas of improvement. The unEnlightened mind typically is only interested in hearing pleasing and agreeable words and the ego does not typically enjoy understanding unpleasing and disagreeable words from others. So, hearing a Teacher’s guidance to improve one’s life practice needs to be openly understood by the Student rather than allowing the ego of the unEnlightened mind to feel rejected or disheartened by a Teacher “who points out treasure”. The “treasure” that a Teacher points out are those areas they see for a Student to improve and further progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

The “test” is that the Student will need to develop the determination, dedication, and diligence to actively seek guidance for improvement of their life practice. Without

conscious choices to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings while seeking guidance, a Student would have no ability to attain Enlightenment. Without understanding the unwholesome qualities that exist in the Student's mind to eliminate and the wholesome qualities to cultivate through a Teacher's guidance, a Student would have no ability to progress in their practice to the ultimate attainment of a liberated mind.

A Student will need to be inviting and accepting of a Teacher's guidance in order to identify areas of improvement and then learn, reflect, and practice Teachings to improve their life practice. If a Student allows the ego to block the guidance from the Teacher while feeling displeasure in the Teacher "pointing out treasure", they will not "stand the test" of receiving guidance from the Teacher to progress towards Enlightenment.

A Teacher would need to exert a significant amount of time, effort, energy, and resources to guide a Student to Enlightenment. A Teacher should not ask for any benefits from their Students, but instead, await what is given as offerings. A Teacher's only goal should be to guide a Student to Enlightenment without any personal gain for themselves whatsoever.

So, a Teacher who takes their time, effort, energy, and resources to "point out treasure" should be regarded as a "wise one who seeing your faults" will help you to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha's advice is to "stay with this sort of Teacher" as things only "get better, not worse". As the condition of the mind and one's life, "only gets better, not worse" when a Student is open to understanding guidance from a wise Teacher who kindly and patiently shares areas for improvement while not seeking any benefit from you - their only goal is to help you. In this type of relationship with a wise Teacher pointing out areas of improvement as "treasure" to be appreciated based on the goal of helping you, you should "stay with this sort of Teacher" as things only "get better, not worse".

Hearing The Hard Truth - Can Trigger Aversion in One's Own Mind

When sharing these Teachings with Students, there are times when a Student either asks a question or makes a statement that a Teacher needs to then respond to, in order to help them, and all individuals, better understand The Path to Enlightenment.

The response, needs to be honest, straight forward, easy to understand, and "the truth", while all being wrapped in loving-kindness and compassion.

Even in doing so, hearing the "hard" truth is oftentimes challenging for a Student and can leave an individual forming a judgment about the Teacher that is untrue and a misperception.

For example, recently, I was teaching at the Temple and when explaining that it is unwise to lie, to tell any type of falsehood, a Student asked me to expound upon this Teaching by providing an example and asking what I might choose to do in that situation.

When explaining how to handle this situation through The Natural Law of Kamma, based in The Teachings of The Buddha, a different Student hastily commented "I will never do that".

My response was along the following:

I shared that each person should feel comfortable to do as they please. That I am not here to convince them of what they should or should not do. Instead, I am sharing what would lead to the elimination of craving/desire/attachment, and produce the Enlightened mental state, where the mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy. A permanent mental state.

I mentioned, as part of my answer, that while I understand the Student currently thinks in the way that they currently do, “that they would never do what I suggested”, I explained that with deeper thought, reflection, and consideration, they might change their decision on whether or not they might implement what was suggested.

I also shared, that the reason why their mind is currently experiencing discontentedness and not experiencing permanent peace and joy, is due to the mind not currently understanding these Teachings and how an individual would need to eliminate its craving/desire/attachment to get to that peace and joy. That lying, would never produce a wholesome result (i.e. wholesome Kamma) as it is based in craving/desire/attachment.

The Student appeared to not like to hear this “hard truth” about their own mind and highly disagreed with what was being shared.

The unEnlightened mind does not know what it does not know, and it is oftentimes disinterested in “letting go” of its false beliefs, opinions, views, and unwholesomeness. This is why the “intention of renunciation” is such an important component of The Path to Enlightenment and the second factor of The Eight Fold Path, a core and central Teaching of The Buddha.

So, while a person may be interested in the peacefulness and joy of the Enlightened mental state, the unEnlightened mind is oftentimes truly complacent and disinterested in implementing change to improve, walking The Path to Enlightenment, developing this “better way of life”.

It is very challenging to look inward, realize that one is imperfect, and that there is real work to be done to improve.

Therefore, when hearing the “hard truth”, an individual could potentially decide to push away the very Teachings that are going to help them to experience the peace and joy they aspire to experience. The mind’s craving/desiring to continue to do things the way it currently does, being disinterested to implement change, can produce painful feelings within the mind, then as part of “wrong view” one could see the Teacher as the problem, and choose to exercise aversion, pushing away the very thing that would help them - the Teacher and The Teachings of The Buddha. Oftentimes, this comes with judgment, looking down on the Teacher thinking, that somehow, they are rude, impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful. They may even judge them as being egotistical and full of conceit.

When in reality, what a Teacher is doing, is helping the mind of the Student “awaken” to the very wisdom that it needs to hear to make progress on The Path to Enlightenment. But, that wisdom is oftentimes a “hard truth” that the unEnlightened is truly not interested to hear, and due to the mind’s craving/desire and conceit, the mind experiences painful

feelings attributing those to The Teacher, when in reality, they are coming from one's own mind.

Therefore, it is much easier for the unEnlightened mind to blame the Teacher for the arising painful feelings, and judge the Teacher, thinking the Teacher has done something wrong, bad, unwise, or out of their own conceit.

When in reality, the Teacher did the most loving, kind, and compassionate thing they could ever do. They shared Teachings with the Student, without any expectation of anything in return, that are going to help them move beyond what they are currently thinking and closer to this "better way of life" as taught by The Buddha, a peaceful and joyful mental state that is permanent. It is just that the Student is not understanding that "better way of life" and thinking that by the Teacher sharing a "hard truth", and their mind being uncomfortable with that truth, that somehow the Teacher has done something unwise or out of conceit.

It is important to understand, the same things that brought someone to The Path to Enlightenment, oftentimes, are the same things that will turn an individual away from The Path to Enlightenment.

What I mean by this is, it is the mind's cravings/desires/attachments/wants/expectations that have led to all of one's own discontentedness, difficulties, struggles, and broken relationships. The mind's conceit and lack of wisdom, has led to relationships that are not harmonious. The mind's aversion has repeatedly pushed people and situations out of one's life without actually addressing the core and central problem rooted deep within the unEnlightened mind, craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations, and all the other pollutions of mind - The Ten Fetters.

Therefore, in a situation where the mind is craving/desiring/wanting/expecting the Teacher to be a certain way, and they do not meet those expectations, the individual's mind will become discontent, attribute those feelings to the Teacher, judge the Teacher, and then push away the Teacher and The Path to Enlightenment.

This is all unfortunate for the Student, because the very Teachings they need to overcome the pollutions of mind, are no longer accessible to them based on their unwise choice to push away The Teachings and a Teacher.

So, I recommend understanding that a Teacher is going to "point out treasure" for their Students. Value that dedication, time, energy, effort, and commitment that the Teacher is applying to help you, without any expectation of anything in return. Realize, that no matter how polite, kind, friendly, and respectful the Teacher is being, when a craving/desire/attachment is triggered within one's own mind, those painful feelings are not being caused by the Teacher but instead, one's own mind.

Practicing aversion, pushing away the Teacher and The Teachings of The Buddha, is not going to solve the painful feelings. Instead, it will just ensure they continue.

Hearing the hard truth can trigger aversion in one's own mind because it is triggering a craving/desire/attachment to appear perfect, smart, intelligent, or to be talked to in a specific way.

But, the most loving, kind, and compassionate thing a Teacher can do, is give you that “hard truth” so that you know what is “true reality” and have the opportunity to remedy it, solve it, eradicate it, and get closer to Enlightenment. And, if an individual chooses that truth is too hard to bear, due to the painful feelings arising in the mind all caused by the mind itself, and then one negatively judges the Teacher, due to not being perceived by the Teacher and other members of The Community in a certain way, ultimately choosing to walk away from the very help that is going to allow the mind to overcome its challenges, then at least as a Teacher, they will know, “I did the very best thing I could do for this individual”.

“I told them the truth”, no matter how hard that was for them to hear, and perhaps, someday, they might consider what was shared and decide to learn, grow, and evolve based on that “hard truth”.

“I told them the truth” and at least now they can choose whether to walk forward towards an improved way of life or, they can run away from that challenge and “hard truth”, deciding to remain in the “unknowing of true reality” with a lack of wisdom, choosing to stay in the darkness.

The Buddha taught, do "not to shrink back from the struggle". Because, running away from a “hard truth” will never lead to Enlightenment, or any kind of improvement in one’s own life.

Someday, you might hear a “hard truth” from your Teacher. I would like you to understand, that is being shared with the utmost care, politeness, kindness, friendliness, and respect. It is being delivered with the utmost love and compassion for you.

As The Buddha shares...

One Who Points Out Treasure

Ānanda, I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay. Repeatedly restraining you, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. Repeatedly guiding you of what to avoid, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. The truly dedicated will stand [the test].

Regard him as one who points out treasure, the wise one who seeing your faults guides you of what to avoid. Stay with this sort of Teacher.

For the one who stays with a Teacher of this sort, things get better, not worse.

(Reference: MN 122 & DHP 76-77)

Chapter 2

Rare That One Obtains the Human State

Monks, suppose that this great earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a ring with a single hole upon it. An easterly wind would drive it westward; a westerly wind would drive it eastward; a northerly wind would drive it southward; a southerly wind would drive it northward. There was a blind turtle which would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, Monks, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that ring with a single hole?

‘It would be rare, Venerable Sir, that that blind turtle coming to surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that ring with a single hole.’

So too, Monks, it is rare that one obtains the human state; rare that a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One arises in the world; rare that The Teachings and Discipline proclaimed by The Tathāgata shines in the world.

You have obtained that human state, Monks; a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One has arisen in the world; The Teachings and Discipline proclaimed by The Tathāgata shines in the world.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the cause of discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.’

(Reference: SN 56.48)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that the arising of a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, a Tathāgata, is extremely rare.

It is extremely rare and unique for a Buddha to have arisen in the world, for one to have obtained the human state during the lifetime of an actual Buddha, and for The Teachings of a Buddha that lead to Enlightenment to “shine in the world”.

Due to the rare and unique circumstances individuals found themselves in, during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, he encouraged them to make an effort to understand The Four Noble Truths. A Practitioner making the break through to learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths will have established “Right View” and be clearly headed in the direction of Enlightenment, and due to the rare and unique circumstances of having a Buddha rise, obtaining the human state, and The Teachings shining in the world this would be the ideal time for a human being to attain Enlightenment as studying with a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha would be a significant advantage in one’s own ability to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 3

Consciousness Conditions Name-and-Form

I have said: “Consciousness conditions name-and-form” and this is the way that should be understood, Ānanda.

...If consciousness were not to come into the mother’s womb, would name-and-form develop there?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Or if consciousness, having entered the mother’s womb, were to be deflected, would name-and-form come to birth in this life?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

And if the consciousness of such a tender young being, boy or girl, were thus cut off, would name-and-form grow, develop, and mature?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Therefore, Ānanda, just this, namely consciousness, is the root, the cause, the origin, the condition of name-and-form.

I have said: “Name-and-form conditions consciousness” and this is the way that should be understood, Ānanda.

If consciousness did not find a resting-place in name-and-form, would there subsequently be an arising and coming-to-be of birth, aging, death, and discontentedness?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Therefore, Ānanda, just this, namely name-and-form, is the root, the cause, the origin, the condition of consciousness.

Thus far then, Ānanda, we can trace birth and decay, death and falling into other states and being reborn.

Thus far extends the way of designation,
Thus far extends the way of concepts,
Thus far is the sphere of understanding,
Thus far the round goes as far as can be discerned in this life.

Namely to name-and-form together with consciousness.

(Reference: DN 15)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how it is the consciousness “having entered the mother’s womb” that a “name-and-form” is created. Through existence, a being will experience "birth, aging, death, and discontentedness".

This means, that if there is no birth, then there is no aging, death, or discontentedness.

It is because we are constantly reborn taking an existence that beings continually experience discontentedness. It is not until one trains the mind to attain Enlightenment that they have eliminated 100% of all discontentedness. In doing so, the mind will be peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. And, there will be no further existence because the consciousness has been fully purified through training to attain Enlightenment.

It is only when there is craving/desire/attachment in the mind that consciousness remains and continues to experience rebirth. Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth.

If we are not born, then there will be no aging, death, or discontentedness.

Chapter 4

Paying Homage to the Six Directions

‘Well, Venerable Sir, how should one pay homage (respect) to the six directions according to the noble discipline? It would be good if The Perfectly Enlightened One were to teach me the proper way to pay homage (respect) to the six directions according to the noble discipline.’

Young Householder, it is by abandoning the four defilements of action, by not doing evil from the four causes, by not following the six ways of wasting one’s substance, through avoiding these fourteen evil ways that the Noble Disciple covers the six directions, and by such practice becomes a conqueror of both worlds, so that all will go well with him in this world and the next, and at the breaking-up of the body after death, he will go to a good destination, a heavenly world.

What are the four defilements of action that are abandoned?

Taking life is one, taking what is not given is one, sexual misconduct is one, false speech is one.

These are the four defilements of action that he abandons.

What are the four causes of evil from which to refrain?

Evil action springs from craving, it springs from anger (ill will), it springs from ignorance (unknowing of true reality), it springs from fear.

If the Noble Disciple does not act out of craving, anger (ill will), ignorance (unknowing of true reality) or fear, he will not do evil from any one of the four causes.

And which are the six ways of wasting one’s substance that he does not follow?

Addiction to strong drink and sloth producing drugs (substances that cause heedlessness) is one way of wasting one’s substance,

haunting the streets at unfitting times is one,
attending fairs is one,
being addicted to gambling is one,
keeping unwholesome company is one,
habitual idleness is one.

And how, Householder's son, does the Noble Disciple protect the six directions?

These six things are to be regarded as the six directions.

The east denotes mother and father.

The south denotes Teachers.

The west denotes wife and children.

The north denotes friends and companions.

The nadir (down) denotes servants, workers, and helpers.

The zenith (up) denotes Ascetics and Brāhmins.

Duties to Minister to the Eastern Direction

There are five ways in which a son should minister to his mother and father as the eastern direction.

(He should think:)

- (1) Having been supported by them, I will support them.
- (2) I will perform their duties for them.
- (3) I will keep up the family tradition (craft/business).
- (4) I will be worthy of my heritage.
- (5) After my parents' deaths, I will distribute gifts on their behalf.

And there are five ways in which the parents, so ministered to by their son as the eastern direction, will reciprocate:

- (1) they will restrain him from evil,
- (2) support him in doing good,
- (3) teach him some skill,
- (4) find him a suitable wife (life partner), and
- (5) in due time, hand over his inheritance to him.

In this way the eastern direction is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.

Duties to Minister to the Southern Direction

There are five ways in which pupils should minister to their Teachers as the southern direction:

- (1) by rising to greet them,
- (2) by waiting on them,
- (3) by being attentive,
- (4) by serving them,
- (5) by mastering the skills they teach.

And there are five ways in which their Teachers, thus ministered to by their pupils as the southern direction, will reciprocate:

- (1) they will give thorough instruction,
- (2) make sure they have learned what they should have duly learned,
- (3) give them a thorough grounding in all skills,
- (4) recommend them to their friends and colleagues, and
- (5) provide them with security in all directions.

In this way the southern direction is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.

Duties to Minister to the Western Direction

There are five ways in which a husband should minister to his wife as the western direction:

- (1) by honoring her,
- (2) by not disparaging her,
- (3) by not being unfaithful to her,
- (4) by giving authority to her,
- (5) by providing her with adornments.

And there are five ways in which a wife, thus ministered to by her husband as the western direction, will reciprocate:

- (1) by properly organizing her work,
- (2) by being kind to the servants,
- (3) by not being unfaithful,
- (4) by protecting stores, and
- (5) by being skillful and diligent in all she has to do.

In this way the western direction is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.

Duties to Minister to the Northern Direction

There are five ways in which a man should minister to his friends and companions as the northern direction:

- (1) by gifts,
- (2) by kind words,
- (3) by looking after their welfare,
- (4) by treating them like himself, and
- (5) by keeping his word.

And there are five ways in which friends and companions, thus ministered to by a man as the northern direction, will reciprocate:

- (1) by looking after him when he is inattentive,
- (2) by looking after his property when he is inattentive,
- (3) by being a refuge when he is afraid,
- (4) by not deserting him when he is in trouble, and
- (5) by showing concern for his children.

In this way the northern direction is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.

Duties to Minister to the Nadir Direction

There are five ways in which a master should minister to his servants and workpeople as the nadir (down):

- (1) by arranging their work according to their strength,
- (2) by supplying them with food and wages,
- (3) by looking after them when they are ill,
- (4) by sharing special delicacies with them, and
- (5) by letting them off work at the right time.

And there are five ways in which servants and workpeople, thus ministered to by their master as the nadir, will reciprocate:

- (1) they will get up before him,
- (2) go to bed after him,
- (3) take only what they are given,
- (4) do their work properly, and
- (5) be bearers of his praise and good repute.

In this way the nadir is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.

Duties to Minister to the Zenith Direction

There are five ways in which a man should minister to Ascetics and Brāhmins as the zenith (up):

- (1) by kindness in bodily deed (actions),
- (2) by kindness in speech,
- (3) by kindness in thought (intentions),
- (4) by keeping open house for them, and
- (5) by supplying their bodily needs.

And the Ascetics and Brāhmins, thus ministered to by him as the zenith, will reciprocate in six ways:

- (1) they will restrain him from evil,
- (2) encourage him to do good,
- (3) be kind-hearted and compassionate towards him,
- (4) teach him what he has not heard,
- (5) clarify what he has already heard, and
- (6) point out to him the way to heaven.

In this way the zenith is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.

(Reference: DN 31)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he explains a traditional ritual, through his own Teachings, that had been performed by the local people for many generations referred to as “Paying Homage to the Six Directions”. He essentially recasts this ritual to eliminate the ritualistic aspects of “Paying Homage to the Six Directions” and instead, guides and encourages Students to practice Teachings that will produce wholesome benefits for their life (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

Each direction identifies a different group of people whom a Practitioner should honor and respect.

The east identifies the parents or caregivers as these are individuals who bring us up and show us the world providing countless necessities to sustain our life. It is not easy to repay one’s caregivers for the tireless efforts they apply to help us come into the world getting started in the right direction with guidance and wisdom to improve our life.

The south identifies Teachers who share their knowledge to help us improve our life. Whether it be a school Teacher, a Teacher who shared a unique skill, or even a Teacher who is sharing these Teachings with you. Without Teachers who are willing to patiently share their knowledge, humanity would quickly crumble. It is only when we are polite, kind, friendly, and respectful to Teachers that we are then able to continue to see individuals willing to teach providing us with knowledge to improve our life.

The west identifies wife (life partners) and children as these are individuals who help to support us in our life providing motivation and encouragement to do wholesome deeds in the world.

The north identifies friends and companions as with good wholesome friends and companions, an individual can be influenced in wholesome ways to continue their journey towards the Enlightened mental state.

The nadir (down) identifies servants, workers, helpers (employees) as these individuals help one to accomplish their goals and objectives. With wholesome relationships between an employer and employees, the team can be predicted to create success and continue their success as a team.

The zenith (up) identifies Ascetics (Ordained Practitioners) and Brāhmins (Priests) who are the individuals that are taking the responsibility to lead a purified life then sharing The Teachings with Household Practitioners to be able to learn, reflect, and practice Teachings to improve their own life on The Path to Enlightenment. It is through having polite, kind, friendly, and respectful relationships with this group of individuals that a person can be predicted to continue to learn and develop their life practice through a strong foundation in these Teachings.

Gotama Buddha provides guidance for how we should practice virtuous behavior or wholesome moral conduct towards each of these groups of people and through doing so, one would accomplish wholesome outcomes (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

Through being impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful to our caregivers, Teachers, life partners and children, friends and companions, employees, and those who share these Teachings, an individual would find it impossible to attain Enlightenment. An individual would struggle through life as they would not have the guidance needed to develop a solid foundation in these Teachings.

This Teaching from Gotama Buddha provides all of us basic virtuous moral conduct that can be practiced to ensure the best possible wholesome outcomes with all of these important groups of people whom we need in our life and rely on for beneficial results (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

Detailed explanation on practicing True Love: Love Without Attachment is available in Chapter 15 of this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 5

Four Worthy Deeds to Be Undertaken with Wealth

Householder, with wealth acquired by energetic striving, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, the Noble Disciple undertakes four worthy deeds.

What four?

(1) Here, Householder, with wealth acquired by energetic striving, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, the Noble Disciple makes himself content and pleased and properly maintains himself in contentedness; he makes his parents content and pleased and properly maintains them in contentedness; he makes his wife and children, his slaves, workers, and servants content and pleased and properly maintains them in contentedness; he makes his friends and companions content and pleased and properly maintains them in contentedness.

This is the first case of wealth that has gone to good use, that has been properly utilized and used for a worthy cause.

(2) Again, with wealth acquired by energetic striving, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, the Noble Disciple makes provisions against the losses that might arise from fire, floods, Kings, thieves, or displeasing heirs; he makes himself secure against them.

This is the second case of wealth that has gone to good use, that has been properly employed and used for a worthy cause.

(3) Again, with wealth acquired by energetic striving, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, the Noble Disciple makes the five offerings: to relatives, guests, ancestors, the King, and the deities.

This is the third case of wealth that has gone to good use, that has been properly employed and used for a worthy cause.

(4) Again, with wealth acquired by energetic striving, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, the Noble Disciple establishes an uplifting offering of alms (a donation) — an offering that is heavenly, resulting in contentedness, conducive to heaven — to those Ascetics and Brāhmins who refrain from intoxication and heedlessness, who are settled in patience and gentleness, who tame the mind, calm the mind, and train the mind for Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

This is the fourth case of wealth that has gone to good use, that has been properly employed and used for a worthy cause.

These, Householder, are the four worthy deeds that the Noble Disciple undertakes with wealth acquired by energetic striving, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained.

But when anyone exhausts wealth on these four worthy deeds, that wealth is said to have gone to good use, to have been properly used, to have been utilized for a worthy cause.

(Reference: AN 4.61)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Student who is practicing these Teachings closely (Noble Disciple) would use wealth for wholesome purposes rather than for selfish desires.

He provides guidance in how one can ensure they are applying wealth towards wholesome activities that will produce wholesome results (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

Each of the “four worthy deeds” would ensure a Practitioner is attending to their “needs” and not their “wants”. Through the mind chasing its wants, an individual can oftentimes become wasteful and irresponsible with the wealth they are acquiring. In doing so, one would find it difficult to sustain their life and provide for those who need their support.

(1) First, Gotama Buddha encourages us to ensure we have attended to our own needs. He explains that a Practitioner should “make himself content and pleased and properly maintains himself in contentedness”. An individual needs five (5) basic necessities to sustain life. Food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care is what is needed to sustain human life. Having these five (5) necessities taken care of, a wise Practitioner would then look to ensure they have taken care of their other responsibilities rather than use wealth unwisely through wasteful or irresponsible spending.

Parents, life partners, children, employees, friends, and companions are the next on the list of individuals The Buddha suggests one should ensure are taken care of with the basic necessities to sustain life. These are the individuals that are closest to you and ensure your success and continued growth of your wealth. Without ensuring these individuals are well cared for, one would find it extremely difficult to continue their

success in the world acquiring income to sustain your life. Ensuring one's parents, life partners, children, employees, friends, and companions are all cared for and well established in contentedness through having the basic necessities to sustain life, a Practitioner can then continue to be met with success in their professional life.

(2) Second, Gotama Buddha encourages us to ensure we have protected our wealth from events that could significantly affect our wealth or growth of wealth. Disasters such as fire and floods could wipe away one's wealth should they not have adequate protection. In today's society, this might include properly allocating wealth towards institutions that are capable of overseeing one's wealth and helping it to grow. This might include a bank, financial institution, insurance, safety deposit vaults, or other ways to protect one's wealth.

Protecting one's wealth from Kings could be looked upon as ensuring one has made proper decisions towards allocating money based on government laws to pay one's fair share of taxes. Should a Practitioner choose not to allocate wealth towards the support of government services, the community would gradually crumble creating an environment that is not supportive of continued growth for humanity.

Protecting one's wealth from thieves would be to ensure there are safeguards in place that a thief would be unable to wipe out one's wealth through stealing. During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, life was very basic compared to today's standards. It would not be uncommon for someone to store their money in their home and for a thief to potentially cause a family ruin through stealing their accumulated money stored in just one central location. Today, we have many ways to ensure that one is well protected from scams and thieves who are looking to steal from you and your family. When one has applied good practices to protect one's wealth, the mind can reside peaceful knowing that a thief is unable to wipe out your family's savings.

Protecting one's wealth from displeasing heirs might include ensuring one has a will that documents what should and should not happen to your wealth upon death while ensuring your relatives are well aware of how you have allocated your wealth upon your death. Through clear communication in a written will and communicating with relatives prior to death, there will be no surprises upon your death and your wealth will not meet with hotly contested legal battles after your death. Through a properly formed will and thorough communication, a Practitioner can ensure a family is not divided and separated based on surprises at the time of death.

(3) Third, Gotama Buddha encourages us to ensure we have made offerings to relatives, guests, ancestors, the King (Government), and deities. This would help to further ensure one has shared their wealth with individuals who have close proximity to you and your wealth would help to provide beneficial outcomes (i.e. wholesome Kamma). Relatives and guests are individuals who you will need to ensure are cared for while visiting your home. This does not necessarily need to include the giving of money but might include offering food and water to provide for comfort during a visit to your home.

Today, we pay regular taxes to the government ensuring we are paying our fair share. I am unsure exactly how Gotama Buddha would have suggested one share wealth with deities as he did not teach any rites, rituals, ceremonies, or worship of deities. I suggest one could disregard any interest to share one's wealth with deities as there are many other wholesome uses that would provide more wholesome results.

(4) Fourth, Gotama Buddha encourages us to ensure we make offerings to Ascetics (Ordained Practitioners) and Brāhmins (Priests) as these are the individuals who are leading a purified holy life to the highest degree. Through sharing wealth with Ascetics and Brāhmins in the community, one is ensuring these wholesome Teachings make their way into your community for the benefit of you and others. It is only through the practice of generosity that these Teachings will continue to be supported throughout humanity and continue to have the ability to positively influence our lives through more and more people learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings.

Notice that while Gotama Buddha lived his life after the Royal Palace through the generosity and kindness of Household Practitioners making offerings, he placed himself as last who you should share your wealth. While it is important that these Teachings are supported in the world, he shared three (3) other worthy deeds to allocate wealth, with his own cause to share these Teachings as being last.

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, he guided Ordained Practitioners to not accept money as an offering. It was only food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care that was offered to sustain his life and the life of those who were his closest Students - the Ordained Practitioners. This helped Ordained Practitioners to eliminate craving/desire/attachment to wealth.

Offerings to Teachers who are sharing these Teachings does not need to be exclusively monetary offerings. While financial support is needed to provide the freedom to produce resources for the continued sharing of these Teachings, a Student can also offer food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care, books, and other supplies along with your time, effort, and energy to support the continued sharing of these Teachings.

Many of us are interested in helping improve the world but lack the wisdom of how to accomplish that goal. It is the wisdom found in these Teachings that will help all of humanity to create a kinder and more peaceful society. Through supporting Teachers who are sharing these Teachings, you can ensure that you and others will continue to learn and progress through developing a solid foundation in these Teachings. You are only receiving these Teachings now due to the generosity and support provided by countless individuals over the past 2,500 years. Any offerings you make to support these Teachings will then ensure these Teachings are available for future generations just like they are being made available to you.

If regular and continued donations to Teachers that assist them in sustaining their life and to provide the needed resources to share these Teachings were not provided, all of humanity would be lost and unable to develop their life practice to experience Enlightenment. The world would continue to become a darker place to exist. It is only when Practitioners choose to provide regular and consistent ongoing support that a Teacher is then able to sustain their life with the basic necessities of life and then direct their effort and energy towards sharing the wisdom of these Teachings with you.

Please support those who are sharing these Teachings into the world who you observe are doing so through virtuous moral conduct. Using discernment (wise decision making) a Practitioner can practice generosity to share their wealth with those “who refrain from intoxication and heedlessness, who are settled in patience and gentleness, who tame the mind, calm the mind, and train the mind for Nibbāna (Enlightenment)”.

Through supporting these individuals with your donations of time, effort, energy, and resources you will be helping all of humanity.

Chapter 6

Repaying One's Mother and Father

Monks, there are two persons that cannot easily be repaid.

What two?

One's mother and father.

Even if one should carry about one's mother on one shoulder and one's father on the other, and (while doing so) should have a life span of a hundred years, live for a hundred years; and if one should attend to them by anointing them with balms, by massaging, bathing, and rubbing their limbs, and they even void their urine and excrement there, one still would not have done enough for one's parents, nor would one have repaid them.

Even if one were to establish one's parents as the Supreme Lords and Rulers over this great earth abounding in the seven treasures, one still would not have done enough for one's parents, nor would one have repaid them.

For what reason?

Parents are of great help to their children; they bring them up, feed them, and show them the world.

But, Monks, if, when one's parents lack confidence, one encourages, settles, and establishes them in confidence; if, when one's parents are unwholesome, one encourages, settles, and establishes them in virtuous behavior (moral conduct); if, when one's parents are selfish, one encourages, settles, and establishes them in generosity; if, when one's parents are unwise, one encourages, settles, and establishes them in wisdom: in such a way, one has done enough for one's parents, repaid them, and done more than enough for them.

(Reference: AN 2.33)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a Teaching of how a Practitioner should have only the deepest respect and gratitude for their parents.

We are born into the world to parents who provide us care or needs to sustain life. In some situations, our parents may lack the understanding or ability to guide us in the way that we expect. The expectations we have of our parents, what they should be and how they should function as our parents, can cause us to be discontent and have a strained relationship at best.

It is important to understand that our parents gave us life. They brought us into the world and provided the care needed to sustain our life. These actions alone require tireless effort. This same Teaching can be applied to grandparents, non-biological parents, and the full range of caregivers who contributed to your upbringing and care from infancy to adulthood.

What Gotama Buddha is sharing here is that parents provide great help to their children to “bring them up, feed them, and show them the world”. The amount of work and effort involved in just clothing, feeding, bathing, and guiding children in the world is exhaustive. Our parents do not always have the training or wisdom to guide us in the way that we “want” to be guided. Our obligations and expectations of our parents can leave us feeling abandoned, left out, or unloved. But these are just the feelings and emotions we have assigned to the lack of our parents meeting our own obligations and expectations we set for them. This is most likely not how our parents actually feel towards us.

If a child can be appreciative of the fact that our parents went through extensive and exhaustive efforts to bring us into the world and sustain our life, the way we repay an unwise parent, is to, when we are ready, provide them encouragement in virtuous behavior, generosity, and wisdom. In this way, then we have done enough for our parents.

If we have gained wisdom and understanding that can help our parents to realize a better life, we need to find humble ways to share that wisdom with our parents and provide them guidance in these Teachings that will improve their life as repayment for the guidance they gave us as a child, and do so without attachment to the outcome.

Our parents are rarely going to meet the expectations we have of a “perfect parent”. If we eliminate the expectations (i.e. the attachments), and understand we have the parents we have and then be thankful for the life that they have given us, then perhaps we can eliminate whatever expectations we have and provide them unconditional “true love” that guides them in virtuous behavior, generosity, and wisdom.

This requires that we are learning and practicing these Teachings so that we can more readily provide the wisdom that our parents would need, to improve the quality of the mind based on our intimate understanding of The Teachings and how to practice them. We need to lead by example through a well established practice of these Teachings.

Detailed explanation on practicing True Love: Love Without Attachment is available in Chapter 15 of this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 7

Affection and Hatred are Born

(1) Affection born from affection

Here, Monks, one person is desirable, lovable, and agreeable to another. Others treat that person in a way that is desirable, lovable, and agreeable. It occurs to the latter: Others treat that person who is desirable, lovable, and agreeable to me in a way that is desirable, lovable, and agreeable.

He thus feels affection for them. It is in this way that affection is born from affection.

(2) Hatred born from affection

Here, Monks, one person is desirable, lovable, and agreeable to another. Others treat that person in a way that is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable. It occurs to the latter: Others treat that person who is desirable, lovable, and agreeable to me in a way that is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable.

He thus feels hatred for them. It is in this way that hatred is born from affection.

(3) Affection born from hatred

Here, Monks, one person is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable to another. Others treat that person in a way that is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable. It occurs to the latter: Others treat that person who is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable to me in a way that is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable.

He thus feels affection for them. It is in this way that affection is born from hatred.

(4) Hatred born from hatred

Here, Monks, one person is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable to another. Others treat that person in a way that is desirable, lovable, and agreeable. It occurs to the latter: Others treat that person who is undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable to me in a way that is desirable, lovable, and agreeable.

He thus feels hatred for them. It is in this way that hatred is born from hatred.

(Reference: AN 4.200)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a person can develop either affection or hatred for others based on how they treat someone that one has affection or hatred towards.

(1) “Affection born from affection” is when you consider Person A to be “desirable, lovable, and agreeable” and others consider Person A to be “desirable, lovable, and agreeable”. Therefore, you feel affection for others because they and you both have affection for the same Person A. Your affection for others is born out of the affection you have for Person A while others have affection for Person A.

(2) “Hatred born from affection” is when you consider Person A to be “desirable, lovable, and agreeable” and others consider Person A to be “undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable”. Therefore, you feel hatred for others because they have hatred for Person A. Your hatred for others is born out of the affection you have for Person A while others have hatred for Person A.

(3) “Affection born from hatred” is when you consider Person A to be “undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable” and others consider Person A to be “undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable”. Therefore, you feel affection for others because they have hatred for Person A. Your affection for others is born out of the hatred you have for Person A while others have hatred for Person A.

(4) “Hatred born from hatred” is when you consider Person A to be “undesirable, unlovable, and disagreeable” and others consider Person A to be “desirable, lovable, and agreeable”. Therefore, you feel hatred for others because they have affection for Person A. Your hatred for others is born out of the hatred you have for Person A while others have affection for Person A.

This Teaching helps a Practitioner understand how you may form perceptions about others based on how they feel about people close to you. The unEnlightened mind will oftentimes form perceptions and opinions through judgment of others causing difficult relationships based on how others feel about those close to you, especially if the mind is attached to Person A.

A wise Practitioner who is practicing Right Mindfulness (awareness of mind) can observe when feelings arise in the mind being influenced by how others feel about those close to you. You should apply Right Effort to cut off any feelings of hatred and arise loving-kindness even when others have hatred towards people who are close to you.

There is no benefit in holding on to hatred towards others for any reason. Hatred is not eliminated through hatred but instead, hatred is eliminated through loving-kindness.

It is important to ensure you have wholesome friends and associates both personally and professionally as you develop your life practice. Ensuring you are making wise decisions of who to involve in your life can significantly improve and influence the mind towards Enlightenment while creating wholesome outcomes in your life.

Allowing yourself to accumulate unwholesome friends and associates would only result in unwholesome influences that would detract and distract you from The Path to Enlightenment. One can, without arrogance or judgment, decide to only involve themselves with wholesome friends and associates both personally and professionally. Together, with wise decision making, you will find more opportunities and better outcomes in your life through the collective wholesome decisions that wholesome friends and associates can create together.

This Teaching is helping Practitioners understand that there is no benefit in allowing the mind to be influenced by others opinions but instead, one should reside with loving-kindness and compassion for all beings.

Loving-kindness (Pāli: mettā) is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

Chapter 8

The Foremost, the Best, the Distinguished, the Supreme, and the Finest Householder

Householder, the one enjoying sensual pleasures who seeks wealth righteously, without violence, and makes himself joyful and pleased, and shares it and does meritorious deeds, and uses that wealth without being tied to it, obsessed with it, and blindly absorbed in it, seeing the danger in it and understanding the escape - he may be praised on four grounds.

The first ground on which he may be praised is that he seeks wealth righteously, without violence.

The second ground on which he may be praised is that he makes himself joyful and pleased.

The third ground on which he may be praised is that he shares the wealth and does meritorious deeds.

The fourth ground on which he may be praised is that he uses that wealth without being tied to it, obsessed with it, and blindly absorbed in it, seeing the danger in it, and understanding the escape.

This person who enjoys sensual pleasures may be praised on these four grounds.

This, Householder, is the foremost, the best, the distinguished, the supreme, and the finest kind of person who enjoys sensual pleasures.

Just as from a cow comes milk, from milk curd, from curd butter, from butter ghee, and from ghee comes cream-of-ghee, which is reckoned the foremost of all these, so too, this kind of person who enjoys sensual pleasures is the foremost, the best, the distinguished, the supreme, and the finest of all those who seek wealth righteously, without violence, and having obtained it, makes himself joyful and pleased; and shares the wealth and does meritorious deeds; and uses that wealth without being tied to it, obsessed with it, and blindly absorbed in it, seeing the danger in it, and understanding the escape.

(Reference: AN 10.91)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares wholesome qualities of a Household Practitioner that are admired and considered to be praiseworthy.

He advises Household Practitioners to use wealth wisely “without being tied to it, obsessed with it, and blindly absorbed in it”. Craving/desire/attachment to wealth can be a significant challenge to overcome on The Path to Enlightenment.

We are often taught that wealth will bring happiness and people are taught to chase after wealth. But, no matter how much wealth one acquires, if there is craving/desire/attachment to wealth, one will never have enough. Oftentimes, human beings accumulate wealth and are blindly tied to it, absorbed with the many pleasures one can acquire through money. A person can also be obsessed with acquiring more and more wealth with the accumulation of wealth supporting the ego finding it challenging to practice generosity.

To experience Enlightenment, a Practitioner would need to “see the danger in it and understand the escape”. If a Practitioner can observe the danger by being obsessed with wealth and material gain, then they can more readily apply effort towards understanding “the escape” from this obsession. Any obsession is a craving/desire/attachment and would inhibit a Practitioner from attaining Enlightenment.

During Gotama Buddha’s lifetime, he did not allow Ordained Practitioners to come in contact with silver or gold, essentially they were unable to acquire any currency or to accumulate wealth in any way. Today, Ordained Practitioners would find it extremely difficult to function in our society without being able to use money for certain aspects of their life. Household Practitioners also require the use of money to conduct our life activities. Due to the pleasures that money can bring, it is important to train the mind to not seek pleasant feelings (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.) through chasing after money, acquiring money, or accumulating money.

Understanding the escape from this craving/desire/attachment is to understand the remedy for craving/desire/attachment as Breathing Mindfulness Meditation, practicing generosity, identifying cravings through analysis of the mind, and a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path.

The Eight Fold Path is “the escape” from all discontentedness and is the escape from the obsession formed in the mind towards wealth that would only inhibit a Practitioner from experiencing liberation of mind.

Gotama Buddha provides four basic Teachings that a Household Practitioner can apply in their need to acquire wealth and use it for beneficial purposes. And, in doing so, a Household Practitioner practicing in this way could be admired for their dedication to practicing these Teachings in this way.

(1) First, a Household Practitioner would seek wealth through righteous livelihoods that does not cause any harm or is “without violence”. Gotama Buddha’s Teachings on Right Livelihood as part of The Eight Fold Path provide guidance on how to practice Right Livelihood. (See the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) in Chapter 5 for detailed Teachings on The Eight Fold Path and Right Livelihood)

Practicing Right Livelihood ensures a Practitioner is not causing harm through how they choose to sustain their life and due to not causing harm through your livelihood, no harm will be returned to you based on your livelihood.

(2) Second, a Household Practitioner would apply Right Effort to develop a mind that is “joyful and pleased”. Complaining about life or complaining about others in the world does not create a conducive environment around you where individuals would be interested to participate with you as a personal or professional associate.

An Enlightened being will understand the challenges of life and know of the misery that exists in the world but will see no benefit in constant discussions or random complaining about the negative aspects of life. Instead, an Enlightened being will have concern for the world but train the mind to have a positive outlook on life knowing that all beings attaining Enlightenment is the solution to the individual and world problems we all face.

To accomplish that goal, each individual will need to focus on their own growth and progress towards Enlightenment. Through each individual focusing on training the mind to eliminate the taints/pollution/fetters in the mind, they will experience the transformation from a negative and disgruntled outlook on life to a positive and uplifting demeanor that will only serve to attract people towards you rather than repel them away from you.

Training the mind to be joyful and pleased at all times requires deep inner work that can only be accomplished through your own individual efforts with guidance in these Teachings with a Teacher. With a mind that is joyful and pleased permanently, there are no goals or objectives that are unattainable.

(3) Third, a Household Practitioner can ensure they are not obsessed with wealth, acquiring wealth, and accumulating wealth through giving and sharing in a well developed practice of generosity through meritorious deeds.

It is through a regular practice of generosity, giving with your own hand, that the mind is trained to “let go” of wealth and not hold it tightly allowing the mind to maintain its obsession through craving/desire/attachment. An Enlightened being is able to be wealthy as there is no harm in being wealthy. It is when the mind is obsessed with accumulation of wealth and fulfilling selfish desires that will inhibit a Practitioner from attaining Enlightenment.

A Practitioner should consider how to acquire life sustaining resources (food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care) through a righteous or proper livelihood that provides benefit to the world rather than pursuing wealth just for the sake of pursuing wealth. A wealthy individual who is deeply practicing these Teachings can be of much benefit to humanity through finding ways to share their wealth in beneficial projects and programs where they do not seek gain, but instead, are only interested in helping others.

Once a righteous livelihood is well established that is creating wealth, a loving, kind, and compassionate Practitioner can choose to then find ways to benefit others through the wealth they acquire rather than only fulfilling selfish desires. Based on a Practitioner’s own personal goals and ambitions to help others through a well developed practice of generosity, they can assist countless beings in uplifting their life.

(4) Fourth, a Household Practitioner who is well established experiencing successful wealth generation can easily become tied, obsessed, or blindly absorbed into continuous accumulation of wealth rather than staying focused on developing their life practice towards liberation of mind from craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

A wise Practitioner will see the danger in allowing the mind to become obsessed with wealth forming craving/desire/attachment knowing this will only cause the mind discontentedness. They will need to deeply learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to understand the escape, and implement the solutions provided through Gotama Buddha's Teachings.

A Household Practitioner can find "the middle way" of acquiring wealth but also find creative ways to share their wealth ensuring the mind does not hold on with craving/desire/attachment causing discontentedness of mind.

Lastly, The Buddha compares the finest or foremost Household Practitioners to the refinement of cow's milk, something that his Students would be very familiar with during their lifetime. He explains "just as from a cow comes milk, from milk curd, from curd butter, from butter ghee, and from ghee comes cream-of-ghee" that the "foremost, the best, the distinguished, the supreme, and the finest of all those" Household Practitioners come from those "who seek wealth righteously, without violence, and having obtained it, makes himself joyful and pleased; and shares the wealth and does meritorious deeds; and uses that wealth without being tied to it, obsessed with it, and blindly absorbed in it, seeing the danger in it, and understanding the escape".

Additional Thoughts:

While there are many different levels of income across all populations of people, anyone who is experiencing moderate to high levels of wealth can consider themselves fortunate for the decisions they have made that led to increased amounts of wealth. While all beings are experiencing the results of their own decisions in all parts of life, a conscious Practitioner who has discovered methods of accumulating income beyond basic necessities might consider using their time, effort, energy, resources, and knowledge to help those who are less fortunate.

Many people across the world are affected by deep generational poverty. Many people do not have the luxury to learn and practice these Teachings nor invest in life improving skills to elevate their life. In some cases, there are people who only have the ability to focus on acquiring their next meal which may or may not come to be. It is extremely difficult for one who is only capable of focusing on acquiring their next meal to invest in life improving skills that could elevate their life to better results including learning these Teachings. One of the biggest myths in our society is that people in poverty are lazy or lacking education. In many cases, they are only lacking opportunity and relationships with people who can create those opportunities.

As a global society, we can find ways to encourage, motivate, and support individuals who are less fortunate to help them elevate their life to overcoming generational poverty. We can find ways to share our time, effort, energy, resources, and knowledge so that people are secure in their basic life sustaining resources to provide them needed support while they work towards developing their life practice and life skills to eliminate generational poverty.

This would involve kind, caring, and compassionate individuals to be creative in exploring opportunities to share their time, effort, energy, resources, and knowledge with others without any interest in their own gain, but instead, decide to help others because it is the right thing to do to provide improved opportunities for others.

There are many people who quietly find ways to help others in the world without a need for acknowledgement or publicity. There are many people who provide support and donations in creative ways to help large numbers of people who are less fortunate. As you learn and practice these Teachings as an independent life practice, a Practitioner cannot help but observe how these Teachings significantly improve one's life and there are many beings in the world who do not have the luxury of time to sit and read a book such as this. Instead, they are busy figuring out how to acquire their next meal or drink of water to sustain them over the next few days which may be the only food and water they have eaten for an extended period of time.

As we look for ways to practice generosity, while we need to support the continued sharing of these Teachings in the world, we also need to find ways to support less fortunate beings providing basic necessities to sustain life to afford the opportunity for them to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings.

A global humanity that is well liberated and awakened to Enlightenment will ensure the safety, security, and peace of all living beings. A global humanity that is well liberated and awakened to Enlightenment will ensure that poverty is eradicated through uplifting all members of society by providing opportunities for all individuals to succeed in life. This would require those who are more fortunate to initiate efforts that support and encourage others in life without any regard for their own personal gain.

Through eliminating one's own selfish desires to accumulate wealth for the sake of accumulating wealth, we can put those resources to use providing opportunities for all beings.

Having generated wealth, an individual can use their knowledge and wealth to provide learning opportunities for massive numbers of people who can be uplifted through gaining opportunities to succeed in life. This would require those who are more fortunate to set aside any interest in personal gain and instead, focus on practicing loving-kindness, compassion, and generosity with only one singular goal - helping humanity.

Chapter 9

Welfare and Peacefulness in This Present Life

‘Venerable Sir, we are Householders enjoying sensual pleasures, living at home in a house full of children. We use sandalwood from Kāsi; we wear garlands, scents, and ointments; we receive gold and silver. Let The Perfectly Enlightened One teach us The Teachings in a way that will lead to our welfare and peacefulness in this present life and in future lives.’

There are, Byagghapajja, these four things that lead to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in this present life.

What four?

- (1) Accomplishment in initiative,
- (2) accomplishment in protection,
- (3) wholesome friendship,
- (4) and balanced living.

Accomplishment in Initiative

And what is accomplishment in initiative?

Here, whatever may be the means by which a Householder earns his living — whether by farming, trade, raising cattle, archery, government service, or some other craft — he is skillful and diligent; he possesses sound and wise decision making about it in order to carry out and arrange it properly.

This is called accomplishment in initiative.

Accomplishment in Protection

And what is accomplishment in protection?

Here, a Householder sets up protection and guard over the wealth he has acquired by initiative and energy, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, thinking: How can I prevent Kings and thieves from taking it, fire from burning it, floods from sweeping it off, and displeasing heirs from taking it?

This is called accomplishment in protection.

Wholesome Friendship

And what is wholesome friendship?

Here, in whatever village or town a Householder lives, he associates with Householders or their sons — whether young but of mature virtue, or old and of mature virtue — who are accomplished in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), generosity, and wisdom; he converses with them and engages in discussions with them.

To the extent that they are accomplished in confidence, he emulates them with respect to their accomplishment in confidence; to the extent that they are accomplished in virtuous behavior (moral conduct), he emulates them with respect to their accomplishment in virtuous behavior; to the extent that they are accomplished in generosity, he emulates them with their accomplishment in generosity; to the extent that they are accomplished in wisdom, he emulates them with respect to their accomplishment in wisdom.

This is called wholesome friendship.

Balanced Living

And what is balanced living?

Here, a Householder knows his income and expenditures and leads a balanced life, neither too extravagant nor too frugal, (aware): In this way my income will exceed my expenditures rather than the reverse. Just as an appraiser or his apprentice, holding up a scale, knows:

By so much it has dipped down, by so much it has gone up so a Householder knows his income and expenditures and leads a balanced life, neither too extravagant nor too frugal, (aware): In this way my income will exceed my expenditures rather than the reverse.

If this Householder has a small income but lives luxuriously, others would say of him: This Householder eats his wealth just like an eater of figs.

But if he has a large income but lives sparingly, others would say of him: This Householder may even starve himself.

But it is called balanced living when a Householder knows his income and expenditures and leads a balanced life, neither too extravagant nor too frugal, (aware): In this way my income will exceed my expenditures rather than the reverse.

This is called balanced living.

These are the four things that lead to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in this very life.

(Reference: AN 8.54)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “four things that lead to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in this present life”.

The Buddha’s clear and direct Teaching here provides Household Practitioners four (4) aspects of life that when understood and practiced will lead to a peaceful life.

(1) First, “accomplishment in initiative” is The Buddha’s guidance in being proficient and capable to perform our professional duties. Whatever profession we choose, The Buddha advises that we should aspire to be “skillful and diligent; he possesses sound and wise decision making about it in order to carry out and arrange it properly”. A Practitioner who practices in this way will develop a wholesome professional reputation leading to improved results in their professional life with increased opportunities for advancement or growth of your business.

If we are complacent or lacking the knowledge needed to perform the profession of our choice, we will find that life is much more difficult in that we will not be well suited to provide valuable products or services that are beneficial to others. This can cause fear and uncertainty in the mind where a Practitioner will struggle to provide life sustaining resources of food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care for themselves and their family.

Developing and maintaining knowledge and wisdom of one’s profession and then applying dedication with energy and effort to perform quality work can help a Practitioner feel a sense of purpose and goodness in their community. A Practitioner will know that they are doing their work and doing it well resting easy knowing that their wise decision making at work will lead to stability and wholesome outcomes eliminating any fear of being unable to support their life and the life of those who rely on us for support.

(2) Second, “accomplishment in protection” Gotama Buddha encourages us to ensure we have protected our wealth from events that could significantly affect our wealth or growth of wealth. Disasters such as fire and floods could wipe away one’s wealth should they not have adequate protection. In today’s society, this might include properly allocating wealth towards institutions that are capable of overseeing one’s wealth and helping it to grow. This might include a bank, financial institution, insurance, safety deposit vaults, or other ways to protect one’s wealth.

Protecting one’s wealth from Kings could be looked upon as ensuring one has made proper decisions towards allocating money based on government laws to pay one’s fair share of taxes. Should a Practitioner choose not to allocate wealth towards the support of government services, the community would gradually crumble creating an environment that is not supportive of continued growth for humanity.

Protecting one's wealth from thieves would be to ensure there are safeguards in place that a thief would be unable to wipe out one's wealth through stealing. During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, life was very basic compared to today's standards. It would not be uncommon for someone to store their money in their home and for a thief to potentially cause a family ruin through stealing their accumulated money stored in just one central location. Today, we have many ways to ensure that one is well protected from scams and thieves who are looking to steal from you and your family. When one has applied good practices to protect one's wealth, the mind can reside peacefully knowing that a thief is unable to wipe out your family's savings.

Protecting one's wealth from displeasing heirs might include ensuring one has a will that documents what should and should not happen to your wealth upon death while ensuring your relatives are well aware of how you have allocated your wealth upon your death. Through clear communication in a written will and communicating with relatives prior to death, there will be no surprises upon your death and your wealth will not meet with hotly contested legal battles after your death. Through a properly formed will and thorough communication, a Practitioner can ensure a family is not divided and separated based on surprises at the time of death.

(3) Third, The Buddha provides guidance throughout his Teachings to cultivate "wholesome friendships". As you may have observed in life, when you are involved in wholesome activities with wholesome people, you will be influenced positively and have a tendency to make wiser and more wholesome decisions. To progress towards Enlightenment experiencing improved benefits to the condition of the mind and in your life, cultivating relationships with wholesome friends and associates is highly beneficial. Through having wholesome friends, a Practitioner will find life more smooth and easy as there will be support, motivation, and encouragement along The Path to Enlightenment and in daily life.

While Gotama Buddha focuses his Teachings at various times on helping you to understand that you will benefit from having wholesome friends, this Teaching focuses on cultivating wisdom from people in the community.

In modern society, all too often, the new generation may not appreciate the knowledge and insight accessible to us through observing elders in our communities and consulting them during challenges we may face. A fast paced lifestyle may not take the time to sit and speak with elders or view them as having wisdom that could be beneficial to your life.

In this Teaching, The Buddha guides Practitioners to engage with young and old members of one's community "who are accomplished in confidence, virtuous behavior, generosity, and wisdom". Through this interaction and discussion, a Practitioner can learn better ways of life and develop wholesome relationships.

Gotama Buddha encourages us to emulate and respect others' confidence in his Teachings. Being "accomplished in confidence" is to have well developed confidence that he is a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, confidence in his Teachings, and confidence in his Community of Practitioners. An individual who is accomplished in confidence will then decide on their own to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to improve the condition of the mind and their life through the attainment of Enlightenment. Lacking confidence, one would have no interest in pursuing The Path to Enlightenment or have the ability to progress to Enlightenment without well developed and accomplished confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.

Rather than choosing any friends that come your way, The Buddha encourages one to select friends who are accomplished in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), generosity, and wisdom looking to emulate these qualities in one's own life practice because these are the same qualities that will lead to wise wholesome decisions resulting in wholesome outcomes to extinguish all unwholesome Kamma leading to Enlightenment.

It is through our own wise decisions towards wholesome activities that one fully extinguishes all unwholesome Kamma production producing only wholesome results to attain Enlightenment. And, you will find that making wise decisions to cultivate relationships with wholesome friends where you are influenced in wholesome ways and have role models to emulate their "accomplishment in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), generosity, and wisdom" will lead to your welfare and peacefulness in this present life.

(4) Fourth, The Buddha provides guidance on "balanced living" helping Household Practitioners understand that "the middle way" for managing one's income and expenses is to ensure that one's expenses do not exceed their income.

Should a Practitioner choose to live life in such a way that their expenses do exceed their income, this would cause significant struggles and hardships in life as one would find themselves continually sinking into debt due to the mind's craving/desire/attachment to live a life beyond their ability of what they can afford.

The Natural Law of Kamma teaches us that we are always experiencing the results of our own decisions through cause and effect or action and result. The result of living a balanced life through well managed finances means that one can be comfortable experiencing peace from choosing not to accumulate debt as there will be no pressure from financial burdens.

Should a Practitioner currently be in debt or living life where their expenses exceed their income, it would be wise to work towards eliminating all debt and lowering their expenses through living a balanced life as described by The Buddha.

Craving/desire/attachment, attempting to fulfill endless "wants", is very expensive. Training the mind to eliminate the constant obsession to fulfill one's desires, which never lead to lasting satisfaction, can drastically improve your ability to live a comfortable and stress free life. Through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment, a Practitioner can focus on eliminating excessive expenditures while focusing on providing for your life sustaining needs such as food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care.

To bring your expenses down and into balance, there may need to be an extended period of compromise and doing without while you gradually adjust the financial variables that will bring more stability of mind knowing that there is not constant debt accumulation.

If a Practitioner's financial obligations are exceeding their income, this will create undue stress and burden that is a result of our own decisions. But just like one's own decisions lead to debt accumulation, it will require wise decision making to eliminate debt and choose to live a balanced financial life. Doing so will result in the wholesome outcome of having eliminated stress and anxiety related to financial obligations bringing the mind more stability and calmness.

As a Practitioner observes their life practice is currently not developed in a way that is most conducive to The Natural Law of Kamma described in this and countless other Teachings from The Buddha, you can gradually adjust your decisions to ensure more beneficial outcomes.

Learning these Teachings is to become aware of what leads to wholesome results in one's life. Reflecting on these Teachings from The Buddha, one can observe that his wisdom was quite profound and would lead to wholesome results. Implementing his Teachings in practice, a Practitioner can observe the truth for themselves discovering and acquiring the wisdom of these Teachings to support a wholesome life having eliminated 100% of all discontent feelings where the mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

How one chooses to manage their life and life choices directly affects the condition of one's own mind and their life. Making wise decisions is the cornerstone of The Path to Enlightenment and it is The Buddha's Teachings that will guide you in how to make wiser and wiser decisions for your own life.

When and if you choose to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings is a personal choice for each individual Practitioner. Through your own determination, dedication, and diligence, you will see the truth for yourself.

Chapter 10

Four Things Leading to the Welfare and Peacefulness in Future Lives

There are, Byagghapajja, these four (other) things that lead to a Householder's welfare and peacefulness in future lives.

What four?

- (1) Accomplishment in confidence,
- (2) accomplishment in virtuous behavior,
- (3) accomplishment in generosity, and
- (4) accomplishment in wisdom.

And what is accomplishment in confidence?

Here, a Householder is endowed with confidence. He places confidence in the Enlightenment of The Tathāgata thus: The Perfectly Enlightened One is an Arahant, Perfectly Enlightened, accomplished in true wisdom and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, Teacher of heavenly beings and humans, the Fortunate One, The Perfectly Enlightened One.

This is called accomplishment in confidence.

And what is accomplishment in virtuous behavior (moral conduct)?

Here, a Householder abstains from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from liquor, wine, and intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness), the basis for heedlessness.

This is called accomplishment in virtuous behavior.

And what is accomplishment in generosity?

Here, a Householder resides at home with a mind free of the stain of selfishness, freely generous, open-handed, joyful in letting go, one devoted to charity, joyful in giving and sharing.

This is called accomplishment in generosity.

And what is accomplishment in wisdom?

Here, a Householder is wise; he possesses the wisdom that discerns arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, and leads to the complete destruction of discontentedness.

This is called accomplishment in wisdom.

These are the four (other) things that lead to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in future lives.

(Reference: AN 8.54)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings that directly relate to the previous Chapter where he guides us in developing “wholesome friendships” with individuals “who are accomplished in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), generosity, and wisdom”.

This Chapter explains exactly what The Buddha taught regarding what is “accomplishment in confidence, virtuous behavior, generosity, and wisdom” so that we can develop these for our own life practice while also selecting wholesome friends who are doing the same.

Through developing your own life practice to have “accomplishment in confidence, virtuous behavior, generosity, and wisdom”, then, you will be better able to make wise decisions within your own life and be able to make wise decisions of what friends to include in your life. Without a Practitioner understanding these Teachings and then practicing them closely, they would be lost and struggle to make wise decisions in their life and to make wise decisions of which friends to include in their life.

(1) First, “accomplishment in confidence”, is described in this Teaching as having confidence in The Buddha as the Fully Perfectly Enlightened One. In multiple other places within his Teachings, he describes having confirmed confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community. Doing so, a Practitioner will then be able to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of “doubt” helping them to move the mind into the first Stage of Enlightenment.

Confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community and elimination of the fetter of doubt is developed through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to observe the results as the condition of the mind improves. There is no blind faith nor belief in these Teachings.

Instead, a wise Practitioner will seek guidance with a Teacher to investigate The Teachings and then implement them in daily life to experience the results of the condition of the mind gradually improving. The gradual improvement in the condition of the mind is observable by the Practitioner as they once experienced discontent feelings such as anger which then moves to slight annoyance and then eventually no discontent feelings are experienced whatsoever based on the same situation occurring in one’s life. Observing this gradual decrease in strong feelings to the complete elimination of

discontentedness, a Practitioner's confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community increases and all doubts are eliminated.

The fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as "doubt" in The Ten Fetters is then completely eliminated and will no longer arise helping to further liberate the mind.

(2) Second, "accomplishment in virtuous behavior (moral conduct)" is described through The Five Precepts. Household Practitioners will typically learn and practice The Five Precepts as basic moral conduct along with developing The Eight Fold Path in its entirety.

The Eight Fold Path is a central and core Teaching on The Path to Enlightenment as shared by Gotama Buddha. The Five Precepts are integrated into The Eight Fold Path providing expanded content to describe Right Speech and Right Action.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path and The Five Precepts is available in this same book series found in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1).

(3) Third, "accomplishment in generosity" is an important Teaching on The Path to Enlightenment and a remedy to the unEnlightened mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment.

The problem that is causing the discontent mind is craving/desire/attachment. This is the cause of all discontent feelings. To eliminate this, The Buddha shares exact remedies to transform the unwholesome qualities of craving/desire/attachment using Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and developing a practice of generosity.

A mind that is unable to give and share time, effort, energy, and resources with others would be unable to attain Enlightenment as the mind is selfish. A Practitioner would instead need to train the mind to "reside at home with a mind free of the stain of selfishness, freely generous, open-handed, joyful in letting go, one devoted to charity, joyful in giving and sharing" so that it can let go of any accumulated selfishness recognizing the interconnectivity of all beings.

A Practitioner can accomplish this through daily sharing in some of the most simple or profound ways based on your own personal choices. Sharing of food, water, clothing, shelter, or medical care with others can help improve the ability of others to sustain their life while giving them the opportunity to learn and practice these Teachings. A Practitioner can share their time, effort, energy, and resources to help others in the community supporting the development of wholesome relationships with those around you. One might even consider sharing a smile or a wave, with those who you come into contact with, as a way of "letting go" and practicing loving-kindness and compassion.

Loving-kindness (Pāli: mettā) is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

Detailed explanation of practicing generosity is available in this same book series found in the book "Generosity" (Volume 13).

(4) Fourth, “accomplishment in wisdom” is the ultimate antidote or remedy to the unEnlightened mind. Through learning, reflecting and practicing these Teachings, a Practitioner gains more clarity and insight into the wisdom of these life changing Teachings.

A Practitioner will need to focus on establishing a well developed practice to include the core and central Teachings shared by The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment.

Those Teachings are:

- A.) The Three Universal Truths
- B.) The Four Noble Truths
- C.) The Eight Fold Path
- D.) The Five Precepts
- E.) The Brahma-viharas
- F.) The Ten Fetters
- G.) The Seven Factors of Enlightenment
- H.) Extensive Meditation Training

The Buddha specifically speaks of “the wisdom that discerns arising and passing away” which is The Universal Truth of Impermanence found in The Three Universal Truths. He then goes on to explain that “accomplishment in wisdom” is the wisdom that “leads to the complete destruction of discontentedness”. This requires deep and penetrative understanding through a determined, dedicated, and diligent practice of these Teachings.

(A - H) mentioned in the above are the core and central Teachings that a Practitioner would need to focus on to develop “penetrative wisdom” while seeking guidance from a Teacher. Then, once well established in these Teachings, a Practitioner can gradually move into deepening and expanding their life practice into the full spectrum of Teachings shared by The Buddha. These core and central Teachings will guide a Practitioner in establishing a foundation in these Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment to have “accomplishment in wisdom”.

Lastly, while Gotama Buddha shares that “these are the four (other) things that lead to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in future lives”, it should be made clear that the goal of all Practitioners should be to learn and practice these Teachings in such a way that there are no future lives by attaining Enlightenment. While Gotama Buddha shared what would result in the welfare and peacefulness of a Practitioner in future lives, his ultimate goal was to support Practitioners in the attainment of Enlightenment.

While a Buddha is going to explain what would lead to a better and improved rebirth in future lives, their goal is to assist as many beings as possible to attain Enlightenment eliminating The Cycle of Rebirth so that there are no longer any future rebirths. With that goal in mind, a Buddha also understands that not every Practitioner will attain Enlightenment even in learning and practicing these Teachings directly with an actual Buddha. So, it is important to share Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment that lead to Enlightenment while also explaining what leads to an improved rebirth should a Practitioner not attain Enlightenment.

While a Practitioner may decide to learn and practice these Teachings in this life, should they not attain Enlightenment and need to be reborn they will have the confidence that their work and effort will lead to an improved existence in this present life and also in future lives. All the work and effort applied in this life will be directly beneficial in this life and in future lives should one not attain Enlightenment in this present life.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 1-10)

<https://youtu.be/9boBwBtJUaE>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 214 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 1-10)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--214---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-1-10-e17g36f/a-a6hof2g>

Chapter 11

Four Sources of Depletion and Accumulation of the Wealth

The Four Sources of Depletion of the Wealth

Byagghapajja, the wealth thus amassed has four sources of depletion:

- (1) womanizing,
- (2) drunkenness (heedlessness),
- (3) gambling,
- (4) unwholesome friendship, unwholesome companionship, unwholesome comradeship.

Byagghapajja, just as if there were a large reservoir with four inlets and four outlets, and a man would close the inlets and open the outlets, and sufficient rain does not fall, one could predict the water in the reservoir to decrease rather than increase;

Byagghapajja, so the wealth thus amassed has four sources of depletion:

- (1) womanizing,
- (2) drunkenness (heedlessness),
- (3) gambling,
- (4) unwholesome friendship, unwholesome companionship, unwholesome comradeship.

The Four Sources of Accumulation of the Wealth

Byagghapajja, the wealth thus amassed has four sources of accumulation:

- (1) one avoids womanizing,
- (2) one avoids drunkenness (heedlessness),
- (3) one avoids gambling,
- (4) one cultivates wholesome friendship, wholesome companionship, wholesome comradeship.

Byagghapajja, just as if there were a large reservoir with four inlets and four outlets, and a man would open the inlets and close the outlets, and sufficient rain falls; one could predict the water in the reservoir to increase rather than decrease,

Byagghapajja, so the wealth thus amassed has four sources of accumulation:

- (1) one avoids womanizing,
- (2) one avoids drunkenness (heedlessness),
- (3) one avoids gambling,
- (4) one cultivates wholesome friendship, wholesome companionship, wholesome comradeship.

These are the four things that lead to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in this very life.

(Reference: AN 8.54)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings of what would lead to the depletion or accumulation of wealth.

The Teachings are exactly reversed in that which leads to the depletion of wealth, having eliminated those in one's life practice, will also lead to the accumulation of wealth.

It is womanizing, drunkenness (heedlessness), gambling, and having unwholesome friendships that a Practitioner will experience loss of wealth. It is through eliminating these same aspects of one's life practice that they will experience the accumulation of wealth.

(1) First, "womanizing" is defined as "engaging in numerous casual sexual affairs with women". This relates to obsessing about and chasing after multiple partners for sexual encounters. Doing so, would result in a lack of focus and attention on one's life practice and aspects of life that would produce wholesome benefits.

The desire to chase after and fulfill sexual desires would only serve to erode the condition of the mind and one's life.

Keep in mind, that Gotama Buddha was sharing this Teaching with a man who preferred a female sexual partner but any Practitioner who would decide to prioritize sexual encounters above wholesome activities that produce wholesome results would experience lack of focus and concentration as the mind's craving/desire/attachment would obsess the mind. This Teaching can be applied to all people and all genders.

Instead, a Practitioner who chooses to have sexual contact can do so while engaged in a committed relationship with one partner rather than experience the difficulties and unwholesome results of multiple partners and casual sexual encounters.

(2) Second, "drunkenness" or "heedlessness" is pursuing substances that cause heedlessness. The meaning of "heedlessness" is: careless, thoughtless, inattentive, uncalm, unaware, or unmindful.

Oftentimes, an individual can become addicted to substances that cause heedlessness unaware how the unEnlightened mind chases after pleasant feelings of happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc. Craving lasting satisfaction an unwise mind can turn to substances that cause heedlessness thinking they are going to provide an escape from the struggles in life and an escape from the associated painful feelings of sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, anxiety, etc. What one will discover is that these substances only lead to continued misery and problems making life worse not better. But, the ignorance (unknowing of true reality) that exists in the unEnlightened mind oftentimes overpowers the mind taking an individual deep into darkness through addiction to substances that cause heedlessness. It is these Teachings which lead to an Enlightened mind that provide the escape from discontentedness, not substances that cause heedlessness.

An individual who chooses to use substances that cause heedlessness will find that Enlightenment is impossible until they choose to eliminate these substances from their life becoming dedicated to improving their life practice. Further, as described in this Teaching, an individual who chooses to pursue heedlessness through any and all substances will find that depletion of wealth is one of the many unwholesome outcomes as a result of choosing to ingest substances that cause heedlessness. The mind will develop craving/desire/attachment to substances that cause heedlessness wasting time

and money towards a temporary high that only ends in deep sorrows and despair with increased difficulties and struggles in life.

The Buddha shares further Teachings on this topic in The Five Precepts.

Detailed explanation of The Five Precepts is available in this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

(3) Third, “gambling” is defined as betting a sum of money on a game of chance. The Buddha shares that this would only lead to the depletion of wealth as the mind oftentimes becomes so addicted to gambling that one finds themselves unable to support their basic needs or they end up in significant debt.

Games of chance are such things as playing cards, dice, roulette, slot machines, animal racing, sports betting, lotteries, and other similar type of games where one is placing a wager with the anticipation of a potential favorable outcome of acquiring an increase in the wager. A wager is often placed through an item of value such as money or another valuable desirable item.

An individual who is gambling has craving/desire/attachment to money and wealth but it is through the craving/desire/attachment for wealth that the individual will find themselves depleted of wealth. The unwholesome decision to gamble will lead to the unwholesome result of depletion of wealth along with other unwholesome outcomes shared in other Teachings by The Buddha.

The danger to one’s mind through the activity of gambling goes beyond “games of chance”.

Practitioners need to deeply examine their life practice to determine if their decisions to participate in such things as day trading are being motivated by craving/desire/attachment to money. Due to the readily available access to stock markets and other online services, an individual can find that they are experiencing craving/desire/attachment to money culminating in activities that can appear harmless but are actually leading to the depletion of wealth and taking one further from the ultimate goal of the Enlightened mind.

If one is performing constant trades through day trading activity with constant cravings to check the markets and increase their money with little to no education in how the financial markets function, these activities may not meet the definition of gambling but are encouraging the same unwholesome activity in the mind in the same way as an addiction to gambling. Gotama Buddha would not have had insight into the stock markets that exist today and the technology to access those markets, but his Teachings on how to train the mind to attain Enlightenment can be applied to what we are seeing available in modern society.

If a Practitioner is constantly checking financial markets expecting gains for the sake of immediate monetary compensation, this up and down stimulus in the mind being fueled by craving/desire/attachment will inhibit a Practitioner from experiencing Enlightenment.

Instead, an educated investor who is wisely applying dedicated research to analyzing the markets investing through well thought out decisions can experience Enlightenment.

Educated investors apply wise decision making in the profession of financial investments doing so through years of applied study and ethical guidelines through well understood best practices among professional investors. They are basing their career in researching and applying wise decisions to increase wealth through financial investments rather than looking for an immediate or quick gain as a result of a “chance” to “win”.

Each Practitioner will need to analyze for themselves, while seeking guidance with a Teacher, whether their decisions in various parts of their life amount to craving/desire/attachment to money that can oftentimes be executed much like a gambler or are their decisions based on educated wise decision making as part of a career choice that leads to righteous wealth accumulation as part of Right Livelihood.

(4) Fourth, “unwholesome friendship, unwholesome companionship, unwholesome comradeship” would influence a Practitioner towards unwholesome decisions leading to unwholesome results (i.e. unwholesome Kamma).

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to develop wholesome decision making that leads to wholesome results. Through the new understanding a Practitioner is gaining in these Teachings, they will need to review their decisions in the past to determine if those same past decisions are still considered to be wise as it relates to friendships.

Holding on to relationships that are unwholesome can lead to further decline in one’s life and lead to depletion of wealth. Through having unwholesome friendships, a Practitioner will constantly find themselves in situations where money is needing to be spent to resolve unwholesome decisions rather than being applied towards wholesome activities.

An individual may find themselves needing to pay money to individuals to resolve personal disputes, governments for release from jail, legal fees, property damage or other unwholesome results that need to be rectified that ultimately lead to a depletion of wealth.

The Buddha encourages and guides Practitioners that they can accumulate wealth through avoiding casual sexual encounters through womanizing, drunkenness or heedlessness, gambling, and cultivating wholesome friendships.

If you have chosen to do any of these in the past, you can always make wise decisions to improve your life practice by eliminating the choices to womanize, become heedless, gamble, or maintain unwholesome friendships. Through choosing to practice these Teachings, one can observe the results for themselves as the condition of the mind and your life gradually improves “leading to the welfare and peacefulness of a Householder in this very life”.

Chapter 12

Six Ways of Wasting One's Substance

Householder's son, and which are the six ways of wasting one's substance that the Noble Disciple does not follow?

- (1) Addiction to strong drink and sloth-producing drugs (substances that cause heedlessness) is one way of wasting one's substance,
- (2) haunting the streets at unfitting times is one,
- (3) attending fairs is one,
- (4) being addicted to gambling is one,
- (5) keeping unwholesome company is one,
- (6) habitual idleness is one.

Householder's son, there are these six dangers attached to addiction to strong drink and sloth-producing drugs (substances that cause heedlessness):

- (1) present waste of money,
- (2) increased arguments,
- (3) liability to sickness,
- (4) loss of good name,
- (5) indecent exposure of one's person,
- (6) weakening of the intellect (wisdom).

Householder's son, there are these six dangers attached to haunting the streets at unfitting times:

- (1) one is defenseless and without protection,
- (2) and so are one's wife (life partner) and children,
- (3) and so is one's property,
- (4) one is suspected of crimes,
- (5) false reports are pinned on one,
- (6) one encounters all sorts of unpleasantness.

Householder's son, there are these six dangers attached to frequenting fairs:
(One is always thinking)

- (1) Where is there dancing?
- (2) Where is there singing?
- (3) Where are they playing music?
- (4) Where are they reciting?
- (5) Where is there hand-clapping?
- (6) Where are the drums?

Householder's son, there are these six dangers attached to gambling:

- (1) the winner makes enemies,
- (2) the loser regrets his loss,
- (3) one wastes one's present wealth,
- (4) one's word is not trusted in the community,
- (5) one is despised by one's friends and companions,
- (6) one is not in demand for marriage, because a gambler cannot afford to maintain a wife (life partner).

Householder's son, there are these six dangers attached to keeping unwholesome company:

- (1) any gambler,
- (2) any glutton,
- (3) any drunkard,
- (4) any cheat,
- (5) any trickster,
- (6) any bully is his friend, his companion.

There are these six dangers attached to idleness:

- (1) thinking: "it's too cold", one does not work;
- (2) thinking: "it's too hot", one does not work;
- (3) thinking: "it's too early", one does not work;
- (4) thinking: "it's too late", one does not work;
- (5) thinking: "I'm too hungry", one does not work;
- (6) thinking: "I'm too full", one does not work.

(Reference: DN 31)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares six ways that one can waste their substance and he guides Students to improve their life practice through avoiding these “dangers”.

One’s substance can be thought of as “the most vital or essential part of something”.

So, if one is “wasting their substance”, they are “weakening their vital energy and capacity of the mind to function optimally”.

When the mind is lacking energy and not functioning optimally, that is an ideal time for one to lose mindfulness (awareness of mind), concentration, and, thus, lack the ability to access wisdom to make wholesome decisions. In doing so, any unwholesome decisions are going to produce unwholesome results (i.e. unwholesome Kamma). So maintaining one’s substance to ensure the mind has vital energy and the mind functions optimally is highly important in cultivating the mind towards Enlightenment as part of The Path to Enlightenment.

In this Teaching, The Buddha provides the unwholesome outcomes to be experienced if one were to participate in any of these six ways of wasting one’s substance. These are described as “dangers” because these are potential outcomes for one who chooses to “waste their substance” and there is a real danger of causing harm to one’s own mind and life should a Practitioner choose to participate in these activities.

(1) First, “addiction to strong drink and sloth-producing drugs (substances that cause heedlessness) is one way of wasting one’s substance” in that through having a mind that is careless, thoughtless, inattentive, un-calm, unaware, or unmindful an individual will make unwise decisions creating unwholesome results.

Ingesting substances that cause heedlessness would diminish their ability to practice mental calmness which weakens mindfulness (awareness of mind), concentration, and one’s ability to access wisdom.

Lacking wisdom, an individual will make countless unwise decisions leading to unwholesome results (i.e. unwholesome Kamma) as it would be extremely difficult to practice these Teachings applying the wisdom, therein, while the mind is heedless. Through unwise decision making one will be causing harm in the world, thus, harm will be returned to an individual who is heedless through unbeneficial outcomes such as those mentioned by Gotama Buddha.

Due to the unwholesome decision to ingest substances that cause heedlessness, Gotama Buddha shares one would (1) waste money, (2) argue often, (3) experience sickness, (4) lose a good reputation, (5) show the unwholesome side of one’s character, and (6) weaken their ability to access wisdom in the mind.

(2) Second, “haunting the streets at unfitting times” would mean that one is outside their home late at night or in early morning involved in activities that are unwholesome.

As one is training the mind towards awakening to Enlightenment, they are choosing to “walk towards the light”. Doing so, one can come to understand that in most places in the world there are not many wholesome things that happen on the streets in the late night or early morning hours.

While one does not need to be fearful of being out at night, a wise Practitioner who is choosing to walk towards the light being involved in wholesome activities might decide to conduct their daily activities in the day light hours when wholesome activities are happening in most cities and towns.

Due to the unwholesome decision to haunt the streets at unfitting times, Gotama Buddha shares (1) one is defenseless and without protection, (2) a person's family is defenseless and without protection as one is away from them during times when harm may come to them, (3) a person's property is defenseless and without protection as one is away from home during times when harm may come to one's property, (4) one is suspected of crimes due to the reputation of being out at unfitting times, (5) false reports are given to others in the community or government authorities based on the tarnished reputation, and (6) one encounters all sorts of unpleasantness as what transpires in times of darkness is oftentimes unwholesome in nature.

A city or town can oftentimes become a very different place during late night or early morning hours when darkness arrives. Choosing to be out in the darkness can result in unwholesome outcomes as this is typically when unwholesome activities are taking place.

It is wise to plan activities that are wholesome and conduct those during daylight hours when wholesome outcomes can be accomplished.

(3) Third, "attending fairs" is another way that Gotama Buddha shared that one would be "wasting their substance" resulting in "weakening their vital energy and capacity of the mind to function optimally".

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, the primary form of entertainment would have been through "attending fairs". There was no television, internet, large sporting events, or other activities that we experience today. Instead, it was (1) dancing, (2) singing, (3) playing music, (4) reciting, (5) hand-clapping, and (6) drums that the mind might have craving/desire/attachment towards and cause the mind to lack mindfulness and concentration based on the arising craving/desire/attachment to attend fairs or entertainment.

There is nothing about this Path to Enlightenment that would preclude one from attending entertainment venues or events. What a Practitioner needs to be aware of is how the mind can oftentimes long or yearn for entertainment as a way to coverup boredom or loneliness. A Practitioner who overlooks this discontentedness and instead fills their time with entertainment, being unable to experience peacefulness or calmness, would need to eliminate the craving/desire/attachment (mental longing with a strong eagerness) for entertainment to attain Enlightenment. Then, after the mind has eliminated this craving/desire/attachment, if a Practitioner's mind can reside unaffected just as peaceful and calm whether they do or don't attend entertainment venues or events, they might choose to participate in entertainment.

Oftentimes to observe if there is any craving/desire/attachment, a Practitioner will need to eliminate something like entertainment for a period of time to observe if there is any arising discontentedness associated with not taking part in something like entertainment. Then, after several months or years of not taking part in entertainment, knowing that the mind is peaceful and calm without boredom or loneliness, if a Practitioner chooses to participate in entertainment, that is possible as the Practitioner knows their mind has no craving/desire/attachment to entertainment. But, a Practitioner would be unknowing of this reality and find it difficult to see the truth until they have tested the mind through

eliminating entertainment for a period of time to observe the effect, if any, that may be experienced.

(4) Fourth, “being addicted to gambling” is only going to cause one’s mind to experience difficulties through craving/desire/attachment to money and wealth. There are six dangers that The Buddha shares as a result of one being addicted to gambling. An individual can experience that (1) the winner makes enemies, (2) the loser regrets his loss, (3) one wastes one’s present wealth, (4) one’s word is not trusted in the community, (5) one is despised by one’s friends and companions, and (6) one is not in demand for marriage, because a gambler cannot afford to maintain a wife (life partner).

These potential dangers will drastically affect one’s life and ability to reside with a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy finding it a struggle to have wholesome opportunities to cultivate wholesome relationships to improve one’s life.

(5) Fifth, “keeping unwholesome company” is another way that The Buddha is encouraging a Practitioner to cultivate wholesome relationships ensuring one develops wholesome influences in their life. He provides specific examples of unwholesome qualities to help you understand the decisions to maintain relationships with individuals that possess these qualities would be unwise and affect your life.

Friends who are (1) a gambler, (2) a glutton, (3) a drunkard, (4) a cheat, (5) a trickster, and (6) a bully as a friend or companion would only serve to influence a Practitioner’s mind in unwholesome ways. Choosing to associate with unwholesome friends can affect one through the unwholesome decisions that others make and it would be wise to cultivate wholesome relationships avoiding individuals with these qualities.

A gambler is one who has excessive craving/desire/attachment for money and wealth through betting sums of money on a game of chance. An individual with excessive craving/desire/attachment for money or wealth, even without being a gambler, will make decisions motivated by this craving with strained relationships.

A glutton is an excessively greedy eater. One who is unwilling to share something as simple as food is an indication of excessive craving/desire/attachment in the mind. One would find it difficult to cultivate wholesome relationships with an individual who has extensive craving in the mind as their decisions are going to be motivated through craving/desire/attachment producing unwholesome results that may affect you.

A drunkard is a person who is habitually heedless through addiction to substances that cause heedlessness. A person who is addicted to substances will have significant craving/desire/attachment in the mind making it difficult for them to cultivate wholesome relationships.

A cheat is a person who acts dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage. Observing this conduct, it would be wise to choose not to associate with an individual who is considered a cheat as they will have the same conduct interacting with you resulting in unwholesome outcomes.

A trickster is a person who deceives people and has fraudulent conduct. Again, the decision to maintain relationships with someone with this type of conduct will affect you in unwholesome ways based on your decision to maintain a relationship with someone who is deceitful.

A bully is a person who habitually seeks to harm, intimidate, or coerce those whom they perceive as vulnerable. They are oftentimes mentally, verbally, or physically abusive to people and it is only a matter of time before you become the next target.

A suggestion for selecting wholesome friends would include cultivating relationships with individuals who are practicing The Five Precepts as a baseline minimum. A Practitioner might also seek friends who are learning and practicing The Eight Fold Path as these individuals will be applying effort to improve their life practice being aware to not cause harm through their decisions.

While you may live in a region of the world where these Teachings are not widely known or practiced, many traditions in the world share Teachings that have some similarities to what The Buddha taught as The Five Precepts and the moral conduct found in The Eight Fold Path. Knowing that any decisions made in contrast to these Teachings will produce unwholesome results, choosing to associate with wholesome friends who are making decisions in their own life rooted in what you know to be wise decisions based on The Natural Law of Kamma will produce wholesome results for you.

(6) Sixth, “habitual idleness” would not produce wholesome outcomes for one’s life. Procrastination, complacency, negligence, or habitual idleness would only result in your continued decline as you would not be making wise decisions to improve your life but instead, be lacking motivation and enthusiasm towards building up your life.

An individual who is habitually idle would look for any and all excuses why they are unable to apply effort and energy towards work. The Buddha shares that one’s mind might be thinking (1) it's too cold, (2) it's too hot, (3) it's too early, (4) it's too late, (5) I’m too hungry, or (6) I’m too full and, therefore, one does not work.

If the mind is experiencing or does experience habitual idleness, a Practitioner will need to train the mind to be active, attentive, alert, with interest and willingness to do something. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment provide guidance on arising qualities of mind to eliminate a sluggish or unmotivated mind.

Detailed explanation of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Developing the mind to perform optimally would be to choose not to waste one’s substance and instead, direct time, effort, energy, and resources to improving one’s life.

Deciding to eliminate these six ways of wasting one’s substance will result in focus and attention towards wholesome goals and objectives that support your continued growth in life.

Chapter 13

Five Cords of Sensual Pleasure

Monks, there are these five cords of sensual pleasure.

What are the five?

- (1) Forms recognizable by the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving.
- (2) Sounds recognizable by the ear that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving.
- (3) Odors recognizable by the nose that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving.
- (4) Flavors recognizable by the tongue that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving.
- (5) Physical objects recognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving.

These are the five cords of sensual pleasure.

As to those Ascetics and Brāhmins who are tied to these five cords of sensual pleasure, obsessed with them and completely committed to them, and who use them without seeing the danger in them or understanding the escape from them, it may be understood of them: They have met with calamity, met with disaster, the Evil One may do with them as he likes.

Suppose a forest deer who was bound lay down on a heap of traps; it might be understood of him: He has met with calamity, met with disaster, the hunter can do with him as he likes, and when the hunter comes he cannot go where he wants.

As to those Ascetics and Brāhmins who are not tied to these five cords of sensual pleasure, who are not obsessed with them or completely committed to them, and who use them seeing the danger in them and understanding the escape from them, it may be understood of them: They have not met

with calamity, not met with disaster, the Evil One cannot do with them as he likes.

Suppose a forest deer who was unbound lay down on a heap of traps; it might be understood of him: He has not met with calamity, not met with disaster, the hunter cannot do with him as he likes, and when the hunter comes, he can go where he wants.

Suppose a forest deer is wandering in the forest wilds: he walks without fear, stands without fear, sits without fear, lies down without fear. Why is that? Because he is out of the hunter's range.

So too, quite distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, he enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. This Monk is said to have blindfolded Māra, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Māra's eye of its opportunity.

(This follows with the second Jhāna, the third Jhāna, the fourth Jhāna, the space is infinite, the consciousness is infinite, the base of nothingness, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the discourses are identical except for the reference to each attainment.)

Again, by completely surmounting the base of neither perception-nor-non perception, a Monk enters upon and resides in the elimination of perception and feeling. And his taints are destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

This Monk is said to have blindfolded Māra, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Māra's eye of its opportunity, and to have crossed beyond attachment to the world. He walks without fear, stands without fear, sits without fear, lies down without fear.

Why is that? Because he is out of the Evil One's range.

(Reference: MN 26)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Five Cords of Sensual Pleasure that the mind experiences related to five (5) of The Six Sense Bases.

Discontentedness is experienced through The Six Sense Bases. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind. These are the six internal sense bases or the six internal sense faculties. You will see different people using different language to describe Gotama Buddha's Teachings because even how people describe these Teachings is impermanent. It is not steady, fixed, or constant as different people choose to use different language.

The six internal sense bases experience the six external sense bases of forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects.

The mind longing for pleasant feelings through the six internal sense bases for the six external sense bases is one of the significant problems of the unEnlightened mind described in The Ten Fetters as “sensual desire”. The mind is chasing after pleasant feelings through The Six Sense Bases looking to fulfill the objects of its desires through impermanent conditions.

The mind experiences discontentedness through longing for sensual pleasure through these six (6) sense bases.

The Six Sense Bases

Internal Sense Base	External Sense Base
Eyes	Forms
Ears	Sounds
Nose	Odors
Tongue	Flavors
Body	Physical Objects
Mind	Mental Objects

When seeing an agreeable form through the eyes, one experiences pleasant feelings. When seeing a disagreeable form through the eyes, one experiences a painful feeling. The mind is discontent.

When hearing an agreeable sound through the ears, one experiences pleasant feelings. When hearing a disagreeable sound through the ears, one experiences a painful feeling. The mind is discontent.

When smelling an agreeable odor through the nose, one experiences pleasant feelings. When smelling a disagreeable odor through the nose, one experiences a painful feeling. The mind is discontent.

When tasting an agreeable flavor through the tongue, one experiences pleasant feelings. When tasting a disagreeable flavor through the tongue, one experiences a painful feeling. The mind is discontent.

When touching an agreeable physical object through the body, one experiences pleasant feelings. When touching a disagreeable physical object through the body, one experiences a painful feeling. The mind is discontent.

When recognizing an agreeable mental object through the mind, one experiences pleasant feelings. When recognizing a disagreeable mental object through the mind, one experiences a painful feeling. The mind is discontent.

Mental objects are objects such as thoughts, ideas, emotions, mental states, etc.

Through all six (6) sense bases or The Six Doorways to Discontentedness, the mind experiences pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. When pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant are experienced, the mind is discontent. There are more detailed Teachings on this topic in the book “The Six Sense Bases” (Volume 9) in this same book series.

As the mind chases pleasant feelings, due to the impermanent nature of these feelings, the mind is then inviting in painful feelings and/or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant as the mind still has a longing with a strong eagerness for impermanent conditions to create pleasant feelings. If the mind is basing its inner pleasant feelings on impermanent conditions, it is also going to experience painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant based on impermanent conditions. Instead, the mind can be trained to be inwardly peaceful and calm no longer yearning for pleasant feelings through conditions which are all impermanent.

To attain Enlightenment, you will need to learn how to “guard” the doorways to discontentedness and “protect your own contentedness” through developing a life practice of non-craving, non-desire, non-attachment, or non-clinging. We are each responsible to “protect or maintain our own contentedness of mind”, no one else can do that for us.

The mind will have craving/desire/attachment (mental longing with a strong eagerness) for pleasant feelings (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.) associated with contact with forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body.

The craving/desire/attachment is the “cord” of sensual pleasure, not the actual object itself. The unEnlightened mind will chase after the objects of its affections seeking pleasant feelings. Gotama Buddha explains this as objects “wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving”. It is the longing with a strong eagerness, craving/desire/attachment, that exists in the unEnlightened mind that causes it to be discontent. The discontentedness is experienced through pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. This is explained in The Teachings of The Three Universal Truths and The Four Noble Truths.

Detailed explanation of The Three Universal Truths and The Four Noble Truths is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

As a Practitioner develops their intellectual understanding of how the unEnlightened mind functions and the remedies, they are then able to better apply the solutions shared by Gotama Buddha. Doing so, a Practitioner will understand “the escape” from The Five Cords of Sensual Pleasure. Eventually, as a Practitioner has a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path, the mind will move into the Jhānas. These are preliminary phases the mind moves through prior to the first Stage of Enlightenment.

When a Practitioner’s mind enters into the Jhānas, it is then protected from “Māra the Evil One”.

Māra the Evil One is an unwholesome being who roams the world influencing unskillful, unbeneficial, and negative conduct. Māra, and beings acting on its behalf, look for ways to entice and lure an individual into conduct that would result in unwholesome results. Other traditions may refer to this entity as Satan, The Devil, or other names associated with a devilish being who is associated with the Realm of Hell looking to cause calamity for all beings here on earth attempting to influence human beings to create “hell on earth”.

Through training the mind in these Teachings, a Practitioner eventually gets to the Jhānas where the mind is protected and no longer influenced by Māra the Evil One. A mind that has entered the Jhānas “is said to have blindfolded Māra”. Māra is no longer able to influence a Practitioner as their mind has become more stable and steady through well developed wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline, yet, the mind is still not Enlightened. There is more work to do in order to fully protect the mind from discontentedness.

However, the mind can “walk without fear, stand without fear, sit without fear, lie down without fear. Why is that? Because he is out of the hunter's range”.

“Distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states” through putting together a well developed life practice of The Eight Fold Path the mind “enters and resides in the first Jhāna” “out of the hunter’s range” and no longer susceptible to “Māra the Evil One”.

With a Practitioner having distanced the mind from sensual desires and unwholesome mental states they are no longer “laying down on a heap of traps”. The sensual desires are the “traps”. The mind will continue to long with a strong eagerness through The Six Sense Bases wanting pleasant feelings. But, those feelings are all temporary (i.e. impermanent) because they are based on impermanent conditions. It is not until the mind is willing to let go of temporary happiness that it will experience permanent joy.

Training the mind to distance itself then eliminate sensual desires through eliminating the craving/desire/attachment (i.e. The Five Cords of Sensual Pleasures) the Practitioner’s mind is no longer “laying on traps” and has escaped from a significant amount of discontentedness.

As a Practitioner chooses to develop their life practice more deeply practicing The Eight Fold Path, the mind will move through the Jhānas, and then eliminate clinging to perceptions. The mind will be able to see clearly having eliminated the taints (i.e. The Ten Fetters) and “seeing with wisdom” the mind will move closer to Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Six Sense Bases is available in this same book series found in the book “The Six Sense Bases” (Volume 9).

Detailed explanation of the space is infinite, the consciousness is infinite, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is available in this same book series found in Chapter 13 of the book “Breathing Mindfulness Meditation” (Volume 7).

Chapter 14

Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech

Monks, possessing five factors, speech is well spoken, not badly spoken, it is blameless and beyond reproach (disapproval) by the wise.

What five?

- (1) It is spoken at the **proper time**;
- (2) What is said is **true**;
- (3) It is **spoken gently**;
- (4) What is said is **beneficial**;
- (5) It is spoken with **a mind of loving-kindness**.

Possessing these five factors, speech is well spoken, not badly spoken; it is **blameless** and beyond reproach (disapproval) by the wise.

(Reference: AN 5.198)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech as a detailed Teaching to further explain Right Speech as part of The Eight Fold Path.

A Practitioner will need to train the mind to deeply understand and practice The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech to attain Enlightenment.

Right Speech: The Right Speech involves ensuring that we do not cause harm to other beings through our communication. During the lifetime of Gotama Buddha all that existed was “verbal speech”. Today, we communicate through verbal speech, text/chat messages, emails, posts to social media, and many other forms of written communication. All communication can either be “harmless and wholesome” or “harmful and unwholesome”. But choosing to learn and practice harmless communication, or Right Speech, you are then ensuring how you interact with others does not cause harm so that harm is not returned to you.

To practice Right Speech, or Right Communication, a Practitioner would need to fully develop and practice The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech in all conversations through *gradual* training of the mind. This includes polite, kind, friendly, respectful, and wholesome speech in all forms of communication.

Proper Time: A Practitioner needs to ensure they are choosing the right time to speak. This includes not interrupting others when they are speaking, choosing to be patient and to speak at the appropriate time. This also includes ensuring that your mind is prepared to speak and is choosing to speak at a time when the mind is clear and concentrated rather than angered or otherwise confused about the topic to be discussed. If the mind is angered or unconcentrated, this will produce communication that is harmful to others

requiring them to sort through our own discontent feelings and unconcentrated or unorganized thoughts.

If the mind is discontent, that is the improper time to speak. Postponing conversations can allow the mind time to regain its calmness, mindfulness, and concentration to then ensure one is speaking at the proper time with wisdom. If the mind is lacking Right Intention, Right Mindfulness or Right Concentration, that is the improper time to communicate. Allow the mind to regain these qualities of mind and then communicate at the proper time when you can practice harmlessness with full awareness of the mind and with focus or singleness of mind.

It is also important that you observe and consider whether it is the proper time to talk with the other person. If they are angered, frustrated, or irritated, it is most likely not the proper time to have a discussion. You can consider the topic that you have to speak about and ensure it is the appropriate time to have a discussion on that specific topic. When people first come home or have recently arrived to a certain destination, it is oftentimes best to allow their mind to adjust to the new environment where they have just arrived before discussing most topics especially topics that may be of a heavy nature. Topics that are significant, dramatic, or those that might involve major changes to one's life would be best discussed at a time when your mind, and the mind of others involved, is prepared to discuss that topic. It could be wise to ask the other individual if it would be a good time to discuss a certain topic before just opening up into an in-depth conversation that could have significant impacts to one's life. As a wise Practitioner, you may need to prepare the mind of the individual prior to choosing to have major conversations through asking questions if it would be a good time to speak about a specific topic rather than opening up into a full scale conversation.

Knowing the best time to speak with others will need to be developed through trial and error, being best assessed in the present moment, based on the uniqueness of the topic, while considering the mental state of the individuals involved in the conversation.

True: Having truthful communication helps to establish that you are a truth-speaker, one to be relied on, trustworthy, dependable, not a deceiver of the world. A Practitioner who only speaks the truth develops the ability to be helpful and well received by others because people become accustomed to you only speaking the truth. It will be well known within your community that when you speak, you only speak the truth, therefore, you will find it much easier to help others and encourage improvement in all the various projects and efforts you choose to participate.

Through speaking the truth, you become "one whom people listen to" well received in the world instead of a deceiver of the world.

You will find that opportunities to progress in life with wholesome outcomes will come to you more easily because in your personal and professional relationships people know that you are not a liar but are trustworthy and dependable. If one speaks untruths, people worry what else you could be lying about and one's reputation is significantly diminished creating obstacles to your success in life.

Not only is it wise to speak the truth, in terms of, not telling a deliberate lie but also, it is important to verify the accuracy so that all you share through communication is 100% true. Whether you are speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating in any way, ensuring that you have independently verified what you share with others will ensure the best

possible outcomes and the mind can be at ease knowing that what you share is accurate and the truth. Propagating untruths, conspiracy theories, or otherwise unfounded content will only create harm in the world, therefore, it will produce unwholesome results for you. Where you can talk through your own direct experience, this will ensure you are speaking the truth, not only by not telling a deliberate lie, but also ensuring all that is communicated is accurate and based in wisdom.

Always speaking the truth makes it easy for the mind and unburdens the mind. If one always speaks the truth, they do not need to sort through all the various conversations and statements they have made in the past to conduct conversations in the present moment. A Practitioner can just always look to the truth, speak the truth, and the mind can rest easy knowing that at all times you are only ever speaking the truth. This allows communication to happen easily, seamlessly, and with minimal effort unburdening the mind. The mind can rest and relax knowing that you are only ever speaking the truth.

Spoken Gently: To speak gently, one needs to pay close attention to training and then practicing gentle tone, tempo, and word choice in their communication. Through observing what is working and not working amongst individuals that you communicate with, you can dramatically improve how you communicate and, thus, interact with others. You can observe and become aware how calm and gentle words work to accomplish your goals more readily than rushed and harsh words. You will need to practice, observe, and adjust your communication style until the mind is more finely tuned to practice speaking effortlessly and gently in all conversations paying close attention to tone, tempo, and word choice.

When you do not practice speaking gently, notice how it causes harm to others and thus, causes harm in your relationships. There are going to be challenges for you to bring your communication style closer to speaking gently in all conversations. As you are *gradually* developing your life practice but still unable to practice speaking gently, you can apologize, aim to improve, then move on applying effort to improve in each and every conversation.

Beneficial: A Practitioner who is speaking beneficially would ensure their communication is clear, concise, and well delivered ensuring there is purposeful speech with an interest to help others. If one was to speak unclearly, lacking conciseness, and with poorly delivered communication then it would cause harm to others as they would need to sort through the muddled conversation to determine what you are attempting to communicate.

Through a well concentrated mind that is uninterested in causing harm to others, you can decide to train the mind to gather the thoughts and communicate in a clear, concise, and well delivered method that ensures the receiver of your communication does not need to apply extensive effort to understand what is being shared. Communication should be purposeful and to the point without frivolous speech or pointless rambling.

If you make people work hard to understand what you are attempting to share, people will be less and less interested in communicating with you. People will just stop listening and “tune you out”. You will find this frustrating and challenging to accomplish your goals in life.

To develop effectiveness in communication, your speech needs to be beneficial to others through purposeful dialogue that is not self satisfying or originating from selfish desires.

Instead, look for ways to help others that focus on bringing people together in harmony rather than argumentative unbeneficial conversations through clear, concise, and well delivered communication.

A Mind of Loving-kindness: Through a well developed practice of Right Intention, a Practitioner should have loving-kindness for all beings. Loving-kindness is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

Through Right Intention, or Right Thought and Right Thinking brought through into Right Speech, the mind is well prepared to deliver words with goodwill and an interest in seeing all beings be well. If there is any ill will inserted into your communication, this will cause harm to others, therefore, cause harm to you.

While on the surface sarcasm may seem humorous and harmless, but in reality the true intention behind sarcasm is oftentimes malicious and with ill intent. While it may be the right time, true, gentle, and perceived as beneficial, if there is ill intent with sarcasm through mocking or ridicule then the speech is not being spoken through a mind of loving-kindness.

Therefore, any speech including sarcasm that has ill will is harmful and will only come back to harm you. People will speak to you in the same way that you speak to others. The ill intended speech with sarcasm, mocking, and ridicule of others is only going to be returned to you as this is the speech one is choosing to use with others. Conversely, if you speak with a mind of loving-kindness, that is how others will choose to speak with you. Overtime, more and more people will observe your wholesome moral conduct and choose to treat you the same way that you treat others.

Blameless: No one enjoys being blamed for anything or made to feel as if they are at fault. While it could be true that someone has made a mistake, it is just a mistake or accident and if you choose to assign blame in your communication, it is only going to serve to create division. And, if the person truly has not made a mistake and is being falsely blamed, this is only going to create separation and arguments - blameful speech is harmful speech.

If we choose to be blameful towards others holding them to potentially feel guilty about their mistakes, then people are going to be uninterested to interact with you as a family member, friend, or coworker. Rather than focusing on placing blame, a well trained mind can let go of that desire and instead focus on solutions to the mistake. There is no need to ensure someone is pressured into accepting blame, but instead, the real challenge is how to move past this impermanent situation in peacefulness and harmony with all beings feeling whole.

Placing blame would only produce harm to others through disparaging others' efforts, thus, it is going to harm your relationship both personally and professionally. Mistakes or accidents are "mistakes and accidents" so punishing others through blameful speech is only going to drive people in the opposite direction from you where you will lack the support you need to accomplish the goals or objectives ahead of you. Instead of blaming others for situations and circumstances that are in the past, focus on the present moment and how to resolve the situation for the best outcome of all involved. It is best to find encouraging, supportive, and motivating language that can allow all participants to

maintain their enthusiasm and interest to work together in meeting a given goal or objective. Speech that is blameless is speech that is harmless.

Through causing no harm in your communication, you will find that relationships are quite enjoyable and you can be inspiring to countless people in your life.

You can reflect on these Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech and the need to speak blamelessly and how when you have not spoken in this way, your conversations and relationships dissolved or were otherwise negatively impacted. Conversely, you can observe how when speaking in this way, all participants gained insight, understanding, and maintained harmony in accomplishing certain goals.

As you observe that the mind is not practicing one or more of these five (5) factors, make efforts and repeated efforts to improve your moral conduct through applying energy and active training of the mind. Bring your speech closer and closer to these five (5) factors observing how your personal and professional relationships will dramatically improve as you focus on improving your life practice as it relates to Right Speech or Right Communication.

If you choose to not practice these five (5) factors in their entirety, then you will observe the struggles and challenges associated with practicing “wrong speech” or “wrong communication”. Difficulties in personal and professional relationships will ensue with the result of continued struggles and challenges making any goals or objectives more labor intensive. The mind will be drained of its energy because it is constantly struggling to have polite, kind, friendly, and respectful relationships.

If you miss even one (1) of these factors in a given conversation, there is the potential for the discussion to digress into argumentative or otherwise difficult territory that you’d wished would not have occurred. Training the mind closer and closer to practicing all five (5) factors will only help you to achieve better results in life. Speaking in this way is “a better way of life” that is beneficial for others, therefore, it is benefiting you. As your life practice becomes more and more wholesome, more and more wholesomeness will return to you.

We should not engage in idle chatter or unpurposeful talk that includes gossip, harsh language, false speech with lies, deceit, or slander.

Slander (Gossip): speech or communication that is damaging to the reputation of an individual/company/organization/country/group of people, etc., whether true or false.

Frivolous Speech (Idle Chatter): is described as speaking “unbeneficially” and “unpurposefully”. This is typically done with the mind’s craving/desire/attachment where one may just be rambling pointlessly without any real purpose or need to speak but instead, just because there is a craving/desire to talk. There is no purpose or value to the speech. In some cases, one could be speaking quickly and continuously without the ability for a mutual conversation.

Having clear, well thought out, purposeful and wholesome speech is important. Your speech should be without blame or “blameless”.

The Right Speech is born out of the Right Intention. With wholesome intentions practicing harmlessness, this will breed wholesome and purposeful speech free from craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) without ego.

A good practice is, “if you do not have something good to say then do not say anything at all”. You will need to learn to have “Right Speech” to attain Enlightenment practicing the “Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech”.

These are not rules to follow but instead, the best way to ensure the best possible outcome in all your communication with all beings. Through not causing harm to others through your speech, your life will become effortless and much more enjoyable as your personal and professional relationships will blossom.

When you do not practice speaking with Right Speech, notice how it causes harm to others and thus, causes harm in your relationships. There are going to be challenges for you to bring your communication style closer to speaking with Right Speech in all conversations. As you are *gradually* developing your life practice but still unable to practice speaking with Right Speech, you can apologize, aim to improve, then move on applying effort to improve in each and every conversation.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path is available in this same book series found in Chapter 5 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 15

The Tathāgata's Speech

So too, Prince,

(1) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(2) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(3) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others: The Tathāgata knows the time to use such speech.

(4) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, but which is welcome and agreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(5) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(6) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others: The Tathāgata knows the time to use such speech.

Why is that? Because The Tathāgata has compassion for all beings.

(Reference: MN 58)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares his choice of practicing in such a way as to ensure his words are well received in all situations and to ensure he is practicing Right Speech.

It is The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech that provides the specific details of how one can drastically improve their practice of communicating with additional Teachings to further help a Practitioner fully understand Right Speech in other areas of his Teachings.

Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech

Monks, possessing five factors, speech is well spoken, not badly spoken, it is blameless and beyond reproach by the wise.

What five?

- (1) It is spoken at the **proper time**;
- (2) What is said is **true**;
- (3) It is **spoken gently**;
- (4) What is said is **beneficial**;
- (5) It is spoken with **a mind of loving-kindness**.

Possessing these five factors, speech is well spoken, not badly spoken; it is **blameless** and beyond reproach by the wise.

— — — — —
Through practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech one ensures they are not causing harm through their speech and, over time, one will experience more and more successful personal and professional relationships because you will be communicating in a way that does not cause harm.

The more you communicate using these five factors, you will observe that more and more people will respond to you in the same way that you practice. In addition to these Teachings from Gotama Buddha on The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, you can remember to always be polite, kind, friendly, and respectful to “all beings” to help guide you in practicing Right Speech.

The Teachings shared in this chapter can also be applied to more deeply refine one’s practice of Right Speech, but it would be suggested that you first train the mind to practice The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech before looking to incorporate The Teachings of this chapter into your life practice.

Through practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, one would be incorporating The Teachings of this chapter into the five factors ensuring speech is “true, correct, and beneficial” as well as knowing the “proper time” to speak. Also, remember to ensure your speech is blameless.

This Teaching is highlighting that special care needs to be taken to understand when speech is “unwelcomed and disagreeable to others” and when speech is “welcomed and agreeable to others”.

The Buddha's Teachings can be thought of as layers. He is layering more and more Teachings to help a Practitioner gradually see more and more “what is Right Speech”, for example.

The Five Precepts provides details on Right Speech along with The Eight Fold Path, The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, this Teaching, and others. He is gradually pulling back the layers of his Teachings for Practitioners to see more and more clearly “what is Right Speech”. The Teachings in The Pāli Canon are spread out over forty-five (45) volumes of books without any clear organization leading to the development of one's practice. This book series provides improved organization of these Teachings by consolidating extracted versions of the forty-five (45) volumes of books found in The Pāli Canon.

What has been done as part of the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1), is put Right Speech all in one place taking into consideration all The Teachings from The Buddha to make it easy for a Practitioner to understand this important Teaching and others.

Now in (Volumes 2-13), a Practitioner is pulling back the covers, or layers, to see the source and details of these Teachings filling in any areas of your life practice that needs further development.

Speech is one of the most used and influential means of interacting with others. There is significant potential to produce wholesome or unwholesome results based on our diligent application of Right Speech. Practicing these wholesome Teachings of The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech will ensure there are wholesome outcomes.

Gotama Buddha further clarifies his purpose of practicing these wholesome Teachings at the end of this chapter as “The Tathāgata has compassion for all beings.”

Compassion is concern for the misfortune of others. So, through diligent learning, reflection, and practice of these Teachings you are improving the condition of your own life practice, and thus the mind, but also improving the world through reducing and eliminating any harm you are currently causing in the world through purifying your intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood. An Enlightened being would have loving-kindness and compassion for “all beings” among many other wholesome qualities of mind ensuring they are not causing any harm in the world through their interactions in the world.

Through eliminating any harm we cause in the world, over time, no harm will come to us. This is based in The Natural Law of Kamma - cause and effect, action and result, essentially the results of your decisions.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares further details on Right Speech. A Practitioner should first train the mind through The Eight Fold Path to practice The Teachings in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) related to Right Speech. As a Practitioner advances in their life practice and is looking to refine their speech even further, this Teaching can guide you in deepening your practice.

But, the Practitioner should ensure they are consistently practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech to ensure that is a foundation before moving into understanding and practicing the Teaching shared here by Gotama Buddha.

As part of The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, we already understand that it is wise to not speak untruths, incorrect, or unbeneficial words at any time. This would only cause harm, thus, harm will come to us and we would be wise to not speak those words.

This Teaching adds to the practice of Right Speech that a Practitioner would be wise to know when it is the proper time to speak words which are unwelcome and disagreeable as well as words that are welcome and agreeable.

If speech is untrue, incorrect, or unbeneficial, then it would be wise to not use this speech.

But, with speech being true, correct, and beneficial, then, we need to determine if it is “unwelcome and disagreeable” or “welcome and agreeable”.

If the words are true, correct, and beneficial while being unwelcome and disagreeable, we need to know the proper “time to use such speech” so that it can be better received.

If the words are true, correct, and beneficial while being welcome and agreeable, we also need to know the proper “time to use such speech”.

Much of the training regarding speech comes through trial and error. As a Practitioner gets to know each individual and how they respond to various speech, they will better know what is unwelcome and disagreeable or welcome and agreeable. This is oftentimes discovered on a case-by-case basis as each person is different.

As you have conversations and communication with various people in your life and observe the results of your speech, you can then determine what is leading to wholesome results and what is leading to unwholesome results. This way, you can refine your speech to develop more and more skillfulness in regards to practicing Right Speech so that your communication is never harmful and only has wholesome outcomes.

You will be able to observe the improvements as you train more deeply because eventually you will get to the point where each individual conversation you have will result in wholesome outcomes. You will find that you are never shaken up or uncalm during conversations as the mind becomes more and more confident conducting conversations using Right Speech.

As you notice that countless conversations you have are leading to wholesome outcomes, then you know that your practice of Right Speech is becoming more developed. Then, if there is an occasional situation where someone becomes hostile or irate in a conversation with you, looking at the situation objectively through the wisdom of these Teachings, you can discover if it was due to your practice or if it was due to the other person’s lack of wisdom, moral conduct, or mental discipline.

Even when you are deeply practicing Right Speech when the mind is Enlightened, there will be occasional situations where a person may become angered, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, or otherwise discontent in a conversation with you. But, by that time, you will have trained the mind so well and be able to see so clearly that you will have confidence

that their discontent mind and wrong speech was not a result of anything that you have done or not done. Instead, it is the lack of their own wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline that caused their “wrong speech”.

You will need to have a well developed and consistent practice of Right Speech to attain Enlightenment and be able to view your conversations objectively to determine where you can improve your practice of Right Speech. You no longer need to obsess over whether you are speaking in a wholesome way but instead, learn, reflect, and practice what The Buddha shares as his Teachings are based on The Natural Law of Kamma and as long as you develop your life practice to practice these Teachings, you will be gradually improving to ensure you are always practicing Right Speech.

Through constant refinement of your practice of Right Speech using the guidance from Gotama Buddha, you can realize increased amounts of successful conversations and interactions where relationships will be easy and smooth. No longer will you find relationships difficult and a struggle because you will be deeply practicing these Teachings.

With that said, there will still be occasional situations where the other person is not deeply practicing these Teachings and their untrained mind will result in “wrong speech”. If your mind is Enlightened, even someone else’s “wrong speech” will not result in your using “wrong speech” but instead, you will be able to maintain your contentedness and joy while continuing to practice to potentially bring the conversation towards a successful conclusion.

You will need to train to the point where there is never a time that another person’s choice to use “wrong speech” influences you to use “wrong speech”. Instead, a wise Practitioner will choose not to use wrong speech even when interacting with others who are choosing to use wrong speech.

No matter how deeply you are practicing these Teachings, there is no such thing as permanently being able to have 100% of everyone you interact with to never speak impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful. They are an individual who is making their own decisions and you are unable to control how others choose to speak to you. There are going to be situations where people are impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful due to their own lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline. But, even though you cannot control others, you can train to control your own mind and speech.

You can train the mind to the point where you do not react to others who are using “wrong speech” with a lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline, but rather, you can respond politely, kindly, friendly, and respectfully no matter what is or is not happening around you. This is how an Enlightened mind will function but will require deep training and practice that will result in gradual progress.

You will see the truth for yourself that you are improving your practice with Right Speech as conversations and relationships become more easy and smooth. While there will be challenges, the Enlightened mind will always be able to find a solution to the situation.

There are millions of “right” answers to any given challenging situation. And, there are “wrong” answers to a given challenging situation. The “right” answer is to always use Right Speech. The “wrong” answer would be to use “wrong speech” that is impolite,

unkind, unfriendly, and disrespectful speaking at the improper time, untrue, harsh, unbeneficial, with a mind of hatred, and being blameful.

Instead, actively deepen your practice through training of the mind using the entire Eight Fold Path refining your speech each and every conversation always looking to improve. Through slowing down the mind using meditation as taught in “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) in Chapter 11, a Practitioner can then reside with a mind in the present moment making wise decisions to practice Right Speech realizing the results of ease and smoothness in all relationships. Why did The Buddha actively work to train his mind so deeply to ensure he was not causing harm to others? “Because The Tathāgata has compassion for all beings”.

Through your practicing compassion for all beings, you can then decide to train your mind deeply so that you are not causing harm through your speech and, thus, no harm will come to you.

Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

While others may choose to speak with you using “wrong speech”, there is no need to be judgmental or irritated at their lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline. Instead, observe how you too, at one time, use to speak this way but have chosen to improve your life practice through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings.

Every unwholesome aspect of someone else’s practice that you observe, you too have done those same things in this life or some prior life. Judging others will only harm your own mind and how could you judge others when you too did those same things?

So instead, have concern for their misfortunate. Be pleased that you have discovered these Teachings and have the ability to improve your life practice and the outcomes that produces.

While a person whose mind is lacking wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline has not come into contact with these Teachings and has not had the good fortune to train in these Teachings, you have had the good fortunate and are training in these Teachings.

So be an example, a role model, one who people understand is actively working to deepen your practice out of compassion for all living beings.

There is no benefit to speaking unwisely but there are many benefits to training the mind to use Right Speech at all times. You will find that you will be more successful in all your personal and professional relationships through developing your ability to communicate using Right Speech that is not harmful to anyone. People will feel more comfortable to associate with you and be involved in the various personal and professional activities that you choose to participate in. Develop your ability to have Right Speech using wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline and people will be more interested to listen to you because they find benefit in doing so. You can be more helpful to those close to you and more influential in your community.

But, choose to learn, reflect, and practice Right Speech because it is the “right” thing to do, not because you “want” something from others.

Unsolicited Guidance vs. Sharing Teachings When There is a Request for Guidance

The Path That Leads to Enlightenment requires learning, reflecting (i.e. independently verifying), and practice of The Teachings of The Buddha with guidance from a Teacher to train the mind to eliminate the defilements, or taints, (i.e. The Ten Fetters - the pollution of the unEnlightened mind).

The Enlightened mind is a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy - permanently. The mind will no longer experience discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

The Enlightened mind is unshakable.

To accomplish this goal, a Practitioner will need guidance as only a true Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment without the guidance of a Teacher, and the last Buddha currently known to the world lived over 2,500 years ago. A Practitioner will be unable to ask questions to a book, video, podcast, etc. and will need to develop their intellectual understanding and practical experience to attain Enlightenment. This is accomplished by applying The Teachings of The Buddha in daily life while seeking guidance, ideally, through a well developed relationship with a Teacher.

The Path That Leads to Enlightenment does not involve forcing unsolicited guidance, advice, or Teachings onto others because a person feels they “know more than another” and they feel the urge to ensure another Practitioner understands The Teachings of The Buddha, or any other aspect of life, in the same way as you.

At the very core of Buddhist Teachings that lead to Enlightenment is the understanding that craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) leads to discontent feelings of sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

It is only through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) that the mind will experience Enlightenment where the mind will reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

If a Practitioner has “longing with a strong eagerness” to share Teachings with others, this will lead to discontentedness for the Practitioner and the mind will remain unEnlightened. Additionally, sharing unsolicited guidance comes from one’s own ego, the arrogance, pride, and boastfulness of the mind’s pollution described by The Buddha as “conceit”, which is one of The Ten Fetters.

If a Practitioner is not seeking guidance through asking a question and a person shares unsolicited guidance as Teachings, this is to do so with craving/desire/attachment and the ego, this will create conditions that lead to discontentedness of one or both persons.

It is suggested that Practitioners choose to learn and practice Teachings with a dedicated Teacher whom they actively seek guidance from, ideally through a well developed relationship with a Teacher.

Nowadays, many people use online groups as a way of discussing The Teachings of The Buddha. If you have been online at all, you have seen, in some cases, the overwhelming inflammatory and harmful speech that these discussion forums will often descend into over simple disagreements.

The unEnlightened mind is most often uncomfortable with those who are disagreeable, craving and desiring for “all people” to agree with them, and when that is not experienced, anger, hatred, and ill will arises in the mind typically followed by hostile, bitter, and harsh speech (i.e. unskillful moral conduct) where the mind then has aversion.

This leads to all sorts of challenges including, people being blocked or banned from groups, inhibiting a Practitioner from further investigation and exploration of The Teachings of The Buddha to improve the condition of their mind.

The very Teachings they are seeking to share teaches harmlessness, to include harmless speech but yet, some find it challenging to have conversations conducive to open sharing where disagreement does not result in hostility.

Hostile, aggressive, bitterness, impolite, unkind, unfriendly, and disrespectful speech is a sure indication that there is not yet a well developed practice of The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment, and that person is not yet Enlightened. It could be suggested that these types of comments be ignored then deleted, because if one is not practicing The Teachings of The Buddha, how could what they are sharing as Teachings be helpful to anyone?

When one unEnlightened mind speaks with hostility it is often hurtful to another unEnlightened mind due to their own cravings/desires/attachment and, therefore, fighting ensues and conversations descend into bickering that is a clear indication that all parties involved could truly benefit from more intellectual learning and practical understanding of The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment with guidance from a Teacher.

Those who argue the most are in the need of more intellectual and practical understanding of The Teachings. But, they will only get that help when the ego is lowered and they choose to seek guidance with a Teacher.

The ego of the unEnlightened mind resorts to sharing unsolicited guidance thinking, “I know better than you”.

This is all hindering an individual from experiencing Enlightenment. As long as there is craving/desire/attachment and ego in the mind, among other unwholesome qualities, the mind will not experience Enlightenment.

Arguing will not allow you to experience Enlightenment as the constant hostility will only inhibit your growth and progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Sharing unsolicited guidance will not allow you to experience Enlightenment because, the ego still exists in the mind.

Sharing unsolicited guidance with others will not lead to your Enlightenment as in doing so, there is still craving/desire/attachment and conceit (i.e. ego) in the mind. An Enlightened being does not have craving/desire/attachment nor conceit. The ego of an

Enlightened being has been completely dissolved so that there is no longer any arrogance, pride, measuring and comparing of others to put yourself above or below others.

The Buddhist tradition of sharing Teachings that leads to awakening to Enlightenment “do not” involve unsolicited sharing of Teachings that one Practitioner feels would be helpful to another Practitioner. A Practitioner needs to choose for themselves to ask questions and seek guidance instead of, Teachings being forced onto others. This will only turn people away from The Teachings of The Buddha when people are pushing Teachings onto others.

The Buddhist tradition of sharing Teachings that lead to Enlightenment “do not” involve fighting over who is “right” and who is “wrong”. So when you receive unsolicited guidance, it is suggested that you ignore it and/or delete it. This will help the individual who is sharing unsolicited guidance understand, they are unwise for sharing unsolicited guidance and people are not interested in unsolicited guidance, thus, you do not respond.

The Buddhist tradition of sharing Teachings that lead to Enlightenment “do not” involve attempting to “save others” from themselves but instead, The Path to Enlightenment involves Practitioners choosing to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment through asking questions and seeking guidance through their own free will to an individual they have confidence in and trust.

Unsolicited guidance is not part of The Path to Enlightenment.

There is nothing anyone can do to force another person to attain Enlightenment.

There is no way to “save” anyone.

And if you have not yet attain Enlightenment, you do not yet know the truth to be able to share Teachings with anyone at all.

The sooner a Practitioner understands this and directs their time, effort, and energy towards their own growth and progress on The Path to Enlightenment, the better off for everyone involved.

The Path to Enlightenment is to realize, among other things, that it is through your own wise decisions that lead to wholesome results and outcomes (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

It is through each person’s individual choices to learn, reflect (i.e. independently verify), and practice The Teachings of The Buddha that, they themselves, will navigate The Path to Enlightenment with guidance from a dedicated, supportive, encouraging, and motivating Teacher who patiently shares without any expectation of anything in return.

You can’t force someone to learn. You can’t force someone to reflect. You can’t force someone to meditate. You can’t force someone to practice The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

So why would you try?

Could a person whom has never driven a car teach another person how to drive a car?

No, of course not.

A Practitioner would need to attain Enlightenment before they would be capable of guiding others to attain Enlightenment.

And to attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to eliminate all craving/desire/attachment (mental longing with a strong eagerness) including the craving/desire/attachment to Teaching those who have not asked for your guidance.

Providing unsolicited guidance is an advertisement that you have not yet attained Enlightenment as there is still craving/desire/attachment to teach others when no one has asked you a question. And, there is still conceit (i.e. ego) in the mind where it arrogantly attempts to push Teachings onto others with the assumption that, you know more than others, as no one has sought your guidance.

It is best to focus on your own Enlightenment and in doing so, you will then be best prepared to share the wisdom of how you attained Enlightenment when someone asks you a question.

An Enlightened being only needs to walk with “wisdom and a smile”.

An Enlightened being does not have the uncontrollable urge to force others to understand The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment in the same way as they do.

An Enlightened being's mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The mind is unshakable.

An Enlightened being knows the truth, with deep wisdom, and has no interest or urge to force others to do anything at all, but may instead, decide to make themselves available to those who choose to seek guidance and understanding so that they can experience the same life affirming improvements to the mind and one's life that are realized on The Path to Enlightenment by attaining Enlightenment.

The next time you feel the urge to give unsolicited guidance, recognize that as your craving/desire/attachment and conceit (i.e. ego), which will need to be eliminated from the mind for you to attain Enlightenment.

Otherwise, the unEnlightened mind will continue to experience discontent feelings, never experiencing peacefulness, calmness, serenity, or contentedness with joy that is permanent in the Enlightened mental state.

Gotama Buddha never attempted to force anyone to learn and practice his Teachings, so why should you?

You will know someone is soliciting guidance because they will ask you a question. But, if they did not ask you a question and you give someone guidance, that is unsolicited guidance, coming from the mind's craving/desire/attachment and ego. You will not attain Enlightenment, nor will anyone else, through unsolicited guidance.

Can you resist the urge to give someone unsolicited guidance through restraining the mind? If so, you are that much closer to Enlightenment.

Actively Listening and Being Supportive of New Thoughts and Ideas

Whether you are talking with your family, friends, or colleagues, etc. it is always wise to be open to other people's ideas.

It is only one's own ego, which is based in craving/desire, that would shut down others thoughts and ideas. Instead, it is wise to be open and inviting for people to share their thoughts and ideas with you but, you will not be able to get to that, if you shut them down, telling people how something will not work.

When presented with a new idea, the unEnlightened mind will typically look at all the reasons why this thing will not work, rather than, look at how to overcome the potential obstacles to implement something new, that is better. Remember, the unEnlightened mind craves permanence, and is typically highly complacent. It is not truly interested in doing the work to consider something new and different, due to its craving for permanence.

Also, keep in mind, that one of the things that The Teachings of The Buddha help you accomplish, is navigating a world of unEnlightened beings.

So, when someone comes to you with new thoughts and ideas, be it family, friends, or colleagues, they are typically going to have craving/desire with excitement. When their mind is not getting their craving/desire fulfilled, it will experience painful feelings, attribute those painful feelings to you, and then either push you away with aversion, become bitter/harsh/hostile with you, or put their expectations on you. This is going to promote disharmony in relationships.

Instead, what you can do, rather than shutting down the new thoughts and ideas based on the obstacles you see, you can ask questions, show interest to understand a person's idea, and if they need your involvement to implement the idea, let them know you would like to think over what they have shared as you can see they have some interesting thoughts and ideas that may be helpful.

If you see certain obstacles with the idea, as part of your questions, ask them questions of how they see to overcome those obstacles, in more of a consulting and teamwork type of conversation, rather than as an adversary. Brainstorm the obstacles, in a positive way, to solicit thoughts and ideas of how to overcome the obstacles, rather than, attempt to shut down the idea due to the obstacles you see.

In this way, you stay open to what others have to say, show them that you are listening, and that you do not think "you know it all". Asking questions to understand, goes a long way to show them that you are working to understand them and considering what they are thinking. Because, someone sharing new thoughts and ideas with you, is trying to help you. But, if you shut that down, you do not get that help. Also, a person usually does not fully articulate their new idea clearly and followup questions are needed to fully understand it. And, you typically will not see all the same angles and benefits that they are seeing, when they first present the new idea to you. Therefore, by asking questions, you can flush all that out.

When people are first communicating their ideas, you may not be understanding it fully so you would like to provide the individual an opportunity to fully explain it, and for you to ask questions to fully understand it. It would be wise to even repeat back to the person what you think their idea is, to ensure you understand it, before giving it further thought.

This will help them to understand you are taking the time to consider their idea, by first understanding it. Then, even if you ultimately consider to not go forward with their idea and get involved with it, they at least know you fully understood it and gave it proper consideration. And, you might be able to offer that person support without getting involved with the effort yourself, which can also be wise in some situations.

Because, truth be told, every single new thought or idea has obstacles. There are barriers to every “new” thing coming into existence. And if all you do is verbalize all those obstacles, it appears to that person, who is eager to share with you, that you are not giving their new thought or idea the time of day, and you will appear to be a very close minded person.

This will produce disharmony in your relationships and you will see that you are not going to be very successful as a wise leader because, you are not giving the team an avenue to share their new thoughts and ideas.

A leader needs to be open to all ideas, listening and understanding what people are looking to contribute.

And while some ideas are not something that one would choose to go forward with, team members will respect and appreciate that at least their leader listened and considered their ideas. They will continue to respect that leader. But, for someone who regularly shuts them down, they will ultimately turn away from that leader because they are not open to their thoughts and ideas, and when you come to them with something you would like them to implement, they will tend to not give it any consideration. It is your Kamma (the results of your decisions) that people will do the same thing to you, that you do to them. So, guiding and leading a team becomes more and more challenging.

In the past, there are countless times when, ideas people brought to me where unwise and I ultimately decided not to go forward with them. But, through listening and asking questions, they felt I heard and understood, and took the time to consider their ideas, thus, a harmonious relationship was maintained. But, it was that 99th idea that I listened to, despite all the other unwise ideas that would not work, that I was able to get that golden nugget that changed everything in a significant way. I regularly implemented this approach when I was a businessperson, and employees, customers, business partners all regularly contributed to the growth of my business. I would not have experienced that same growth without being a good listener to others new thoughts and ideas, and showed them that I truly considered what they had to share, and was appreciative of them sharing.

Being open to listen and understand others ideas, without just verbalizing all the obstacles you see, is the way to be a successful and harmonious leader who values teamwork and team problem solving.

Enlightened beings will be able to listen and understand others ideas, not assuming they “know it all”. They will be interested and intrigued to know what others think and how they are considering to do something new. People will feel listened to and that an Enlightened being considers their ideas, even if they do not go forward with them. And, an Enlightened being can be supportive in someone else progressing towards their ideas, even if they are not involved themselves.

So, whether you are interested in being a leader or a valuable member of a team, listening to new thoughts and ideas from others is highly important and wise, it will promote continuous improvement in your life and harmony in your relationships.

Chapter 16

Four Qualities of a Wholesome Person

Monks, one who possesses four qualities can be understood to be a wholesome person.

What four?

- (1) Here, Monks, a wholesome person does not disclose the faults of others even when asked about them, how much less then when not asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about the faults of others with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail. It can be understood: This individual is a wholesome person.
- (2) Again, a wholesome person discloses the virtues of others even when not asked about them, how much more then when asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about the virtues of others without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail. It can be understood: This individual is a wholesome person.
- (3) Again, a wholesome person discloses his own faults even when not asked about them, how much more then when asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about his own faults without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail. It can be understood: This individual is a wholesome person.
- (4) Again, a wholesome person does not disclose his own virtues even when asked about them, how much less then when not asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about his own virtues with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail. It can be understood: This individual is a wholesome person.

One who possesses these four qualities can be understood as a wholesome person.

(Reference: AN 4.73)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Four Qualities of a Wholesome Person”. These are not the “only” four qualities that determine whether you are practicing in a wholesome way, but are four of “the” qualities of a wholesome person.

(1) First, a wholesome person would not speak of a person’s faults or mistakes. Instead, they would keep those to themselves without a desire to share them with others. To openly share the faults or mistakes of others would be to gossip and that will only lead to their harm, thus, this harm will come back to you. If you gossip about others, it is only a matter of time before people decide to gossip about you.

A wise Practitioner would see no benefit in gossiping and choose not to gossip. Even if what is potentially being shared is true, it is unbeneficial to share the faults and mistakes of others so, why share them?

The only situation one might choose to share faults and mistakes of others is “when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions”. This might occur in an employment or educational situation when you are asked for an assessment of someone’s performance.

If asked, a wholesome person would “speak about the faults of others with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail”. A wise Practitioner might choose to share selective challenges with the employee or Student as a way to help them improve in the new opportunity they are moving into. Faults and mistakes should not be shared with malicious intent or to harm the other person but only in an encouraging and positive way to help them continue to grow in their life.

Since you are not perfect, it is not wise to speak of others as if they should be perfect.

Instead, when asked and you are speaking with all the other factors of Right Speech, share areas for improvement, if any, so that the individual can continue to progress in life.

(2) Second, a wholesome person would speak of the “virtues of others even when not asked about them” and “when asked”. In doing so, a wise Practitioner would speak about all of a person’s positive qualities “without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail”.

An Enlightened mind can see the positive and beneficial qualities of everyone. While there may be areas for improvement, all people have positive qualities that can be shared.

When in a situation to share someone’s “virtues”, you can feel comfortable in sharing those as a way to bring people together and not separate people.

As described in the prior example, if asked to discuss a person’s faults or mistakes in an employment or educational situation, share those as needed in a positive way but also include the positive qualities or virtues of the individual as well. Be sure to provide a balanced and well rounded perspective that helps the individual continue to grow and progress in life.

If you feel that there is truly nothing good to say whatsoever, then, it is best to say nothing at all.

(3) Third, a wholesome person would speak of their own faults and mistakes, when appropriate and when asked “without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail”.

You do not need to share this information unless it is appropriate in a given situation. Being unwilling to share your own faults or mistakes would tend to indicate there is ego present in the mind. To eliminate the ego, a Practitioner would need to be comfortable with understanding and sharing their faults and mistakes as appropriate in a given situation. An Enlightened being would need to have eliminated the ego to attain Enlightenment, and being willing and able to disclose your own faults and mistakes will help the mind practice being humble.

(4) Fourth, a wholesome person does not disclose his own “virtues even when asked about them” and definitely not when not asked about them. Should a Practitioner choose to speak glowingly of their own virtues when not asked about them, this would be arrogant, prideful, and boastful indicating that there is ego present in the mind. Doing so, an individual is typically rejected by others as arrogance, pride, and being boastful only serves to separate you from others making it difficult to have wholesome relationships.

When asked about your own virtues, The Buddha shares that one should speak “with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail”. Doing so, one is practicing being humble and “down to earth” rather than arrogant, prideful, or boastful.

If the mind is eager to speak of your own virtues, this is due to the ego and will only result in unwholesome results. A wise being only needs to walk with wisdom and a smile. A wise being does not have the desire for admiration of others with desire for others to acknowledge their wisdom. When you know the truth and have acquired wisdom, you know that for yourself and do not need others’ validation. A wise Practitioner has already independently verified the truth to acquire wisdom and have validated that wisdom on their own with guidance from a Teacher. But, if the mind projects arrogance, pride, and is boastful due to the acquired wisdom, it will only serve to push people away from you.

In summary, speak of others in positive ways and only share beneficial thoughts on improvements one might consider when asked while adding in a person’s virtues.

Never speak of another person’s faults or mistakes when not asked and when asked, only in appropriate settings like employment or educational settings.

Speak of your own positive qualities when asked and when appropriate never being arrogant, prideful, or boastful. There is no need to speak of your positive qualities at any other time unless asked and in doing so, one should practice being humble without a need to share every single detail unless needed for employment or educational settings. And even in those settings, you will find being humble will have the most beneficial outcome.

This Teaching is shared to help you develop your own wholesome qualities not to be used for you to judge if others are or are not wholesome. These Teachings are for your own personal growth on The Path to Enlightenment and at no time should a Practitioner judge others looking down on them with arrogance or pride. Doing so would only harm your own mind.

Chapter 17

Four Qualities of an Unwholesome Person

Monks, one who possesses four qualities can be understood to be an unwholesome person.

What four?

- (1) Here, Monks, an unwholesome person discloses the faults of others even when not asked about them, how much more then when asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about the faults of others without gaps or omissions, fully and in detail. It can be understood: This individual is an unwholesome person.
- (2) Again, an unwholesome person does not disclose the virtues of others even when asked about them, how much less then when not asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about the virtues of others with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail. It can be understood: This individual is an unwholesome person.
- (3) Again, an unwholesome person does not disclose his own faults even when asked about them, how much less then when not asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about his own faults with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail. It can be understood: This individual is an unwholesome person.
- (4) Again, an unwholesome person discloses his own virtues even when not asked about them, how much more then when asked. But when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions, he speaks about his own virtues without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail. It can be understood: This individual is an unwholesome person

One who possesses these four qualities can be understood to be an unwholesome person.

(Reference: AN 4.73)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Four Qualities of an Unwholesome Person”. These are not the “only” four qualities that determine whether you are practicing in an unwholesome way, but are four of “the” qualities of an unwholesome person.

(1) First, an unwholesome person would speak of a person’s faults or mistakes. They would share those openly with a desire to harm others. To openly share the faults or mistakes of others would be to gossip and that will only lead to their harm, thus, this harm will come back to you. If you gossip about others, it is only a matter of time before people decide to gossip about you.

A wise Practitioner would see no benefit in gossiping and choose not to gossip. Even if what is potentially being shared is true, it is unbeneficial to share the faults and mistakes of others so, why share them?

The only situation one might choose to share faults and mistakes of others is “when he is asked about them, then, led on by questions”. This might occur in an employment or educational situation when you are asked for an assessment of someone’s performance.

If asked, an unwholesome person would “speak about the faults of others without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail”. An unwise Practitioner might choose to share others’ faults with harmful intent sharing every detail their mind can remember in an attempt to cause harm. This harm will only come back to harm you so a wise Practitioner would not choose to speak in this way. Faults and mistakes should not be shared with malicious intent or to harm the other person but only in an encouraging and positive way to help them continue to grow in their life.

Since you are not perfect, it is not wise to speak of others as if they should be perfect.

Instead, when asked and you are speaking with all the other factors of Right Speech, share areas for improvement, if any, so that the individual can continue to progress in life.

(2) Second, an unwholesome person would not speak of the “virtues of others even when asked about them” and “when not asked”. In doing so, an unwise Practitioner would speak about a person’s positive qualities “with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail”.

An Enlightened mind can see the positive and beneficial qualities of everyone. While there may be areas for improvement, all people have positive qualities that can be shared.

When in a situation to share someone’s “virtues”, you can feel comfortable in sharing those as a way to bring people together and not separate people. An unwholesome person would be looking to separate people with harmful speech.

As described in the prior example, if asked to discuss a person’s faults or mistakes in an employment or educational situation, share those as needed in a positive way but also include the positive qualities or virtues of the individual as well. Be sure to provide a balanced and well rounded perspective that helps the individual continue to grow and progress in life.

If you feel that there is truly nothing good to say whatsoever, then, it is best to say nothing at all.

(3) Third, an unwholesome person would not speak of their own faults and mistakes, when appropriate and when asked “with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail”.

You do not need to share this information unless it is appropriate in a given situation. Being unwilling to share your own faults or mistakes would tend to indicate there is ego present in the mind. To eliminate the ego, a Practitioner would need to be comfortable with understanding and sharing their faults and mistakes as appropriate in a given situation. An Enlightened being would need to eliminate the ego to attain Enlightenment and being willing and able to disclose your own faults and mistakes will help the mind practice being humble.

(4) Fourth, an unwholesome person does disclose his own “virtues even when not asked about them” and when asked about them. Should a Practitioner choose to speak glowingly of their own virtues when not asked about them, this would be arrogant, prideful, and boastful indicating that there is ego present in the mind. Doing so, an individual is typically rejected by others as arrogance, pride, and being boastful only serves to separate you from others making it difficult to have wholesome relationships.

When asked about your own virtues, The Buddha shares that an unwholesome person would speak “without gaps and omissions, fully and in detail”. Doing so, one is practicing being boastful and with craving to share their own virtues rather than being humble and “down to earth”.

If the mind is eager to speak of your own virtues, this is due to the ego and will only result in unwholesome results. A wise being only needs to walk with wisdom and a smile. A wise being does not have the desire for admiration of others with desire for others to acknowledge their wisdom. When you know the truth and have acquired wisdom, you know that for yourself and do not need others’ validation. A wise Practitioner has already independently verified the truth to acquire wisdom and have validated that wisdom on their own with guidance from a Teacher. But, if the mind projects arrogance, pride, and is boastful due to the acquired wisdom, it will only serve to push people away from you.

In summary, speak of others in positive ways and only share beneficial thoughts on improvements one might consider when asked while adding in a person’s virtues.

Never speak of another person’s faults or mistakes when not asked and when asked, only in appropriate settings like employment or educational settings.

Speak of your own positive qualities when asked and when appropriate never being arrogant, prideful, or boastful. There is no need to speak of your positive qualities at any other time unless asked and in doing so, one should practice being humble without a need to share every single detail unless needed for employment or educational settings. And even in those settings, you will find being humble will have the most beneficial outcome.

This Teaching is shared to help you develop your own wholesome qualities not to be used for you to judge if others are or are not wholesome. These Teachings are for your own personal growth on The Path to Enlightenment and at no time should a Practitioner judge others looking down on them with arrogance or pride. Doing so would only harm your own mind.

The Dangers of Gossip and Slander - Proceed with Caution

In order to attain Enlightenment, an individual would need to eliminate gossip and slander from their life practice.

As long as one is gossiping and slandering, the mind is still polluted with craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), which are described as The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires and will lack the ability to experience Enlightenment.

As part of The Eight Fold Path, The Path to Enlightenment, The Buddha taught as part of Right Speech to eliminate gossip and slander in order to move the mind towards Enlightenment.

But why?

Let me help you understand...

1.) Choosing to Gossip and Slander: If one is choosing to gossip and slander, the mind has craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). These poisonous states of mind hinder one from experiencing the peace, calm, serenity, contentedness and joy of the Enlightened mind.

If you are choosing to gossip and slander, this means that the mind “wants” something specific (i.e. craving/desire/attachment), it has anger/hatred/ill will towards others, and this is due to the mind’s ignorance (unknowing of true reality) of The Natural Laws of Existence (i.e. The Natural Law of Kamma) and not being able to practice them in a way that would lead to your own Enlightenment. The mind is polluted and struggling in the world and will experience unwholesome results (i.e. unwholesome Kamma).

If you are choosing to gossip and slander, that means you are putting harm into the world, thus, harm will come to you due to The Natural Law of Kamma. As you choose to gossip and slander others, these harms will come back to you in multiple ways.

- It is only a matter of time before people will gossip and slander you.
- Hearing the gossip and slander, and knowing who it has come from, individuals might cause you bodily harm, injury, or death.
- You damage your own reputation through others understanding that you are choosing to speak in unwise, unwholesome, and harmful ways.
- You will find it difficult to maintain personal and professional relationships because people will not be interested in associating with individuals who are gossiping and slandering, knowing that it is only a matter of time before you do the same to them.
- The mind will be muddled and cluttered with negative content of others degrading your ability to have focus, concentration, clarity of mind, and a deep memory to benefit you in life.
- People will have a lack of trust and respect for you as they know that you gossip and slander, thus, hindering your ability to be successful in life.
- The mind will be judgmental of others and themselves, retaining its “conceit”, thus, one might find they have negative self-talk that degrades the way they view themselves and others hindering the mind from practicing loving-kindness and compassion with “all beings”.

These are just a handful of the challenges and difficulties one will experience when they choose to gossip and slander others, thus, it would be wise to never gossip and slander. If you have done this in the past, you can train your mind to eliminate this destructive conduct so that you are no longer choosing to gossip and slander helping you get closer to Enlightenment.

The Eight Fold Path will guide you in being able to train the mind to accomplish this goal. It is important to learn, reflect, and practice The Eight Fold Path to gradually develop your life practice and eliminate gossip/slander.

2.) Listening to Gossip and Slander: If you only listen to gossip and slander, this is still destructive to your own mind. You are taking in negative content that negatively effects the mind. Gossip and slander is most often untrue, thus, the mind will be forming perceptions and making decisions based on untruths leading to unwholesome results (i.e unwholesome Kamma).

Perceptions: a belief or opinion based on how things seem.

Listening to gossip and slander means that people around you will understand that you are open to receiving their unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech. This means, that they will continue to come to you with gossip and slander.

Water flows in the path of least resistance. The same is true about unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech to include gossip and slander. People will know your mind is open to gossip and slander and they will seek you out for a continuous bombardment of negative, unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech putting yourself in a continuous position of destruction and erosion of the quality of your mind.

If you are listening to gossip and slander, that means you are accepting and receiving harmful speech from the world, thus, harm will come to you due to The Natural Law of Kamma. As you choose to listen to gossip and slander, these harms will be experienced.

- It is only a matter of time before people will gossip and slander you.
- The mind will continue to take in negative content about others and form a negative view of others further rooting anger/hatred/ill will into the mind hindering it from experiencing liberation, freedom from strong feelings, peace, and Enlightenment.
- You damage your own reputation through others understanding that you are choosing to listen to unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech of others.
- You will find it difficult to maintain personal and professional relationships because people will not be interested in associating with individuals who are listening to gossip and slander, knowing that an individual circulates in unwise and unwholesome relationships.
- The mind will be muddled and cluttered with negative content of others degrading your ability to have focus, concentration, clarity of mind, and a deep memory to benefit you in life.
- People will have a lack of trust and respect for you as they know that you are a listener of gossip and slander, thus, hindering your ability to be successful in life.

3.) Telling Others Who Is Gossiping and Slandering Them: If you listen to gossip and slander and then carry that forward as a messenger to others, informing them of the gossip and slander you are listening to, you are now choosing to gossip and slander. People oftentimes shoot a messenger.

While you are putting yourself in the position of being a messenger, the individual who you are sharing this with is most likely going to get angered, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, etc. and potentially blame you for their painful feelings. You are going to be viewed as a “trouble maker” as you are putting yourself in a position of spreading the gossip and slander through gossiping and slandering.

While you may think that telling others who is gossiping and slandering them and what is being said as helping, what is truly happening is that you are helping to spread the gossip and slander through gossip and slander, creating opportunity for continued challenges and difficulties in relationships. You are ensuring that the problems only continue rather than allowing the gossip and slander to be buried and to die.

If you are sharing gossip and slander around your community thinking this is going to improve things, you are essentially throwing garbage around your community hoping that it will become more clean.

This is an unwise decision that would lead to unwholesome results (i.e. unwholesome Kamma).

If you are spreading gossip and slander, that means you are putting harm into the world, thus, harm will come to you due to The Natural Law of Kamma. As you choose to spread gossip and slander, these harms will come back to you in multiple ways.

- It is only a matter of time before people will gossip and slander you.
- Hearing the gossip and slander, and knowing who it has come from, individuals might cause you bodily harm, injury, or death.
- You damage your own reputation through others understanding that you are choosing to speak in unwise, unwholesome, and harmful ways.
- You will find it difficult to maintain personal and professional relationships because people will not be interested in associating with individuals who are gossiping and slandering, knowing that it is only a matter of time before you do the same to them.
- People will have a lack of trust and respect for you as they know that you gossip and slander, thus, hindering your ability to be successful in life.
- The mind will be muddled and cluttered with negative content of others degrading your ability to have focus, concentration, clarity of mind, and a deep memory to benefit you in life.
- The mind will be judgmental of others and themselves, retaining its “conceit”, thus, one might find they have negative self-talk that degrades the way they view themselves and others hindering the mind from practicing loving-kindness and compassion with “all beings”.

4.) **Hearing Gossip and Slander:** While it is wise to remove yourself from a situation where people are gossiping and slandering, thus, individuals will come to understand that you are not a receiver of unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech, it is not possible to control others. Therefore, as you are making this transition away from gossip and slander, people might come to you and start gossiping and slandering others without you being able to readily and easily move away. Therefore, you might hear some gossip and slander for a period of time until you are determined, dedicated, and diligent enough that those around you understand you are not an outlet for their unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech to include, gossip and slander.

Upon hearing gossip and slander it is important to do the following:

A.) Do not acknowledge or confirm the gossip and slander. Do not give any indication that the gossip or slander is welcomed, appreciated, or well received. There is no need to be harsh or hostile, just ensure there is no indication from you that the gossip and slander is well received.

B.) Take action to move away from the speaker by excusing yourself from the conversation and situation. Over time, people will come to know that you do not stay and listen to gossip and slander and they will be less and less likely to seek you out for their gossip and slander. This will take time and those individuals will most likely gossip and slander about your new choices. This is the results of your decisions of having existed in conversations, situations, and relationships with repeated gossip and slander. But, this is the only way to extinguish the unwholesome results of your decisions and you will need to experience the results of your past decisions that were unwise (i.e. old unwholesome Kamma).

You will need to move away and distance yourself from the gossip and slander, otherwise, it is only going to continue with significant results impacting your life. If others choose to gossip and slander you, be unaffected and choose to move forward in life understanding you need to extinguish the unwise decisions that have been leading to the unwholesome results you are experiencing and this may include, moving on from old relationships forming new and healthier relationships where gossip and slander does not exist. If you are clinging to relationships, this can be challenging. But, you will need to train the mind to “let go” and “move on” from these relationships, otherwise, you will be “stuck” in continuous harmful experiences producing unwholesome results.

C.) If you heard something from others that can negatively affect your relationships with people, it is possible to ask questions of others to inquire whether what you heard is true or false without exposing who you heard it from or that it is gossip/slander that you have been exposed to. You can skillfully ask questions of an individual that you heard the gossip and slander about, to understand what is true or false.

If needed and as another option, you can completely ignore the gossip/slander entirely, not allowing it to affect your personal and professional relationships which would be very wise. Put it out of the mind not allowing it to settle into the mind. But, if you have retained the gossip and slander and need a conversation to clarify what you understand, you could ask skillful questions to the individual who was gossiped/slandered rather than allow the mind to cling to its perceptions. You can discover the truth through asking questions and pursue understanding so that you are not clinging to perceptions, thus, eroding and destroying the quality of your mind.

Perceptions: a belief or opinion based on how things seem.

In effect, view gossip and slander as unwise, unwholesome, and untrue as the individual who is gossiping and slandering has destructive goals with ill will and is attempting to damage relationships. It would be unwise to associate with an individual who is looking to damage relationships as you will eventually find yourself on the receiving end of their efforts to separate people and damage reputations.

An Enlightened being would be interested in bringing people together, not creating division and separation. Enlightened beings are interested in harmony not division.

Who you choose to associate with as friends and colleagues has a direct effect on your ability to function in the world through wise decisions leading to wholesome results. If you continue to gossip/slander, listen to gossip/slander, spread gossip/slander, or associate with people who gossip/slander, you will experience continued struggles and difficulties in life as you are negatively impacted by this unwise, unwholesome, and harmful speech.

If you choose to swim in a dirty pool, you are going to get filthy while regretting your decision to not find a pool that has clean water. So empty the dirty pool and fill it up with clean water then, you will be able to enjoy a refreshing swim.

Chapter 18

Do Not Go by Oral Tradition

Come, Kālāmas, do not go (only) by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by presumed reasoning, by reasoned deep thinking, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence (of a speaker), or because you think: This person is our Teacher.

But when, Kālāmas, you know for yourselves: These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy (responsible for wrongdoing); these things are denounced by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to harm and discontentedness, then you should abandon them.

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

‘For his harm, Venerable Sir.’

Kālāmas, a craving/greedy person, overcome by craving/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 discontentedness for a long time?

‘Yes, Venerable Sir.’

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

‘For his harm, Venerable Sir.’

Kālāmas, a person who is full of anger/hate, overcome by anger/hatred, 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 discontentedness for a long time?

‘Yes, Venerable Sir.’

(3) What do you think, Kālāmas? When ignorance/delusion (unknowing of true reality) arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?

‘For his harm, Venerable Sir.’

Kālāmas, a person who is unwise/deluded, overcome by ignorance/delusion (unknowing of true reality), 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 discontentedness for a long time?

‘Yes, Venerable Sir.’

Come, Kālāmas, do not go (only) by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by presumed reasoning, by reasoned deep thinking, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence (of a speaker), or because you think: This person is our Teacher.

But when you know for yourselves: These things are wholesome; these things are blameless (not responsible for wrongdoing); these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and peacefulness; then you should live in accordance with them....

(Reference: AN 3.65)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that a Practitioner should not go only “by oral tradition” or other aspects of merely learning The Teachings but instead, a Practitioner should observe for themselves through independent verification of The Teachings, what is wise and true “leading to welfare and peacefulness”.

If a Practitioner were to “only” listen to what people share in the oral tradition, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” follow and be respectful of a lineage of teaching, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by hearsay, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by a collection of scriptures in a written text, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by logical reasoning, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by presumed reasoning, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by reasoned deep thinking, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” go by the seeming competence of a speaker, this can be misleading.

If a Practitioner were to “only” follow a person because they think that “this person is our Teacher”, this can be misleading.

Instead, what Gotama Buddha is guiding Students to understand is that they must “know for themselves” through “direct experience” to acquire wisdom in what is unwholesome, blameworthy (responsible for wrongdoing), leading to harm and discontentedness. A Practitioner does not gain this wisdom through any of the potential ways of being misled but instead, they learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings with guidance from a Teacher to ensure they can discover the truth for themselves to acquire wisdom.

A Practitioner will need to examine and investigate The Teachings while seeking guidance from a Teacher but then, they will need to independently verify The Teachings through practice of The Teachings to determine the truth and observe these Teachings work to improve the condition of the mind. Then, one will acquire wisdom liberating the mind from ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

The Buddha speaks of The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). These are also referred to as greed, hatred, and delusion.

Detailed explanation of The Three Poisons is available in this same book series found in Chapter 8 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Gotama Buddha also references four (4) of The Five Precepts when he mentions “destroys life, takes what is not given, transgresses with another's wife, and speaks falsehood; and he encourages others to do likewise”.

Detailed explanation of The Five Precepts is available in this same book series found in Chapter 7 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

As a Practitioner discovers the truth for themselves through direct experience of independent verification of The Teachings within their own life practice, they will know what is wholesome and blameless (not responsible for wrongdoing). They will know for themselves the wholesome qualities of mind that are “praised by the wise” and if practiced will lead to your “welfare and peacefulness”. A Practitioner will make wise choices to live in accordance with the wisdom they have discovered in these Teachings being able to liberate the mind to attain Enlightenment.

But, if a Practitioner does not do this work to independently verify The Teachings and only goes by the potential ways of being misled, then they will be unable to discover the truth to acquire wisdom remaining in ignorance (unknowing of true reality). It is the responsibility of each individual Practitioner to seek guidance but to then independently verify The Teachings through practicing The Teachings. As they observe the condition of the mind gradually improving, they will know the truth through having seen it for themselves as the condition of the mind gradually improves.

In this way, a Practitioner acquires wisdom leading to the complete elimination of discontentedness rather than being misled.

Each Practitioner needs to do the work to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings through a determined, dedicated, and diligent life practice. No one can give you Enlightenment but instead, you will need to earn it yourself with the guidance of Teachers which requires one to not be misled. Instead, verify The Teachings through your own life practice not based on belief or any of the potential ways of being misled as described by Gotama Buddha.

Chapter 19

To Understand Even a Single Sentence

Headman, because if they understand even a single sentence, that will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time.

(Reference: SN 42.7)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that if beings “understand even a single sentence” of these Teachings, “that will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time”.

As unEnlightened beings roam and wander on the earth, they are unaware of many of the basic aspects of these Teachings that will transform one’s life.

Even if an individual understands that one should speak gentle and practices just that one aspect of these Teachings, it will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time.

Or, if an individual understands that one should practice loving-kindness for all beings and practices just that one aspect of these Teachings, it will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time.

Through learning and practicing these Teachings, a being can completely liberate the mind from discontentedness. A being will no longer experience any discontentedness. The mind can completely eliminate all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. on The Path to Enlightenment.

All of these Teachings can be learned and practiced to independently observe the truth as the mind gradually acquires wisdom through independent verification of these Teachings through practice of these Teachings.

This new found wisdom gradually improves the way the mind functions in the world through eliminating discontentedness of mind.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha's Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

This life affirming wisdom will lead to your welfare and peacefulness for a long time, even if you just understand a single sentence. But, the goal is to understand much more than just a single sentence so that through continued development of wisdom in the mind, a Practitioner can fully liberate the mind from all discontentedness.

Chapter 20

Develop Meditation That is Like the Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and Space

Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Just as people throw clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, saliva, pus, and blood on the earth, and the earth is not horrified, humiliated, and disgusted because of that,

So too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Just as people wash clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, saliva, pus, and blood in water, and the water is not horrified, humiliated, and disgusted because of that,

So too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Rāhula, develop meditation that is like fire; for when you develop meditation that is like fire, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Just as people burn clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, saliva, pus, and blood in fire, and the fire is not horrified, humiliated, and disgusted because of that,

So too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like fire; for when you develop meditation that is like fire, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Rāhula, develop meditation that is like wind; for when you develop meditation that is like wind, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Just as the wind blows on clean things and dirty things, on excrement, urine, saliva, pus, and blood, and the wind is not horrified, humiliated, and disgusted because of that,

So too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like wind; for when you develop meditation that is like wind, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Rāhula, develop meditation that is like space; for when you develop meditation that is like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

Just as space is not established anywhere, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like space; for when you develop meditation that is like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade the mind and remain.

(Reference: MN 62)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a Teaching with his son Rāhula.

While Gotama Buddha left the Royal Palace for a life of homelessness, he did return back to the region where his family lived. Many of his family members decided to join him as Ordained Practitioners including his son, wife, step mother, cousins, and others. Rāhula is the son of The Buddha and here he provides him a Teaching related to the development of meditation providing insight to help him deepen his practice of meditation.

Gotama Buddha relates meditation to the four (4) elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. There is a fifth category of “space” or “ether” that is often used to describe the emptiness or lack of the other four (4) elements.

During the lifetime of The Buddha and now in traditional medicine, the body is described through The Four Elements. The body is categorized into four (4) different elements such as: earth, water, fire, and wind. Each of these is used to describe the characteristics of the body.

Earth is the solids of the body. For example, hair, teeth, bones, finger and toe nails, etc.

Water is the liquids of the body. For example, tears, saliva, pus, urine, blood, etc.

Fire is the temperature of the body. For example, the heat that is generated to sustain the body. This element is also connected with the process of digestion.

Wind is the movement within the body. For example, the movement of food and feces through the intestines of the body.

Space is the lack of any other of The Four Elements. For example, the voids or empty spaces in the body like the nasal cavity or other locations where there is nothing that exists.

The Four Elements are used in traditional medicine to understand symptoms of illness and provide remedies to the patient. Space is not considered an element because it lacks the qualities of any of the other elements. There are no elemental qualities as it is described as the lack of or absence of, all the other qualities. Some people consider “space” to be a fifth element, but The Buddha described only The Four Elements.

Not only can the human body be described through The Four Elements, but we can also describe any physical object through The Four Elements as all material objects have a combination of The Four Elements.

Rāhula is encouraged to develop meditation like the earth as the earth is unaffected by agreeable or disagreeable contact. Here, the earth is being used describing the actual dirt or soil of the earth to explain how it is unaffected by clean or dirty things such as excrement, urine, saliva, pus, and blood.

Through training the mind in meditation in this way, then in daily life one will benefit from this training to ensure that contact with agreeable or disagreeable forms, sounds, smells, flavors, physical objects, or mental objects “will not invade the mind and remain”.

Whether our contact with forms, sounds, smells, flavors, physical objects, or mental objects (The Six External Sense Bases) is agreeable or disagreeable, the mind needs to be trained to reside unaffected not allowing this contact to “invade the mind”. In doing so, a Practitioner can cut off and let go of any arising discontentedness that is produced as a result of agreeable or disagreeable contact eventually getting to the point where the mind resides unaffected by agreeable or disagreeable contact.

Not only does a Practitioner need to train to not allow the agreeable or disagreeable contact to arise pleasant feelings, painful feelings, or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant in meditation and in daily life but also, if these feelings do arise, a Practitioner will need to cut them off and let them go. A Practitioner can then ensure that agreeable or disagreeable contact with forms, sounds, smells, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects “will not invade the mind and remain”.

The ideal goal would be to catch any arising discontentedness as a bodily sensation to cut it off and let it go at that point. Then, the arising discontentedness never invades the mind. But, should the Practitioner not catch the arising discontentedness as bodily sensations and it moves to feelings in the mind, then one will need to cut it off and let it go as a feeling in the mind so that the arisen discontentedness does not “remain” in the mind.

Once arising discontentedness is allowed to move past the bodily sensations into feelings in the mind, they then have the ability to affect the condition of the mind lasting multiple hours, days, or weeks. Should a Practitioner not cut off and eliminate unwholesome conditions of the mind, they then have the ability to form mental objects such as

complacency, ill will, restlessness, worry, and others that remain for significant periods of time making it much more difficult to eliminate from the mind. (These are described in more detail as part of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.)

So, Gotama Buddha is providing guidance to develop meditation where the Practitioner's mind is unaffected by any agreeable contact that might arise pleasant feelings and unaffected by any disagreeable contact that might arise painful feelings.

Train the mind to be unaffected just like the earth, water, fire, wind and space where agreeable and disagreeable contact will not invade the mind and remain.

Detailed explanation of The Six Sense Bases is available in this same book series found in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) or "The Six Sense Bases" (Volume 9).

Detailed explanation of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness is available in this same book series found in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) or "Breathing Mindfulness Meditation" (Volume 7).

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 11-20)

<https://youtu.be/LZstoCzIV9I>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 217 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 11-20)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--217---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-11-20-e17n54i/a-a6ijoh2>

Chapter 21

Gain, Honor, and Praise, Are an Obstacle Even For an Arahant

Monks, gain, honor, and praise, I say, are an obstacle even for a Monk who is an Arahant, one with taints destroyed.

When this was said, the Venerable Ānanda asked the Master Teacher Gotama: ‘Why, Venerable Sir, are gain, honor, and praise an obstacle even for a Monk with taints destroyed?’

I do not say, Ānanda, that gain, honor, and praise are an obstacle to his unshakable liberation of mind. But I say they are an obstacle to (his attainment of) those peaceful dwellings in this very life which are achieved by one who resides diligent, dedicated, and determined. So dreadful, Ānanda, are gain, honor, and praise so bitter, vile, obstructive to achieving the unsurpassed security from bondage (Enlightenment).

Therefore, Ānanda, you should train yourselves thus: ‘We will abandon the arisen gain, honor, praise, and we will not let the arisen gain, honor, and praise persist obsessing our mind.

Thus should you train yourselves.

(Reference: SN 17.30)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how gain, honor, and praise can inhibit the mind from experiencing Enlightenment.

Through allowing the mind to dwell in gain, honor, and praise from others, the mind can accumulate ego, specifically “conceit”.

Conceit (Arrogance, pride, judging, measuring or comparing as superior or inferior to others.)

Gotama Buddha describes gain, honor, and praise as dreadful, bitter, vile, obstructive to attaining Enlightenment or “security from bondage”.

The unEnlightened mind is bound and burdened carrying craving/desire/attachment. The mind is bound into the condition of the unEnlightened mind by The Ten Fetters or the “taints”.

Conceit is one of the taints, or pollution of the mind, that traps the mind in the unEnlightened state. It is only through the elimination of The Ten Fetters that the mind is then liberated experiencing freedom from strong feelings and Enlightened.

A Practitioner is unable to control whether others share admiration for you but through training of the mind a Practitioner can ensure that the arisen gain, honor, and praise does not obsess the mind.

It is through “one who resides diligent, dedicated, and determined” to training the mind through practicing these Teachings that the mind is able to reside unaffected.

Allowing agreeable positive comments from others to produce conceit in the mind will only inhibit the Practitioner from experiencing Enlightenment. Not only can the mind accumulate conceit but it may also have craving/desire for continued positive comments.

If the mind hears agreeable positive comments, it experiences pleasant feelings and the mind is discontent. If the mind hears disagreeable negative comments, it experiences painful feelings and the mind is discontent.

Anytime the mind is allowed to latch onto and be affected by anything agreeable or disagreeable, it will experience discontentedness.

The work of liberating the mind requires constant determination, dedication, and diligence to actively be aware of any arising discontentedness in daily life, then, cut off and let go of the arising feelings including any pleasant feelings that arise due to gain, honor, and praise not allowing it to obsess the mind.

Eventually, the more a Practitioner cuts off and lets go of any arising discontentedness, there will no longer be any arising of discontentedness. The mind will experience liberation or “security from bondage”. The mind will be protected and secure from the bondage of The Ten Fetters no longer bound to experience discontentedness in the repeating cycle of constant discontentedness through The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 22

How Is a Monk Mindful and Exercising Clear Comprehension?

And how, Monks, is a Monk mindful?

Here, Monks, a Monk resides reflecting on body as body, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world.

He resides reflecting on feelings as feelings, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world.

He resides reflecting on mind as mind, dedicated, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world.

He resides reflecting on mental objects as mental objects, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world.

It is in such a way that a Monk is mindful.

And how, Monks, does a Monk exercise clear comprehension?

Here, Monks, a Monk is one who acts with clear comprehension when going forward and returning; when looking ahead and looking aside; when drawing in and extending the limbs; when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; when eating, drinking, chewing his food, and tasting; when defecating and urinating; when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, speaking, and keeping silent.

It is in such a way that a Monk exercises clear comprehension.

(Reference: SN 36.7)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Four Foundations of Mindfulness and that they lead to “clear comprehension” or clarity of mind.

It is through developing The Four Foundations of Mindfulness that a Practitioner is able to have “awareness of mind” to observe the arising discontentedness training the mind to cut it off and let it go to completely eliminate 100% of all discontentedness.

What Are The Four Foundations of Mindfulness?

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness are four aspects of awareness the mind needs to develop to have “awareness of mind”, then, actively and skillfully work with arising unwholesome thoughts, ideas, and feelings to eliminate them from ever arising again.

It is through developing awareness of bodily sensations, feelings, conditions of the mind, and mental objects that the mind can then eliminate unwholesome qualities and cultivate wholesome qualities.

Through developing The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, a Practitioner can then more readily and actively "cut off the thoughts" and "let them go" training the mind to eliminate discontentedness.

Rather than allowing the mind to become polluted with unwholesome feelings, conditions of the mind, or mental objects, a Practitioner can instead cut off and let go of any arising thoughts, ideas, and feelings when they are only bodily sensations.

This allows the mind to not experience the pollution of arising unwholesomeness and trains the mind so that unwholesome thoughts, ideas, and feelings no longer arise at all.

Without The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, a Practitioner would not be aware of the bodily sensations, or the resulting feelings, conditions of the mind, and mental objects to then be able to cut off and let go of the unwholesome thoughts, ideas, and feelings prior to polluting the mind so that eventually, they will never arise.

Through developing The Four Foundations of Mindfulness a Practitioner will be able to get to the point in their training that through the constant cutting off of unwholesome thoughts, ideas, and feelings that the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy because unwholesomeness will never arise.

It is the constant cutting off sooner and sooner that the mind can experience liberation through the non-arising unwholesome thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The mind will eventually get tired and will submit to never arise unwholesome thoughts, ideas, or feelings.

The non-arising of unwholesome thoughts, ideas, and feelings is experienced through a well liberated mind - an Enlightened mind.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Body as Body	Observing/Awareness of Bodily Sensations
Feelings as Feelings	Observing/Awareness of Feelings
Mind as Mind	Observing/Awareness of Conditions of the Mind
Mental Objects as Mental Objects	Observing/Awareness of Mental Objects

To develop awareness of mind, you should not allow the mind to be lost in daydreams, anticipation, indulgences, worry, or dwell in other discontent feelings. With awareness of the mind that the mind is not in the present moment during daily life, cut off those thoughts and bring the mind to the present moment.

Cultivating mindfulness or awareness of mind is accomplished through meditation practices and carried into everyday life through implementing awareness of the mind in each moment of your normal activities.

The Buddha describes to have full awareness of mind in all of our daily activities such as “when going forward and returning; when looking ahead and looking aside; when drawing in and extending the limbs; when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; when eating, drinking, chewing his food, and tasting; when defecating and urinating; when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, speaking, and keeping silent”.

It is through Right Mindfulness, or awareness of mind, that a Practitioner is vigilant and constantly aware of what exists in the mind. Through Breathing Mindfulness Meditation the mind is brought to the present moment training it to have clear comprehensive, awareness of mind, and concentration. Through having full awareness of the bodily sensations, feelings, condition of the mind, and mental objects a Practitioner can then skillfully eliminate unwholesomeness and arise the wholesomeness.

Through continuous awareness of mind through The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, a Practitioner is then “exercising clear comprehension”.

To cultivate mindfulness, you will need to learn Breathing Mindfulness Meditation in the positions of seated, lying, standing, or walking. Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and the four (4) body positions for meditation are described in the Chapter titled “Meditation: Developing Your Practice” (Chapter 11) of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) of this same book series. Using Breathing Mindfulness Meditation, you can establish mindfulness or awareness of bodily sensations, feelings, condition of the mind, and mental objects while learning to “let them go” to eliminate discontentedness.

Chapter 23

Wonderful and Marvelous Quality of The Tathāgata

That being so, Ānanda, remember this too as a wonderful and marvelous quality of The Tathāgata:

Here, Ānanda, for The Tathāgata feelings are known as they arise, as they are present, as they disappear; perceptions are known as they arise, as they are present, as they disappear; thoughts are known as they arise, as they are present, as they disappear.

Remember this too, Ānanda, as a wonderful and marvelous quality of The Tathāgata.

(Reference: MN 124)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how he has full awareness of feelings, perceptions, and thoughts as they arise, are present, and then disappear.

It is very challenging for an unEnlightened mind to understand the experience of Enlightenment and understand how to attain this mental state. Through The Buddha describing his own qualities of mind, Students can then more readily learn, reflect, and practice to experience the same results. Gotama Buddha sharing that “The Tathāgata’s feelings are known as they arise, as they are present, as they disappear; perceptions are known as they arise, as they are present, as they disappear; thoughts are known as they arise, as they are present, as they disappear” would help Students to understand they will need to cultivate these same qualities of mind to experience Enlightenment.

A Buddha would not have conceit, therefore, you can understand that he is not boasting about what he’s accomplished but instead, sharing the qualities of mind that exist so that his Student’s can cultivate those same wholesome qualities of mind.

Conceit (Arrogance, pride, judging, measuring or comparing as superior or inferior to others.)

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to develop this crisp awareness of mind to observe feelings, perceptions, and thoughts that rise, exist, and then fade away.

Through understanding what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, a Practitioner can then take active steps to both support and encourage the wholesome, and eliminate and abandon the unwholesome.

Learning and practicing these Teachings from The Buddha, a Practitioner comes to understand the wholesome and unwholesome qualities of mind to then be able to take the appropriate action as feelings, perceptions, and thoughts that are arising, present, and disappear.

The Practitioner can train the mind to be filled and overflowing with wholesomeness.

The Practitioner can train the mind to abandon and eliminate unwholesomeness.

This requires effort and energy to be applied through determination, dedication, and diligence. But, through applying constant effort and energy towards this goal, it becomes easier and effortless as the mind can then maintain consistent wholesomeness until eventually one gradually starts to experience more of the Enlightened mind where it is permanently wholesome having attained a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy.

Chapter 24

The Six Subjects of Conscious Awareness

How many subjects of conscious awareness are there, Ānanda?

‘There are, Venerable Sir, five subjects of conscious awareness.’

Good, good, Ānanda! Therefore, Ānanda, remember this sixth subject of conscious awareness, too.

Here, ever mindful a Monk goes forward,
ever mindful he returns,
ever mindful he stands,
ever mindful he sits,
ever mindful he lies down to sleep,
ever mindful he undertakes work.

This subject of conscious awareness, developed and cultivated in this way, leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension.

(Reference: AN 6.29)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner will need to be constantly aware of the mind practicing “mindfulness”.

Mindfulness is to be aware of the mind in the present moment, not allowing the mind to dwell in the past or the future.

Cultivating mindfulness or awareness of mind is accomplished through meditation practices and carried into everyday life through implementing awareness of the mind in each moment of your normal activities along with all the other steps on The Eight Fold Path.

The Buddha describes to have full awareness of mind in all of our daily activities such as “going forward, returning, standing, sitting, lying down to sleep, and undertaking work”.

It is not possible to meditate all day long as meditation is a technique to actively train the mind during dedicated, independent, purposeful training sessions to eliminate unwholesome qualities of the mind and/or cultivate wholesome qualities of the mind in the positions of seated, lying, standing, or walking.

But, it is through Breathing Mindfulness Meditation that a Practitioner develops awareness of mind (i.e. mindfulness) and will then need to practice awareness of mind throughout their day. It is not only in meditation that one needs to train the mind and develop wholesome qualities but also outside of meditation during daily life.

In this Teaching, The Buddha is reminding his close Student Ānanda of this important aspect of training the mind to attain Enlightenment. He shares that a Practitioner will need to be continuously aware of the mind throughout all daily activities.

Chapter 25

Having Full Awareness When Lying Down

Ānanda, if his mind inclines to lying down, he lies down, thinking:

While I am lying down thus, no evil unwholesome states will invade me.

In this way he has full awareness of that.

(Reference: MN 122)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares with his close Student Ānanda how even when lying down a Practitioner needs to be actively aware to not allow “evil unwholesome states” to “invade” the mind.

At all times, a Practitioner needs to have full awareness of mind including when lying down.

This determination, dedication, and diligence to never allow the mind to be complacent will result in beneficial outcomes as the Practitioner is able to observe any arising discontentedness while cutting it off and letting it go so that it is no longer subject to arising in the future.

Chapter 26

From Darkness to Light - From Light to Light

And how, Great King, is a person one heading from darkness to light?

Here some person has been reborn in a low family - a family of candalas, bamboo workers, hunters, cartwrights, or waste-collectors - a poor family in which there is little food and drink and which subsists with difficulty, one where food and clothing are obtained with difficulty; and he is ugly, unsightly, deformed, chronically blind or cripple-handed or lame or paralyzed. He is not one who gains food, drink, clothing, and vehicles: garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, housing and lighting. He engages in wholesome conduct of body, speech, and mind. Having done so, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. Suppose, Great King, a man would climb from the ground on to a palanquin, or from a palanquin on to horseback, or from horseback to an elephant mount, or from an elephant mount to a mansion: this person, I say, is exactly similar.

It is in this way, Great King, that a person is one heading from darkness to light.

And how, Great King, is a person one heading from light to light?

Here some person has been reborn in a high family - an affluent Khattiya family, an affluent Brāhmin family, or an affluent householder family - one which is rich, with great wealth and property, with abundant gold and silver, abundant treasures and commodities, with abundant wealth and grain; and he is handsome, attractive, graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion. He is one who gains food, drink, clothing, and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, housing and lighting. He engages in wholesome conduct of body, speech, and mind. Having done so, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. Suppose, Great King, a man would cross over from palanquin to palanquin, or from horseback to horseback, or from elephant mount to elephant mount, or from mansion to mansion: this person, I say, is exactly similar.

It is in this way, Great King, that a person is one heading from light to light.

(Reference: SN 3.21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a person who is reborn into a low family, which is based on one's decisions in their past life, can then move from there towards a better life in the heavenly realm. In this way, one is moving "from darkness to light".

Similarly, he explains how a person who is reborn into a high family, which is based on one's decisions in their past life, can then move from there towards a similar life in the heavenly realm. In this way, one is moving "from light to light".

It is through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings that one moves to a better destination upon any potential future rebirths.

It is important to understand that the goal of these Teachings is for a being to attain Enlightenment so that there is no longer any rebirth into any realm of existence. But, should one need to be reborn, through the effort to attain a more developed mind in this life their next rebirth will be in an improved destination.

Gotama Buddha never used rebirth in an improved destination to motivate or encourage his Students to learn and practice these Teachings because the goal was for them to attain Enlightenment no longer experiencing rebirth in any realm of existence.

And, a Buddha does not need to guilt, shame, or fear anyone into learning and practicing their Teachings. The Teachings themselves are to eliminate discontent feelings such as guilt, shame, and fear so they would not use these feelings to motivate Students to eliminate guilt, shame, and fear - that does not work.

Instead, The Buddha is providing understanding in this Teaching of how one does not need to be hindered by a birth into a low family. During his lifetime, the caste system inhibited people from moving to an improved existence through lack of wealth or social status because of the lack of opportunities to improve one's life.

Gotama Buddha is encouraging Students that no matter what is your birth, either in a low or high family, both individuals can experience the same destination upon their next rebirth. This Teaching shared by Gotama Buddha is not what was being shared among the population of people prior to his Teaching. Instead, people were taught that they were subjected to a life of misery now and in the future due to being reborn into a low family and through being reborn into a high family one is destined for a life of luxury. But, The Buddha makes clear to his Students that all beings can improve their life through training of the mind and wise decision making based on The Natural Laws of Existence.

A Practitioner can observe the results and improvements to the condition of the mind when learning and practicing these Teachings. A Buddha does not need to guilt, shame, or fear anyone into learning and practicing his Teachings because they can independently observe the truth for themselves that The Teachings are true and through the acquired wisdom, the condition of the mind gradually improves.

Instead, Gotama Buddha helps the Students in this Teaching to understand they are not destined to a life of misery now and in the future but instead, they can improve their life through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to train the mind and make wise decisions.

Chapter 27

Harmoniously Without Disputes

Monks, wherever Monks are residing in calmness, harmoniously, without disputes, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with eyes of affection, I am at ease about going there, let alone about directing my attention there. I conclude: Surely, those Venerable Ones have abandoned three things and cultivated three (other) things.

What are the three things they have abandoned?

- (1) Sensual thoughts,
- (2) thoughts of ill will,
- (3) thoughts of harming.

These are the three things they have abandoned.

What are the three things they have cultivated?

- (1) Thoughts of renunciation (letting go),
- (2) thoughts of good will,
- (3) thoughts of harmlessness.

These are the three things they have cultivated.

Wherever Monks are residing in calmness, harmoniously, without disputes, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with eyes of affection, I am at ease about going there, let alone about directing my attention there. I conclude: Surely, those Venerable Ones have abandoned these three things and cultivated these three (other) things.

(Reference: AN 3.124)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares insight into what creates harmony among a population of people.

Through the abandoning of sensual thoughts (i.e. sensual desire), thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of harming, a population of people will be able to reside without disputes and in harmony. People will be interested in visiting and residing among a population of people who are without disputes living in harmony.

Through cultivating and practicing Right Intention from The Eight Fold Path, one is practicing renunciation (letting go), good will, and harmlessness.

For a population of people who are practicing Right Intention, The Buddha explains that they are without disputes, living harmoniously, much like that of milk and water.

Rather than humans viewing each other as having ill intentions with resentment, jealousy, harshness and judgment, a population of people can “view each other with eyes of affection”, thus, creating a peaceful and harmonious community in which to exist.

It is through viewing others with negative perceptions that the mind attributes negative unwholesome qualities to others finding it difficult and a struggle to exist peacefully with all beings.

Instead, The Buddha provides guidance that one should eliminate the constant seeking of pleasure through “sensual thoughts” or having “sensual desires”. Through elimination of the unEnlightened mind’s tendency to chase after pleasant feelings training the mind to let go of chasing pleasant feelings, one can then apply effort to reside with others peacefully.

Through the elimination of ill will practicing good will or loving-kindness, a Practitioner can have a genuine interest in seeing all beings be well. Through elimination of the unEnlightened mind’s tendency to have anger, hatred, and ill will, one can then apply effort to reside with others peacefully.

Through the elimination of thoughts of harming practicing harmlessness, a Practitioner can look for ways to motivate, encourage, and support others in their daily activities. Through elimination of the unEnlightened mind’s tendency to have an interest in seeing harm come to others, one can then apply effort to reside with others peacefully.

A Practitioner needs to develop Right Intention as part of The Eight Fold Path and practice this daily through their own inner dialogue and interactions with others. Training the mind to “let go” of sensual thoughts, ill will, and harming, a Practitioner will find harmony without arguments with others.

This work needs to be applied within one’s own mind and then practiced within their household and professional environment. Through training your own mind to function in this way, you can then practice Right Intentions within all relationships and all interactions on a daily basis. Each individual doing this work for themselves will benefit their personal and professional relationships resulting in increased amounts of peacefulness and harmony throughout the world.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path is available in this same book series found in Chapter 5 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 28

Disputes Arise from Craving

Craving is a cause of seeking,
Seeking is a cause of gaining material possessions,
Gaining material possessions is a cause of evaluating,
Evaluating is a cause of desire,
Desire is a cause of clinging,
Clinging is a cause of possessiveness,
Possessiveness is a cause of stinginess,
Stinginess is a cause of guarding of possessions:

And because of the guarding of possessions, many unwholesome, unskillful things come to be: there arise the taking up of stick and sword (weapons), fights, disputes, arguments, accusations, harsh speech, lying and other evil unskilled states.

(Reference: DN 15)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how craving leads to disputes and unwholesome unskillful conduct.

It is through the mind's craving/desire/attachment that it has longing with a strong eagerness wanting "material gain" and results in the "guarding of possessions". The mind will guard possessions with "weapons" where "fights, disputes, arguments, accusations, harsh speech, lying, and other evil unskilled states" will arise causing unwholesome outcomes.

There is a need for certain possessions to sustain our life and exist in the world. But, it is when the mind has longing with a strong eagerness (craving/desire/attachment) to keep these permanently, being unaware and uncomfortable with impermanence, that the mind then feels a need to hold on to "guarding possessions" tightly.

With holding on tightly, the mind cannot reside in the middle peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy but instead, is looking out with fear for when these possessions might leave. Rather, a mind that has the wisdom of impermanence will be able to make wise decisions to ensure the possessions they need to sustain life are available but with the understanding that they will leave them someday due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

Detailed explanation of The Universal Truth of Impermanence is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1).

Chapter 29

Dependent Origination

When this exists, that comes to be;
with the arising of this, that arises.

When this does not exist, that does not come to be;
with the elimination of this, that ceases.

(Reference: SN 12.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a very basic introduction to Dependent Origination.

Dependent Origination is a detailed Teaching that shares the “cause and effect” of how ignorance (unknowing of true reality) leads to rebirth and a being then experiences discontentedness.

Here in this Teaching, The Buddha is just sharing a basic introduction of Dependent Origination where one needs to understand the “cause and effect” relationship of “when this exists, that comes to be” and “with the arising of this, that arises”.

Conversely, “when this does not exist, that does not come to be” and “with the elimination of this, that ceases”.

This basic understanding of causality, “cause and effect”, or “action and result” forms the basis of The Teachings on The Natural Law of Kamma and will explain how everything that comes into existence whether feelings, perceptions, thoughts, or an actual being itself, has some cause that initiates it into arising or existence.

Likewise, through the same “cause and effect” or “action and result” the elimination of feelings, perceptions, thoughts, or an actual being can be traced through the same sequence of events in The Teaching of Dependent Origination.

Detailed explanation of Dependent Origination is available in this same book series found in Chapter 14 of the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment” (Volume 5).

Detailed explanation of The Natural Law of Kamma is available in this same book series found in the book “The Natural Law of Kamma” (Volume 6).

Chapter 30

Cause of Ill Will

'By what fetters, Sir, are beings bound - gods, humans, asuras, nagas, gandhabbas and whatever other kinds there may be - whereby, although they aspire to live without hate, harming, hostility or ill will, and in peace, they yet live in hate, harming one another, hostile and with ill will?'

Ruler of the Gods, it is the bonds of jealousy and material gain that bind beings so that, though they aspire to live without hate, harming, hostility or ill will, and in peace, they yet live in hate, harming one another, hostile and with ill will.

'But Sir, what gives rise to jealousy and material gain, what is their origin, how are they born, how do they arise? Owing to the presence of what do they arise, owing to the absence of what do they not arise?'

Jealousy and material gain, Ruler of the Gods, take rise from happiness and sadness, this is their origin, this is how they are born, how they arise. When these are present, they arise, when these are absent, they do not arise.

'But, Sir, what gives rise to being happy and sad, what is their origin, how are they born, how do they arise? Owing to the presence of what do they arise, owing to the absence of what do they not arise?'

They arise, Ruler of the Gods, from craving/desire due to the presence of craving/desire they arise, due to the absence of craving/desire they do not arise.

(Reference: DN 21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how ill will arises in the mind as a result of craving/desire/attachment.

Because there is craving/desire/attachment, the mind experiences happiness and sadness.

Because there is happiness and sadness, the mind experiences jealousy and material gain.

So while one might “aspire to live without hate, harming, hostility or ill will, and in peace, they yet live in hate, harming one another, hostile and with ill will” due to craving/desire/attachment existing in the mind.

Anger, hatred, and ill will are all the same pollution of the mind that breeds hostility, aggression, and resentment. The solution to eliminating anger/hatred/ill will is to develop a Loving-kindness Meditation practice while practicing loving-kindness in daily life through all our interactions with all beings.

Anger, hatred, or ill will is part of The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires.

Detailed explanation of The Three Poisons is available in this same book series found in Chapter 8 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Detailed explanation of establishing a Loving-kindness Meditation practice is available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 21-30)

<https://youtu.be/hcQC325GP7w>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 220 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 21-30)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--220---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-21-30-e184c6a/a-a6k83lq>

Chapter 31

Craving/Desire is the Root of Discontentedness

Whatever discontentedness arose in the past, all that arose rooted in craving/desire, with craving/desire as its source: for craving/desire is the root of discontentedness.

Whatever discontentedness will arise in the future, all that will arise rooted in craving/desire, with craving/desire as its source, for craving/desire is the root of discontentedness.

Whatever discontentedness arises, all that is rooted in craving/desire, has craving/desire as its source; for craving/desire is the root of discontentedness.

(Reference: SN 42.11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the cause of all discontentedness is craving/desire/attachment.

Craving/Desire/Attachment/Wants/Expectations/Grasping/Holding/Clinging: a mental longing for something with a strong eagerness. The mind pulling in a direction for objects of its affection.

Whether it be discontentedness that arose with beings in the past, present, or future it is all caused by craving/desire/attachment.

The cause, elimination, and the solution leading to the complete elimination of all discontentedness is described in The Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths is a foundation in these Teachings that is required in order to understand all the other Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment shared by Gotama Buddha.

A Practitioner will need to deeply understand and practice The Four Noble Truths in order to eliminate discontentedness of the mind.

Detailed explanation of The Four Noble Truths is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 32

Seven Principles to Prosper and Not Decline

Brāhmin! If the Vajjians keep these seven principles, as long as these principles remain in force, the Vajjians may be predicted to prosper and not decline.

(The followings are the seven principles that The Tathāgata said to Venerable Ānanda in the presence of Vassakāra Brāhmin.)

- (1) Ānanda! The Vajjians hold regular and frequent assemblies.
- (2) Ānanda! The Vajjians meet in harmony, break up in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony.
- (3) Ānanda! The Vajjians do not authorize what has not been authorized already, and do not abolish what has been authorized, but proceed according to what has been authorized by their ancient tradition.
- (4) Ānanda! The Vajjians honor, respect, revere, and salute the elders among them, and consider them worth listening to.
- (5) Ānanda! The Vajjians do not forcibly abduct others' wives and daughters and compel them to live with them.
- (6) Ānanda! The Vajjians honor, respect, revere, and salute the Vajjians shrines at home and abroad, not withdrawing the proper support made and given before.
- (7) Ānanda! The Vajjians make proper provision for the safety of Arahants, so that such Arahants may come in the future to live there, and those already there may reside in comfort.

Ānanda, so long as they keep these principles, the Vajjians may be predicted to prosper and not decline.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings that will help a community of people live in harmony experiencing prosperity.

He suggested that they (1) hold regular and frequent meetings, (2) greet each other, conduct their affairs, and leave in harmony and peacefulness, (3) follow the rules that have been established for their community based on their ancient tradition without alteration, (4) respect their elders gaining insight and knowledge through listening to them, (5) do not forcibly abduct others' wives and daughters and compel them to live with them practicing the refraining from taking what is not given and sexual misconduct, (6) honor and respect their shrines maintain proper support for their upkeep, and (7) accommodate Enlightened beings to ensure their safety and comfort of those who already reside there and to attract future Enlightened beings to reside in their community.

Through sharing this guidance, The Buddha is offering Teachings that will help the community of the Vajjians understand how to maintain the prosperity of their community.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, The Vajjians were a group of clans who settled in a land area that we might refer to as a "country" using today's terms. They were considered as being prosperous and a well developed group of people who lived in harmony with one another. The Buddha provided this Teaching to help them continue their prosperity long into the future.

Chapter 33

Four Things that Lead to the Continuation of the Wholesome Teachings

There are, Monks, these four things that lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

What four?

(1) Here, the Monks learn discourses that have been well acquired, with well set down words and phrases. When the words and phrases are well set down, the meaning is well understood.

This is the first thing that leads to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(2) Again, the Monks are easy to correct and possess qualities that make them easy to correct. They are patient and accept instruction respectfully.

This is the second thing that leads to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(3) Again, those Monks who are learned, heirs to the heritage, experts on The Teachings, experts on the discipline, experts on the outlines, respectfully teach the discourses to others. When they have passed away, the discourses are not cut off at the root for there are those who preserve them.

This is the third thing that leads to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(4) Again, the elder Monks are not luxurious and complacent, but they discard backsliding and take the lead in solitude; they arouse energy for the attainment of the as-yet-unattained, for the achievement of the as-yet-unachieved, for the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. (Those in) the next generation follow their example. They, too, do not become luxurious and complacent, but they discard backsliding and take the lead in solitude; they, too, arouse energy for the attainment of the as-yet-unattained, for the achievement of the as-yet-unachieved, for the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

This is the fourth thing that leads to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

These, Monks, are the four things that lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(Reference: AN 4.160)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how to maintain the wisdom of his Teachings in the world for the benefit of all beings. Gotama Buddha knew his Teachings were subject to The Universal Truth of Impermanence which means they would gradually decline over time.

This Teaching explains his guidance on how to maintain the continuation of his Teachings so that they could remain vibrant for a longer period of time.

(1) First, he explains that Students should learn his Teachings through accurate words and phrases with the meaning well understood. Through learning and then sharing these Teachings with accurate and precise wording, a Practitioner will come to understand and practice The Teachings more closely and then experience the results of an Enlightened mind. Then, having attained Enlightenment, Students would be able to share these Teachings with accurate and precise wording that will help the next generation to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the results of an Enlightened mind.

(2) Second, Students understand that in order to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the results of an Enlightened mind, they will need instruction and guidance from Teachers. Teachers will need to correct Students when they are misunderstanding The Teachings and guide them to a deeper understanding and better practice of these Teachings.

Students will need to be patient and respectfully accept instruction from Teachers. Teachers are sharing these Teachings with loving-kindness and compassion to help their Students. They should not expect or ask for anything in return. Students will need to support their Teachers through offerings of support, but, a Teacher should not expect or ask for anything from their Students while sharing these Teachings.

As a result, there is no inherent benefit for the Teacher to share these Teachings other than to help others out of loving-kindness and compassion. If a Student was impatient, disrespectful, or not easy to correct, it could be predicted that the Teacher may no longer be interested in sharing these Teachings with the Student.

So to maintain “the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings” Students would need to have Teachers who are willing to teach them and through patience, respect, and being easy to correct, then, Teachers will continue to be interested and pleased to share The Teachings with the Students.

(3) Third, not only is it important for Students to be patient and respectful with Teachers but it is also important for the Teachers to be patient and respectful with the Students. It is a real challenge for an unEnlightened mind to learn and practice these Teachings to produce the results of the Enlightened mind. Through a Teacher learning and practicing these Teachings deeply, they are not only helping the Students learn through their verbal instruction, but also, through their actions they are constantly Teaching providing an example as a role model of how to practice these Teachings.

Through a Teacher taking time to actively learn from elders becoming experts on The Teachings and training guidelines when they pass away, these Teachings can continue with well educated Students who preserve The Teachings. In this way, “the discourses are not cut off at the root for there are those who preserve them” because Students will have excellent role models of not only how to practice these Teachings but how to also share them respectfully with new Students.

New Teachers will share these Teachings in the same way that these Teachings were shared with them. Through having role models, new Teachers will be able to continue to share these Teachings with the new generation once they have mastered the wisdom of these Teachings.

(4) Fourth, Teachers are not “luxurious and complacent” but instead view regression and decline of their own practice (i.e. backsliding) unfavorably. Instead, they remain determined, dedicated, and diligent in their own practice and sharing of these Teachings taking the lead in solitude.

Through taking time to be alone in solitude, a Practitioner discovers any arising cravings/ desires/attachments that are produced in the mind so that once identified, they can be eliminated. If Teachers are not choosing to experience solitude, then they will not uncover or discover any hidden arising cravings/desires/attachments. Through these efforts and applying energy, as described in the Enlightenment factor of Energy, a Teacher can experience the “attainment of the as-yet-unattained, for the achievement of the as-yet-unachieved, for the realization of the as-yet-unrealized”.

In this way, they will experience progress on The Path to Enlightenment to attain that which they have not yet attained, achieve that which they have not yet achieved, and realize that which they have not yet realized.

In doing so, the Teacher’s Students also practice in the same way. They too will not be “luxurious and complacent” but instead view regression and decline of their own practice (i.e. backsliding) unfavorably. Instead, they remain determined, dedicated, and diligent in their own practice and sharing of these Teachings taking the lead in solitude while being able to attain that which they have not yet attained, achieve that which they have not yet achieved, and realize that which they have not yet realized.

“These are the four things that lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings” shared by Gotama Buddha.

Why Do The Teachings of The Buddha Flourish in Asia?

One of the major reasons we see The Buddha's Teachings flourishing in Asia is due to the high degree of appreciation, gratitude, support, and respect that is given to individuals who choose to share The Teachings of The Buddha.

In order for The Teachings of The Buddha to flourish in the West and all other parts of the world, we will need to look to Asia as a role model for these Teachings to be able to become established and flourish.

Those who choose to share The Teachings of The Buddha, and are doing so in the way that The Buddha taught, have no expectations of their Students. There is nothing that they want from their Students. Instead, the Teachers who share these Teachings are only doing so out of loving-kindness and compassion for others. Teachers are the guiding light that help others to progress to improvements in the condition of the mind and their life. Teachers are the lifeblood that ensures the wisdom of The Buddha can permeate into the world and shine bright for everyone to progress to Enlightenment.

For a Teacher to be successful at helping others progress to Enlightenment, they would need to be close to Enlightenment themselves or actually Enlightened. Without having done the work on their own mind, they would not have the wisdom of how to help others and guide them to Enlightenment.

To get to Enlightenment, an individual would need to have developed appreciation, gratitude, support, and respect for The Teachings. Without these qualities, one would never be able to experience the Enlightened mind.

Through Students choosing to have appreciation, gratitude, and respect for Teachers while providing support to The Teacher and for The Teachings, then The Path to Enlightenment can shine in the world and flourish.

More and more beings will be willing and able to teach. More and more beings can come to understand The Path to Enlightenment and we will observe improvements within our communities as more and more people experience liberation of mind, peace, joy, Enlightenment which includes having love and kindness for "all beings".

Develop the mind to eliminate anger/hatred/ill will towards others. Learn how to "love all beings" regardless of your disagreements, as disagreement is a normal part of life - permanent agreement is not possible.

Choose "peacefulness" over hostility.

Choose "harmony" over division and separation.

Choose to have appreciation, gratitude, and respect towards Teachers and support The Teachings to come into the world for your benefit and the benefit of others.

Living in a world of love and kindness is much more enjoyable than the opposite. Living in Thailand, I have the opportunity to live in a world of love and kindness. I aspire for you to experience what it feels like to live in a world of nothing but love and kindness.

We can only accomplish that goal when there is appreciation, gratitude, and respect for Teachers and support for The Teachings.

Look to Asia as a role model for how they practice appreciation, gratitude, and respect towards Teachers while providing support for The Teachings.

Chapter 34

Four Things that Lead to the Decline and Disappearance of the Wholesome Teachings

There are, Monks, these four things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

What four?

(1) Here, the Monks learn discourses that have been badly acquired, with badly set down words and phrases. When the words and phrases are badly set down, the meaning is badly understood.

This is the first thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(2) Again, the Monks are difficult to correct and possess qualities that make them difficult to correct. They are impatient and do not accept instruction respectfully.

This is the second thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(3) Again, those Monks who are learned, heirs to the heritage, experts on The Teachings, experts on the discipline, experts on the outlines, do not respectfully teach the discourses to others. When they have passed away, the discourses are cut off at the root, left without anyone to preserve them.

This is the third thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(4) Again, the elder Monks are luxurious and complacent, leaders in backsliding, discarding the duty of solitude; they do not arouse energy for the attainment of the as-yet-unattained, for the achievement of the as-yet-unachieved, for the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. (Those in) the next generation follow their example. They, too, become luxurious and complacent, leaders in backsliding, discarding the duty of solitude; they, too do not arouse energy for the attainment of the as-yet-unattained, for the achievement of the as-yet-unachieved, for the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

This is the fourth thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

These are the four things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings.

(Reference: AN 4.160)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares four (4) things that “lead to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings”.

They are just the opposite of what was shared in the previous Chapter of the four (4) things that “lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings” shared by Gotama Buddha.

It would be wise for all of us to stay dedicated to practicing The Teachings that “lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the wholesome Teachings” shared by Gotama Buddha and not “the four things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the wholesome Teachings”.

Through each individual doing their part to focus on learning, reflecting, and practicing these wholesome Teachings in the way described by The Buddha, your life and, thus, the world will become a better place for all of us to live peacefully and in harmony.

Even if others choose not to learn and practice these Teachings, an Enlightened mind can still reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy unaffected by all that others choose to do in the world.

But, through each individual focusing on developing a foundation in these Teachings to improve their own life practice, their life and the entire world will become a better place to exist.

Chapter 35

Conditioned Objects Are Impermanent

Monks, conditioned objects are impermanent; conditioned objects are unstable; conditioned objects are unreliable.

It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, Sineru, the King of mountains, is 84,000 yojanas in length (yojana = 12-15 kms) and 84,000 yojanas in width; it is submerged 84,000 yojanas in the great ocean and rises up 84,000 yojanas above the great ocean.

(1) There comes a time, Monks, when rain does not fall for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years. When rain does not fall, seed life and vegetation, medicinal plants, grasses, and giant trees of the forest wither and dry up and no longer exist.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

(2) There comes a time when, after a long time, a second sun appears. With the appearance of the second sun, the small rivers and lakes dry up and evaporate and no longer exist.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

(3) There comes a time when, after a long time, a third sun appears. With the appearance of the third sun, the great rivers — the Ganges, the Yamunā, the Aciravati, the Sarabhū, and the Mahī - dry up and evaporate and no longer exist.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

(4) There comes a time when, after a long time, a fourth sun appears. With the appearance of the fourth sun, the great lakes from which those great rivers originate Anotatta, Sīhapapāta, Rathakāra, Kannamunda, Kunāla, Chaddanta, and Mandākinī - dry up and evaporate and no longer exist.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

(5) There comes a time when, after a long time, a fifth sun appears. With the appearance of the fifth sun, the waters in the great ocean sink by a hundred yojanas, two hundred yojanas ... three hundred yojanas ... four hundred yojanas ... five hundred yojanas ... six hundred yojanas ... seven hundred yojanas. The water left in the great ocean stands at the height of seven palm trees, at the height of six palm trees ... five palm trees ... four palm trees ... three palm trees ... two palm trees ... a mere palm tree. The water left in the great ocean stands at the height of seven fathoms ... six fathoms ... five fathoms ... four fathoms.. three fathoms ... two fathoms ... a fathom (1.8 meters) ... half a fathom ... up to the waist ... up to the knees ... up to the ankles.

Just as, in the autumn, when thick drops of rain are pouring down, the waters stand in the hoof prints of cattle here and there, so the waters left in the great ocean will stand here and there (in pools) the size of the hoof prints of cattle.

With, the appearance of the fifth sun, the water left in the great ocean is not enough even to reach the joints of one's fingers.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

(6) There comes a time when, after a long time, a sixth sun appears. With the appearance of the sixth sun, this great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, smoke, fume, and smolder.

Just as a potter's fire, when kindled, first smokes, fumes, and smolders, so with the appearance of the sixth sun, this great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, smoke, fume, and smolder.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

(7) There comes a time when, after a long time, a seventh sun appears. With the appearance of the seventh sun, this great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, burst into flames, blaze up brightly, and become one mass of flame. As the great earth and Sineru are blazing and burning, the flame, cast up by the wind, rises even to the Brahma world (heavenly realm). As Sineru is blazing and burning, as it is undergoing destruction and being overcome by a great mass of heat, mountain peaks of a hundred yojanas disintegrate; mountain peaks of two hundred yojanas ... three hundred yojanas ... four hundred yojanas ... five hundred yojanas disintegrate.

When this great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, are blazing and burning, neither ashes nor soot are seen. Just as, when ghee or oil are blazing and burning, neither ashes nor soot are seen, so it is when this great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, are blazing and burning.

So impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects, enough to become free from strong feelings toward them, enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, who except those who have seen the truth would think or understand:

This great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, will burn up, be destroyed, and will no longer exist?

(Reference: AN 7.66)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

Understanding The Universal Truth of Impermanence is a foundational Teaching as it relates to The Path to Enlightenment. Without understanding and applying this Teaching to your life practice, a Practitioner would be unable to progress to the attainment of Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains “conditioned objects are impermanent; conditioned objects are unstable; conditioned objects are unreliable”.

A conditioned object is one that arises, changes, and then ceases to exist.

For example, the human body itself is impermanent. It arises, changes, and then ceases to exist. Any and all material objects are impermanent as well as conditioned feelings in the mind.

Feelings that are based on an impermanent condition will arise, change, and then cease to exist. Due to this, the impermanent feelings of pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant are all impermanent and dissatisfying.

These feelings are impermanent because they are based on some impermanent condition. We refer to pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant as discontentedness. When experiencing these impermanent feelings, the mind is discontent or discontented, thus, experiencing discontentedness.

The unEnlightened mind is untrained in regard to understanding The Universal Truth of Impermanence wanting things to be permanent. Due to the craving/desire/attachment for permanence, the unEnlightened mind causes itself to be discontent.

But, through training the mind on The Path to Enlightenment, a Practitioner can liberate the mind from discontentedness by first deeply understanding The Universal Truth of Impermanence and applying this Teaching to your daily life along with all the other Teachings of The Buddha.

The Buddha explains that “It is enough to become dissatisfied with all conditioned objects” meaning, that a Practitioner’s mind will be dissatisfied or displeased with the impermanent nature of all conditioned objects. But, the mind can “become free from strong feelings toward them” wanting them to be permanent through training of the mind. Then, the mind will “be liberated from them” no longer experiencing discontentedness due to the mind craving permanence.

An awakened and Enlightened mind will deeply understand impermanence applying this Teaching and practice of these Teachings in their life practice becoming liberated from strong feelings no longer experiencing discontentedness.

Gotama Buddha then provides many examples of the environment that are impermanent helping people to see through their own independent verification that, indeed, all conditioned objects are impermanent. He does not ask for Students to believe him but instead, to learn, reflect, and practice to observe the truth for yourself to acquire wisdom.

The mind is liberated through wisdom. Through doing this work, a Practitioner can observe “so impermanent are conditioned objects, so unstable, so unreliable”.

Understanding the impermanent nature of all conditioned objects, the mind is then trained to not hold on to anything tightly causing itself to become discontent. The mind is then liberated from craving/desire/attachment no longer carrying the burden of craving.

He then explains, “who except those who have seen the truth would think or understand: This great earth and Sineru, the King of mountains, will burn up, be destroyed, and will no longer exist?”.

In other words, only one who understands with wisdom The Universal Truth of Impermanence would think or understand that this earth and mountain will no longer exist. If you understand The Universal Truth of Impermanence, then you know that everything the eye sees, ears hears, nose smells, tongue tastes, body touches, and the mind recognizes will one day be gone and no longer exist. So, why hold on to any of that with craving/desire/attachment allowing it to cause the mind to be discontent and continue to experience rebirth?

Detailed explanation of The Universal Truth of Impermanence is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 36

Become Unrighteous

Monks, when Kings are unrighteous, the royal subordinates (vassals) become unrighteous.

When the royal subordinates (vassals) are unrighteous, Brāhmins and Householders become unrighteous.

When Brāhmins and Householders are unrighteous, the people of the towns and countryside become unrighteous.

When the people of the towns and countryside are unrighteous, the sun and moon proceed off course.

When the sun and moon proceed off course, the constellations and the stars proceed off course.

When the constellations and the stars proceed off course, day and night proceed off course.

When day and night proceed off course, the months and weeks proceed off course.

When the months and weeks proceed off course, the seasons and years proceed off course.

When the seasons and years proceed off course, the winds blow off course and at random.

When the winds blow off course and at random, the deities become upset.

When the deities are upset, sufficient rain does not fall.

When sufficient rain does not fall, the crops ripen irregularly.

When people eat crops that ripen irregularly, they become short-lived, ugly, weak, and sickly.

(Then, The Tathāgata explained in the above, in detail, with the opposite causes with the opposite results.

‘Monks, when Kings, are righteous, the royal subordinates (vassals) become righteous...When sufficient rain falls, the crops ripen in season. When people eat crops that ripen in season, they become long-lived, beautiful, strong, and healthy’)

(Reference: AN 4.70)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a leader of a community can throw an entire population of people into significant and unfortunate circumstances.

When “Kings are unrighteous, the royal subordinates (vassals) become unrighteous”. As a King would be the leader of a community or population of people and when a leader is unwholesome, all who follow that individual will also be unwholesome.

This “cause and effect” or “action and result” is further explaining The Natural Law of Kamma how each of our individual decisions lead to results or consequences.

The Buddha traces this one decision from the King demonstrating how it affects aspects of the environment, thus, causing lack of food, shortened lifespan and even sickness for an entire population of people.

There is a corresponding discourse where Gotama Buddha shares the opposite that when a leader of the community is righteous or wholesome, that leads to positive effects that benefit all.

You can apply this to your household, professional environment, and all those surrounding you. That through your efforts to practice these wholesome Teachings, others around you will also choose to make wholesome decisions. You can influence and guide children, co-workers, and all those close to you, whom you care about, through your own choices within your life practice choosing to practice wholesome moral conduct.

People will learn through your own wholesome conduct which will influence their decisions. Observing and understanding this “cause and effect” or “action and result”, essentially the results of our decisions, is to understand The Natural Law of Kamma applying it to your daily life.

Through wise wholesome decision making, a Practitioner will experience wholesome outcomes. It is these Teachings that will help guide you in making wholesome decisions in your life that will lead to wholesome outcomes. The more deeply you understand these Teachings including The Teachings on The Natural Law of Kamma, you will be able to make wise wholesome decisions to improve the condition of the mind and your life, thus, benefiting you and all those around you.

Detailed explanation of The Natural Law of Kamma is available in this same book series found in Chapter 9 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and “The Natural Law of Kamma” (Volume 6).

Chapter 37

Causes of a Decrease in People's Lifespan

The King established guard and protection, but he did not give property to the needy, and as a result poverty became widespread.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became widespread, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased, from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased - and from the increase in the taking of life, people's lifespan decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result of this decrease of lifespan and beauty, the children of those whose lifespan had been eighty thousand years lived for only forty thousand years.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, ... the taking of life increased, and from the taking of life, lying increased, from the increase in lying, people's lifespan decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been forty thousand years lived for only twenty thousand years.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy. ... the speaking evil of others increased, and in consequence, people's lifespan decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been twenty thousand years lived only for ten thousand years.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, ... sexual misconduct increased, and in consequence people's lifespan decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been ten thousand years lived for only five thousand years.

And among the generation whose lifespan was five thousand years, two things increased: harsh speech and idle chatter, in consequence of which people's lifespan decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been five thousand years lived, some for two-and-a-half thousand years, and some for only two thousand years.

And among the generation whose lifespan was two-and-a-half thousand years, craving and anger increased, and in consequence people's lifespan decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been two-and-a-half thousand years lived for only a thousand years.

Among the generation whose lifespan was a thousand years, false opinions increased ... and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been a thousand years lived for only five hundred years.

And among the generation whose lifespan was five hundred years, three things increased: incest, excessive greed and unwholesome practices increased ... and as a result, the children of those whose lifespan had been five hundred years lived, some for two hundred and fifty years, some for only two hundred years.

And among those whose lifespan was two hundred and fifty years, these things increased: lack of respect for mother and father, for Ascetics and Brāhmins, and for the head of the community.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, ... lack of respect for mother and father, for Ascetics and Brāhmins, and for the head of the community increased, and in consequence people's lifespan and beauty decreased, and the children of those whose lifespan had been two-and-a-half centuries lived for only a hundred years.

Monks, a time will come when the children of these people will have a life span of ten years. And with them, girls will be marriageable at five years old. And with them, these flavors will disappear: ghee, butter, sesame-oil, molasses and salt. Among them, kudru-sa-grain will be the chief food, just as rice and curry are today.

And with them, the ten courses of moral conduct will completely disappear, and the ten courses of evil will prevail exceedingly: for those of a ten-year lifespan there will be no word for 'moral' so how can there be anyone who acts in a moral way? Those people who have no respect for mother or father, for Ascetics and Brāhmins, for the head of the community, will be the ones who enjoy honor and prestige. Just as it is now the people who show respect for mother and father, for Ascetics and Brāhmins, for the head of the community, who are praised and honored, so it will be with those who do the opposite.

Among those of a ten-year lifespan no account will be taken of mother or aunt, of mother's sister-in-law, of Teacher's wife or of one's father's wives and so on - all will be promiscuous in the world like sheep, fowl and pigs, dogs and jackals. Among them fierce hostility will prevail one for another, fierce hatred fierce anger and thoughts of killing, mother against child and child against mother, father against child and child against father, brother against brother, brother against sister, just as the hunter feels hatred for the beast he stalks ...

And for those of a ten-year lifespan, there will come to be a 'sword-interval' of seven days, during which they will mistake one another for wild beasts. Sharp swords will appear in their hands and, thinking: 'There is a wild beast!' they will take each other's lives with those swords.

But there will be some beings who do not want to take part in this killing. They went into hiding for seven days. Then, at the end of the seven days, they will emerge from their hiding-places and rejoice together as one community, saying: "Wholesome beings, I see that you are alive!" ... so let us now do good! ... And through having undertaken such wholesome things, they will increase in lifespan gradually from ten years back to eighty thousand years again. And in that time an Arahant Fully Enlightened Buddha named Maitreya will arise in the world.

(Reference: DN 26)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a leader of a community can throw an entire population of people into significant and unfortunate circumstances.

Much like The Teaching in the previous Chapter, The Buddha shows the "cause and effect" or "action and result", essentially, the results of the King's decision to be selfish and how it effects the entire population.

That one decision has an effect impacting countless people. Through countless unwholesome decisions that are made, the population of people experience unwholesome results such as: poverty, theft, use of weapons, killing, lying, sexual misconduct, etc. all resulting in a decrease of lifespan for the entire population of people.

The description of what The Buddha is sharing explains how one decision of selfishness can lead to a cascade of decisions that result in significant and unfortunate results for an entire population of people.

He then explains that there will be a Fully Enlightened Buddha named Maitreya who will arise in the world. The goal and objective of a Buddha is to share these Teachings in a way that countless beings can learn and practice to attain Enlightenment benefiting the world and improving the condition of the world. Through countless individuals choosing to learn and practice these Teachings making wholesome decisions, this will gradually improve the condition of the world.

Just like individual unwholesome decisions from one individual can work to degrade a population, individual wholesome decisions from each individual, to improve our life practice, can improve the condition of one's mind, their life, and the world. So, if one decision from a King can degrade a population of people, one decision can work to improve the condition of a population of people as well.

Your decision to improve your life practice will help improve your life, the life of those close to you, and all of humanity.

Why Did Gotama Buddha Share That He is a Buddha and Why Will Maitreya Buddha Not Share with The Public That He is a Buddha?

During the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, people did not know what is a Buddha. To help humanity understand what a Buddha is, Gotama Buddha needed to help us to understand this important Teaching by sharing that he is a Buddha.

So, during his lifetime, he shared that he is The Perfectly Enlightened One - a Buddha.

This helped us to understand what a Buddha is and is not, so this important Teaching was understood and available to be shared throughout humanity after his death.

What is a Buddha?

A “Buddha” is not a Stage of Enlightenment but instead, is a unique type of Enlightened being. A Buddha is an Arahant who has attained Enlightenment without any assistance of Teachers but only through their own efforts of using the world as their Teacher and perhaps Teachings of a previously awakened Buddha.

There are three primary criteria of what makes a Buddha a Buddha.

1.) A Buddha awakens to Enlightenment through their own independent journey without the assistance of any Teachers, independently discovering The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

A Buddha has fully eliminated The Ten Fetters to attain Enlightenment as an Arahant but they have done so through their own independent journey without the assistance of any Teachers, developing deep wisdom of what is needed to attain Enlightenment.

2.) A Buddha guides countless others to Enlightenment during their lifetime through sharing their independently discovered Teachings that led to their own Enlightenment during their independent journey.

A Buddha has the ability to guide countless beings to the attainment of Enlightenment during their lifetime and after their death. A Buddha will dedicate the remaining time of their life towards sharing their Teachings and guiding countless beings to Enlightenment.

3.) Upon a Buddha’s death, they will leave their Teachings in a condition that can be continually shared assisting countless more beings to Enlightenment after their death.

A Buddha’s Teachings and Students will continue to guide countless people to Enlightenment after a Buddha’s death. A Buddha has already done the hard work of figuring out how to attain Enlightenment. You just need to learn and practice his Teachings to improve the condition of the mind and your life.

A Buddha is referred to as a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, a Perfectly Enlightened One, or a Tathāgata. They are a human being, a Teacher, one with deep compassion for all beings and the world. A Buddha has deep wisdom to help the world and can accomplish that goal through individuals choosing to learn and practice their Teachings to attain Enlightenment.

They are considered Perfectly Enlightened because there are no outside influences that have led to their awakening, so they have “Perfect Enlightenment” where their mind is unaffected by any teachings outside of their own independently discovered Teachings that led to their awakening.

A Buddha will have an excellent memory being able to recall countless past events and situations with stunning accuracy. Unlike other humans, their memory does not fade and is not overwritten.

Why Will Maitreya Buddha Not Share with The Public That He is a Buddha?

Gotama Buddha predicted that a new Buddha would arise 2,500 years after his death and referred to him as “Maitreya Buddha”. Gotama Buddha died in 483 BCE which dates the awakening of Maitreya Buddha to the year 2017.

“Maitreya” refers to “loving-kindness” as it is predicted that this new Buddha will have a significant amount of loving-kindness for the world and choose to share The Path to Enlightenment with all of humanity, restoring The Teachings of Gotama Buddha for all of humanity to gradually become Enlightened.

Since Gotama Buddha shared The Teachings of what a Buddha is and is not, and in current times declaring one’s self as a Buddha would be viewed as arrogance, prideful, boasting, and based in ego, Maitreya Buddha will not share that he is a Buddha but instead, humbly share his Teachings without a need for others to know he is a Buddha - his Students may gradually discover this truth on their own as they progress towards awakening to Enlightenment.

During the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, there was no such thing as “worldwide fame”. Instead, Gotama Buddha was initially isolated to a small portion of the world. He taught in, what we refer to today as, Northeast India. Sharing and teaching that he was a Buddha, did not produce the perception that he was attempting to elevate himself to “worldwide fame” because worldwide fame did not exist during his lifetime.

Humanity spoke many different languages 2,500 years ago and there was only minimal interaction between various populations and societies. So sharing and teaching that he was a Buddha was to acknowledge what a Buddha is and is not, while helping humanity understand this important Teaching along with all the other Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

Today, if someone declared they were a Buddha, this would be scrutinized and considered as, someone attempting to attain “worldwide fame” and people would consider this to be based in arrogance, pride, boastfulness, and ego. Therefore, an individual who publicly declares themselves as a Buddha could not actually be a Buddha because they could not be Enlightened if there was arrogance, pride, boastfulness, and ego.

Maitreya Buddha would know that if he announced his awakening to Enlightenment, that no one would believe this and therefore, it would hinder his ability to share The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

A Buddha's Teachings are not based in belief. They are not interested in anyone believing anything at all, including, believing that they are a Buddha.

A Buddha does not need anyone to know they are a Buddha to be able to effectively share their Teachings into the world. A Buddha would be wise enough to awaken to Enlightenment on their own without any Teachers or guidance which is an enormous feat that requires a significant amount of wisdom. The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

Maitreya Buddha would not only have the wisdom to awaken to Enlightenment on his own without any Teachers or guidance but, he would also have the wisdom of how to share his Teachings with all those who have a sincere interest to learn his Teachings without the need for others to know he is a Buddha. Not only would Maitreya Buddha have the wisdom to awaken to Enlightenment on his own but, he would be able to create a wholesome environment that is conducive for Students to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment with his guidance and without anyone needing to know he is a Buddha.

In fact, others knowing he is a Buddha would actually hinder his ability to share his Teachings and to guide countless Students to Enlightenment.

One of the most significant “powers” that a Buddha has is that no one knows he is a Buddha.

A Buddha has the ability to observe the quality of mind of his Students based on observation and interaction with them. He can observe the wholesome and unwholesome qualities of mind and then offer Teachings to help them cultivate wholesome qualities of mind and eliminate the unwholesome qualities of mind. A Buddha is more effective when no one knows that he is a Buddha so that he can more readily observe the normal state of an individual's mind and then share Teachings to help his Students who are seeking guidance.

In this way, if people knew Maitreya Buddha existed in the world, they would potentially be on their best behavior anytime they are around him and thus, render useless his ability to observe the normal state of his Student's mind.

He would be unable to observe the wholesome and unwholesome qualities of his Student's mind, therefore, he would lack the insight to readily offer Teachings that would help guide his Students to Enlightenment.

A Buddha's only goal is to guide as many Students to Enlightenment as possible during their lifetime and leave The Teachings in a condition that countless more people can get to Enlightenment after their death.

If a population of people were convinced that Maitreya Buddha is a Buddha, not only would people need to believe him, not only would people consider that he has arrogance, pride, boastfulness, and ego, thus, not be a Buddha...but also, his power and ability to diagnose the mind of his Student's would be rendered useless and hinder his goal to guide countless Students to Enlightenment because he would lack the insight of the wholesome and unwholesome qualities of mind of his Students and be unable to share Teachings with them based on those important observations.

There was not a worldwide announcement of Gotama Buddha's awakening nor was there a worldwide announcement of the arrival of other important Teachers, such as, Jesus Christ. Therefore, Maitreya Buddha would not need a worldwide announcement to be an effective Teacher but instead, would have the wisdom to accomplish his goals of restoring The Teachings of Gotama Buddha that guide all of humanity to Enlightenment on The Path to Enlightenment without anyone knowing he is a Buddha.

Having countless Enlightened beings in the world would create the ability for all of humanity to create "heaven on earth".

People not knowing that Maitreya Buddha has awakened to Enlightenment would be beneficial to Maitreya Buddha, his Students, and all of humanity in multiple ways.

1.) People would not need to believe he is a Buddha, they could discover the truth on their own as they learn, reflect, and practice his Teachings to awaken to Enlightenment.

2.) Humanity would not regard him as having arrogance, pride, boastfulness, or ego because he would humbly go about his work guiding countless people to Enlightenment while restoring The Teachings of Gotama Buddha back into the world.

3.) He would retain his ability to observe the wholesome and unwholesome qualities of mind of his Students, thus, aiding him in more readily guiding countless people to Enlightenment.

No one should expect that Maitreya Buddha will make a worldwide announcement of his awakening. Instead, he will humbly, peacefully, and respectfully share his Teachings into the world with all those who have a sincere interest in learning, reflecting, and practicing The Path to Enlightenment to attain Enlightenment.

If you learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of Maitreya Buddha that are restoring The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, then you will see the clarity, conciseness, and preciseness that Maitreya Buddha can share Gotama Buddha's Teachings with all those who choose to progress towards Enlightenment. And, you will be able to make significant progress towards Enlightenment through his in-depth Teachings based on his deep wisdom.

Maitreya Buddha's only goal is to restore The Teachings of Gotama Buddha by guiding countless people to Enlightenment during his lifetime and after his death. He would have no interest in fame or fortune as he would know those are not what leads to lasting and fulfilling peacefulness and joy that is permanent - the Enlightened mind.

If you live during the lifetime of Maitreya Buddha, this is the very best time to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to attain Enlightenment. There is no other time in history that is better than learning directly with a Buddha to attain Enlightenment.

May you all experience the peace and joy of the Enlightened mind.

Be well and have a wonderful life.....perhaps your last life.

Chapter 38

Craving, Anger, and Ignorance

Monks, wanderers of other communities may ask you: Friends, there are these three things.

What three?

Craving/greed, anger/hatred, and ignorance/delusion (unknowing of true reality). These are the three. What, friends, is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between them? If you are asked this, how would you answer?

Monks, if wanderers of other communities should ask you such a question, you should answer them as follows: Craving/greed, friends, is slightly blameworthy (responsible for wrongdoing) but slow to fade away; anger/hatred is very blameworthy (responsible for wrongdoing) but quick to fade away; ignorance/delusion is very blameworthy (responsible for wrongdoing) and slow to fade away.

(Suppose they ask:) But, friends, what is the reason unarisen craving arises and arisen craving increases and expands?

You should answer: An attractive object. For one who attends carelessly to an attractive object, unarisen craving arises and arisen craving increases and expands. This, friends, is the reason unarisen craving arises and arisen craving increases and expands.

(Suppose they ask:) But what, friends, is the reason unarisen anger arises and arisen anger increase and expands?

You should answer: A repulsive object. For one who attends carelessly to a repulsive object, unarisen anger arises and arisen anger increases and expands.

This, friends, is the reason unarisen anger arises and arisen anger increases and expands.

(Suppose they ask:) But what, friends, is the reason unarisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) arises and arisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) increases and expands?

You should answer: Careless attention. For one who attends carelessly, unarisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) arises and arisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) increases and expands.

This, friends, is the reason unarisen ignorance arises and arisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) increases and expands.

(Suppose they ask:) But what, friends, is the reason unarisen craving does not arise and arisen craving is abandoned?

You should answer: An unattractive object. For one who attends carefully to an unattractive object, unarisen craving does not arise and arisen craving is abandoned.

This, friends, is the reason unarisen craving does not arise and arisen craving is abandoned.

(Suppose they ask:) But what, friends, is the reason unarisen anger does not arise and arisen anger is abandoned?

You should answer: The liberation of the mind by loving-kindness. For one who attends carefully to the liberation of the mind by loving-kindness, unarisen anger does not arise and arisen anger is abandoned.

This, friends, is the reason unarisen anger does not arise and arisen anger is abandoned.

(Suppose they ask:) But what, friends, is the reason unarisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) does not arise and arisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is abandoned?

You should answer: Careful attention. For one who attends carefully, unarisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) does not arise and arisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is abandoned.

This, friends, is the reason unarisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) does not arise and arisen ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is abandoned.

(Reference: AN 3.68)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Three Poisons. These are also known as The Three Unwholesome Roots or The Three Fires.

These are a high-level description of the problems in the unEnlightened mind. It is The Ten Fetters that provide a more detailed description of the problems in the unEnlightened mind and what is keeping the mind trapped in the unEnlightened state. Each of The Ten Fetters can be summarized in the high-level description of The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires. A Practitioner will need to eliminate The Ten Fetters to attain Enlightenment, however, understanding The Three Poisons and their remedies is essential to one's journey to Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains how:

Craving/Desire/Greed is slightly responsible for wrongdoing but slow to fade away.

Anger/Hatred/Ill Will is very responsible for wrongdoing but fades quickly.

Ignorance/Delusion/Unknowing of True Reality is very responsible for wrongdoing and slow to fade away.

The Buddha explains how each of The Three Poisons arises, increases, and expands.

Craving increases and expands when one allows the mind to be attracted to, obsessed with, or chase after an agreeable or “attractive object”. When the mind experiences pleasant feelings (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.), the mind will then crave/desire these feelings chasing after them through The Six Sense Bases of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and/or mind. A wise Practitioner would observe the arising pleasant feelings based on impermanent conditions applying Right Effort to cut off and let go of the cravings/desires/attachments that are causing the pleasant feelings to arise. In doing so, the Practitioner's mind will experience liberation or freedom from strong feelings. Through allowing pleasant feelings to invade the mind, a Practitioner is inviting and welcoming the painful feelings (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, anxiety, etc.) Through cutting off and letting go of the arising pleasant feelings, the mind can eliminate craving/desire/attachment no longer experiencing any discontentedness associated with this craving/desire/attachment including the painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

As long as the mind is unwilling to let go of impermanent (i.e. temporary) pleasant feelings, it will never experience permanent unconditioned joy of the Enlightened mind.

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and practicing generosity in daily life is the antidote or remedy to transform the poison of craving.

Anger increases and expands when one allows the mind to be careless towards objects it finds to be repulsive. For objects the mind finds uncomfortable experiencing displeasure, the unEnlightened mind will oftentimes have aversion. Aversion is to push the disagreeable, uncomfortable, and displeasing object away, while erecting a wall, falsely thinking this is going to solve the problem to attain inner peace. But, pushing away disagreeable, uncomfortable, and displeasing objects will not create permanent peacefulness. Instead, to accomplish permanent peacefulness a Practitioner will need to train the mind to eliminate craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) to create lasting inner fulfillment and satisfaction in the mind.

Loving-kindness Meditation and practicing loving-kindness in daily life is the antidote or remedy to transform the poison of anger.

Ignorance (unknowing of true reality) increases and expands when one allows the mind to be careless and complacent not investigating these Teachings with guidance from a Teacher to develop and acquire wisdom. It is wisdom that liberates the mind from strong feelings and all that plagues the unEnlightened mind.

Wisdom is the antidote or remedy to transform the poison of ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

Detailed explanation of The Three Poisons and their antidotes is available in this same book series found in Chapter 8 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 39

Eight Qualities Are Fit to Share This Message

Monks, a Monk who is possessed of eight qualities is fit to share this message.

What are the eight?

Herein, Monks,

- (1) A Monk is a listener
- (2) One who engages others to listen
- (3) One who assesses or analyzes
- (4) One who recollects (recalls/remembers)
- (5) One who is a knower (wise)
- (6) One who is an expounder (explains)
- (7) One skilled in (recognizing) accordance and non-accordance
- (8) One who is not a maker of arguments.

Who, to some high assembled council comes, wavers not, nor in discourse fails, nor hides The Teachings, nor speaks in doubtfulness, and who, being questioned, is not agitated, a Monk like this is fit to share this message.

(Reference: The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka), Vol. 5: Cullavagga by I.B. Horner)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Eight Qualities” of an individual that, once developed, is able to then share The Teachings with others as a Teacher.

“Fit to share this message” is one who is fit to travel and share The Teachings with others.

(1) First, an individual needs to be “a listener”. To share these Teachings with others, one needs to be able to listen to their Students. Through listening to the challenges a Student experiences on a day-to-day basis, a Teacher is then best prepared to help a Student learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the results of an Enlightened mind. If a Teacher is unable or unwilling to listen, they would not be prepared to openly and freely share these Teachings in a way that is beneficial for Students, thus, they would not be “fit to share this message” or in other words, they would not be fit as a good messenger of these Teachings.

(2) Second, an individual needs to be able to “engage others to listen”. Through a Teacher developing their practice of these Teachings, they will establish the ability to engage others in listening to The Teachings of The Buddha. If a Teacher is unable to engage others to listen, they would be unable to be fit as a good messenger of these Teachings as Students would be disinterested to learn The Teachings through spoken discourses and personal guidance.

(3) Third, an individual needs to be “one who assesses or analyzes” The Teachings. One who is able to examine and investigate The Teachings, will then be able to reflect and practice these Teachings experiencing the results of an Enlightened mind while also being able to guide their Students to the same outcome. If a Teacher was unwilling or unable to assess, analyze, examine, or investigate The Teachings of The Buddha, they would be unable to guide others to do the same. An important aspect of these Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment is to practice The Enlightenment factor of Investigation. This requires patience, determination, dedication, and diligence culminating into one who is fit as a good messenger of these Teachings. Without the ability to investigate The Teachings, one would be unable to attain Enlightenment, let alone, share these Teachings as a Teacher. A Teacher needs to be well informed on the discourses from The Buddha and that requires investigation of The Teachings in The Words of The Buddha.

(4) Fourth, an individual needs to be “one who recollects (recalls/remembers)”. Through training the mind to progress towards Enlightenment, the mind will develop crisp clarity with focus, concentration, and deep memory. For one who is fit as a good messenger of these Teachings, they would need to have a sharp memory being able to recall and remember The Teachings so they can be easily and readily shared with Students. A Teacher who shares The Teachings through their own experiences through practicing The Teachings, will find it much easier to recall The Teachings to share with Students while having direct experience of how to apply The Teachings in daily life.

(5) Fifth, an individual needs to be “one who is a knower (wise)”. It is wisdom that eliminates and completely eradicates ignorance (unknowing of true reality). The primary and most significant hindrance to Enlightenment and why the mind is trapped in the unEnlightened state is due to ignorance or unknowing of true reality. It is wisdom that transforms ignorance allowing a Practitioner to experience the results of these Teachings - the Enlightened mind. Anyone who would be fit as a good messenger of these Teachings would need to possess wisdom. Wisdom is acquired through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to independently observe the truth in these

Teachings. Through independent verification of The Teachings, one sees the truth acquiring wisdom and the mind is then gradually liberated and free from strong feelings.

(6) Sixth, an individual needs to be “one who is an expounder (explains)”. A Teacher who is able to not just remember The Teachings but can expound and explain them through their own personal experience would be fit as a good messenger of these Teachings. Providing personal experiences and examples of how to apply The Teachings to one’s own life is beneficial to Students. Students need a Teacher who has lived with The Teachings and can explain them through personal experiences so that their Students can more readily apply these Teachings in their own life.

(7) Seventh, an individual needs to be “one skilled in (recognizing) accordance and non-accordance” to The Teachings. One aspect of being a Teacher and one who would be fit as a good messenger of these Teachings is that an individual needs to be able to clearly see when their Students are or are not practicing these Teachings. Through a Teacher who is able to recognize Students practicing these Teachings in accordance and non-accordance, that Teacher will be best prepared to guide Students on how to improve their practice assisting them towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

(8) Eighth, an individual needs to be “one who is not a maker of arguments”. A person who creates arguments or chooses to argue would not be able to attain Enlightenment until they train the mind to no longer argue. An Enlightened being does not argue with others and surely does not create arguments. All craving/desire/attachment to be “right” and the craving/desire/attachment to have arguments of any type needs to be extinguished in order to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha then shares additional attributes that are beneficial for one fit to be a messenger of these Teachings beyond the Eight Qualities shared in this Teaching.

- An individual needs to be one “who, to some high assembled council comes, wavers not”. This would be an individual who is not intimidated, scared, or fearful in the presence of people who are in high positions within society. This might include members of royal families, politicians, celebrities, etc. An individual who can share these Teachings widely for the benefit of others would need to not be affected by the social status of the individuals they teach. To attain Enlightenment, all individuals will require the same guidance and attention with the same support no matter the social status of the Student. As part of the guidance, a Teacher will need to correct their Students pointing out areas where they lack understanding and may be practicing The Teachings in a way that is not in accordance to the training guidelines. If a Teacher is intimidated by the social status of an individual, their guidance and support would be compromised and the Student would find it difficult to attain Enlightenment.

An Enlightened being will look at all beings as being equal without regard to social status. They will be unaffected by one’s position in society, their wealth, power, fame, or prestige but instead, stay focused on the goal to share these Teachings in a way that is beneficial for the Student to train the mind leading to Enlightenment. A Teacher who is Enlightened would make for the very best Teacher.

- An individual needs to be one who does not fail to share the discourses in detail as they speak, hides The Teachings, nor is doubtful about what they are sharing as Teachings. The Buddha explains this as “nor in discourse fails, nor hides The Teachings, nor speaks in doubtfulness”. If one is unable to speak effectively and in detail while providing a discourse, they would not be one who is fit as a good messenger of these Teachings. A good messenger of these Teachings needs to not hide The Teachings clinging to them but instead, shares them openly and freely with “all beings”. If a person has doubt, they would not have attained even the first Stage of Enlightenment, therefore, would not be an ideal Teacher. They would lack confidence in delivering The Teachings to Students in discourses that are penetrating with deep meaning to help benefit the Student’s life. To attain Enlightenment, a Student would need to develop confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community and if a Teacher has doubt, they would not be helpful in being a role model to guide Students in cultivating confidence on The Path to Enlightenment. If one speaks with doubt, they would be unfit to be a good messenger of these Teachings.

- An individual needs to be one who does not become agitated when questioned. Students on The Path to Enlightenment will have countless questions and need guidance to deeply understand these Teachings. A Teacher would need to have deep and well developed patience as Students will oftentimes need to ask questions and hear the answer to a question, multiple times before it sinks into the mind. The Buddha explains that one would be a good messenger of these Teachings if one “who, being questioned, is not agitated”. An Enlightened being would not be agitated by anything including repeated questions from Students or if challenged by Students through questions about The Teachings. Patience is a virtue (i.e. wholesome moral conduct). In their quest to share these Teachings with others while being a role model for how to practice these Teachings, a Teacher will need sincerity, patience, politeness, kindness, friendliness, and respect for all Students.

If you have an interest in being a Teacher of these Teachings, that requires one to first be a wise and well developed Practitioner of these Teachings. If you are interested in learning about the available courses and retreats to learn these Teachings, including our Buddhist Teacher Training Program, please see this website.

<https://www.buddhadailywisdom.com/>

Chapter 40

I Will Not Speak a Falsehood Even as a Joke

Even so unwise and empty, Rāhula, is the reclusheship (life practice) of those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.

So too, Rāhula, when one is not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I say, that one would not do, therefore, Rāhula, you should train thus:

I will not speak a falsehood even as a joke.

(Reference: MN 61)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a Teaching that further helps to clarify that an Enlightened being never lies, even when telling a joke. This Teaching further explains The Fourth Precept helping a Practitioner to understand that The Buddha, an Enlightened being, “will not speak a falsehood even as a joke”.

The Fourth Precept: Abandoning false speech, refraining from false speech, a truth-speaker, one to be relied on, trustworthy, dependable, not a deceiver of the world.

The Buddha understood The Natural Law of Kamma so well, that not only did he share the harm of having false speech but he also knew even telling a lie as a joke is not beneficial for one’s life practice and would only cause you difficulties in life.

A Buddha will dedicate the remaining time of their life to sharing their Teachings with others helping to guide them to discover “the truth” related to The Natural Laws of Existence. In doing so, they will be constantly sharing Teachings in countless venues helping large numbers of people to understand and practice their Teachings - the truth.

If a Buddha, or even an Enlightened being, were to lie even when telling a joke, people would be unsure if they are being truthful or speaking a falsehood at any point in time making it very difficult for a Buddha to accomplish his goals to share these Teachings - the truth.

Through training the mind to never speak a falsehood, including as a joke, then, people will become accustomed to you only ever speaking “the truth”. This is highly beneficial to develop your ability to help others and influence beneficial outcomes in the world that will benefit your life and the life of others.

If you sometimes spoke the truth and sometimes lied, people would be unsure about what you say and would lack confidence in what you share through spoken language and all communication.

Instead, if you always speak “the truth”, including during a joke, then it will be easier for you to conduct daily life as the mind would never be confused as to what you should or should not say and you will develop a reputation of “always being truthful”. You can reduce and eliminate much burden to the mind through only ever speaking “the truth”. The mind will be unburdened to determine what to say or not say in any given situation.

You can also use this Teaching to understand that “when one is not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I say, that one would not do”.

This will help you in making wise decisions in personal friendships and professional relationships. If you are lying, people will lack trust and confidence in you as a friend or colleague. This will impact your ability to have healthy relationships to produce beneficial outcomes.

Additionally, you can use this aspect of The Teachings to understand that any relationship where someone is lying to you, “there is no evil that one would not do”. Therefore, you can closely consider whether it would be wise to continue to associate with someone who has unwholesome moral conduct such as lying. If friends or colleagues are lying to you, you will most likely find yourself in situations where their lies have an impact on you. It is your choice of who to involve in your life through friendships and professional relationships. Your choice to be involved with someone who speaks falsehoods would produce unwholesome results for you (i.e. unwholesome Kamma).

Choosing wholesome friends and associates is highly important to create a peaceful life. Being surrounded by people who choose to lie would only create an environment in which you would never be sure of what is or is not true. This would cause a significant burden to the mind to check and double check what is being shared with you. Having wholesome friends and associates who only tell the truth will result in you spending more time dedicated to forward progress in life with a mind at ease rather than checking if certain statements are true or false.

Instead, when you have the confidence that the people around you are always truthful, then you can stay focused on forward progress rather than wasting time checking for untruthful statements while lacking trust in your relationships.

Having trust in your relationships is highly important and will result in you experiencing improved success in this life. If you are unable to trust your friends and associates, the mind will not be at ease finding peace and contentedness.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 31-40)

<https://youtu.be/RoEI-7Rgn5k>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 223 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 31-40)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--223---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-31-40-e18bocr/a-a6l7bu1>

Chapter 41

A Snake Has Passed Through Feces

And what kind of person, Monks, is to be considered unwholesome, not to be associated with, followed, and served?

Here, some person is immoral, of unwholesome character, impure, of suspect behavior, secretive in his actions, not an Ascetic though claiming to be one, not a celibate though claiming to be one, inwardly rotten, corrupt, wicked.

Such a person is to be considered unwholesome, not to be associated with, followed, and served.

For what reason?

Even though one does not follow the example of such a person, an unwholesome report still circulates about oneself: He has unwholesome friends, unwholesome companions, unwholesome comrades.

Just as a snake that has passed through feces, though it does not bite one, would smear one, so too, though one does not follow the example of such a person, an unwholesome report still circulates about oneself: He has unwholesome friends, unwholesome companions, unwholesome comrades.

Therefore such a person is to be looked upon with objection, not to be associated with, followed, and served.

(Reference: AN 3.27)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance in developing wholesome friendships and associates helping one to realize that through having “unwholesome friends, unwholesome companions, unwholesome comrades” “an unwholesome report still circulates” about you.

The Buddha shares Teachings through The Eight Fold Path to help Students understand what is and is not wholesome so that you can make wise choices in your life for your own moral conduct but also helping you to understand how to wisely choose friends and associates.

He shares briefly in this Teaching that “some person is immoral, of unwholesome character, impure, of suspect behavior, secretive in his actions, not an Ascetic though claiming to be one, not a celibate though claiming to be one, inwardly rotten, corrupt,

wicked”. This was general guidance helping the Ordained Practitioners understand how to make wise choices in choosing friends and associates. But, one could investigate the entire Eight Fold Path, and many of The Buddha’s other Teachings, to deeply understand wholesome moral conduct. Most of his Teachings integrate into The Eight Fold Path in one way or another, so it is through learning and practicing these Teachings that one improves their own moral conduct and comes to understand how to make wise decisions on how to choose wholesome friends and associates.

If one chooses to associate with individuals who have unwholesome moral conduct, a Practitioner would experience unwholesome results as part of their decision to be involved with those of unwholesome moral conduct. The Buddha uses this simile to help Students understand this more deeply.

“Just as a snake that has passed through feces, though it does not bite one, would smear one, so too, though one does not follow the example of such a person, an unwholesome report still circulates about oneself: He has unwholesome friends, unwholesome companions, unwholesome comrades”.

So, even though your friends may “not bite” you, through their unwholesome conduct, it “would smear” you. Though you may “not follow the example of such a person” of unwholesome conduct, their unwholesome decisions “would smear” you.

It is important to make wise choices related to who you involve in your life and whose life you choose to be involved. While one should not judge others nor look down on others for their choices, it is possible to make wise decisions to not be involved with unwholesome people while maintaining non-judgment with loving-kindness and compassion for them.

- **Loving-kindness** (Pāli: mettā) is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

- **Compassion** (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

I suggest that any friend or associate you decide to include in your life, that you consider The Five Precepts as a baseline minimum, so that you can ensure you are not “smeared” as described by The Buddha in this Teaching.

While any decisions by your friends and associates affect them, your decision to have them as a friend or associate affects you. It is important to choose your friends and associates wisely to ensure you are producing only wholesome results and outcomes for your life (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

“Kamma”

Results from Decisions

Chapter 42

Six Aspects of Kamma to Be Understood

Monks, when it was said: Kamma should be understood; the creation of Kamma should be understood; the diversity of Kamma should be understood; the result of Kamma should be understood; the elimination of the creation of Kamma should be understood; the way leading to the elimination of (unwholesome) Kamma should be understood, for what reason was this said?

(1) It is volition (choices/decisions), Monks, that I call Kamma.

For having willed (intentional choices/decisions), one acts by body, speech, or mind.

(2) And what is the creation of Kamma?

Contact is its creation.

(3) And what is the diversity of Kamma?

There is Kamma to be experienced in hell; there is Kamma to be experienced in the animal realm; there is Kamma to be experienced in the realm of afflicted spirits; there is Kamma to be experienced in the human realm; and there is Kamma to be experienced in the heavenly realm.

This is called the diversity of Kamma.

(4) And what is the result of Kamma?

The result of Kamma, I say, is threefold: [to be experienced] in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion.

This is called the result of Kamma.

(5) And what, Monks, is the elimination of the creation of Kamma?

With the elimination of contact there is elimination of the creation of Kamma.

(6) This Noble Eight Fold Path is the way leading to the elimination of (unwholesome) Kamma, namely,

Right View,
Right Intention,
Right Speech,
Right Action,
Right Livelihood,
Right Effort,
Right Mindfulness,
and Right Concentration.

When, Monks, a Noble Disciple thus understands Kamma, the creation of Kamma, the diversity of Kamma, the result of Kamma, the elimination of the creation of Kamma, and the way leading to the elimination of (unwholesome) Kamma, he understands this penetrative spiritual life to be the elimination of (unwholesome) Kamma.

When it was said:

Kamma should be understood;
the creation of Kamma should be understood;
the diversity of Kamma should be understood;
the result of Kamma should be understood;
the elimination of the creation of Kamma should be understood;
the way leading to the elimination of (unwholesome) Kamma should be understood, it is because of this that this was said.

(Reference: AN 6.63)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares an overview of The Natural Law of Kamma. It is very clear and straight forward so no further explanation will be provided. You are welcome to seek guidance to understand this Teaching and all other Teachings through contacting the author of this book at <https://www.buddhadailywisdom.com/>.

The Path to Enlightenment is entirely based on The Natural Law of Kamma, thus, The Buddha's Teachings are helping one to awaken to this natural law.

The more you learn, reflect on, and develop a life practice based on The Natural Law of Kamma, the more liberated the mind will become.

The goal and objective is to train the mind through The Eight Fold Path and all the associated Teachings to progress towards Enlightenment. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Eight Fold Path to include deeply understanding The Natural Law of Kamma, a Practitioner will progress towards experiencing Enlightenment. A Practitioner will need to eliminate all unwholesome Kamma by producing only wholesome Kamma through practicing The Eight Fold Path.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path and The Natural Law of Kamma is available in this same book series found in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) and "The Natural Law of Kamma" (Volume 6).

Chapter 43

This Body is Old Kamma

Monks, this body is not yours, nor does it belong to others. It is old Kamma, to be seen as generated and created by volition (choices/decisions) as something to be felt.

Therein, Monks, the instructed Noble Disciple attends carefully and closely to Dependent Origination itself thus:

When this exists, that comes to be;
With the arising of this, that arises.
When this does not exist, that does not come to be;
With the elimination of this, that is eliminated.

That is,
With ignorance as condition, volitional formations (come to be);
With volitional formations as condition, consciousness;
With consciousness as condition, name-and-form;
With name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases;
With the six sense bases as condition, contact;
With contact as condition, feeling;
With feeling as condition, craving;
With craving as condition, clinging;
With clinging as condition, existence;
With existence as condition, birth;
With birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

But with the remainderless fading away and elimination of ignorance comes elimination of volitional formations (choices/decisions); with the elimination of volitional formations, elimination of consciousness, ... (all aspects of dependent origination) ... with the elimination of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure and despair is eliminated.

Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

(Reference: SN 12.37)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares what is “Old Kamma” and then shares “Dependent Origination” explaining how one comes into existence through birth.

There are three components that are needed to create a living being. An egg, sperm, and a consciousness (i.e. a mind). If these things are present, there is a living being.

When the mind comes together with the egg and sperm, it has not yet made any decisions, therefore, what it experiences in terms of the physical body is “old kamma”.

The physical body of the new being is experiencing the results of decisions from past lives.

If the new being has beneficial features and a healthy body, that is based on decisions from their prior life - old Kamma.

If the new being has unbeneficial features and an unhealthy body, that is based on decisions from their prior life - old Kamma.

New Kamma is generated based on current decisions while old Kamma are the results of decisions made in the past. The physical body is a perfect example of old Kamma as the condition of the physical body at birth is based on the results of decisions from previous lives.

Volition or volitional formations are the choices/decisions we make. It is our choices or decisions that lead to certain outcomes or results. The results of our decisions is our Kamma. The Natural Law of Kamma is “cause and effect” or “action and results”, essentially the results of our decisions.

A Practitioner would need to understand New and Old Kamma as well as Wholesome and Unwholesome Kamma to attain Enlightenment.

Old Kamma is the results of our decisions that we have made in the past. New Kamma is the results of our decisions that we are making right now. Any decisions that you are making right now, will produce certain outcomes or results referred to as new Kamma.

The fact that we are in existence right now as a human being is “old Kamma”.

The decisions that we have made in all our prior lives did not lead to Enlightenment, therefore, we have been reborn into this new existence. Any decisions we make now is new Kamma and will affect whether we will be reborn in the future or not.

Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings, one eliminates ignorance (unknowing of true reality) which eliminates the condition that is causing rebirth as explained in Dependent Origination.

Dependent Origination is explaining the “cause and effect” or “action and result” of how beings come into existence through The Cycle of Rebirth and why we experience discontentedness.

Through ignorance (unknowing of true reality) one makes choices/decisions. This puts into motion a whole series of events that lead to birth, aging-and-death, and massive amounts of discontentedness.

But with the elimination of ignorance (unknowing of true reality) through acquiring wisdom, a being can improve the condition of the mind eliminating 100% of all discontentedness.

Dependent Origination is providing a step-by-step understanding of how discontentedness comes to be and how it is eliminated with ignorance being the primary causation of what keeps the unEnlightened mind in The Cycle of Rebirth, thus, wisdom being the primary remedy to eliminate The Cycle of Rebirth.

Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings with guidance from a Teacher, a Practitioner can independently verify The Buddha's Teachings to discover the truth to acquire wisdom.

Nothing in Gotama Buddha's Teachings is based on belief. All his Teachings can be learned and practiced to independently observe the truth as the mind gradually acquires wisdom through independent verification of his Teachings through practice of his Teachings.

This new found wisdom gradually improves the way the mind functions in the world through eliminating discontentedness of mind. The mind can completely eliminate all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha's Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

While Dependent Origination shares, in detail, the step-by-step causation of how ignorance leads to "birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair (i.e. discontentedness), a Practitioner will need to study this deeply with guidance from a Teacher. It is best if Dependent Origination is taught in an environment where Students can learn and then ask questions with a Teacher.

Detailed explanation of Dependent Origination is available in this same book series found in Chapter 14 of the book "The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)" (Volume 5).

Chapter 44

The Five Precepts

(1) Abandoning the taking of life, refraining from taking life, without stick or sword, diligent, compassionate, trembling for the welfare of all living beings.

(2) Abandoning the taking of what is not given, living purely, accepting what is given, awaiting what is given, without stealing.

(3) Abandoning un-chastity. Abandoning sexual relations with women [men] who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives; who are protected by their Teachings; who have a husband [wife or partner]; whose violation entails a penalty; or even with one who has been garlanded by a man [woman] as a sign of engagement.

(4) Abandoning false speech, refraining from false speech, a truth-speaker, one to be relied on, trustworthy, dependable, not a deceiver of the world.

(5) Refraining from strong drink and sloth-producing drugs (substances that cause heedlessness), the basis for heedlessness.

(Reference: DN 1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Five Precepts providing basic guidance to significantly reduce unwholesome outcomes or results in our life (i.e. unwholesome Kamma).

Gotama Buddha gave us guidance to conduct life without harm to other beings or ourselves. In his Teaching titled “The Five Precepts”, he provides some basic guidance that when learned and practiced, will significantly reduce the harm you are causing in the world.

These are not commandments nor rules to follow, rather how to ensure you are not causing harm to others or yourself. By causing harm to others, we cause harm to ourselves by The Natural Law of Kamma. Through practice of these precepts, you will drastically eliminate unwholesome Kamma production and, thus, experience a more peaceful and content existence.

It is The Eight Fold Path that completely and fully extinguishes all unwholesome Kamma through the production of only wholesome Kamma, but here in The Five Precepts, we gain more insight into Right Speech and Right Action to further help us understand The Eight Fold Path. Through making wholesome choices in our life, we will experience wholesome outcomes. Through making unwholesome choices in our life, we will experience unwholesome outcomes. It is always our choice of whether we choose to make decisions based on wholesome or unwholesome Teachings and then we experience the results according to our choices. That is our Kamma or the results of our decisions.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings are not to control an individual nor dictate what they should or should not do. But instead, provide guidance that when practiced, will lead to Enlightenment, liberation of the mind, a peaceful and content mind and, thus, a peaceful and content life. Everything in this practice is attained through personal free will choices.

The Five Precepts will not be a surprise for you as they are all things you have been taught your entire life. The Five Precepts are required as a minimum for realizing the benefits of Enlightenment. You can gradually train the mind towards practicing these Teachings more closely each day rather than feel that you need to make multiple drastic changes at one time. If you have in the past practiced these precepts or are currently doing any of these now, good. If not, you can change or slowly modify your conduct to still seek Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Five Precepts is available in this same book series found in Chapter 7 of the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1).

The book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) will help you to learn The Five Precepts in detail and how to apply them into your life practice. The following is to help you understand why these precepts are important and how through practicing them, one is improving the condition of their mind towards the attainment of Enlightenment. There are additional details shared in the following beyond what is shared in "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1).

If you have already learned The Five Precepts in (Volume 1), the following content will help you to further understand The Five Precepts and how to apply them in your life practice but it is important that you first learn The Five Precepts in Chapter 7 of "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) before learning the content shared in the following.

(1) Abandoning the taking of life, refraining from taking life, without stick or sword, diligent, compassionate, trembling for the welfare of all living beings.

This Precept, or training guidance, is to help a Practitioner to eliminate anger, hatred, and ill will from the mind. Through training the mind to not cause harm through the bodily actions of taking a life, then loving-kindness and compassion can be deeply cultivated in the mind.

- **Loving-kindness** (Pāli: mettā) is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

- **Compassion** (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

Notice this precept is not, “preserve all life at all costs”. That is not possible. So, what a Practitioner is doing through learning and practicing this precept is training the mind to live compassionately with concern for the welfare of all living beings.

Insect Infestations

Insects that are in your residence may need to be relocated outside which is the best idea if there aren't many and they can be easily relocated.

But, there are going to be situations where insects cause an infestation.

There are options available today to eliminate some infestations without taking life, that is ideal but may require more research to find a service provider who is able to accomplish this goal.

In some cases, it is not possible to eliminate an infestation without taking the life of the insects or animals.

In this case, one needs to look at this clearly. If you have already attempted to figure out how to remove the insects without taking their life, then consider the following:

- 1.) The insects have been reborn into the animal realm as part of their Kamma, their own decisions. They are unable to attain Enlightenment in that realm and will need to be reborn.
- 2.) The insects are causing harm through their infestation and due to their choice to cause harm, harm is going to come to them through the need to be killed. This is their Kamma.
- 3.) This Precept is to guide a Practitioner in eliminating anger, hatred, and ill will from the mind. Notice the precept is not, “preserve all life at all cost”.

So, if a Practitioner is attempting to find a harmless way to remove the insects but is unable to do so, then you are “living compassionately for the welfare of all living beings” and attempting to not harm them. But, due to their Kamma of being an insect and they are choosing to cause harm, one may need to have them removed through killing as the only option. That is their Kamma, the results of their decisions.

Euthanasia and Abortion

There are many options that exist in our lifetime for euthanasia of an animal and even a human. Procedures to perform an abortion of a growing being is also available. There are multiple circumstances that might lead one to consider euthanasia or abortion of an animal or human. There never seems to be a perfect answer and each person needs to make the personal choice that is right for them and their situation.

It is oftentimes challenging and difficult to make these types of decisions when the decision arises. A Practitioner can learn these Teachings and consider what they may or may not do in a given situation prior to the circumstances arriving. Deciding to take the life of another being through euthanasia or abortion is a significant decision and one considering this decision should only do so with deep reflection and thought.

Through reflecting on these Teachings and your life practice before presented with the circumstances where one might need to make a decision on euthanasia or abortion, can help the mind and development of your life practice as one can consider the options without the pressure or need to make an immediate decision. By taking the time now to think through how euthanasia and abortion can affect the mind, you can develop clarity on whether euthanasia or abortion would even be an option should the circumstances arise. The mind will be much better at thinking this through now than when the situation arises.

We use the word euthanasia and abortion to help the mind see these as a medical procedure and help the mind rationalize the decision. But it is important to see this clearly in order to make a sound decision.

Euthanasia and abortion are an intentional killing of another being and produces harmful effects in the world, thus, there will be harm that is returned to a person who chooses to participate in an intentional killing. Oftentimes, a person who decides for euthanasia or abortion can feel they are making the best decision in that present moment. But then later after the procedure and with more reflection, the mind will oftentimes experience deep regret, guilt, shame, and fear. This is the result of one's decisions also known as unwholesome Kamma. The result of our decisions either wholesome or unwholesome is returned to us and the deep regret, guilt, shame, and fear is part of the consequences of participating in a decision to intentionally take the life of another being.

Deciding to intentionally take the life of another being, an animal, is a decision that is not being made by that being. Choosing to kill an animal due to it being sick or ill is not a decision that the animal is making, that decision is being made by others. An individual is imposing their will on the other being when in reality, the animal may not make that same decision for themselves. But oftentimes, due to the human being having painful feelings due to their cravings/desires/attachments for the animal to be permanently healthy, one might come to the conclusion that to solve their discontent feelings, they could choose to intentionally take the life of the animal.

There is no such thing as a compassionate killing.

If an animal or human is reaching the end of life, allowing that to happen naturally is the best decision. There is no way to take the life of another being compassionately and

killing a being prematurely actually causes more harm than good for both the animal or human and the people who are responsible for the decision to take the life.

A being needs to experience as much of their Kamma in each life which will lead to a better rebirth in the next life. To attain Enlightenment and end The Cycle of Rebirth, an animal will need to be reborn into future existences. To attain Enlightenment, one needs to cultivate the mind and extinguish 100% of its unwholesome Kamma in a certain birth. That is impossible in an animal birth so the animal will need to be reborn.

Ending an animal's life prematurely can affect its next rebirth making it more challenging for them to escape The Cycle of Rebirth. An animal could continue to be reborn into the animal realm (or a lower realm) or perhaps it could reach the human realm on its next rebirth if we provide the animal the opportunity to experience its entire life while in an animal existence. If they obtain the human state, which is more likely if they are able to experience their entire natural life, they would then have the ability to attain Enlightenment in that human rebirth ending 100% of all suffering through escaping The Cycle of Rebirth.

But, through being killed prematurely through euthanasia, an animal will have less of a chance to be reborn into a better existence with the opportunity to attain Enlightenment ending the continued displeasure and despair associated with birth, sickness, aging, and death.

Enlightenment is the solution to the problem of death because without birth there is no death. The goal would be for this being to obtain a human rebirth and then attain Enlightenment so they are no longer reborn into displeasure and despair. When there is no birth, the problem of sickness, aging, and death is eliminated.

Choosing to end the life of an animal prematurely does not allow the opportunity for the animal to experience an improved rebirth and therefore, the decision to euthanize an animal is causing more harm for the animal rather than allowing it to live out its full natural life and experience an improved rebirth in their next life. The choice to kill the animal is hindering its progress on The Path to Enlightenment and will also hinder the progress of the individuals involved in making the decision to take the life of the animal.

Euthanasia is sometimes seen as an ending of the caregiver's suffering but prolongs the being's suffering due to extending its time in The Cycle of Rebirth.

But even in the perceived ending of the caregiver's suffering, one can suffer long after the decision is made to end the life.

Should one participate in euthanasia there is going to be unwholesome Kamma you need to experience as part of that action. Kamma is "cause and effect" or "action and result", essentially the result of our decisions.

While you may feel you are helping the animal experience less suffering through euthanasia, you will most likely doubt this decision and feel bad about it afterwards because you know that it was your decision that created the death. Where if you allow the animal's life to take its natural course, you are less likely to be left with any feelings of regret, guilt, shame, or fear and you can celebrate the animal's life appreciating the time you spent together.

You can relax the mind knowing that you provided the animal a good home, it lived its natural life, and it will experience whatever next birth it experiences in a better condition because it more fully experienced its Kamma in this life and you did not participate in its death. You only comforted the animal the best you could. Providing end of life comfort is the best way to practice loving-kindness and compassion not euthanasia.

You need to find the decision that feels right for you. I share this information not to influence your decision but to share what I would consider in facing this same decision.

I would not end the life but rather, allow the animal to experience its full natural life more fully experiencing its Kamma because that will set up the next rebirth in the best way possible for that being and there would be no regret, guilt, shame, or fear that I participated in a death. Instead, focusing on providing end of life comfort will produce the best results because one is practicing generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom.

This is your decision and you need to find the answer that works for you.

Abortion is going to produce the same results in the mind of the Practitioner as euthanasia.

People who are involved in the decision to take the life of a baby that is still in the womb will oftentimes struggle with regret, guilt, shame, or fear for many years as a result of their decision to abort a child. The decision whether to have an abortion is for the individuals involved to make, not anyone else. Each person will need to make the decision that is best for them in that present moment based on the unique circumstances that only the individuals involved are capable to understand, evaluate, and then make an appropriate decision.

The guidance that is provided here is to help you understand that any residual or long lasting discontent feelings that result from the taking of a life are the unwholesome results of this unwholesome decision. There should be no judgment of individuals who choose to have an abortion, as the decision is theirs to make and only affects the individuals involved in the decision. It is not wise for people outside of a situation to tell others how they should or should not make decisions in their life, as those decisions only affect the people who are making the decision.

This is your decision and you need to find the answer that works for you.

(2) Abandoning the taking of what is not given, living purely, accepting what is given, awaiting what is given, without stealing.

This Precept, or training guidance, is to help a Practitioner to eliminate craving/desire/attachment also referred to as “greed”.

Training the mind to eliminate longing with a strong eagerness for material possessions is highly beneficial to the mind. If a Practitioner longs to acquire material possessions, the mind will experience discontentedness being unable to attain Enlightenment.

(3) Abandoning un-chastity. Abandoning sexual relations with women [men] who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives; who are protected by their Teachings; who have a husband [wife or partner]; whose violation entails a penalty; or even with one who has been garlanded by a man [woman] as a sign of engagement.

This Precept, or training guidance, is to help a Practitioner to reduce the fetter/taint/pollution of “sensual desire” from The Ten Fetters while training the mind to be loyal, honest, and trustworthy.

(4) Abandoning false speech, refraining from false speech, a truth-speaker, one to be relied on, trustworthy, dependable, not a deceiver of the world.

This Precept, or training guidance, is to help a Practitioner to develop honesty and be trustworthy so that you can be successful in personal and professional relationships. A Practitioner who deeply practices this precept and the associated guidance on Right Speech, will develop the ability to help others and accomplish goals through well developed communication. People you associate with will come to trust and depend on you viewing you as someone who is reliable.

(5) Refraining from strong drink and sloth-producing drugs (substances that cause heedlessness), the basis for heedlessness.

This Precept, or training guidance, is to help a Practitioner to develop mindfulness or awareness of mind with concentration while practicing harmlessness towards their own body and mind.

A being would have no ability to attain Enlightenment as long as they are using substances that cause heedlessness. Substances that cause heedlessness do not help a Practitioner attain Enlightenment, they only hinder one’s progress. Mindfulness and concentration, along with a practice of harmlessness, is required to attain Enlightenment.

Polluting the mind with substances that cause heedlessness is not going to allow a Practitioner to develop these important qualities of mind towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

Chapter 45

A Great Gift

Monks, here, a Noble Disciple, having abandoned the destruction of life, abstains from the destruction of life.

By abstaining from the destruction of life, the Noble Disciple gives to an immeasurable number of beings freedom from fear, hostility, and harm.

He himself in turn enjoys immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility, and harm. This is the first gift, a great gift, highest, of long standing, traditional, ancient, untainted and never before tainted, which is not being tainted and will not be tainted, not refused by wise Ascetics and Brāhmins.

This is the stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of peacefulness - heavenly, ripening peacefulness, conducive to heaven – that leads to what is aspired for, needed, and agreeable, to one's welfare and peacefulness.

(The other 4 precepts which are abstaining from taking of what is not given, abstaining from sexual misconduct, abstaining from lying, and abstaining from consuming substances that cause heedlessness, are repeated with The Buddha's guidance.)

There are, Monks, these five gifts, great gifts, highest, of long standing, traditional, ancient, untainted and never before tainted, which are not being tainted and will not be tainted, not refused by wise Ascetics and Brāhmins.

(Reference: AN 8.39)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he explains how through practicing The Five Precepts that a Practitioner “gives to an immeasurable number of beings freedom from fear, hostility, and harm”.

It is through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Five Precepts that a Practitioner significantly reduces the harm they cause in the world. This is beneficial to one’s own mind and life. You will experience that through significantly reducing harm you cause in the world through practicing The Five Precepts, there will be less harm that comes to you.

It is The Eight Fold Path that helps a Practitioner learn and practice Teachings that completely eliminates 100% of all harm one is causing in the world, thus, they will be producing only wholesome Kamma. Extinguishing all unwholesome Kamma through producing only wholesome Kamma is how a Practitioner “cleans up” their unwholesome Kamma and will eventually experience Enlightenment through continued progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 46

The Eight Precepts The Uposatha Precepts

- (1) I too shall abandon and abstain from the destruction of life; with the rod and weapon laid aside, diligently and kindly, I too shall reside compassionate toward all living beings.
 - (2) I too shall abandon and abstain from taking what is not given; I shall accept only what is given, awaiting what is given, and be honest in mind, free of theft.
 - (3) I too shall abandon sexual activity and observe celibacy, living apart, abstaining from sexual intercourse, the common person's practice.
 - (4) I too shall abandon and abstain from false speech; I shall be a speaker of truth, an adherent of truth, trustworthy and reliable, not a deceiver of the world.
 - (5) I too shall abandon and abstain from liquor, wine, and intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness), the basis for heedlessness.
 - (6) I too shall eat once a day, abstaining from eating at night and from food outside the proper time.
 - (7) I too shall abstain from dancing, singing, instrumental music, and unsuitable shows, and from adorning and beautifying myself by wearing garlands and applying scents and fragrance.
 - (8) I too shall abandon and abstain from the use of high and luxurious beds; I shall lie down on a low resting place, either a small bed or a straw mat.
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(Reference: AN 3.70)

It would be wise to ensure there is a deep understanding of The Five Precepts prior to learning the content in this Chapter.

Detailed explanation of The Five Precepts is available in this same book series found in Chapter 7 of the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) and Chapter 44 of this book.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Eight Precepts providing refined basic guidance to significantly reduce unwholesome outcomes or results in our life (i.e. unwholesome Kamma) with additional guidance to help one attain Enlightenment through deeper training to eliminate certain fetters/taints/pollution of the mind.

Precepts 1, 2, 4, and 5 all remain the same as in The Five Precepts with the third precept being enhanced and the 6th, 7th, and 8th Precepts being added for further guidance.

Whether a Practitioner chooses to practice The Five Precepts or The Eight Precepts is a personal choice. A Practitioner who chooses to practice The Eight Precepts will find more benefit in choosing to learn and practice this additional guidance. To experience the benefit of practicing The Eight Precepts, a Practitioner would need to implement these into their life practice on a consistent and ongoing basis. Practicing these precepts for a “day or two” “here or there” will not produce the results of long term consistent practice of this training guidance.

A Practitioner might choose to start with learning and practicing The Five Precepts and then later, as their practice develops, choose to more deeply learn and practice The Eight Precepts for deeper training of the mind.

1.) The Third Precept is guiding a Practitioner to “abandon sexual activity and observe celibacy, living apart, abstaining from sexual intercourse, the common person’s practice”.

This Precept will help a Practitioner to eliminate the fetter/taint of “sensual desire” from the mind. All of The Ten Fetters need to be eliminated from the mind for a Practitioner to attain Enlightenment. One of the fetters/taints/pollutions of the mind is “sensual desire”. One of the strongest sensual desires that many human beings experience is the sensual desire of sexual contact.

Through a Practitioner choosing to eliminate sexual contact by practicing this precept, they can actively work to train the mind to eliminate sensual desire bringing them closer to Enlightenment.

A Practitioner would need to first gradually eliminate the action of sexual contact then gradually eliminate the mind’s craving/desire/attachment to sexual contact to fully liberate the mind from this fetter/taint/pollution.

There is nothing wrong or immoral with having sexual intercourse but, a mind that has the fetter of sensual desire will still experience discontentedness. When or if a Practitioner chooses to eliminate sexual contact from their life practice, is a personal choice for each Practitioner. A Practitioner could attain the first and second Stage of Enlightenment while maintaining a healthy sexual life enjoying the benefits of training the mind to this point.

Then, when and if they choose, a Practitioner can work on eliminating the remaining fetters/taints bringing the mind into the third and fourth Stage of Enlightenment which would include eliminating sexual contact to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of sensual desire.

2.) The Sixth Precept is also to train the mind to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of mind referred to as “sensual desire”. Another strong sensual desire for each human being is that of ingesting food to please the tongue.

The Sixth Precept is to “eat once a day, abstaining from eating at night and from food outside the proper time”. Outside the proper time would be after midday or 12:00 PM.

This Precept helps guide one to eliminate craving/desire/attachment to food training the body and mind to practice moderation in eating. If the body and mind are allowed to crave and desire food, there will be excessive eating and discontentedness associated with food intake. The mind will oftentimes crave and desire certain foods and become discontent when it does not have those foods.

This Precept helps one to reduce food cravings so that they can use food to sustain life rather than experience emotional eating, attempting to create pleasant feelings in the mind through the sensual desire of The Six Sense Bases.

Ordained Practitioners have this precept built into their training guidelines practiced in the Temple environment. Ordained Practitioners are choosing to practice a discipline that is beyond that of Household Practitioners and is more conducive to producing Enlightenment but it is not guaranteed. There are aspects of the training guidance practiced by Ordained Practitioners that Household Practitioners can understand and adapt for household life helping them to attain Enlightenment. This is one of the training guidelines primarily practiced by Ordained Practitioners but can be applied to household life if one chooses.

Household Practitioners will need to have more vigilance and independent discipline to learn and practice a precept such as this, along with many other Teachings. One way a Household Practitioner could eliminate sensual desire for food, in addition to this precept and other training guidance, would be to allow others to choose your food for you. Through removing your choice of food, you can then eat whatever food is selected training the mind to be content with whatever is selected.

If you are a frequent visitor to restaurants, ask a food server or employees at the restaurant “what do they suggest to eat”. Whatever they reply, you can accept that as the meal you will eat. This way, you are removed from the decision to please the senses and are able to train the mind to consider food as serving only one purpose, to sustain the physical body. Food is to sustain life, not to please the tongue or mind.

That is not to say that we are unable to have enjoyable food. But, if the mind is craving/desiring/attached to specific foods, then it will experience discontentedness when those foods are not available. To train the mind to eliminate the sensual desire for food, you will need to take an active role in training the mind to view the purpose of food as only to sustain this life. To do that, you may need to have others select your food for you, eat only once a day, and eat prior to midday or 12:00 PM.

There are other options for how to accomplish this goal and a Teacher should be consulted to inquire on the various options you might employ.

3.) The Seventh Precept is also to train the mind to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of mind referred to as “sensual desire” and to help a Practitioner eliminate “the self” to realize The Universal Truth of Non-self.

There is no harm in observing “dancing, singing, or instrumental music” (i.e. entertainment) but, if a Practitioner is looking to eliminate all craving/desire/attachment which is causing discontentedness in the mind, one may need to eliminate these from their life for a period of time to observe if there is any arising discontentedness such as boredom or loneliness. If the mind has a longing with a strong eagerness for entertainment (i.e. craving/desire/attachment) always looking to seek pleasant feelings, then it is welcoming in painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

Through gradually eliminating entertainment for a period of time (6-12 months), a Practitioner can essentially strip down their life practice observing any arising discontentedness and then cutting it off to let it go. In doing so, a Practitioner can become aware of any cravings/desires/attachments in the mind and eliminate them. Through eliminating entertainment, a Practitioner can then more readily observe the mind and skillfully eliminate craving/desire/attachment so that there will no longer be discontentedness associated with yearning for entertainment. Then, once this is accomplished and the Practitioner is observing the mind is peaceful and content, even without entertainment for an extended period of time, they might choose to gradually and selectively reintroduce entertainment but, with the knowledge that the mind has no craving for entertainment and is not covering up discontentedness such as boredom or loneliness.

Unsuitable shows would be entertainment that causes harm to the individuals who participate in the event or causes harm to your own mind. You might consider that events like boxing, mixed martial arts (MMA), dancing with nudity (i.e. Gogo Bars), animal circus shows, etc. are all going to cause harm to the beings participating in the show and can also arise aggression or sensual desire in the mind of one in the audience.

Whether you choose to view a show such as this or any other entertainment is your own personal choice. Through choosing to view an “unsuitable show”, a Practitioner could be negatively affecting the condition of their mind making their path to Enlightenment more challenging. This Teaching from The Buddha helps a Practitioner understand that through choosing to eliminate dancing, singing, instrumental music, and unsuitable shows, they will be able to more actively train the mind towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

The Universal Truth of Non-self is a critical Teaching to understand in order to attain the First Stage of Enlightenment eliminating the fetter/taint/pollution of “personal existence view”. The Universal Truth of Non-self is shared in this same book series in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” in Chapter 4 and Chapter 16. A Practitioner will need to work closely with a Teacher to deeply understand The Universal Truth of Non-self and to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of “personal existence view”.

The guidance shared by The Buddha to eliminate “adorning and beautifying myself by wearing garlands and applying scents and fragrance” is to help the mind disassociate with the body being “the self” or “who you are”. Just eliminating this from your life practice without the associated understanding and additional practices to realize non-self, would not necessarily produce the needed results in your life practice and to the mind. Instead, understanding that this aspect of The Eight Precepts is guidance towards

realizing non-self, a wise Practitioner can use this precept and their understanding of The Universal Truth of Non-self to more deeply train the mind to realize non-self while working directly with a Teacher who is familiar with how to train the mind to realize non-self.

Tattoos and Body Piercings

It is important to understand that with The Teachings of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment, there are no rules or requirements of what to do or not do. Instead, The Buddha is providing you guidance on how to train the mind through gaining wisdom to be able to experience “a better way of life” where the mind no longer struggles and has difficulties due to pollutions of mind that cause struggles and difficulties in one’s life.

He is providing guidance for you to gain wisdom, thus, make wiser decisions that lead to more wholesome outcomes in your life.

The primary thing you are gaining wisdom about are The Natural Laws of Existence to include, The Natural Law of Kamma. In addition, he explains the causes of problems in the mind and the solutions of how to eliminate those and it is always your choice of what to do or not do.

There are no rules or requirements of what you should or should not do but instead, you are learning wisdom that then guides your decision making in life leading to improved outcomes due to making wiser decisions that lead to wholesome outcomes.

There are certain pollutions in the mind that keep it hindered and stuck in the unEnlightened state continuing to make unwise decisions that lead to unwholesome results. It is not until a Practitioner understands the problems that they can then apply the solutions and resolve the struggles and difficulties of living life with a mind that is polluted.

As part of this, one needs to eliminate cravings/desires/attachments.

There are two ways to eliminate cravings/desires/attachments.

1.) Through training the mind to “cut it off and let it go” no longer chasing after the objects of its affection which is only going to produce discontentedness in the mind.

2.) By fulfilling the craving/desire/attachment.

There is no requirement for an individual to sustain life to get a tattoo/body piercing but oftentimes, when the mind views the body as being “who you are” based on the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described in The Ten Fetters as “personal existence view”, the mind can have a craving/desire/attachment to adorning and decorating the body with various things including tattoos or body piercings.

So you are always free to make whatever decisions you feel are best for your life. And as you learn more and more of the problems in the unEnlightened mind and the solutions to those problems, then your decisions will be more informed based on the wisdom you have cultivated.

Tattoos and body piercings are oftentimes the mind’s way of decorating the body thinking that this is going to provide some type of lasting satisfaction in the mind, but this is part

of the mind's craving due to ignorance (unknowing of true reality) described in The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires. There can be a craving/desire for a tattoo/body piercing and this only reinforces the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as "personal existence view" which will lead to discontent feelings in the mind.

Whether you choose to get a tattoo/body piercing or not get one, is a personal choice.

If you are thinking about getting a tattoo/body piercing, you might think about "why", "how does this help you in life?", and "what is the benefit of the tattoo/body piercing?". Is this the mind craving/desiring something and is it going to be satisfied with just one tattoo/body piercing or is the craving/desire only going to persist and the mind is going to "want" the next one and the next one and the next one?

Or, are you getting one tattoo/body piercing and this is to fulfill a certain craving/desire and after that, it is going to be completely finished and done?

Or, would it be wiser to completely eliminate this from the mind and not get a tattoo/body piercing directing those resources towards something else in life that would contribute to sustaining life and training the mind?

If your goal is to train the mind to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as "personal existence view", one would not get a tattoo/body piercing. But, if your goal is to eliminate a craving/desire/attachment and getting an actual tattoo/body piercing is what will help you accomplish that goal because one is having difficulties to "cut it off and let it go", then perhaps you might decide to get the tattoo/body piercing.

Again, the choice is yours and you will need to think through the reasoning, the resources you have available to you, and the goals you have in life towards continued progress in life and on The Path to Enlightenment.

What is most important to you and what are you looking to accomplish in this life?

4.) The Eighth Precept shares guidance from Gotama Buddha for a Practitioner to "abandon and abstain from the use of high and luxurious beds; I shall lie down on a low resting place, either a small bed or a straw mat".

This Precept, or training guidance, is to help a Practitioner to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of "conceit".

Conceit (Arrogance, pride, judging, measuring or comparing as superior or inferior to others.)

Conceit is one of the higher fetters and needs to be eliminated to attain Enlightenment. There are multiple aspects of one's practice that need to be improved to eliminate conceit from the mind and there are many ways to accomplish that goal. One aspect of the training approach shared by The Buddha is to not sleep on high or luxurious beds but instead, to sleep close to the floor. Lowering one's location to sleep helps the mind become more humble and "down to earth". By ensuring one is not sleeping in highly luxurious bedding, the mind can move to the middle becoming accustomed to sleeping in standard accommodations that are comfortable for sleep but does not provide the mind the opportunity to feel magnificent, lavish, or extravagant.

Extremely plush or lavish bedding can create a feeling of superiority in the mind producing high degrees of conceit rather than working to eliminate conceit. Each Practitioner will need to find the middle choosing to sleep in a low position that does not create a feeling of superiority in the mind.

If you have been born and raised in a culture where sleeping on the floor is not the norm, this training guidance may sound a bit odd. However, if you practice this Teaching or any of the other Teachings from The Buddha, you can see the truth for yourself that it does work to gradually eliminate conceit.

Getting down onto the floor and raising up from the floor multiple times a day as you enter and exit your sleeping area will gradually train the mind to become more humble and promote the elimination of conceit which is part of the ego.

The ego needs to be dissolved 100% to attain Enlightenment. If there is still ego in the mind, the mind will not be able to experience liberation or Enlightenment.

You might decide to place a mattress or other sleeping aids directly on the floor. There are also some bed manufacturers who have designed beds that sit low to the floor. There are many options to consider and this is one aspect of learning and practicing The Teachings that can be revolutionary and life changing. As a Practitioner gradually works to eliminate the ego and eventually does eliminate the ego, the mind can then reside more peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy because it is no longer projecting arrogance, pride, judging, measuring or comparing as superior or inferior to others. The ego can be completely dissolved and the Practitioner will experience more liberation or freedom from strong feelings once they have accomplished this goal.

Never Assume The Ego Has Been Eliminated

We must always and forever develop our practice to “eliminate ego” and never “assume” it has been extinguished. The ego will always attempt to get you to think it has been eliminated as it is like a bad tenant that never pays rent and does not want to leave.

The moment the mind convinces you that the ego has been eliminated is a moment that you know that ego still exists. Instead, never assume the ego has been eliminated and constantly work towards being humble and down to earth in any and all situations.

A Practitioner who learns and practices these Teachings from Gotama Buddha will develop profound wisdom. It is especially important for one who has deep wisdom to always practice being humble. A truly wise individual is wise enough to know to always practice being humble and has no need to project arrogance, pride, judge others, or otherwise allow conceit into the mind or into their daily interactions.

There is no benefit in projecting self image, self identity, arrogance, pride, judging others, measuring and comparing one’s self as being superior or inferior to others. You will find that your personal and professional relationships will blossom when personal existence view and conceit is eliminated.

Through eliminating the fetter of personal existence view and conceit, the mind can reside peaceful and calm no matter what is or is not happening around them.

The ego props us up and protects “who we think we are” and “our self image”. It is very difficult for one to see their own ego.

There is no need to mentally protect yourself from anyone when there is “no self”. A peaceful, calm, serene and content mind with joy that does no harm, only needs to walk with “wisdom and a smile”.

A wise person only needs to walk with wisdom and a smile. They have no desire to project a self image, self identity, arrogance, pride, judge others, or measure and compare themselves as superior or inferior. A wise person knows there is no benefit in doing so therefore they only need to walk with wisdom and a smile.

The ego is held deeply inside the mind and blocks us from realizing our full potential because we “think” we already know who we are and what we should be doing in the future. It blocks us from healthy relationships and connecting to other beings with a pure mind and pure intentions.

The ego can block us from learning and growing with other beings because we think we already “know it all”.

Dissolving the ego is easier said than done. Because we have spent a lifetime acquiring the ego and many countless hours thinking about what we want to do in the future, it is very hard to let go of the ego. There is self image and self identity along with many other attributes attached to the ego and if we hold on to this aspect of the mind, we will create discontentedness for ourself, never being able to fully experience the Enlightened mind.

To reach Enlightenment, the ego must be dissolved, dismantled, and eradicated. The ego serves no wholesome purpose.

Detailed explanation of Dissolving The Ego is available in this same book series found in Chapter 16 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

What are The Four Stages of Enlightenment?

There are four (4) stages in the attainment of Enlightenment, however, these are for personal development purposes only. You should not compare or profess to another person which Stage of Enlightenment you feel you have attained. Self declared attainment has no beneficial purpose and oftentimes comes from arrogance and pride, the ego, while being fraught and filled with errors.

One goal of these Teachings is to eliminate arrogance and pride, the ego, therefore, if a Practitioner is declaring their self determined Stage of Enlightenment, there is still arrogance and pride. A Practitioner sharing with others what they feel they have attained is an indication that, the mind is not yet Enlightened.

An Enlightened being would have no need or desire to profess what they feel the mind has attained. An Enlightened mind is so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that an Enlightened being will just be enjoying life rather than attempting to convince others or boasting about what they feel they have attained.

Self determination of attainment of any Stage of Enlightenment is fraught and filled with errors.

While one should consistently apply effort towards learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings to include understanding The Four Stages of Enlightenment, these are used for personal development to guide a Practitioner's journey assisting you on the path to higher and higher degrees of attainment not as a way to brag, show off or profess to others what you feel you have attained. Convincing the mind that it has attained any of these Stages of Enlightenment or that the mind is actually Enlightened is dangerous for the mind.

The ego is constantly going to be interested to convince the mind it is more Enlightened than it really is. The ego is equivalent to a "bad tenant" who never pays rent and doesn't want to leave the residence. The bad tenant, the ego, needs to be evicted but every time things move in that direction it tries to convince the mind it is more Enlightened than it really is because the ego does not want to leave. The bad tenant keeps wanting to stay but yet provides no benefit whatsoever and continually attempts to convince the mind it is Enlightened so that the bad tenant, the ego, can stick around.

You need to evict the ego and as long as the mind is convinced that it is experiencing higher and higher degrees of attainment, then there is the risk or danger that arrogance and pride will arise, thus, halting any forward progress. With arrogance and pride (i.e. the ego), the mind will want to measure and compare what it feels it has attained to others creating unwholesome decisions that produce separation rather than harmony amongst friendly Practitioners and "all beings". The mind could become judgmental looking down on others rather than practicing loving-kindness and compassion with an interest in seeing all beings attain Enlightenment.

You should never believe you have attained Enlightenment and continuously pursue this path your entire life. Should you ever feel you have attained Enlightenment and are "done", the mind can become "sluggish or complacent" and halt your progress on this path.

Arrogance and pride can arise in the mind if one becomes absorbed, engrossed or fascinated with progressing through The Four Stages of Enlightenment. As soon as any arrogance, pride, or ego arises, the mind is not experiencing Enlightenment.

If any of this is occurring in the mind, the mind is not Enlightened and is essentially sabotaging a Practitioner's ability to experience more progress. Through never convincing the mind that it is truly Enlightened, even when all discontentedness has been eliminated, then, the mind can continue to reside protected from any potential arising of arrogance and pride (i.e. the ego), and continue to experience increased benefits as the mind becomes more and more Enlightened.

While we use the term Enlightenment, this mental state is not a destination that once one arrives, everything is complete. Instead, as the mind arrives to Enlightenment having eliminated all discontentedness, a Practitioner can experience increased benefits of the Enlightened mind as the brilliance and brightness of the Enlightened mind shine through more and more. If one convinces themselves they are Enlightened and are actually "done", then they would not experience the continued and increasing benefits of the mind entering into an even higher degree of Enlightenment.

There will be glimpses of Enlightenment as you develop your practice. Whether it be in meditation, during the daily activities, or for multiple minutes, hours, weeks, months, etc. as one progresses. These glimpses are similar to a flickering lightbulb that is struggling to shine bright on a consistent and ongoing basis. These glimpses of Enlightenment help a Practitioner to observe the possibilities of what one is headed towards and that they are headed in the right direction. But the mind needs to remain unaffected by these momentary or elongated and impermanent experiences. The mind needs to remain unaffected by the improved condition of the mind to be able to experience more and more awakening of the mind.

The mind could experience multiple minutes, hours, weeks, months, etc. with the returning of discontentedness at any moment. A wise Practitioner needs to remain determined, dedicated, and diligent to apply effort watching over the mind with mindfulness or awareness of mind. If one proceeds without guarding the mind with mindfulness, then cravings/desires/attachments can emerge from the corners of the mind producing discontentedness.

Just like the mind will experience flickering and glimpses of Enlightenment as the mind is developed, the mind will also experience a flickering diminishing of cravings/desires/attachments and discontentedness.

As discontentedness is *gradually* being extinguished, the qualities of the Enlightened mind are continuing to increase. All the while, the Practitioner is having experiences in the mind they never knew existed and the mind can become quite blissful and elated. It is important to reside unaffected by these experiences continuing to bring the mind back to the middle. If the mind takes great pleasure in what it is experiencing, this is dangerous and risky as the mind then continues to crave these pleasant feelings stalling progress.

This is yet another reason guidance with a Teacher is so important. As the mind moves and shifts through the preliminary phases of the Jhānas and into The Four Stages of Enlightenment, a Practitioner is going to need support from someone who has experienced what they are experiencing. This will allow a Practitioner to gain the insight and Teachings needed to continue forward development through seeking guidance of how to continue the mind's cultivation.

The Ten Fetters are the ten (10) individual aspects of the mind that need to be eliminated to attain Enlightenment. The word "fetter" is defined as: "a chain or shackle used to restrain a prisoner, typically placed around the ankles". The Ten Fetters are essentially keeping a being trapped in The Cycle of Rebirth bound to the endless cycle of continuous rebirth experiencing discontentedness over countless lives.

It is not until one eliminates The Ten Fetters that a being's mind is liberated from discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth. A fetter can also be referred to as a taint or pollution of the mind. A taint is an impure quality of the mind and is why these need to be eliminated to attain Enlightenment. The Ten Fetters pollute the mind not allowing us to experience the brightness and radiance of the Enlightened mind.

These are "The Ten Fetters". These are the chains that bind us into The Cycle of Rebirth and to multiple lifetimes of experiencing continuous discontentedness. You must eliminate these and practice The Seven Factors of Enlightenment to attain Enlightenment - along with many other Teachings as part of The Eight Fold Path.

The Ten Fetters

Lower Fetters

1.) Personal existence view (Eliminating the concept of a permanent self from the mind. Realization of The Universal Truth of Non-self.)

2.) Doubt (Elimination of doubts about The Teachings and the ability of them to attain Enlightenment. Confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, your Teacher, and your own ability to attain Enlightenment.)

3.) Wrong behavior and observances (Elimination of the mind's belief that rites, rituals, ceremonies, and worship will help a Practitioner to attain Enlightenment. Well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path.)

4.) Sensual desire (Elimination of the desire for pleasures from The Six Sense Bases: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind.)

5.) Ill will (Elimination of hostility, hatred, anger, aggression, resentment, frustration, irritation, annoyance, etc.)

Higher Fetters

6.) Desire for form (Elimination of desire for existence in the form realms; Animal or Human. Elimination of the fear of death.)

7.) Desire for the formless (Elimination of desire for existence in the formless realms; Hell, Afflicted Spirits, or Heaven.)

8.) Conceit (Elimination of arrogance, pride, judging, measuring or comparing as superior or inferior to others. Ego is completely dissolved.)

9.) Restlessness (Elimination of confused, distracted, worried, anxious, restless state of mind the opposite of "singleness of mind".)

10.) Ignorance (Elimination of delusion or unknowing of true reality through acquiring wisdom. Learn, reflect, and practice of The Teachings of The Buddha, such as, The Three Universal Truths, The Four Noble Truths, The Eight Fold Path, The Five Precepts, The Three Wholesome/Unwholesome Roots, The Natural Law of Kamma, The Cycle of Rebirth, etc. all detailed later in this book and book series.)

The Four Stages of Enlightenment

A Stream-Enterer (returning to human realm no more than 7 times) is:

Free From:

1. Personal existence view
2. Doubt
3. Wrong behavior and observances

A Once-Returner (returns to human realm only one time) is:

Free From:

1. Personal existence view
2. Doubt
3. Wrong behavior and observances

Greatly Thinned:

4. Sensual desire
5. Ill will

A Non-Returner (does not return to human realm) is:

Free From:

1. Personal existence view
2. Doubt
3. Wrong behavior and observances
4. Sensual desire
5. Ill will

An Arahant is free from all of the five lower fetters and the five higher fetters, which are:

1. Personal existence view
2. Doubt
3. Wrong behavior and observances
4. Sensual desire
5. Ill will
6. Desire for form
7. Desire for the formless
8. Conceit
9. Restlessness
10. Ignorance

A Practitioner attaining the results and Stage of Enlightenment as an Arahant is Enlightened. In the first three (3) Stages of Enlightenment, the mind is not yet Enlightened and is still experiencing discontentedness. There will be a *gradual* diminishing of discontentedness as the mind ascends through each Stage of Enlightenment but it is not until the mind reaches the Stage of Enlightenment as an Arahant, where the mind is actually Enlightened, that all discontentedness is eliminated and there is no more rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 47

Ten Courses of Unwholesome Kamma

Impurity by body, Cunda, is threefold.

Impurity by speech is fourfold.

Impurity by mind is threefold.

And how, Cunda, is impurity by body threefold?

- (1) Here, someone destroys life. He is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.
- (2) He takes what is not given. He steals the wealth and property of others in the village or forest.
- (3) He engages in sexual misconduct. He has sexual relations with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives; who are protected by their Teachings; who have a husband; whose violation entails a penalty; or even with one already engaged.

It is in this way that impurity by body is threefold.

And how, Cunda, is impurity by speech fourfold?

- (1) Here, someone speaks falsehood. If he is summoned to a council, to an assembly, to his relatives' presence, to his club, or to the court, and questioned as a witness thus: 'So, good man, tell what you know'. Then, not knowing, he says, 'I know,' or knowing, he says, 'I do not know'; not seeing, he says, 'I see', or seeing, he says, 'I do not see!' Thus he knowingly speaks falsehood for his own benefit, or for another's benefit, or for some insignificant worldly benefit.
- (2) He speaks argumentatively. Having heard something here, he repeats it elsewhere in order to divide (those people) from these; or having heard something elsewhere, he repeats it to these people in order to divide (them) from those. Thus he is one who divides those who are united, a creator of divisions, one who enjoys separation, rejoices in separation, finds pleasure in separation, a speaker of words that create separation.

- (3) He speaks harshly. He speaks such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, offensive to others, bordering on anger, uncondusive to concentration.
- (4) He indulges in idle chatter. He speaks at an improper time, speaks falsely, speaks what is unbeneficial, speaks opposite to The Teachings and the discipline; at an improper time, he speaks such words as are unwise, unreasonable, rambling, and unbeneficial.

It is in this way that impurity by speech is fourfold.

And how, Cunda, is impurity by mind threefold?

- (1) Here, someone is full of longing (craving). He longs (craves) for the wealth and property of others thus: Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!
- (2) He has a mind of ill will and intentions of hate thus: May these beings be slain, slaughtered, cut off, destroyed, or obliterated!
- (3) He holds wrong view (ignorance: unknowing of true reality) and has an incorrect perspective thus: There is nothing given, nothing sacrificed, nothing offered; there is no fruit or result of wholesome and unwholesome actions; there is no this world, no other world; there is no mother, no father; there are no beings spontaneously reborn; there are in the world no Ascetics and Brāhmins of right conduct and right practice who, having realized this world and the other world for themselves by direct knowledge (experience), make them known to others.

It is in this way that impurity by mind is threefold.

These, Cunda, are the ten courses of unwholesome Kamma.

...It is because people engage in these ten courses of unwholesome Kamma that hell, the animal realm, the realm of afflicted spirits, and other bad destinations are seen.

(Reference: AN 10.176)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Ten Courses of Unwholesome Kamma” based on impurity of body, speech, and mind.

The origin of all unwholesome Kamma is craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) known as The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires. But in this Teaching, The Buddha shares more specific guidance to help Practitioners more deeply understand some of the specifics that produce unwholesome Kamma.

This Teaching will help one to further purify their intentions, speech, and actions using The Eight Fold Path as a foundational Teaching.

Body = Right Action

Speech = Right Speech

Mind = Right Intention

This Teaching provides one with detailed guidance of what impurities of body, speech, and mind lead to unwholesome outcomes or results known as unwholesome Kamma.

The Path to Enlightenment is to train the mind to no longer make unwholesome decisions and instead, purify one’s bodily actions, speech or communication, and mind or thoughts. Through deeply understanding and practicing this Teaching along with all the others shared by Gotama Buddha, a Practitioner moves the mind closer to Enlightenment where one is only ever making wholesome decisions producing wholesome results (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

If you have done any of these in the past, then through training the mind, with a comprehensive approach to improvements in developing a life practice, a Practitioner will “clean up” their life practice experiencing improved results in the condition of the mind and their life.

Through gradual training and gradual practice, one will experience gradual progress observing the condition of the mind becomes more peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, permanently, through training the mind to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 48

Ten Courses of Wholesome Kamma

Purity by body, Cunda, is threefold.

Purity by speech is fourfold.

Purity by mind is threefold.

And how, Cunda, is purity by body threefold?

- (1) Here, someone, having abandoned the destruction of life, abstains from the destruction of life. With the rod and weapon laid aside, diligent and kindly, he resides compassionate towards all living beings.
- (2) Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not steal the wealth and property of others in the village or in the forest.
- (3) Having abandoned sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual misconduct. He does not have sexual relations with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives; who are protected by their Teachings; who have a husband; whose violation entails a penalty; or even with one already engaged.

It is in this way that purity by body is threefold.

And how, Cunda, is purity by speech fourfold?

- (1) Here, someone, having abandoned false speech, abstains from false speech. If he is summoned to a council, to an assembly, to his relatives' presence, to his club, or to the court, and questioned as a witness thus: So, good man, tell what you know, then, not knowing, he says, 'I do not know', or knowing, he says, 'I know'; not seeing, he says, 'I do not see,' or seeing, he says, 'I see'. Thus he does not knowingly speak falsehood for his own benefit, or for another's benefit, or for some insignificant worldly benefit.
- (2) Having abandoned argumentative speech, he abstains from argumentative speech. Having heard something here, he does not repeat it elsewhere in order to divide (those people) from these; or having heard something elsewhere, he does not repeat it to these people in order to divide (them) from those. Thus he is one who reunites those who are

divided, a promoter of unity, who enjoys calmness, rejoices in calmness, encourages calmness, a speaker of words that promote calmness.

- (3) Having abandoned harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech. He speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and lovable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many.
- (4) Having abandoned idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks at a proper time, speaks truth, speaks what is beneficial, speaks on The Teachings and the discipline; at a proper time, he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, concise, and beneficial.

It is in this way that purity by speech is fourfold.

And how, Cunda, is purity by mind threefold?

- (1) Here, someone is without longing (craving). He does not long (crave) for the wealth and property of others thus: Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!
- (2) He is of good will (loving-kindness) and his intentions are free of hate thus: May these beings live peacefully, free from hostility, harm, and anxiety!
- (3) He holds Right View (wisdom) and has a correct perspective thus: There is what is given, sacrificed, and offered: there is fruit and result of wholesome and unwholesome actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings spontaneously reborn; there are in the world Ascetics and Brāhmins of right conduct and right practice who, having realized this world and the other world for themselves by direct knowledge (experience), make them known to others.

It is in this way that purity by mind is threefold.

These, Cunda, are the ten courses of (wholesome) Kamma.

...It is because people engage in these ten courses of (wholesome) Kamma that the heavenly beings, human beings, and other good destinations are seen.

(Reference: AN 10.176)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Ten Courses of Wholesome Kamma” based on purity of body, speech, and mind.

The origin of all wholesome Kamma is generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom known as The Three Wholesome Roots. But in this Teaching, The Buddha shares more specific guidance to help Practitioners more deeply understand some of the specifics that produce wholesome Kamma.

This Teaching will help one to further purify their intentions, speech, and actions using The Eight Fold Path as a foundational Teaching.

Body = Right Action

Speech = Right Speech

Mind = Right Intention

This Teaching provides one with detailed guidance of what purities of body, speech, and mind lead to wholesome outcomes or results known as wholesome Kamma.

The Path to Enlightenment is to train the mind to no longer make unwholesome decisions and instead, purify one’s bodily actions, speech or communication, and mind or thoughts. Through deeply understanding and practicing this Teaching along with all the others shared by Gotama Buddha, a Practitioner moves the mind closer to Enlightenment where one is only ever making wholesome decisions producing wholesome results (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

If you have not done any of these in the past, then through training the mind, with a comprehensive approach to improvements in developing a life practice, a Practitioner will “clean up” their life practice experiencing improved results in the condition of the mind and their life.

Through gradual training and gradual practice, one will experience gradual progress observing the condition of the mind becomes peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, permanently, through training the mind to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 49

The Benefits from Residing Possessed of Virtue

Monks, reside possessed of virtue (practicing moral conduct), possessed of the training guidelines, restrained with the restraint of the training guidelines, perfect in conduct and course of action in a difficult situation, and seeing danger in the slightest faults, train by undertaking the training precepts.

If a Monk should aspire: May I be dear and agreeable to my companions in the holy life, respected and admired by them, let him fulfill the precepts, be devoted to internal serenity of mind, not neglect meditation, be possessed of wisdom, and reside in empty huts.

If a Monk should aspire: May I be one to obtain robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal supplies, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May the services of those whose robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal supplies I use bring them great fruit and benefit, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: When my kinsmen and relatives who have passed away and died remember me with confidence in their minds, may that bring them great fruit and great benefit, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I become a conqueror of sadness and excitement, and may sadness and excitement not conquer me; may I reside transcending sadness and excitement whenever they arise, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I become a conqueror of fear and dread, and may fear and dread not conquer me; may I reside transcending fear and dread whenever they arise, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I become one to obtain at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four Jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a peaceful residing here and now, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I with the destruction of three fetters, become a Stream-Enterer, no longer subject to hell, bound (for liberation), headed for Enlightenment, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I, with the destruction of three fetters and with the fading of craving, anger, and ignorance, become a Once-Returner, returning once to this world to make an end of discontentedness, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I, with the destruction of the five lower fetters, become due to reappear spontaneously (in the heavenly realm) and there attain Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment), without ever returning from that world, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I wield the various kinds of supernormal power, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I with the divine ear element, which is purified and surpasses the human, hear both kinds of sounds, the divine and the human, those that are far as well as near, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I understand the minds of other beings, of other persons, having encompassed them with my own mind, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I recollect (recall/remember) my countless past lives, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, see beings passing away and reappearing, let him fulfill the precepts...

If a Monk should aspire: May I, by realizing for myself with direct knowledge (experience), here and now enter upon and reside in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints, let him fulfill the precepts, be devoted to internal serenity of mind, not neglect meditation, be possessed of wisdom, and reside in empty huts.

So it was with reference to this that it was said: Monks, reside possessed of virtue (practicing moral conduct), possessed of the training guidelines, restrained with the restraint of the training guidelines, perfect in conduct and course of action in a difficult situation, and seeing danger in the slightest faults, train by undertaking the training precepts.

(Reference: MN 6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “The Benefits from Residing Possessed of Virtue” conduct and behavior. Using The Precepts as a basis, The Buddha points to specific aspects of training that one can aspire to learn and practice that will improve one’s life practice, thus, improving the condition of the mind and life.

Chapter 50

To Obtain a Straight Destination and Rebirth

Monks, beings are the owners of their Kamma, the heirs of their Kamma; they have Kamma as their origin, Kamma as their relative, Kamma as their resort; whatever Kamma they do, wholesome or unwholesome, they are its heirs.

Here, having abandoned the destruction of life, someone abstains from the destruction of life; with the rod and weapon laid aside, dedicated and kindly, he resides compassionate toward all living beings. He is not secretive by body, speech, and mind. His bodily Kamma is straight; his verbal Kamma is straight; his mental Kamma is straight. His destination is straight; his rebirth is straight.

But for one with a straight destination and rebirth, I say, there is one of two destinations: either the exclusively pleasant heavens or influential families (in the human realm), such as those of affluent Khattiyas, affluent Brāhmins, or affluent Householders, [families that are] rich, with great wealth and property, abundant gold and silver, abundant treasures and belongings, abundant wealth and grain.

Thus a being is reborn from a being; one is reborn through one's deeds. When one has been reborn, contacts affect one.

It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their Kamma.

(The Tathāgata spoke of 'abandoning of taking what is not given' and 'abandoning of sexual misconduct' with discourses similar to that of 'abandoning taking life'.)

(Reference: AN 10.216)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings connecting the practice of the first three precepts to rebirth.

First, he makes it clear that any decisions one makes either wholesome or unwholesome, you will experience the results of those decisions. The Buddha shares that “beings are the owners of their Kamma, the heirs of their Kamma; they have Kamma as their origin, Kamma as their relative, Kamma as their resort; whatever Kamma they do, wholesome or unwholesome, they are its heirs”.

Essentially, one is unable to run or hide from the results of their decisions. Not as punishment and rewards but instead, just the results of our decisions. It is not possible for another person to create unwholesome results for you but instead, it is your own decisions that lead to the results you experience in this life and potentially future lives. The more readily and actively a Practitioner realizes this accepting full responsibility for everything that has happened, is happening, or will happen in their life, the more readily and active a Practitioner can be in learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to improve their decision making to improve the results they are experiencing in life.

If a Practitioner continues to believe that it is not their own decisions that are leading to the outcomes and results they experience, then with this “wrong view”, one will continue to experience difficulties and struggle through life because they are resigning to the belief that there is nothing they can do to improve this life because everything is a result of someone else, not their own decisions.

Through practice of Precepts 1-3 and with the elimination of “secretive by body, speech, and mind”, The Buddha explains that one’s bodily, verbal, and mental “Kamma is straight” or in other words, “clean” and “wholesome”.

The meaning here is that one is walking the straight way, the upright way, the clean way, or the wholesome way, through learning and practicing good wholesome moral conduct. Virtuous conduct ensures that one is not causing harm to others and the mind can be at ease knowing that because one is not causing harm, no harm will come to you.

The Buddha does share the potential rebirth for one practicing these Teachings as “one of two destinations: either the exclusively pleasant heavens or influential families (in the human realm), such as those of affluent Khattiyas, affluent Brāhmins, or affluent Householders, [families that are] rich, with great wealth and property, abundant gold and silver, abundant treasures and belongings, abundant wealth and grain”.

Keep in mind that the goal of a Practitioner who is on The Path to Enlightenment is to attain Enlightenment and no longer experience any rebirth whatsoever. The Buddha is sharing the truth of what will or will not occur through one practicing these Teachings. He is in no way attempting to motivate or encourage one to practice these Teachings in order to attain these more favorable rebirths but instead, just sharing what will happen if one is practicing these Teachings, does not attain Enlightenment, and needs to be reborn.

A Buddha does not fear, guilt, or shame anyone into learning and practicing their Teachings. And, a Buddha also does not motivate one to learn and practice their Teachings through dangling desirable aspects of a future rebirth. Instead, a Buddha has discovered the truth and is sharing that wisdom with all those who choose to learn, reflect, and practice the Teachings so that they can independently observe the truth for themselves as the condition of the mind gradually improves.

A Buddha's mind is already liberated experiencing complete peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy. They are accepting the responsibility to share what they have discovered with others out of loving-kindness and compassion for all beings in the entire world. They know that not all beings will learn and practice their Teachings during their lifetime but it is what they do during their lifetime that will make The Teachings available for countless generations in the future to experience the same liberation of mind.

A Buddha is not interested in fame or fortune of any type. They have transcended these aspects of life realizing they do not bring any sort of lasting fulfillment or satisfaction of mind. They are not sharing their Teachings to become famous or to gain anything for themselves. Instead, they attained the mental state of Enlightenment by "letting go" of everything that the mind was holding on to and they are disinterested in holding on to anything in the mind.

They are not sharing their Teachings for their own pleasure. They are not seeking pleasure through sharing their Teachings. Instead, they have a goal and objective to ensure that as many people as are interested to learn and practice their Teachings, that those Practitioners have the opportunity to gain the needed wisdom to experience liberation or Enlightenment.

With a Buddha knowing that the entire world will not learn and practice their Teachings during their lifetime, their goal is not to persuade people through corrupt means but instead, to ensure the full and complete truth they discovered during their own independent awakening to Enlightenment is well known by all those who seek to understand and will carry their Teachings forward after their death.

It is only through countless beings learning, reflecting, and practicing a Buddha's Teachings that they will continue in the world for the benefit of all beings. But, a Buddha is not attached to a specific number or quantity of beings who should learn or practice his Teachings. Instead, a Buddha is more interested in the quality of his Students ensuring that they deeply understand and are deeply practicing prior to his death. This will ensure the most longevity and ability for their Teachings to continue into the world for the benefit of all beings.

A Buddha's dedication and effort towards accomplishing the goal and objective of sharing the truth and wisdom of The Natural Laws of Existence is tireless. They have transcended any interest in worldly affairs or the trappings of any cravings/desires/attachments to things such as material gain, wealth, fame, or sensual desire. Instead they only have one goal, which is to guide all those who choose to learn and practice to freedom of strong feelings, liberation of mind, or Enlightenment where the mind is completely peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

A Buddha's success cannot be realized through fearing, guilt, or shaming people into learning and practicing his Teachings. His Teachings are to train the mind to eliminate discontentedness such as fear, guilt, and shame so a Buddha would not use fear, guilt, or shame to motivate people into learning and practicing their Teachings.

Likewise, their Teachings are to eliminate the unwholesome quality of craving/desire/attachment to such things as "sensual desire". A Buddha's Teachings explain how through longing with a strong eagerness for pleasant feelings, the mind causes itself to be discontent. Therefore, a Buddha would not attempt to motivate people to learn and practice his Teachings through developing a longing with a strong eagerness for the

pleasantness of a future destination. Instead, they are applying tireless effort to help guide Students to train the mind to be in the present moment so that they can experience liberation and Enlightenment.

Dangling a pleasant future rebirth in front of a Student's mind would not produce the results of an Enlightened mind because it could produce craving/desire/attachment inhibiting Enlightenment, therefore, a Buddha would not employ this approach to sharing their Teachings because their goal is to produce Enlightenment not hinder it.

If a Student has been part of a community or tradition where pleasant future benefits were dangled as a way to motivate and encourage adherence to Teachings or Teachings were used to fear, guilt, or shame them into certain beliefs, this conditioning of mind will need to be eliminated as they approach The Buddha's Teachings to produce Enlightenment.

When you observe that he is discussing potential rebirths in the lower realms or favorable rebirth in the human or heavenly realms, the conditioning from your past experiences may ignite reluctance to learn and practice The Buddha's Teachings to experience the results of a liberated mind. Therefore, a Practitioner will need to set aside and ultimately eliminate all conditioning of the mind, including the conditioning that Teachings such as these might be used to control a group of individuals or otherwise work towards corrupt objectives.

The Buddha's Teachings are not based on belief and therefore, one can independently confirm the truth in his Teachings to observe the wisdom. The acquired wisdom will improve the condition of the mind and the way one functions in the world through improved decision making. Rather than being motivated to learn and practice through corrupt means with promises of future benefits, a Practitioner who is actively learning and practicing these Teachings will see the benefits to the condition of their mind and life, right now.

It is common for Practitioners who are learning and practicing these Teachings to observe improvements in a matter of days or weeks as they observe the condition of the mind improve in situations that once produced anger or other discontent feelings. The Practitioner no longer experiences the same results based on the same situation. The Practitioner can observe their learning and practice is culminating into the mind functioning differently than it did prior to learning and practicing these Teachings.

As you see this progress, it is an indication for you that these Teachings are working to produce improved outcomes and results for your life. Continuing to learn and practice these Teachings will further develop the mind to experience less discontentedness and eventually if Enlightenment is attained, one will have completely and entirely eliminated 100% of all discontentedness in the mind experiencing peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy - permanently.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 41-50)

<https://youtu.be/A5wETF0upoU>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 226 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 41-50)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--226---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-41-50-e18lnrg/a-a6mgc1k>

Chapter 51

Leading to Hell, to the Animal Realm, and to the Realm of Afflicted Spirits

Monks, the destruction of life, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being the destruction of life at minimum leads to a short life span.

Taking what is not given, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being taking what is not given at minimum leads to loss of wealth.

Sexual misconduct, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being sexual misconduct at minimum leads to hostility and competition.

False speech, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being false speech at minimum leads to false accusations.

Argumentative speech, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being argumentative speech at minimum leads to being separated from one's friends.

Harsh speech, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being harsh speech at minimum leads to hearing disagreeable things.

Idle chatter, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being idle chatter at minimum leads to others distrusting one's words.

Drinking liquor and wine (ingestion of substances that cause heedlessness), repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, leads to hell, to the animal realm, and to the realm of afflicted spirits; for one reborn as a human being drinking liquor and wine (ingestion of substances that cause heedlessness) at minimum leads to madness.

(Reference: AN 8.40)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares more details related to unwholesome moral conduct and the results of this conduct. This Teaching is connecting The Five Precepts and The Eight Fold Path to The Cycle of Rebirth, explaining the truth of how our decisions that lack the wisdom of these Teachings practicing unwholesome moral conduct, lead to unpleasant rebirth in the lower realms.

The Buddha expands Right Speech adding more details to help one understand that false speech, argumentative speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter all need to be eliminated from one's life practice to experience Enlightenment.

He explains the resulting unpleasant rebirth but also explains the outcome of not practicing each of these individual Teachings.

Remember, these Teachings are not to be believed but instead, one can learn, reflect, and practice to observe the truth for yourself.

Now that you have learned this Teaching, it is time to reflect.

1.) Have you or have you ever known anyone who has destroyed life repeatedly? Did it lead to a short life span? Perhaps you might think of individuals involved in all types of killing, not just killing that is considered illegal but all killing as The Natural Law of Kamma does not function based on societal laws created by humans.

Think of world leaders who, in the past, were dedicated to killing and look at the result of their life. Consider soldiers who are sent into battle. Think of the animal world such as snakes, lions, bears, etc., these animals generally have shorter life span than animals like elephants or turtles which do not kill for food.

2.) Have you or have you ever known of anyone who steals repeatedly? Did they experience loss of wealth through going to jail, paying courts, or lawyers? Did people steal from them?

3.) Have you or have you ever known of anyone who has been involved in sexual misconduct repeatedly? Did it lead to hostility in their relationships and/or competition amongst friends and associates?

4.) Have you or have you ever known of anyone who has used speech that is false, argumentative, harsh, or have idle chatter repeatedly? Did it lead to false accusations, separation from friends, hearing disagreeable things, or distrusting one's words?

5.) Have you or have you ever known of anyone who has ingested substances that cause heedlessness repeatedly? What was or is the condition of that person's life? Did they or do they experience a peaceful, calm, serene, and content life with joy or did it lead to madness?

As you reflect on these Teachings and outcomes, one can come to the conclusion that The Buddha's Teachings are the truth and with this new found wisdom choose to no longer make decisions that would include any of these. As you do, the condition of the mind and your life will gradually improve as more people will interact with you in

wholesome ways because that is what you are doing, making wholesome choices to interact with people and conduct your life through the wisdom of these wholesome Teachings.

As you can see, The Buddha is not attempting to fear, guilt, or shame anyone into learning and practicing his Teachings but instead, sharing the truth of what will or will not happen in one's life now and in the future should one continue to choose to make decisions to include any of these into your life practice.

His Teachings are not attempting to control anyone, because that is not possible. Instead, his Teachings are providing guidance based on the truth of The Natural Law of Kamma for one who chooses to learn, reflect, and practice this "better way of life" so that you can experience peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy through not causing harm in the world so that, over time, no harm will come to you.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path and The Five Precepts is available in this same book series found in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1).

Chapter 52

Reappear in a Happy Destination

But here, Student, some man or woman, abandoning the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he resides compassionate to all living beings. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. But if on the dissolution of the body, after death, he does not reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world, but instead comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is long-lived.

But here, Student, some man or woman is not given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is healthy.

But here, Student, some man or woman gives food, drink, clothing, carriages, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling and lamps to Ascetics or Brāhmins. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wealthy.

But here, Student, some man or woman is not of an angry and irritable character; even when criticized a little, he is not offended, does not become angry, hostile, and resentful, and does not display anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is beautiful.

But here, Student, some man or woman is not jealous, one who does not become jealous, resentful, and feel bitter about the gains, honor, respect, gratitude, salutations, and veneration received by others. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is influential.

But here, Student, some man or woman is not stubborn and arrogant; he pays homage (respect) to one who should receive homage (respect), rises up for one in whose presence he should rise up, offers a seat to one who deserves a seat, makes way for one for whom he should make way, and honors, respects, appreciates, and venerates one who should be honored, respected, appreciated, and venerated. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is high-born.

But here, Student, some man or woman visits an Ascetic or a Brāhmin and asks: Venerable Sir, what is wholesome? What kind of action will lead to my welfare and peacefulness for a long time? Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wise.

(Reference: MN 135)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares detailed Teachings on various unwholesome qualities of mind that one should eliminate and the results of having accomplished that goal.

The Buddha is guiding Practitioners to eliminate unwholesome qualities and cultivate wholesome qualities of mind which lead to a rebirth in the heavenly realm but if not, should one be reborn back into the human realm, practicing in this way will produce a certain result in that future life.

- 1.) Does not kill other beings, if reborn into the human realm he is long-lived.
- 2.) Does not Injure other beings, if reborn into the human realm he is healthy.
- 3.) Gives food, drink, clothing, carriages, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling and lamps to those who are sharing Teachings to help beings to develop an improved life, if reborn into the human realm he is wealthy.
- 4.) Is not of an angry and irritable character; even when criticized a little, he is not offended, does not become angry, hostile, and resentful, and does not display anger, hate, and bitterness, if reborn into the human realm he is beautiful.
- 5.) Is not jealous, one who does not become jealous, resentful, and feel bitter about the gains, honor, respect, gratitude, salutations, and veneration received by others, if reborn into the human realm he is influential.
- 6.) Is not stubborn and arrogant; he pays homage (respect) to one who should receive homage (respect), rises up for one in whose presence he should rise up, offers a seat to one who deserves a seat, makes way for one for whom he should make way, and honors, respects, appreciates, and venerates one who should be honored, respected, appreciated, and venerated, if reborn into the human realm he is high-born or born into a family of high status.
- 7.) Visits an Ascetic or a Brāhmin (Teachers) and asks: Venerable Sir, what is wholesome? What kind of action will lead to my welfare and peacefulness for a long time?, if reborn into the human realm he is wise.

Wisdom is what liberates the mind to attain Enlightenment and will help an individual to create an improved life through making wise decisions.

Chapter 53

Eight Worldly Conditions

Gain and loss,
shame and fame,
blame and praise,
pleasure and pain:

these conditions that people meet are impermanent,
transient, and subject to change.

A wise and mindful person knows them
and sees that they are subject to change.

Desirable conditions don't excite his mind
nor is he saddened by undesirable conditions.

(Reference: AN 8.5)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Eight Worldly Conditions”.

Four (4) of these conditions are desirable, while four (4) are undesirable.

Desirable	Undesirable
Gain	Loss
Fame	Shame
Praise	Blame
Pleasure	Pain

The Buddha is sharing that a Practitioner should train the mind so that it is unaffected by desirable conditions through experiencing excitement. And, that a Practitioner should train the mind so that it is unaffected by undesirable conditions through experiencing sadness.

He is providing a reminder that “these conditions that people meet are impermanent, transient, and subject to change”. Knowing that all desirable and undesirable conditions are impermanent and subject to change, it would not be wise to allow the mind to be affected by these temporary conditions.

An Enlightened mind will be trained to not base its inner feelings on impermanent conditions.

The Buddha shares that “a wise and mindful person knows [these desirable and undesirable conditions] and sees that they are subject to change”.

Whenever The Buddha is referring to a wise person, he is referring to a person who is either close to Enlightenment or is Enlightened. Whenever The Buddha is referring to something that is wise, he is referring to practicing these Teachings in such a way that leads to Enlightenment.

Mindful or mindfulness is “awareness of mind”.

So, an Enlightened (wise) person, one who has awareness of the mind (mindful), knows and can observe that all these worldly conditions are subject to change and will train the mind to not base their inner feelings on these impermanent conditions.

In that way, an Enlightened (wise) person, one who has awareness of the mind (mindful), does not allow the mind to become excited by desirable conditions and does not become saddened by undesirable conditions.

When the mind experiences an arising pleasant feeling with Right Mindfulness, the Practitioner needs to apply Right Effort to “cut off and let go” of the arising discontentedness. If a Practitioner can observe this as a **bodily sensation** and cut it off there, this is ideal. The mind will gradually be trained to eliminate creating its inner feelings on impermanent conditions residing in the middle peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, not based on any conditions at all - the mind will be unconditioned.

If the Practitioner is unaware of the arising discontentedness as a bodily sensation, then “cut it off and let it go” as it becomes **feelings**, is also highly beneficial. Allowing the arising discontentedness to pollute the mind with discontent feelings, then there is the potential for those feelings to influence the condition of the mind for a few hours or days. This will leave a Practitioner challenged with practicing wholesome moral conduct while the mind is polluted with discontentedness.

If the Practitioner is unaware of the arising discontentedness as a feeling, then “cut it off and let it go” as it becomes a **condition of the mind**, is also beneficial. Allowing the arising discontentedness to pollute the mind by influencing the condition of the mind, there is the potential for the condition of the mind to form **mental objects** that are more long term and creates sustained changes to the mind that require much more effort and work to eliminate them from the mind. This will leave a Practitioner challenged with practicing wholesome moral conduct, while the mind has a long term sustained unwholesome mental object that influences unskillful moral conduct causing significant harm to one’s own mind and to others in the world.

Observing the arising discontentedness through The Four Foundations of Mindfulness to then “cut off and let go” of the discontentedness, comes with deep practice related to learning and practicing the entire Eight Fold Path to include Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration (i.e. mental discipline) with an understanding of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

This is accomplished through gradual training and gradual practice to experience gradual progress on The Path to Enlightenment with guidance from a Teacher.

Chapter 54

Deeds with Fruit That Result in Great Accomplishment and Power

Having cultivated for seven years a mind of loving-kindness, for seven eons of contraction and expansion I did not return to this world. Whenever the eon contracted I reached the plane of streaming radiance, and when the eon expanded I arose in an empty heavenly mansion.

And there I was Brahma (God), the Great Brahma, the unvanquished victor, the all-knowing, the all-powerful.

Thirty-six times I was Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings. And many hundreds of times I was a Wheel-Turning Monarch, righteous, a King of righteousness, conqueror of the four regions of the earth, maintaining stability in the land, in possession of the seven treasures.

What need is there to speak of mere local Kingship?

It occurred to me, Monks, to wonder: Of what kind of deed of mine is this the fruit? Of what deed's ripening am I now of such great accomplishment and power?

And then it occurred to me: It is the fruit of three kinds of deeds of mine, the ripening of three kinds of deeds that I am now of such great accomplishment and power: deeds of giving, of mastery of the mind, and of refraining.

(Reference: ITI 22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he recalls some of his past existences and explains why he has been so fortunate to become a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha.

A Perfectly Enlightened Buddha's mind is very clear and concentrated with deep wisdom. While all Enlightened beings will be able to experience these same qualities of mind, a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha experiences these to a large degree beyond a typical Enlightened being.

The Buddha shares what has led to his fortunate existences in the past and in his present life. He attributes this to "deeds of giving, of mastery of the mind, and of refraining".

Giving or generosity produces beneficial outcomes in one's life as they are able to train the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment while creating wholesome results with people who accept the generosity.

Mastery of mind is to train the mind to have deep mental discipline or control of the mind. Being able to control one's own mind allows for calmness, mindfulness, concentration, and to access deep wisdom.

Refraining is to train the mind to have restraint from things such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, ingesting substances that cause heedlessness while practicing other wholesome moral conduct. A Practitioner has trained the mind to refrain from unwholesomeness.

The Buddha attributes his accomplishment to attain Perfect Enlightenment and have the experiences he mentioned from past lives to these three deeds.

Chapter 55

An Unsurpassed Field of Merit for the World

Monks, these eight persons are worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an unsurpassed field of merit for the world.

What eight?

The Stream-Enterer, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of Stream Entry;

the Once-Returner, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of Once-Returning;

the Non-Returner, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of Non-Returning;

the Arahant, the one practicing for realization of the fruit of Arahantship.

These eight persons, Monks, are worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an unsurpassed field of merit for the world.

The four practicing the way
and the four established in the fruit;
this is the upright Community -
composed in wisdom and virtuous behavior (moral conduct).

For people intent on sacrifice,
for living beings seeking merit,
making merit that ripens in the acquisitions,
what is given to The Community bears great fruit.

(Reference: AN 8.59)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares details of the “eight persons [who] are worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an unsurpassed field of merit for the world”.

- 1.) One practicing to attain the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream Enterer.
- 2.) One who has attained the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream Enterer.
- 3.) One practicing to attain the second Stage of Enlightenment as a Once Returner.
- 4.) One who has attained the second Stage of Enlightenment as a Once Returner.
- 5.) One practicing to attain the third Stage of Enlightenment as a Non-Returner.
- 6.) One who has attained the third Stage of Enlightenment as a Non-Returner.
- 7.) One practicing to attain the fourth Stage of Enlightenment as an Arahant.
- 8.) One who has attained the fourth Stage of Enlightenment as an Arahant.

The Buddha then refers to the “upright Community” who are his Students learning and practicing these Teachings towards the attainment of Enlightenment. The “upright Community” refers to those who are practicing with “wisdom and virtuous behavior” or wholesome moral conduct.

He explains that any gifts or offerings given to this Community provides the opportunity for people to create merit which ultimately helps them to eliminate their craving/desire/attachment and also leads to “acquisitions” or the ability to acquire beneficial outcomes due to the offering made through practicing generosity. Generosity leads to the “acquisition” of all the attainments that lead to Enlightenment, to include, the Jhānas and all four Stages of Enlightenment.

“What is given to The Community bears great fruit” or produces great benefit because through supporting The Community of Practitioners who are practicing for the attainment of any of the four Stages of Enlightenment or who have attained any of the four Stages of Enlightenment, the offering helps to continue to develop this wisdom within one’s own community.

If a population of people did not provide support for these “eight persons worthy of gifts”, then the wisdom of these Teachings would not be supported within a local community and that population would struggle through not understanding these good wholesome Teachings. But, through supporting these Teachings to enter and flourish within a Community by making offerings to the “eight persons worthy of gifts”, then the wisdom of these Teachings permeate throughout a local community and the population would prosper through understanding these good wholesome Teachings.

Detailed explanation of Merit is available in this same book series found in Chapter 10 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 56

People Who Generate Much Merit (Wholesome Kamma)

Monks, whenever virtuous monastics come to a home, the people there generate much merit (wholesome Kamma) on five grounds.

What five?

- (1) When people see virtuous monastics come to their home and they arouse hearts of confidence (toward them), on that occasion that family is practicing the way conducive to heaven.
- (2) When people rise, pay homage (respect), and offer a seat to virtuous monastics who come to their home, on that occasion that family is practicing the way conducive to birth in high families.
- (3) When people remove the stain of selfishness toward virtuous monastics who come to their home, on that occasion that family is practicing the way conducive to great influence.
- (4) When, according to their means, people share what they have with virtuous monastics who come to their home, on that occasion that family is practicing the way conducive to great wealth.
- (5) When people question virtuous monastics who come to their home, make inquiries about The Teachings, and listen to The Teachings, on that occasion that family is practicing the way conducive to great wisdom.

Monks, whenever virtuous monastics come to a home, the people there generate much merit (wholesome Kamma) on these five grounds.

(Reference: AN 5.199)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how Household Practitioners can generate “much merit” or wholesome Kamma through their interactions with “virtuous monastics”.

These five (5) ways of practice are what Gotama Buddha provides as how Household Practitioners would need to practice these Teachings and then the benefits of having done so.

Gotama Buddha did not suggest that Household Practitioners should make offerings to just anyone who is ordained and wearing a robe but instead, he always mentions one should make offerings to “virtuous monastics”.

A common definition of “virtuous” is: having or showing high moral standards.

So, The Buddha is guiding Household Practitioners to make offerings to those Ordained Practitioners who are practicing these Teachings closely. Through supporting individuals who are deeply practicing these Teachings and sharing these Teachings into the world, one is providing support for the continuation of these Teachings for the benefit of all beings.

Through making wise decisions of supporting Ordained Practitioners and Teachers who are sharing these Teachings into the world, we can be assured these Teachings will continue long into the future for the benefit of the entire world.

The benefit of making offerings to virtuous monastics is not achieved purely through just the offering itself but through “making inquiries about The Teachings, and listening to The Teachings”, so that one can practice “the way conducive to great wisdom”. It is through one’s interactions with virtuous monastics that they will come to learn, understand, and practice these good wholesome Teachings to produce the results of an Enlightened mind.

This Teaching does not appear to need any further clarification.

Teachings and Investigation

Chapter 57

Adjusted to a Balanced Pitch

Tell me, Soṇa, in the past, when you lived at home, weren't you skilled at the lute (a stringed instrument)?

'Yes, Venerable Sir.'

What do you think, Soṇa? When its strings were too tight, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?

'No, Venerable Sir.'

When its strings were too loose, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?

'No, Venerable Sir.'

But, Soṇa, when its strings were neither too tight nor too loose but adjusted to a balanced pitch, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?

'Yes, Venerable Sir.'

So too, Soṇa, if energy is aroused too forcefully this leads to restlessness, and if energy is too soft this leads to complacency.

Therefore, Soṇa, be determined on a balance of energy, spiritual faculties, and take up achieving evenness of the object there.

'Yes, Venerable Sir,' the Venerable Soṇa replied.

(Reference: AN 6.55)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings related to “the middle way” helping Practitioners understand that it is “the middle way” that leads to Enlightenment.

Using the musical instrument of the lute as an analogy, he guides a female Ordained Practitioner named Soṇa to understand how the mind is also meant to be tuned to the middle or a “balanced pitch”.

Detailed explanation of The Middle Way is available in this same book series found in Chapter 6 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 58

The Pleasure of Sleep

What do you think, Monks? Have you ever seen or heard that a head anointed Khattiya King, while exercising rule all his life, is pleasing and agreeable to the country if he spends as much time as he wants yielding to the pleasure of rest, the pleasure of inactivity, the pleasure of sleep?

'No, Venerable Sir.'

Good, Monks. I too have never seen or heard of such a thing.

What do you think, Monks? Have you ever seen or heard that a royal official ... a favorite son ... a general ... a village headman ... a club master, while exercising leadership over the club all his life, is pleasing and agreeable to the club if he spends as much time as he wants yielding to the pleasure of rest, the pleasure of inactivity, the pleasure of sleep?

'No, Venerable Sir.'

Good, Monks. I too have never seen or heard of such a thing.

Monks, what do you think? Suppose there is an Ascetic or Brāhmin who spends as much time as he wants yielding to the pleasure of rest, the pleasure of inactivity, the pleasure of sleep; one who does not guard the doors of the sense bases, who is immoderate in eating, and is not intent on wakefulness; who lacks insight into wholesome qualities; who does not reside intent on the effort to develop the aids to Enlightenment in the earlier and later phases of the night. Have you ever seen or heard that such a one, with the destruction of the taints, has realized for himself with direct knowledge (experience), in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, resides in it?

'No, Venerable Sir.'

Good, Monks. I too have never seen or heard of such a thing.

Therefore, Monks, you should train yourselves thus: We will guard the doors of the sense bases, be moderate in eating, and be intent on wakefulness; we will have wisdom into wholesome qualities, and will reside intent on the effort to develop the aids to Enlightenment in the earlier and later phases of the night.

Thus, Monks, should you train yourselves.

(Reference: AN 6.17)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how in order to attain Enlightenment a Practitioner will need to not seek “pleasure in sleep” and “inactivity” but instead, apply energy and effort to being determined, dedicated, and diligent through applying effort to develop a foundation in these Teachings.

Using the examples of people from other parts of the world such as a King, a royal official, a favorite son, a general, a village headman, and a club master, The Buddha explains how none of these people have been successful through seeking “pleasure in sleep” or “inactivity” but instead, would need to be active in their role to meet with success.

Similarly, he applies this to individuals who have the objective to attain Enlightenment. That if one is complacent, lethargic, or lazy towards the goal of attaining Enlightenment, then the goal will not be accomplished.

Instead, The Buddha encourages and motivates his Students to “guard the doors of the sense bases, be moderate in eating, and be intent on wakefulness; we will have wisdom into wholesome qualities, and will reside intent on the effort to develop the aids to Enlightenment”.

Wakefulness is to be interested in awakening the mind to Enlightenment through acquiring wisdom. Pursuing and progressing to Enlightenment as goal, objective, and interest rather than with craving/desire/attachment.

If a Practitioner “spends as much time as he wants yielding to the pleasure of rest, the pleasure of inactivity, the pleasure of sleep; one who does not guard the doors of the sense bases, who is immoderate in eating, and is not intent on wakefulness; who lacks insight into wholesome qualities; who does not reside intent on the effort to develop the aids to Enlightenment”, they would not be able to attain Enlightenment.

A Practitioner who is not practicing the Enlightenment factor of Investigation and Energy, would be unable to experience “the destruction of the taints, realize for himself with direct knowledge (experience), in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, resides in it”.

Investigation: (Dedicated examination, exploration, research, study, and questioning to learn The Teachings.)

Energy: (Effort, determination, ambition, initiative, motivation, vigor, and enthusiasm; willingness to do something.)

Detailed explanation of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 59

One Who Is Constantly Dedicated

But, Monks, if a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while walking, and he does not tolerate it but abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it, then that Monk is said to be dedicated and to have moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously energetic and determined while walking.

If a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while standing, and he does not tolerate it but abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it, then that Monk is said to be dedicated and to have moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously energetic and determined while standing.

If a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while sitting, and he does not tolerate it but abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it, then that Monk is said to be dedicated and to have moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously energetic and determined while sitting.

If a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while wakefully lying down, and he does not tolerate it but abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it, then that Monk is said to be dedicated and to have moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously energetic and determined while wakefully lying down.

(Reference: AN 4.11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings connecting multiple steps from The Eight Fold Path together, helping a Practitioner learn how to apply these Teachings in daily life.

Right Intention is to practice relinquishment (letting go), non-ill-will, and harmlessness.

Right Effort is to apply effort to eliminate unwholesome qualities of mind and arise wholesome qualities of mind.

Right Mindfulness is to have awareness of mind by practicing The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

Right Concentration is to practice “singleness of mind” focusing on one task at a time.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path is available in this same book series found in Chapter 5 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

When The Buddha shares this Teaching, he is explaining how a Practitioner should apply all four (4) of these steps of The Eight Fold Path in daily life to eliminate discontentedness from the mind. A Practitioner will need to train in meditation on a daily basis but they will also need to apply The Eight Fold Path in daily life throughout the day to actively train the mind. This Teaching is explaining the work to be done outside of meditation in order to eliminate discontentedness.

“But, Monks, if a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while walking, and he does not tolerate it but abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it, then that Monk is said to be dedicated and to have moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously energetic and determined while walking”.

Right Mindfulness or awareness of mind is to be “aware” of the arising “sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming” by observing The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (bodily sensations, feelings, condition of mind, or mental objects).

Right Effort is to apply the effort to eliminate the unwholesome qualities and arise the wholesome qualities of mind (i.e. “he does not tolerate it but abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it”) practicing Right Intention.

Right Concentration is to have focus and clarity of mind being “dedicated and to have moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously energetic and determined”.

Through learning and practicing all the steps of The Eight Fold Path, a Practitioner is able to train the mind to attain Enlightenment eliminating 100% of all discontent feelings from the mind.

Detailed explanation of moral wrongdoing and moral concern is available in this same book series found in Chapter 25 of the book “Generosity” (Volume 13).

Chapter 60

One Who Is Constantly Complacent

Monks, if a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while walking, and he tolerates it, does not abandon it, dispel it, terminate it, and obliterate it, then that Monk is said to be lacking of effort and moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously complacent and lacking in energy while walking.

If a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while standing, and he tolerates it, does not abandon it, dispel it, terminate it, and obliterate it, then that Monk is said to be lacking of effort and moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously complacent and lacking in energy while standing.

If a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while sitting, and he tolerates it, does not abandon it, dispel it, terminate it, and obliterate it, then that Monk is said to be lacking of effort and moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously complacent and lacking in energy while sitting.

If a sensual thought, a thought of ill will, or a thought of harming arises in a Monk while wakefully lying down, and he tolerates it, does not abandon it, dispel it, terminate it, and obliterate it, then that Monk is said to be lacking of effort and moral concern of wrongdoing; he is constantly and continuously complacent and lacking in energy while wakefully lying down.

(Reference: AN 4.11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the opposite of The Teaching in Chapter 59. Here, The Buddha is describing a Practitioner who is complacent lacking effort, moral concern, and energy.

A Practitioner who is complacent will not attain Enlightenment.

Complacency is one of The Five Hindrances and this needs to be eliminated from the mind through understanding and practicing The Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Detailed explanation of moral wrongdoing and moral concern is available in this same book series found in Chapter 25 of the book “Generosity” (Volume 13).

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 51-60)

<https://youtu.be/wdyNWiVOEmk>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 229 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 51-60)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--229---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-51-60-e18v6mp/a-a6nn270>

Meditation and Its Benefits

Chapter 61

The Preservation of Truth

‘But, Master Gotama, in what way is there the preservation of truth? How does one preserve truth? We ask Master Gotama about the preservation of truth.’

If a person has confidence, Bhāradvāja, he preserves truth when he says: My confidence is thus; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: Only this is true, anything else is wrong.

If a person approves of something, Bhāradvāja, he preserves truth when he says: My approval of something is thus; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: Only this is true, anything else is wrong.

If he receives an oral tradition, Bhāradvāja, he preserves truth when he says: My receiving of the oral tradition is thus; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: Only this is true, anything else is wrong.

If he (reaches a conclusion based on) reasoned reflection, Bhāradvāja, he preserves truth when he says: My (reaching of a conclusion based on) reasoned reflection is thus; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: Only this is true, anything else is wrong.

If he gains a reflective understanding of a view, he preserves truth when he says: My reflective understanding of a view is thus; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: Only this is true, anything else is wrong.

In this way too, Bhāradvāja, there is the preservation of truth; in this way he preserves truth; in this way we describe the preservation of truth. But as yet there is no discovery of truth.

(Reference: MN 95)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one can preserve truth by not reaching the conclusion of “only this is true, anything else is wrong”.

In choosing not to reach a definite conclusion based on minimal information, one is then able to preserve the truth.

All too often, an individual might come to a conclusion on a topic without taking time to fully investigate all the available information. When we fail to analyze all the available information and make decisions based on incomplete information, then we have the potential to cause harm to others and ourselves.

The unEnlightened mind is polluted with craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). The mind is oftentimes, longing and yearning for a conclusion and to reach a decision being unwilling or unable to take its time to fully assess a situation coming to the full discovery of truth making a sound decision.

A Practitioner who realizes that craving/desire/attachment is going to be pushing the mind to make decisions based on a lack of information and understanding can instead, choose to take their time fully acquiring all relevant information making a more wise decision with a wholesome outcome.

Choosing to make decisions based on a lack of information and understanding will lead a Practitioner to continue in the darkness as they are choosing to make unwise decisions leading to unwholesome outcomes being motivated to come to a conclusion based on craving, anger, ignorance (unknowing of true reality) rather than generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom.

The unEnlightened mind is perceiving the world around it through its own pollution of mind. The unEnlightened mind is not only pushing itself to make an untimely decision but it is also looking at all situations through its own pollution of mind finding it difficult to see true reality coming to a wise decision.

Through training the mind to eliminate the pollution of mind, a Practitioner can take their time to make sound decisions ensuring they have collected all the information and are not choosing to make decisions based on their own false perceptions. The unEnlightened mind's pollution distorts its ability to see situations clearly and therefore, will oftentimes make abrupt and harmful decisions.

It is only through deeply understanding The Three Poisons that a Practitioner can ensure they are applying effort to eliminate them from the mind and make sound decisions without the influence of The Three Poisons, thus, preserving the truth but they have still not discovered the truth.

Meditation is a primary technique used to train the mind to eradicate the pollution of the mind but there are many other aspects of learning and practicing these Teachings that a Practitioner will need to develop to fully train the mind to attain Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Three Poisons is available in this same book series found in Chapter 8 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 62

The Discovery of Truth

‘But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the discovery of truth? In what way does one discover truth?’

‘We ask Master Gotama about the discovery of truth.’

Here, Bhāradvāja, a Monk may be living in dependence on some village or town. Then a Householder or a Householder’s son goes to him and investigates him in regard to three kinds of states:

In regard to states based on craving/greed,
In regard to states based on anger/hatred,
In regard to states based on ignorance/delusion:

Are there in this Venerable One any states based on craving/greed such that, with his mind obsessed by those states, while not knowing he might say, ‘I know,’ or while not seeing he might say, ‘I see’ or he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and discontentedness for a long time? As he investigates him he comes to know: There are no such states based on craving/greed in this Venerable One. The bodily behavior and the verbal behavior of this Venerable One are not those of one affected by craving/greed. And The Teachings that this Venerable One teaches are profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and superb, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. These Teachings cannot easily be taught by one affected by craving/greed.

When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on craving/greed, he next investigates him in regard to states based on anger/hate: Are there in this Venerable One any states based on anger/hate such that, with his mind obsessed by those states, while not knowing he might say, ‘I know,’ or while not seeing he might say, ‘I see’ or he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and discontentedness for a long time? As he investigates him he comes to know: There are no such states based on anger/hate in this Venerable One. The bodily behavior and the verbal behavior of this Venerable One are not those of one affected by anger/hate. And The Teachings that this Venerable One teaches are profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and superb, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. These Teachings cannot easily be taught by one affected by anger/hate.

When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on anger/hate, he next investigates him in regard to states based on ignorance/delusion: Are there in this Venerable One any states based on ignorance/delusion such that, with his mind obsessed by those states, while not knowing he might say, 'I know,' or while not seeing he might say, 'I see' or he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and discontentedness for a long time? As he investigates him he comes to know: There are no such states based on ignorance/delusion in this Venerable One. The bodily behavior and the verbal behavior of this Venerable One are not those of one affected by ignorance/delusion. And The Teachings that this Venerable One teaches are profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and superb, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. These Teachings cannot easily be taught by one affected by ignorance/delusion.

When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on ignorance/delusion,

- (1) then he places confidence in him; filled with confidence,
- (2) he visits him and pays respect to him;
- (3) having paid respect to him,
- (4) he gives ear; when he gives ear,
- (5) he hears The Teachings; having heard The Teachings,
- (6) he memorizes them,
- (7) and examines the meaning of The Teachings he has memorized; when he examines their meaning,
- (8) he gains a reflective understanding of those Teachings; when he has gained a reflective understanding of those Teachings,
- (9) enthusiasm springs up; when enthusiasm has sprung up,
- (10) he applies his will; having applied his will,
- (11) he investigates thoroughly; having investigated thoroughly,
- (12) he applies effort and energy through purposeful striving; determined to apply effort and energy through striving, he realizes the ultimate truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.

In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the discovery of truth; in this way one discovers truth; in this way we describe the discovery of truth. But as yet there is no final arrival at truth.

(Reference: MN 95)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one can discover the truth through selecting a Teacher. He shares that one should observe and investigate a potential Teacher to determine if there are any unwholesome qualities of mind that exist in one's potential Teacher.

A Student should investigate a potential Teacher to determine if there is any craving, anger, or ignorance (unknowing of true reality). The ideal Teacher to share these Teachings and guide others to Enlightenment is a Teacher who has already attained Enlightenment.

If one has not attained Enlightenment, they would be unable to guide others to Enlightenment because they have not been able to accomplish this goal for themselves, how could they lead others to that goal.

This would be like attempting to teach someone to drive a car yet one has never driven a car. It would be impossible for someone who has never driven a car to teach others how to drive a car.

Similarly, The Buddha is advising that to discover the truth one would need to have a Teacher who has eliminated craving, anger, and ignorance from the mind which is how to produce Enlightenment. He explains that “these Teachings cannot easily be taught by one affected by” craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) because the mind would be unEnlightened.

Additionally, The Buddha suggests one observes a potential Teacher's bodily and verbal behavior (moral conduct). If a Teacher has craving, anger, or ignorance in their bodily or verbal conduct, they would not be well suited to share these Teachings guiding you to Enlightenment because they have not yet attained Enlightenment.

For you to attain Enlightenment, you will need to spend many hours, days, months, and years to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings. Having a Teacher who has attained Enlightenment will ensure you are discovering the truth in The Teachings they share helping to guide you to Enlightenment. If you were to overlook the process of taking the time to select a wise Teacher to guide you, you might be spending an enormous amount of time without experiencing substantial results on The Path to Enlightenment.

The Buddha advises that it would be wise to ensure a Student is making a wise decision about one's own Teacher.

Detailed explanation of “How to Determine If A Potential Teacher Has Attained Enlightenment” is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Next, The Buddha describes that once a Student has “investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on ignorance/delusion” a Student should:

- (1) then he places confidence in him: filled with confidence,
- (2) he visits him and pays respect to him;
- (3) having paid respect to him,
- (4) he gives ear; when he gives ear,
- (5) he hears The Teachings; having heard The Teachings,
- (6) he memorizes them,
- (7) and examines the meaning of The Teachings he has memorized; when he examines their meaning,
- (8) he gains a reflective understanding of those Teachings; when he has gained a reflective understanding of those Teachings,
- (9) enthusiasm springs up; when enthusiasm has sprung up,
- (10) he applies his will; having applied his will,
- (11) he investigates thoroughly; having investigated thoroughly,
- (12) he applies effort and energy through purposeful striving; determined to apply effort and energy through striving, he realizes the ultimate truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.

In this way, a Student is then able to discover the truth but there has been no final arrival at truth. While the Student is working towards discovering the truth to attain Enlightenment, in this description, the Student has not yet attained Enlightenment but instead, working towards the discovery of truth.

Chapter 63

The Final Arrival at Truth

‘But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the final arrival at truth? In what way does one finally arrive at truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final arrival at truth.’

The final arrival at truth, Bhāradvāja, lies in the repetition, development, and cultivation of those same things.

In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the final arrival at truth (wisdom); in this way one finally arrives at truth (wisdom); in this way we describe the final arrival at truth (wisdom).

(Reference: MN 95)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one can finally arrive at truth or wisdom.

Through preserving the truth, selecting a Teacher to be able to discover the truth, then final arrival at truth “lies in the repetition, development, and cultivation” of applying The Teachings in daily life.

Through continuous development to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings with guidance from a Teacher, a Practitioner is able to independently verify the truth acquiring wisdom. The mind is liberated to Enlightenment through wisdom.

Chapter 64

Five Future Dangers in the Way for Consideration

Monks, there are these five future dangers in the way of reflecting on which the diligent, dedicated, determined Monk, forest-gone, ought to live just to attain the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized.

What five?

(1) Take the case of a Monk who reflects thus:

I am now young, a mere youth, black-haired and endowed with the beauty of youth, in the prime of life; but there will come a time when old age shall touch this body: and when grown old and overcome by age, it is not easy to attend to The Buddha's Teachings, it is not easy to retreat to the forest wilderness. Before that comes to me - unwished for, undesirable, disagreeable condition comes upon me, let me in advance arouse energy for the attainment of the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized. Then when I am in that condition, I will reside at ease even though I am old. This is the first future danger to consider which is enough for a Monk to reside diligent, dedicated, determined...for the attainment of the unattained.

(2) Again he reflects: I have health and well-being, a good digestion which is neither too cold nor too heated, but moderate and suitable for striving; but there will come a time when sickness shall touch this body, and sick and ill, it is not easy to attend to The Buddha's Teachings, it is not easy to retreat to the forest wilderness. Before that comes to me - unwished for, undesirable, disagreeable condition comes upon me, let me in advance arouse energy for the attainment of the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized. Then when I am in that condition, I will reside at ease even though I am sick. This is the second future danger to consider which is enough for a Monk to reside diligent, dedicated, determined...for the attainment of the unattained.

(3) Again he reflects: Food is now plentiful, there has been a good harvest and food is easy to get and it is easy to keep oneself going by gathering; but there will come a time when there is famine, bad harvest, and difficulty in getting food, when it will be hard to keep oneself going by gathering; and in a time of famine people will move to where there is plentiful food and there one will dwell in living conditions that are congested and crowded, it is not easy to attend to The Buddha's Teachings, it is not easy to retreat to the

forest wilderness. Before that comes to me - unwished for, undesirable, disagreeable condition comes upon me, let me in advance arouse energy for the attainment of the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized. Then when I am in that condition, I will reside at ease even though food is not plentiful. This is the third future danger to consider which is enough for a Monk to reside diligent, dedicated, determined...for the attainment of the unattained.

(4) Again he reflects: Now men reside in friendly fellowship together, blending like milk and water, without disputes, but viewing each other with eyes of affection; but there will come a time of fear, fear of robbers, and the people of the countryside will mount their vehicles and flee. Fear-stricken men will move away to where there is safety, and there one will dwell in living conditions that are congested and crowded, it is not easy to attend to The Buddha's Teachings, it is not easy to retreat to the forest wilderness. Before that comes to me - unwished for, undesirable, disagreeable condition comes upon me, let me in advance arouse energy for the attainment of the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized. Then when I am in that condition, I will reside at ease even in a time of fear. This is the fourth future danger to consider which is enough for a Monk to reside diligent, dedicated, determined...for the attainment of the unattained.

(5) Moreover, Monks, the Monk reflects thus: Now The Community lives in friendly fellowship together, finding comfort in one Teaching: but the time will come when The Community will be fractured: and when that happens, it is not easy to attend to The Buddha's Teachings, it is not easy to retreat to the forest wilderness. Before that comes to me - unwished for, undesirable, disagreeable condition comes upon me, let me in advance arouse energy for the attainment of the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized. Then when I am in that condition, I will reside at ease even though The Community is fractured. This is the fifth future danger to consider which is enough for a Monk to reside diligent, dedicated, determined...for the attainment of the unattained.

Monks, there are these five future dangers in the way to consider which the diligent, dedicated, determined Monk, forest-gone, ought to live just to attain the unattained, to master the unmastered, to realize the unrealized.

(Reference: AN 5.78)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares details of how a Practitioner should not delay or push off the responsibility to train the mind, thus, not allowing the mind to become complacent as this is dangerous to one's progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

While certain aspects of life may be comfortable for you now, that might not always be the case due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence. The Buddha provides five (5) situations, or dangers, to consider that will happen in the future that could inhibit one from being able to learn and practice these Teachings to acquire the results of an Enlightened mind.

1.) Old age can cause challenges for one as the unEnlightened mind will not be as sharp to be able to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings. With living an entire life with a muddled mind, an elderly individual who is struggling with old age will find it a struggle to learn and practice these Teachings. So, The Buddha provides guidance that while one is young it is the ideal time to dedicate time, effort, energy, and resources towards learning and practicing these Teachings.

There is no age that is too old to learn and practice these Teachings but this Teaching is sharing that it would be more wise to choose to learn and practice while one is still young. Do not delay the decision to learn and practice these Teachings any further. The right time to learn and practice is always, right now.

Even if a Student is in the later phases of their life, they can still learn and practice to experience improvement to the condition of the mind possibly attaining Enlightenment during this life or at death.

If a Practitioner chooses to learn and practice these Teachings sooner in life, they will have less conditioning to eliminate. A child, for example, has very little craving and anger compared to an adult. An adult has other attributes that are beneficial and helpful in the pursuit to Enlightenment but there is more pollution of mind to eliminate.

There is no wrong time to begin to learn and practice but choosing to do so earlier in life can produce significant benefit as one will not need to live an entire life with discontentedness and can enjoy the benefits of having made the wise decision to learn and practice these Teachings while still young. If a Practitioner attains Enlightenment early in life, they are then able to enjoy the benefits of an Enlightened mind their entire life rather than experiencing constant struggles and difficulties living with an unEnlightened mind.

2.) Good health is an attribute that makes learning and practicing these Teachings less challenging. If there is bodily sickness, a Practitioner will be busy attending to the needs of the physical body where they will find it more challenging to learn and practice these Teachings.

While there is good health, rather than be complacent with the good health, a wise Practitioner would instead use that to their advantage to learn and practice so that they can get as much work accomplished in training the mind while there is still a healthy body.

3.) Plentiful food allows for a Practitioner to be able to nourish the body maintaining its strength and vitality. When food is easy to acquire, this is not a time to become complacent but instead, a time to use this to your benefit so that you are able to apply time, effort, energy, and resources towards learning and practicing these Teachings to experience the results of an Enlightened mind.

Plentiful food may promote a complacent mind and one should not allow easy access to food to lure the mind into complacency.

4.) Wholesome friends and associates is an important aspect of learning and practicing these Teachings. Making the wise choice to have wholesome friends and associates will positively influence you towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

While there are wholesome friends and associates, this would be the ideal time to actively learn and practice these Teachings instead of allowing the comfort of wholesome friends and associates to produce complacency or any sluggish conditions in the mind.

5.) The Community of Practitioners is highly important for one to develop their mind to Enlightenment. A Practitioner would need to have confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community. Through developing this confidence and having access to The Teachings and The Community, a Practitioner is then able to actively progress towards Enlightenment.

While The Community of Practitioners is strong, this is the ideal time to develop the mind towards Enlightenment rather than becoming complacent that this beneficial situation exists.

All of these things are impermanent. If a Practitioner allows these beneficial attributes to produce complacency rather than use them to their advantage, they could potentially be gone and lost, then a Practitioner would lack these same attributes of youthfulness, health, food, wholesome friends, and a strong community of Practitioners which are all helpful in one's pursuit to Enlightenment.

It would be dangerous for one to become complacent with certain comforts that exist now to delay applying time, effort, energy, and resources to learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 65

When the Mind Becomes Sluggish

On an occasion, Monks, when the mind becomes sluggish, it is untimely to develop the Enlightenment factor of tranquility, the Enlightenment factor of concentration, and the Enlightenment factor of equanimity.

For what reason?

Because the mind is sluggish, Monks, and it is difficult to arouse it with those things.

Suppose, Monks, a man wants to make a small fire flare up. If he throws wet grass, wet cow dung, and wet timber into it, sprays it with water, and scatters soil over it, would he be able to make that small fire flare up?

‘No, venerable sir.’

So too, Monks, on an occasion when the mind becomes sluggish, it is untimely to develop the Enlightenment factor of tranquility, the Enlightenment factor of concentration, and the Enlightenment factor of equanimity.

For what reason?

Because the mind is sluggish, Monks, and it is difficult to arouse it with those things.

On an occasion, Monks, when the mind becomes sluggish, it is timely to develop the Enlightenment factor of investigation, the Enlightenment factor of energy, and the Enlightenment factor of joy.

For what reason?

Because the mind is sluggish, Monks, and it is easy to arouse it with those things.

Suppose, Monks, a man wants to make a small fire flare up. If he throws dry grass, dry cow dung, and dry timber into it, blows on it, and does not scatter soil over it, would he be able to make that small fire flare up?

‘Yes, venerable sir.’

So too, Monks, on an occasion when the mind becomes sluggish, it is timely to develop the Enlightenment factor of investigation, the Enlightenment factor of energy, and the Enlightenment factor of joy.

For what reason?

Because the mind is sluggish, Monks, and it is easy to arouse it with those things.

(Reference: SN 46.53)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how to remedy a sluggish, lazy, and complacent mind.

Complacency: Dullness, Lethargy, Lack of Motivation (sloth and torpor)

Remedy: Enlightenment Factors of Investigation, Energy, and Joy

When the mind is sluggish, it would not be wise to practice the Enlightenment factors of tranquility, concentration, and equanimity as remedies for the sluggish mind.

Detailed explanation of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 66

When the Mind Becomes Excited

On an occasion, Monks, when the mind becomes excited, it is untimely to develop the Enlightenment factor of investigation, the Enlightenment factor of energy, and the Enlightenment factor of joy.

For what reason?

Because the mind is excited, Monks, and it is difficult to calm it down with those things.

Suppose, Monks, a man wants to extinguish a great bonfire. If he throws dry grass, dry cow dung, and dry timber into it, blows on it, and does not scatter soil over it, would he be able to extinguish that great bonfire?

'No, venerable sir.'

So too, Monks, on an occasion when the mind becomes excited, it is untimely to develop the Enlightenment factor of investigation, the Enlightenment factor of energy, and the Enlightenment factor of joy.

For what reason?

Because the mind is excited, Monks, and it is difficult to calm it down with those things.

On an occasion, Monks, when the mind becomes excited, it is timely to develop the Enlightenment factor of tranquility, the Enlightenment factor of concentration, and the Enlightenment factor of equanimity.

For what reason?

Because the mind is excited, Monks, and it is easy to calm it down with those things.

Suppose, Monks, a man wants to extinguish a great bonfire. If he throws wet grass, wet cow dung, and wet timber into it, sprays it with water, and scatters soil over it, would he be able to extinguish that great bonfire?

'Yes, venerable sir.'

So too, Monks, on an occasion when the mind becomes excited, it is timely to develop the Enlightenment factor of tranquility, the Enlightenment factor of concentration, and the Enlightenment factor of equanimity.

For what reason?

Because the mind is excited, Monks, and it is easy to calm it down with those things.

But mindfulness, Monks, I say is always useful.

(Reference: SN 46.53)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how to remedy an excited, happy, and euphoric mind.

Excitement: a feeling of great enthusiasm and eagerness. (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)

Remedy: Enlightenment Factors of Tranquility, Concentration, and Equanimity.

When the mind is excited, it would not be wise to practice the Enlightenment factors of investigation, energy, and joy as remedies for the excited mind.

The Buddha explains that practicing “mindfulness” “is always useful”. Mindfulness is “awareness of mind” using The Four Foundations of Mindfulness as shared in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) in Chapter 5.

Detailed explanation of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 67

Four Developments of Concentration

Monks, there are these four developments of concentration.

What four?

- (1) There is a development of concentration that leads to residing peacefully in this very life.
- (2) There is a development of concentration that leads to obtaining wisdom and vision.
- (3) There is a development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension.
- (4) There is a development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints.

— — — — —

(1) And what, Monks, is the development of concentration that leads to residing peacefully in this very life?

Here, a Monk, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

‘Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness’, he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

This is called the development of concentration that leads to residing peacefully in this very life.

(2) And what is the development of concentration that leads to obtaining wisdom and vision?

Here, a Monk attends to the perception of light; he focuses on the perception of day thus: As by day, so at night; as at night, so by day. Thus, with a mind that is open and uncovered, he develops a mind permeating (filled) with brightness.

This is the development of concentration that leads to obtaining wisdom and vision.

(3) And what is the development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension?

Here, a Monk knows feelings as they arise, as they remain present, as they disappear; he knows perceptions as they arise, as they remain present, as they disappear; he knows thoughts as they arise, as they remain present, as they disappear.

This is the development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension.

(4) And what is the development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints?

Here, a Monk resides reflecting on arising and vanishing in The Five Aggregates subject to clinging:

Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away; such is feeling, such its origin, such its passing away; such is perception, such its origin, such its passing away; such are volitional formations (choices/decisions), such its origin, such its passing away; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its passing away.

This is the development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints.

These are the four developments of concentration.

(Reference: AN 4.41)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “Four Developments of Concentration”.

These are the four (4) ways to develop concentration in the mind.

Concentration is a highly important quality of mind that a Practitioner will need to develop that benefits you on The Path to Enlightenment and in daily life.

It is when the mind is muddled, confused, and lacking comprehension that we find life difficult and a struggle. We have difficulties and struggles in relationships, in our profession, in learning, and in completing daily tasks, etc. Through a well developed mind, a Practitioner will develop concentration and clarity of mind benefiting you in improving the quality of life through being able to conduct life with ease.

It is training the mind through practicing the entire Eight Fold Path that concentration is developed, especially with meditation.

Meditation is a technique to actively train the mind during dedicated, independent, purposeful training sessions to eliminate unwholesome qualities of the mind and/or cultivate wholesome qualities of the mind in the positions of seated, lying, standing, or walking.

While The Eight Fold Path and meditation is the training a Practitioner will employ to cultivate concentration, The Buddha shares this Teaching beyond the basics of The Eight Fold Path helping a Practitioner to more deeply develop concentration as an important quality of mind that a Practitioner will find benefits with the development of their life practice.

(1) First, “there is a development of concentration that leads to residing peacefully in this very life”.

The Buddha explains the attainment of the Jhānas as the way to develop concentration that leads to residing peacefully in this very life.

Through training the mind to learn and practice The Eight Fold Path, a Practitioner’s mind will eventually experience the Jhānas. The Jhānas are preliminary phases the mind experiences prior to entering the first Stage of Enlightenment. There are several qualities of mind that are experienced as a Practitioner enters into the Jhānas that will benefit them throughout their daily life such as mindfulness, equanimity, joy, the unification of the mind (i.e. elimination of subconscious thoughts motivating unskillful behavior), and concentration.

An unEnlightened mind that is not learning and practicing these Teachings compared to the unEnlightened mind that is learning and practicing these Teachings and has attained the Jhānas, is like “night and day”. There is a significant difference, with increased benefits in the quality of mind experienced, when the mind has attained the Jhānas. The benefits of the Jhānas are experienced throughout one’s day, not only in meditation.

The Jhānas are so profound, many Practitioners mistakenly believe they have attained Enlightenment but are instead, just experiencing the Jhānas. In the Jhānas, the mind will still be experiencing discontentedness but, to a much lesser degree.

A Practitioner entering the Jhānas is an indication that they are successfully understanding and implementing The Eight Fold Path. At this point, it is time for the Practitioner to continue their learning, reflection, and practice of The Eight Fold Path, with all the other Teachings, while starting to focus on the elimination of The Ten Fetters.

Explanation of the Jhānas is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

You can find a detailed explanation of the Jhānas through these additional resources:

(YouTube)

The Eight Fold Path - Mental Discipline (Part 3 of 3) - (Group Learning Program)

https://youtu.be/O_1vFGBiGXU

(Podcast)

Ep. 145 - The Eight Fold Path - Mental Discipline (Part 3 of 3) - (Group Learning Program)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--145---The-Eight-Fold-Path---Mental-Discipline-Part-3-of-3---Group-Learning-Program-eqoh9q/a-a4nacqj>

(2) Second, “there is a development of concentration that leads to obtaining wisdom and vision”.

The Buddha explains concentration that leads to wisdom and vision. Wisdom is the antidote or remedy to ignorance (unknowing of true reality). Ignorance is the primary hindrance keeping the mind in the unEnlightened state. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings, the mind is liberated from the ignorance having been deeply trained and can then see clearly.

When The Buddha mentions “vision”, he is referring to a Practitioner who is able to “see clearly”. It is wisdom that lifts the mind from the fog of ignorance allowing the Practitioner to see the world with great clarity or brightness.

Gotama Buddha is sharing that through developing concentration, one is able to acquire wisdom and clarity to see the world through “a mind permeating (filled) with brightness”.

An Enlightened mind will not be complaining about the dreadful and miserable aspects of life but instead, be able to see with clear vision the brightness or fullness of life.

While an Enlightened mind is aware of the misery and suffering that exist in the world, perhaps even more so than an unEnlightened mind, the Enlightened mind is able to move beyond the misery and suffering to experience liberation despite the complications and difficulties in the world. An Enlightened mind chooses not to allow the challenges of daily life to burden the mind with constant negativity but instead, is able to function filled with brightness, joy, and positivity.

(3) Third, “there is a development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension”.

The Buddha explains development of concentration that leads to mindfulness and clear comprehension. Mindfulness, or awareness of mind, is useful at all times. To purify the

mind, a Practitioner needs to develop awareness of mind and be constantly aware or mindful with clear comprehension.

The Buddha explains that a Practitioner knows feelings, perceptions, and thoughts as they arise, remain present, and disappear. This is accomplished through training the mind in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and remaining mindful or aware of the mind throughout the day.

As a Practitioner observes the mind is lost in day dreams, wanders away from a topic of conversation, or becomes cluttered during a daily task, they need to cut off and let go of the invading feelings, perceptions, and thoughts bringing the mind back to the current task.

A Practitioner actively develops mindfulness and clear comprehension both inside and outside of meditation. While meditation is the consistent ongoing training employed 2-3 times per day, to attain Enlightenment a Practitioner will need to develop mindfulness and clear comprehension outside of meditation as well.

This all culminates into a Practitioner developing deep concentration to benefit you in all parts of your life.

(4) Forth, “there is a development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints”.

The Buddha explains development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints. The taints are the pollution of the unEnlightened mind also referred to as the fetters or The Ten Fetters.

It is through eliminating The Ten Fetters that a Practitioner develops concentration as the mind is liberated from the pollution of the taints. The mind will no longer be tainted by the unwholesome qualities that plague the unEnlightened mind.

The Buddha shares that it is “reflecting on arising and vanishing in The Five Aggregates subject to clinging” that leads to development of concentration that leads to the destruction of the taints. The Five Aggregates are what makes a being, a being.

Form, Feelings, Perceptions, Volitional Formations, and Consciousness.

The Five Aggregates

Form: the physical body.

Feelings: results of experiences in the mind through The Six Sense Bases.

Perceptions: a belief or opinion based on how things seem.

Volitional Formations: choices or decisions that are made.

Consciousness: the mind.

It is when the mind “clings” or “holds on” to The Five Aggregates that the mind experiences discontentedness. Observing the impermanent nature of The Five Aggregates, a being can “let go” no longer experiencing discontentedness due to “holding on” to The Five Aggregates.

The Buddha advises that a Practitioner should understand the origin and passing away of The Five Aggregates in order to eliminate the taints. Reflecting on the passing away, fading away, or subsiding of The Five Aggregates helps a Practitioner understand their impermanent nature and trains the mind to “let go” of existence to escape The Cycle of Rebirth. This further assists a Practitioner to realize The Universal Truth of Non-self eliminating the taint of “personal existence view”.

Training the mind to observe the impermanent nature of The Five Aggregates helps a Practitioner eliminate the taint of “sensual desire”, “desire for form”, “desire for formless”, and “ignorance”. As the mind eliminates all of The Ten Fetters, destroying the taints, the Practitioner will experience deep concentration and clarity of mind.

It is through the development of concentration that a Practitioner will find their life practice continually improve realizing increased benefits in daily life.

A Practitioner can gain further understanding of The Five Aggregates and the related Teaching of Dependent Origination in this same book series found in the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)” (Volume 5).

Chapter 68

Develop Concentration (First Discourse)

Monks, develop concentration. A Monk who is concentrated understands things as they really are.

And what does he understand as it really is?

He understands as it really is: This is discontentedness.

He understands as it really is: This is the cause of discontentedness.

He understands as it really is: This is the elimination of discontentedness.

He understands as it really is: This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

Monks, develop concentration. A Monk who is concentrated understands things as they really are.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: This is discontentedness.

An effort should be made to understand: This is the cause of discontentedness.

An effort should be made to understand: This is the elimination of discontentedness.

An effort should be made to understand: This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

(Reference: SN 56.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the importance of developing concentration. He points to The Four Noble Truths as a Practitioner who “understands as it really is”.

Through understanding “This is discontentedness”, “This is the cause of discontentedness”, “This is the elimination of discontentedness”, and “This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness” a Practitioner will come to understand The Four Noble Truths implementing this Teaching in daily life to develop concentration.

Detailed explanation of The Four Noble Truths is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 69

Develop Concentration (Second Discourse)

Monks, develop concentration. A Monk who is concentrated understands things as they really are.

And what does he understand as it really is?

The origin and passing away of form; the origin and passing away of feeling; the origin and passing away of perception; the origin and passing away of volitional formations (choices/decisions); the origin and passing away of consciousness.

And what, Monks, is the origin of form? What is the origin of feeling? What is the origin of perception? What is the origin of volitional formations (choices/decisions)? What is the origin of consciousness?

Here, Monks, one seeks excitement, one welcomes, one remains holding. And what is it that one seeks excitement in, what does one welcome, to what does one remain holding?

One seeks excitement in form, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement arises. Excitement in form is clinging. With one's clinging as condition, existence (comes to be); with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One seeks excitement in feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement arises. Excitement in feeling is clinging. With one's clinging as condition, existence (comes to be); with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One seeks excitement in perception, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement arises. Excitement in perception is clinging. With one's clinging as condition, existence (comes to be); with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One seeks excitement in volitional formations (choices/decisions), welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement arises. Excitement in volitional formations is clinging. With one's clinging as condition, existence (comes to be); with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One seeks excitement in consciousness, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement arises. Excitement in consciousness is clinging. With one's clinging as condition, existence (comes to be); with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

This, Monks, is the origin of form; this is the origin of feeling; this is the origin of perception; this is the origin of volitional formations; this is the origin of consciousness.

And what, Monks, is the passing away of form? What is the passing away of feeling? What is the passing away of perception? What is the passing away of volitional formations (choices/decisions)? What is the passing away of consciousness?

Here, Monks, one does not seek excitement, one does not welcome, one does not remain holding. And what is it that one does not seek excitement in? What doesn't one welcome? To what doesn't one remain holding?

One does not seek excitement in form, does not welcome it, does not remain holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement in form is eliminated. With the elimination of excitement comes elimination of clinging; with elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence comes elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth comes elimination of aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One does not seek excitement in feeling, does not welcome it, does not remain holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement in feeling is eliminated. With the elimination of excitement comes elimination of clinging; with elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence comes elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth comes elimination of aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One does not seek excitement in perception, does not welcome it, does not remain holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement in perception is eliminated. With the elimination of excitement comes elimination of clinging; with elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence comes elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth comes elimination of aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One does not seek excitement in volitional formations (choices/decisions), does not welcome it, does not remain holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement in volitional formations is eliminated. With the elimination of excitement comes elimination of clinging; with elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence comes elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth comes elimination of aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

One does not seek excitement in consciousness, does not welcome it, does not remain holding to it. As a consequence of this, excitement in consciousness is eliminated. With the elimination of excitement comes elimination of clinging; with elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence comes elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth comes elimination of aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

With the elimination of excitement comes elimination of clinging; with elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence comes elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth comes elimination of aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair.

Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

This, Monks, is the passing away of form; this is the passing away of feeling; this is the passing away of perception; this is the passing away of volitional formations (choices/decisions); this is the passing away of consciousness.

(Reference: SN 22.5)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares further details on the development of concentration through understanding The Five Aggregates.

Through seeking excitement in form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness, a Practitioner welcomes and remains holding on to existence which leads to further rebirths in The Cycle of Rebirth.

When a Practitioner does not seek excitement in forms, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness, they do not welcome or remain holding on to The Five Aggregates. Then, a being will escape The Cycle of Rebirth no longer experiencing “birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair” described as the whole massive amount of discontentedness.

Chapter 70

The First Jhāna Is Secure from Danger and Māra

So too, Monks, when, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. On that occasion it occurs to the Monk: Now I am secure from danger and Māra cannot do anything to me. It also occurs to Māra the Evil One: Now the Monk is secure against danger and I cannot do anything to him.

(In reference to the second Jhāna ... the third Jhāna ... and the fourth Jhāna ... are explained in the same repetitive phrases.)

(Reference: AN 9.39)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how once a Practitioner enters into the first Jhāna, they are no longer in danger from Māra the Evil One.

For details on Māra the Evil One, please see Chapter 13 of this book.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 61-70)

<https://youtu.be/Vn2bXp601RA>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 232 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 61-70)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--232---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-61-70-e19d2ba/a-a6pgsej>

Chapter 71

Craving and Anger Does Not Exist

Monks, there are these four things that are born.

What four?

Craving is born from craving; anger is born from craving; craving is born from anger; and anger is born from anger.

When, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, he enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy, on that occasion craving born from craving does not exist in him, anger born from craving does not exist in him, craving born from anger does not exist in him, and anger born from anger does not exist in him.

When, with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy ... the third Jhāna ... the fourth Jhāna, on that occasion craving born from craving does not exist in him, anger born from craving does not exist in him, craving born from anger does not exist in him, and anger born from anger does not exist in him.

(Reference: AN 4.200)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how craving and anger are born for each other and how when the mind enters and resides in the Jhānas, craving and anger are significantly decreased.

A Practitioner who enters the Jhānas will still have craving and anger in the mind but, it will be significantly decreased. Therefore, discontentedness is significantly decreased for a Practitioner who has entered into the Jhānas. It is not until the third Stage of Enlightenment that anger/hatred/ill will is completely eliminated from the mind and it is not until a Practitioner is in the fourth Stage of Enlightenment that craving/desire/attachment is fully extinguished.

In order to accomplish the goal of extinguishing all craving/desire/attachment and anger/hatred/ill will, a Practitioner needs to deeply understand and practice the entire Path to Enlightenment - The Eight Fold Path. One aspect of The Path to Enlightenment is to understand how craving and anger arise.

In this Teaching, The Buddha mentions how craving is born from craving; anger is born from craving; craving is born from anger; and anger is born from anger.

Craving is born from craving: If an individual has a certain craving, this can arise additional cravings on top of the original craving.

For example, if a Practitioner has craving/desire/attachment for wealth, this could then arise craving and obsession for increased promotions in one's career, increased money, lavish lifestyle, and luxury cars, clothing, jewelry, property, etc. These cravings can then motivate unskillful intentions, speech, and actions resulting in significant difficulties in one's life.

In this way, craving is born from craving.

Anger is born from craving: If an individual has a certain craving, this can arise anger in the mind when one does not acquire the objects of their affection.

For example, if a Practitioner has craving/desire/attachment for wealth, this could then arise anger when increased promotions in one's career, increased money, lavish lifestyle, and luxury cars, clothing, jewelry, property, etc. are not acquired. Anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, etc. can all arise in the mind based on the initial craving/desire/attachment for wealth. The anger can then motivate unskillful intentions, speech, and actions resulting in significant difficulties in one's life.

In this way, anger is born from craving.

Craving is born from anger: If an individual has a certain anger that has arisen based on an initial craving, the anger can arise further craving in the mind when one is experiencing the painful feelings of anger, the unEnlightened mind will then arise additional cravings attempting to pursue pleasant feelings to eliminate the painful feelings associated with the anger.

For example, if a Practitioner has craving/desire/attachment for wealth, this could then arise anger when increased promotions in one's career, increased money, lavish lifestyle, and luxury cars, clothing, jewelry, property, etc. are not acquired. Anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, etc. can all arise in the mind based on the initial craving/desire/attachment for wealth. The individual is uncomfortable with the arisen anger, therefore, a craving/desire/attachment for sex, drugs, alcohol, shopping, material possessions, or other cravings may arise within the mind as it seeks to rid itself of the painful feelings associated with the anger. The unEnlightened mind is "unknowing of true reality" how it is stuck in this vicious cycle constantly longing and yearning with a strong eagerness to permanently hold on to the pleasant feelings when that is impossible. With the unEnlightened mind basing its inner feelings on impermanent conditions, it will never experience lasting satisfaction until one trains the mind to eliminate all cravings/desires/attachments. The new cravings can then motivate unskillful intentions, speech, and actions resulting in significant difficulties in one's life.

In this way, craving is born from anger.

Anger is born from anger: If an individual has anger, this can arise further anger in the mind when one does not acquire the objects of their affection.

For example, if a Practitioner has anger because they were not able to acquire wealth, this could then arise further anger when increased promotions in one's career, increased money, lavish lifestyle, and luxury cars, clothing, jewelry, property, etc. are not acquired. Anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, etc. can all arise in the mind based on the initial anger that wealth was not acquired. The new anger can then motivate unskillful intentions, speech, and actions resulting in significant difficulties in one's life.

In this way, anger is born from anger.

Chapter 72

Calm and Reflection Have Part in True Wisdom

Monks, these two qualities have part in true wisdom.

What two?

Calm and reflection.

If cultivated, what profit does calm attain?

The mind is cultivated.

What profit results from a cultivated mind?

All craving is abandoned.

Monks, if reflection is cultivated, what profit does it attain?

Wisdom is cultivated.

If wisdom is cultivated, what profit does it attain?

All ignorance is abandoned.

A mind defiled by craving is not liberated; and wisdom defiled by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is not developed. Thus, Monks, through the fading away of craving there is liberation of mind; and through the fading away of ignorance (unknowing of true reality) there is liberation by wisdom.

(Reference: AN 2.31)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how “calmness leads to the elimination of craving” and “reflection leads to the elimination of ignorance”. Accomplishing these goals, a Practitioner’s mind would be close to Enlightenment and potentially Enlightened.

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner needs to eliminate craving/desire/attachment from the mind. The Buddha guides Practitioners to understand that calmness is a quality of mind that leads to the elimination of craving/desire/attachment, thus, the elimination of discontentedness.

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner also needs to cultivate wisdom in the mind. The Buddha guides Practitioners to understand that reflection is a quality of mind that leads to the cultivation of wisdom, thus, the elimination of ignorance.

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to eliminate craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). This is the general way to understand what needs to be eliminated with The Ten Fetters representing a detailed description of what needs to be eliminated from the mind to attain Enlightenment.

It is wisdom that transforms ignorance (unknowing of true reality). Wisdom is acquired through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings.

Transforming The Three Poisons: Craving, Anger, and Ignorance

Gotama Buddha’s Teachings to eliminate craving, anger, and ignorance are known, for good reason, as The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, and The Three Fires. Also known as (greed, hatred, and delusion) or (desire, ill will, and confusion).

These are The Three Poisons that exist and are present in the mind as part of rebirth into the human realm. It is our goal, through these Teachings, to eliminate these three poisons through practice of non-craving or generosity, non-anger or loving-kindness, and non-ignorance or wisdom. To attain Enlightenment, one would need to completely eliminate The Three Poisons.

These metaphors suggest how dangerous afflictive thoughts and emotions can be if they are not understood and transformed. Craving (Greed/Desire) refers to our selfishness, desire, attachment, and grasping for contentedness and satisfaction outside of ourselves. Anger (Hatred/Ill Will) refers to our hostility and aggression, our aversion and repulsion toward unpleasant people, circumstances, and even toward our own uncomfortable feelings. Ignorance (Delusion/Confusion) refers to our dullness, confusion, and misperception; our unknowing or wrong views of reality misunderstanding the world around us as described as part of The Natural Laws of Existence in Gotama Buddha’s Teachings.

The poisons of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) — mask our true nature, the awakened mind of wisdom and compassion. These poisonous states of mind then motivate non-virtuous and unskillful intentions, speech, and actions, which produces unwholesome Kamma so they need to be transformed, remedied and an antidote applied to experience the brightness of the Enlightened mind.

Craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) are deeply embedded in the conditioning of our personalities. Our behavior is habitually influenced and tainted by these three poisons, these unwholesome roots buried deep into the mind. Burning within

us as craving (greed/desire), anger (hatred/ill will), and ignorance (delusion/confusion), these poisons lay to waste hearts, lives, hopes, and civilizations, driving us blind and thirsty through the seemingly endless round of birth and death - The Cycle of Rebirth.

Gotama Buddha describes these defilements as bonds, hindrances, and knots; the actual root cause of unwholesome Kamma and the entire spectrum of human discontentedness. It is The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires that keeps the mind in the unEnlightened state. It is only when a Practitioner deeply understands these and uproots them from the mind, that one can reside permanently peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy.

Although this Teaching may appear negative or unpleasant, indeed, a wise understanding of The Three Poisons of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is ultimately positive and empowering. With this superb understanding, we can clearly see and feel the factors that are causing discontentedness and suffering in our lives. And with this clarity and insight, we can make the choice to eliminate those factors.

The Teaching of The Four Noble Truths clearly explains that when we embrace and understand the exact causes of our discontentedness, suffering and dissatisfaction, we can then take the necessary steps to extinguish those causes and liberate the mind. This is certainly positive and empowering.

In addition, it is important for us to realize that Gotama Buddha's Teachings regarding defilement and purification are not just rigid, restrictive, or authoritarian theories regarding morality, but are real and solid truths essential to our correct understanding of reality and eventual awakening. Through learning these Teachings and the practice of these Teachings, we awaken to true reality, acquiring wisdom, eliminating the poison of ignorance/delusion or "unknowing" we have of true reality that keeps The Three Poisons well rooted into the mind causing us untold amounts of discontentedness and suffering.

Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings while seeking guidance with a Teacher, a Practitioner will independently observe the truth acquiring wisdom to liberate the mind removing these poisons to experience Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Three Poisons and how to eliminate them is available in this same book series found in Chapter 8 of the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1).

Chapter 73

One Who Inclines Towards Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

Monks, just as the river Ganges slants, slopes, and inclines towards the east, so too a Monk who develops and cultivates the four Jhānas slants, slopes, and inclines towards Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

And how, Monks, does a Monk who develops and cultivates the four Jhānas slant, slope, and incline towards Nibbāna (Enlightenment)?

Here, a Monk, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

‘Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness’, he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

It is in this way, Monks, that a Monk who develops and cultivates the four Jhānas slants, slopes, and inclines towards Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

(Reference: SN 53.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how developing the mind to attain the Jhānas moves a Practitioner's mind towards Enlightenment. Through training the mind to attain the Jhānas, a Practitioner is likely to continue their progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

The way a Practitioner attains the Jhānas is to stay focused on learning, reflecting, and practicing the core and central Teachings that comprise the main aspects of The Path to Enlightenment.

The core and central Teachings a Practitioner should focus on developing in their life practice are:

- A.) The Three Universal Truths
- B.) The Four Noble Truths
- C.) The Eight Fold Path
- D.) The Five Precepts
- E.) The Brahma-viharas
- F.) The Ten Fetters
- G.) The Seven Factors of Enlightenment
- H.) Extensive Meditation Training

Through learning and practicing these Teachings, a Practitioner could be predicted to progress towards the attainment of the Jhānas. Once the mind is experiencing the Jhānas, this is an indication that one's life practice is becoming well developed and they should then start to focus on the elimination of The Ten Fetters.

Through the elimination of The Ten Fetters, the mind will experience Enlightenment.

Chapter 74

Great Fruit and Benefit of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation (Anāpānasati)

Monks, Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit.

And how, Monks, is Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit?

Here, Monks, a Monk, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or an empty hut, sits down.

Having folded his legs crosswise, straightened his body and set up mindfulness in front of him, just mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

Breathing in long, he knows: I breathe in long; or breathing out long, he knows: I breathe out long.

Breathing in short, he knows: I breathe in short; or breathing out short, he knows: I breathe out short.

He trains thus: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing joy, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Experiencing joy, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing peacefulness, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Experiencing peacefulness, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing the mental activity, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Experiencing the mental activity, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Calming the mental activity, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Calming the mental activity, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing the mind, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Experiencing the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Gladdening the mind, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Gladdening the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Concentrating the mind, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Concentrating the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Liberating the mind, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Liberating the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on impermanence, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Reflecting on impermanence, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on fading away, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Reflecting on fading away, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on elimination, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Reflecting on elimination, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe out.

It is, Monks, when Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) is developed and cultivated in this way that it is of great fruit and benefit.

When, Monks, Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) has been developed and cultivated in this way, one of two fruits may be predicted: either final knowledge (wisdom) in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of Non-Returner.

(Reference: SN 54.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance for training the mind using Breathing Mindfulness Meditation.

There are two benefits that The Buddha is describing associated with Breathing Mindfulness Meditation. The benefits he describes are “final knowledge (wisdom) in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of Non-Returner”.

One who has attained “final knowledge (wisdom)” is an Enlightened being and “the state of Non-Returner” is the third Stage of Enlightenment, the Stage of Enlightenment just prior to attaining Enlightenment as an Arahant in the fourth Stage of Enlightenment.

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation is a primary aspect of training the mind to attain Enlightenment. One would not be able to attain Enlightenment without Breathing Mindfulness Meditation but one would not be able to attain Enlightenment with only Breathing Mindfulness Meditation. Gotama Buddha prioritized Breathing Mindfulness Meditation above all other forms of meditation.

Anāpānasati is the Pāli word to refer to Breathing Mindfulness Meditation.

Detailed explanation of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation is available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

The Buddha’s Teachings on Breathing Mindfulness Meditation are available in this same book series found in the book “Breathing Mindfulness Meditation” (Volume 7). A detailed explanation of his guidance will be explained in (Volume 7).

Chapter 75

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation An Excellent and Peaceful Dwelling

(The Buddha commented on the incidences of Monks' dying through suicide by themselves or by encouraging and assisting others to do so. On this occasion The Perfectly Enlightened One had given them the discourses of Anāpānasati (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation).)

Monks, this concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, is peaceful and superb, an excellent and peaceful dwelling, and it dissolves and extinguishes right on the spot evil unwholesome states whenever they arise.

Just as, Monks, in the last month of the hot season, when a mass of dust and dirt has swirled up, a great rain cloud out of season disperses it and extinguishes it on the spot, so too concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, is peaceful and superb, an excellent and peaceful dwelling, and it dissolves and extinguishes on the spot evil unwholesome states whenever they arise.

And how is this so?

Here, Monks, a Monk, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down.

Having folded his legs crosswise, straightened his body and set up mindfulness in front of him, just mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

Breathing in long, he knows: I breathe in long; or breathing out long, he knows: I breathe out long.

Breathing in short, he knows: I breathe in short; or breathing out short, he knows: I breathe out short.

He trains thus: Experiencing the whole body.... (Repeated as at Chapter 74)

He trains thus: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe in;
he trains thus: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe out.

It is in this way, Monks, that concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) is developed and cultivated so that it is peaceful and superb, an excellent and peaceful dwelling, and it dissolves and extinguishes on the spot evil unwholesome states whenever they arise.

(Reference: SN 54.9)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how Breathing Mindfulness Meditation develops peacefulness in the mind eliminating any evil unwholesome mental states. While this is true, it does require practice to develop one's mind to the point where it can "dissolve and extinguish right on the spot evil unwholesome states whenever they arise".

If you have never meditated before, one should not expect that the mind can immediately eliminate evil unwholesome states. Instead, it is through gradual training and gradual practice that the mind will experience gradual progress towards the ability of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation to "dissolve and extinguish right on the spot evil unwholesome states whenever they arise".

Developing a dedicated practice of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation with the guidance of a Teacher will be needed to progress on The Path to Enlightenment. In doing so, one can eliminate all unwelcomed feelings including suicidal thoughts or interest in assisting others to die by suicide.

You can access resources to assist you in developing your practice using this Youtube Channel which has a Playlist of a series of nine (9) videos to guide you in your learning along with other resources to help you. You can also seek personalized guidance with the author of this book.

Daily Wisdom - Walking The Path with The Buddha (Youtube Channel)

<https://bit.ly/DailyWisdom-Youtube>

Chapter 76

A Monk Who Is Not Lacking of Jhāna

Monks, if for just the time of a finger snap a Monk develops Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), he is called a Monk who is not lacking of Jhāna, who acts upon The Teachings of The Teacher, who responds to his advice, and who does not eat the country's almsfood having produced no results or benefits. How much more, then, those who cultivate it!

(Reference: AN 1.394)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one who trains in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation will be able to experience the Jhānas. He also encourages Students to practice "The Teachings of The Teacher" and respond to his advice.

A Teacher is highly important on The Path to Enlightenment. Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha's Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

Only a Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without Teachers. These are some of the criteria that make a Buddha a Buddha is that they discover The Teachings on their own attaining Enlightenment without help from a Teacher, shares their independently discovered Teachings to guide countless others to Enlightenment during the remaining time of their life, and they leave their Teachings in a condition that they guide countless others to Enlightenment after their death.

The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

That means you and everyone else will need Teachers on this Path to Enlightenment. A Buddha has already done the hard work of figuring out how to attain Enlightenment. You just need to learn and practice his Teachings to improve the condition of the mind and your life.

Seeking guidance to learn and practice Breathing Mindfulness Meditation is a wise decision to get started.

Chapter 77

Breathing In and Breathing Out Is a Certain Kind of Body

Whenever, Ānanda, a Monk, when breathing in long, knows: I breathe in long; or, when breathing out long, knows: I breathe out long;

when breathing in short, knows: I breathe in short; or,
when breathing out short, knows: I breathe out short;

when he trains thus: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in;
when he trains thus: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe out;

when he trains thus: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe in;
when he trains thus: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe out...

(Repeated as at Chapter 74)

...on that occasion the Monk resides reflecting on the body as body,
dedicated, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed craving and
displeasure in regard to the world.

For what reason?

I call this a certain kind of body. Ānanda, that is, breathing in and breathing out.

Therefore, Ānanda, on that occasion the Monk resides reflecting on the body as body, dedicated, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed craving and displeasure in regard to the world.

(Reference: SN 54.13)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner can use Breathing Mindfulness Meditation to develop the first of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness through “reflecting on the body as body, dedicated, clearly comprehending, [and] mindful”.

A Practitioner will need to develop Right Mindfulness to the point where they are able to observe the arising discontentedness as bodily sensations so that they can “cut it off and let it go” through applying Right Effort prior to the arising discontentedness becoming feelings, affecting the condition of the mind, or forming a mental object.

A Practitioner whose training has progressed to the point where they are observing the bodily sensations associated with arising discontentedness and is able to “cut it off and let it go” is nearing close to Enlightenment.

To accomplish this goal, a Practitioner will need to have a well developed practice of the entire Eight Fold Path to include, Breathing Mindfulness Meditation.

Then, in daily life as discontentedness is starting to arise and is observed as bodily sensations, the Practitioner should apply Right Effort to eliminate the arising discontentedness prior to it making its way into the mind as feelings. Doing this repeatedly through one’s daily life will culminate into the complete elimination of discontentedness as the Practitioner eliminates the cravings/desires/attachments that produced the discontentedness. “Cutting off and letting go” of any arising discontentedness will result in, over time, the discontent feelings never arising in the future as the mind eliminates the cravings/desires/attachments that produced the discontentedness.

Chapter 78

Mindfulness of the Body

Here a Monk, gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out:

Breathing in long, he understands: I breathe in long; or breathing out long, he understands: I breathe out long.

Breathing in short, he understands: I breathe in short; or breathing out short, he understands: I breathe out short.

He trains thus: I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body;
he trains thus: I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body.

He trains thus: I shall breathe in calming the bodily sensations;
he trains thus: I shall breathe out calming the bodily sensations.

As he resides thus diligent, dedicated, and determined, his memories and thoughts based on the household life are abandoned; with their abandoning, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

That is how a Monk develops mindfulness of the body.

(Reference: MN 119)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares another Teaching guiding a Practitioner to develop Right Mindfulness of bodily sensations as part of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

“Experiencing the whole body” is guiding a Practitioner to have awareness of the bodily sensations that arise, exist, and then fade away during meditation which then becomes helpful in daily life. The mind can observe the impermanent nature of these bodily sensations to develop the mind to understand impermanence while cultivating awareness of mind.

“As he resides thus diligent, dedicated, and determined” is encouraging a Practitioner to remain dedicated to the practice of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation.

“His memories and thoughts based on the household life are abandoned” guides a Practitioner to let go of the past focusing the mind on the breath, the present moment, during meditation. This trains the mind to reside only in the present moment, not longing for the past or the future. His guidance was for the Ordained Practitioners who left the household life. For a Household Practitioner, you can use this guidance to train the mind to let go of pleasant or painful experiences in the past, rooting the mind into the present moment.

“With their abandoning his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated” helps a Practitioner understand what they need to accomplish during Breathing Mindfulness Meditation sessions. The Practitioner will need to focus the mind on the breath to eliminate craving/desire/attachment while cultivating mindfulness (awareness of mind) and developing concentration or singleness of mind while quieting the thoughts.

A mind trained in this way will then be able to perform optimally in daily life through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment and having cultivated mindfulness (i.e. awareness of mind) and concentration (i.e. singleness of mind) by focusing on only one task at a time.

The Buddha explains the purpose of this Teaching through explaining “that is how a Monk develops mindfulness of the body”.

Chapter 79

One Who Has Developed and Cultivated Mindfulness of the Body

Again, Monks when walking, a Monk understands: I am walking; when standing, he understands: I am standing; when sitting, he understands: I am sitting; when lying down, he understands: I am lying down; or he understands accordingly however his body is positioned.

Again, Monks, a Monk is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating or urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

As he resides thus diligent, dedicated, and determined his memories and thoughts based on the household life are abandoned; with their abandoning, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated. That too is how a Monk develops mindfulness of the body.

Monks, anyone who has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body has included within himself whatever wholesome states there are that lead to true wisdom.

Just as anyone who has extended his mind over the great ocean has included within it whatever streams there are that flow into the ocean; so too, anyone who has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body has included within himself whatever wholesome states there are that lead to true wisdom.

(In addition, it was also mentioned that to develop reflection on unattractiveness of the body: Thirty-two (32) Part Body Meditation and to develop the first Jhāna all the way to the fourth Jhāna are also considered as developing mindfulness of the body.)

(Reference: MN 119)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares additional Teachings on developing mindfulness of the bodily sensations.

A Practitioner will need to function with full awareness of bodily sensations and the mind during their daily life. This will take a lot of effort in the beginning of one's development of this practice but over time, the mind will be able to attend to this full awareness effortlessly. But, because the unEnlightened mind is untrained and is not used to constant awareness, initially this will require a lot of work and effort.

The Buddha provides many common daily tasks illustrating how that during even the most simple activities, one needs to remain fully aware of the mind or mindful. Even when doing tasks such as “defecating or urinating”, a Practitioner needs to focus on only one task at a time rather than attempting to use a mobile device, read, or perform some other tasks. In this way, the mind will develop singleness of mind with deep concentration to benefit you in daily life.

“Anyone who has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body has included within himself whatever wholesome states there are that lead to true wisdom” guides a Practitioner in understanding how to cultivate the mind leading to wisdom.

The entire Path to Enlightenment has the cultivation of wisdom as a central objective. It is through the cultivation of wisdom that one observes the truth being able to make wise decisions. Through wise decision making, or discernment, a Practitioner develops an improved condition of their mind and life.

The Buddha uses the description of how streams flow into the ocean to describe how developing mindfulness of bodily sensations leads to wholesome mental states, thus, leading to wisdom. Wisdom is the ocean, the ultimate goal. “Just as anyone who has extended his mind over the great ocean has included within it whatever streams there are that flow into the ocean; so too, anyone who has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body has included within himself whatever wholesome states there are that lead to true wisdom”.

Through awareness of bodily sensations, the mind is then able to “cut off and let go” of any arising discontentedness. This leads to wholesome mental states through not allowing discontentedness or any other unwholesome mental states, to arise as feelings in the mind. Through practicing in this way, the mind becomes fully and completely protected from all discontentedness and unwholesome mental states.

This requires a “diligent, dedicated, and determined” approach to developing and maintaining a consistent meditation practice where the mind is “steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated”. Training to develop these qualities of mind are then beneficial in daily life maintaining a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy.

Chapter 80

Mindfulness Directed to the Body “A Strong Post for Mind”

One Dwells Without Having Set Up Mindfulness of the Body

Suppose, Monks, a man would catch six animals--with different domains and different feeding grounds - and tie them by a strong rope. He would catch a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal, and a monkey, and tie each by a strong rope. **Having done so, he would tie the ropes together with a knot in the middle and release them.**

Then, those six animals with different domains and different feeding grounds would each pull in the direction of its own feeding ground and domain. The snake would pull one way, thinking, ‘Let me enter an anthill’. The crocodile would pull another way, thinking, ‘Let me enter the water’. The bird would pull another way, thinking, ‘Let me fly up into the sky’. The dog would pull another way, thinking, ‘Let me enter a village’. The jackal would pull another way, thinking, ‘Let me enter a charnel ground’. The monkey would pull another way, thinking, ‘Let me enter a forest’.

Now when these six animals become worn out and fatigued, they would be dominated by the one among them that was strongest; they would submit to it and come under its control.

So too, Monks, when a Monk has not developed and cultivated mindfulness directed to the body, the eye pulls in the direction of agreeable forms and disagreeable forms are repulsive; the ear pulls in the direction of agreeable sounds and disagreeable sounds are repulsive; the nose pulls in the direction of agreeable odors and disagreeable odors are repulsive; the tongue pulls in the direction of agreeable flavors and disagreeable flavors are repulsive; the body pulls in the direction of agreeable physical objects and disagreeable physical objects are repulsive; the mind pulls in the direction of agreeable mental objects and disagreeable mental objects are repulsive.

It is in such a way that there is non-restraint.

One Resides Having Set Up Mindfulness of the Body

Suppose, Monks, a man would catch six animals with different domains and different feeding grounds - and tie them by a strong rope. He would catch a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal, and a monkey, and tie each by a strong rope. **Having done so, he would bind them to a strong post or pillar.**

Then, those six animals with different domains and different feeding grounds would each pull in the direction of its own feeding ground and domain. The snake would pull one way, thinking, 'Let me enter an anthill'. The crocodile would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter the water'. The bird would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me fly up into the sky'. The dog would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter a village'. The jackal would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter a charnel ground'. The monkey would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter a forest'.

Now, when these six animals become worn out and fatigued, they would stand close to that post or pillar, they would sit down there, they would lie down there.

So too, Monks, when a Monk has developed and cultivated mindfulness directed to the body, the eye does not pull in the direction of agreeable forms nor are disagreeable forms repulsive; the ear does not pull in the direction of agreeable sounds nor are disagreeable sounds repulsive; the nose does not pull in the direction of agreeable odors nor are disagreeable odors repulsive; the tongue does not pull in the direction of agreeable flavors nor are disagreeable flavors repulsive; the body does not pull in the direction of agreeable physical objects nor are disagreeable physical objects repulsive; the mind does not pull in the direction of agreeable mental objects nor are disagreeable mental objects repulsive.

It is in such a way that there is restraint.

A strong post or pillar: this, Monks, is a designation for mindfulness directed to the body.

Therefore, Monks, you should train yourselves thus: We will develop and cultivate mindfulness directed to the body, make it our vehicle, make it our basis, stabilize it, exercise ourselves in it, and fully perfect it.

Thus should you train yourselves.

(Reference: SN 35.247)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how Breathing Mindfulness Meditation (i.e. “cultivate mindfulness directed to the body”) is used as a strong “post or pillar” to restrain The Six Sense Bases of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

He uses the six animals pulling in different directions to represent the six internal sense bases of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind pulling towards the six external sense bases of forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects. If the mind is unrestrained allowing the mind to pull towards the objects of its affection, the mind will continue to experience discontentedness.

Through training the mind to be restrained by focusing on the arising bodily sensations as the “post or pillar” then as discontentedness arises, the Practitioner can observe those bodily sensations and cut off and let go of the discontentedness, thus, working to eliminate the cravings/desires/attachments that caused the discontentedness. By no longer allowing the mind to pull towards the objects of its affection, it is restrained and the mind will eliminate discontentedness.

A Practitioner who trains the mind in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation will be able to train the mind to cut off thoughts and let them go gaining more and more mental discipline of the mind being aware of the bodily sensations that precede the arising of discontentedness. In this way, one gains the ability to cut off and let go of cravings/desires/attachments of the mind that are pulling towards forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects to eliminate discontentedness.

It is the mind’s mental longing with a strong eagerness towards the six external sense bases through the six internal sense bases that is the cause of the discontent mind. The mind craves pleasant feelings and when it gets the object of its affection, it experiences happiness, excitement, and elation but the mind is discontent. If the mind does not acquire the objects of its affection, it experiences sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, etc. – painful feelings. Or, the mind might experience feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant such as boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied. All of these feelings and others are indications of a discontent mind.

It is only when one deeply learns, reflects, and practices these Teachings while training the mind using techniques such as Breathing Mindfulness Meditation that the mind will be liberated through wisdom from the discontent feelings experienced in the unEnlightened mind. Then in the moment as the mind experiences the arising of bodily sensations indicating arising discontentedness, cut that off and let it go.

As the mind is being trained in meditation to cut off thoughts and let them go, the mind develops the ability to become deeply aware of unwholesome thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc., arising and to then cut them off or let them go. This trains the mind over repeated meditation training sessions to “let go”. Every time the mind wants to pull in any direction towards the past, the future, thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc., a Practitioner should not judge the thoughts, label them, or even attempt to figure out where they are coming from. You can just cut them off and let them go bringing the mind back to the breath. The breath is the present moment and is the strong “post or pillar”.

This training will develop into the mind having deep awareness (Right Mindfulness) and the ability to cut off and let go of thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc. (Right Effort)

Then, with this consistent and ongoing training during daily meditation sessions of 2-3 times per day for 30-minutes or more per session, in daily life as unwholesome thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc., arise or the mind goes to the past or future, cut it off and let it go.

Over time, this trains the mind to be well disciplined with Breathing Mindfulness Meditation being the strong “post or pillar”. Just as Gotama Buddha shares that “when these six animals become worn out and fatigued, they would stand close to that post or pillar, they would sit down there, they would lie down there” the mind will eventually get tired of pulling in the direction of the six external sense bases through the six internal sense bases and it will just “sit down there” and “lie down there” being perfectly tuned to “the middle way”.

The mind can then apply this in daily life, that as the mind is pulling in the direction of the objects of its affection due to craving/desire/attachment, the Practitioner can cut that off and let it go. This trains the mind to reside in the middle no longer pulling towards the objects of its affection due to craving/desire/attachment. Craving/desire/attachment can be gradually eliminated from the mind, thus, all discontentedness of mind is gradually eliminated. The mind becomes Enlightened because the unwholesome root of craving/desire/attachment has been extinguished from the mind and no longer causes arising discontentedness.

The mind will be more and more trained to perform optimally with deep concentration (Right Concentration) as the fetters/taints/pollution of the mind are no longer causing muddle mindedness. The mind will become more and more clear as it fully realizes the benefits and results of consistent and ongoing training on The Path to Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation is available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 71-80)

https://youtu.be/wpw_BwFTzKs

Podcast(s)

Ep. 235 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 71-80)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--235---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-71-80-e19ics9/a-a6q86ie>

Chapter 81

The Simile of The Tortoise

Monks, in the past a tortoise was searching for food along the bank of a river one evening. On that same evening a jackal was also searching for food along the bank of that same river. When the tortoise saw the jackal in the distance searching for food, it drew its limbs and neck inside its shell and passed the time keeping still and silent.

The jackal had also seen the tortoise in the distance searching for food, so he approached and waited close by, thinking: When this tortoise extends one or another of its limbs or its neck, I will grab it right on the spot, pull it out, and eat it. But because the tortoise did not extend any of its limbs or its neck, the jackal, failing to gain access to it, lost interest in it and departed.

So too, Monks, Māra the Evil One is constantly and continually waiting close by you, thinking, ‘Perhaps I will gain access to him through the eye or through the ear or through the nose or through the tongue or through the body or through the mind.’ Therefore, Monks, reside guarding the doors of The Six Sense Bases. Having seen a form with the eye...Having heard a sound with the ear...Having smelt an odor with the nose...Having tasted a flavor with the tongue...Having touched a physical object with the body... Having recognized a mental object with the mind, do not grasp its signs and features. Since, if you leave the eye sense base unguarded, the ear sense base unguarded, the nose sense base unguarded, the tongue sense base unguarded, the body sense base unguarded, the mind sense base unguarded, evil unwholesome states of craving and displeasure might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, the body sense base, the mind sense base, undertake the restraint of the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, the body sense base, and the mind sense base.

When, Monks, you reside guarding the doors of The Six Sense Bases, Māra the Evil One, failing to gain access to you, will lose interest in you and depart, just as the jackal departed from the tortoise.

Drawing in the mind’s thoughts
As a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell,
Independent, not harassing others, fully extinguished.
A Monk would not blame anyone.

(Reference: SN 35.240)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings to help Practitioners understand that developing a “guard” over The Six Sense Bases is crucial for the development of the mind on The Path to Enlightenment.

A Practitioner needs to deeply understand the problem of the unEnlightened mind which is its mental longing and strong eagerness (craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations/grasping/holding), craving for sensual pleasures through The Six Sense Bases. Due to the craving/desire/attachment for agreeable and pleasant sensual pleasures, the mind causes itself to be discontent.

It is through training the mind to eliminate the defilement, or unwholesome root, of craving/desire/attachment that one will be able to eliminate discontentedness and, thus, liberate the mind.

So, when one observes the arising of craving/desire/attachment through The Six Sense Bases or a form, sound, odor, flavor, physical object, or mental object has come in contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind that arises any sort of discontent feelings either pleasant, painful, or neither painful-nor-pleasant - cut it off and let it go.

Through constant dedication and effort to eliminate the arising pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant, eventually these feelings will not ever arise in the mind.

But this comes with determination and diligence to guard the six doorways to discontentedness ensuring that one can readily cut off and let go of the cravings/desires/attachments that cause the mind to be discontent.

Chapter 82

The Simile of the Bowl of Oil

Monks, suppose that on hearing, ‘The most beautiful girl of the land! The most beautiful girl of the land!’ a great crowd of people would assemble. Now that most beautiful girl of the land would dance exquisitely and sing exquisitely. On hearing, ‘The most beautiful girl of the land is dancing! The most beautiful girl of the land is singing!’ an even larger crowd of people would assemble. Then a man would come along, aspiring to live, not aspiring to die, aspiring for peacefulness, uninterested in discontentedness. Someone would say to him:

Good man, you must carry around this bowl of oil filled to the brim between the crowd and the most beautiful girl of the land. A man with a drawn sword will be following right behind you, and wherever you spill even a little of it, right there he will cut off your head.

What do you think, Monks, would that man stop attending to that bowl of oil and out of negligence turn his attention outwards?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

I have made up this simile, Monks, in order to convey a meaning. This here is the meaning: The bowl of oil filled to the brim: this is a designation for mindfulness directed to the body.

Therefore, Monks, you should train yourselves thus: We will develop and cultivate mindfulness directed to the body, make it our vehicle, make it our basis, stabilize it, exercise ourselves in it, and fully perfect it.

Thus, Monks, should you train yourselves.

— — — — —

Monks, those who do not take part in mindfulness directed to the body do not take part in the deathless (Enlightenment). Those who take part in mindfulness directed to the body they take part in the deathless.

Monks, those who are unattentive about mindfulness directed to the body are unattentive about the deathless. Those who are attentive about mindfulness directed to the body are attentive about the deathless (Enlightenment).

(Reference: SN 47.20)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a simile to help Practitioners understand the importance in establishing mindfulness of bodily sensations or “mindfulness directed to the body”.

He is explaining how the mind needs to be restrained from the tendency for the eye to pull towards the direction of “the most beautiful girl of the land” and the ear to pull in the direction of “crowd of people” with excitement.

Applying this to your daily life, as you are in situations where the mind wants to pull in the direction of pleasant feelings to experience happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc., imagine a man walking right behind you with a sword about to cut off the head should the mind pull in the direction of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind (i.e. The Six Sense Bases).

Instead, stabilize the mind and fully perfect restraining the mind from being pulled towards agreeable contact and being repulsed by disagreeable contact. The mind can develop the ability to guard the six doorways to discontentedness so that it can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

Chapter 83

Great Good of Mindfulness Directed to the Body

Monks, those who do not take part in mindfulness directed to the body do not take part in the deathless (Enlightenment). Those who take part in mindfulness directed to the body take part in the deathless (Enlightenment).

Monks, those who are unattentive about mindfulness directed to the body are unattentive about the deathless (Enlightenment). Those who are attentive about mindfulness directed to the body are attentive about the deathless (Enlightenment).

(Reference: AN 1.616)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the importance of mindfulness of bodily sensations, or “mindfulness directed to the body”, in training the mind towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

“The Deathless” is another way of referring to Enlightenment. One who has attained Enlightenment has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth and will no longer experience the constant rounds of birth, sickness, aging, and death. Therefore, The Buddha is referring to one who has attained Enlightenment as “The Deathless”.

Having attained Enlightenment in this life, a being is so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that the mind never experiences any discontent feelings. The mind has eliminated 100% of all fears, including the fear of death. For the rest of one’s life, they will never again experience any discontent feelings. So, at the time of their last death, there is no death. The physical body dies and the mind separates from the physical body, referred to as “Final Enlightenment”.

Therefore, because there is “no you”, (i.e. an Enlightened being has realized The Universal Truth of Non-self), then “you” have not died but instead, the body and mind have just separated. This is referred to as “the breaking-up of the body after death”. It is the physical body that dies and the mind that separates from the physical body at death. But, for one who has attained Enlightenment, there is no longer any rebirth through The Cycle of Rebirth, therefore, an Enlightened being is considered to be “The Deathless”.

If one is “unattentive about mindfulness directed to the body”, then they are “unattentive about the deathless (Enlightenment)”. In other words, one who does not develop mindfulness of bodily sensations is complacent towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

If one is “attentive about mindfulness directed to the body”, then they are “attentive about the deathless (Enlightenment)”. In other words, one who does develop mindfulness of bodily sensations is diligent towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

The Buddha left The Teachings of what happens when one attains Enlightenment and dies as an “undeclared” Teaching. He did not share what does or does not happen once Enlightenment is attained and there is death.

I suspect The Buddha did this for one of these reasons:

1.) The Buddha only ever taught what he had direct knowledge of and had experienced for himself. Because he had never attained Enlightenment and died, he may not have known what was next, if anything, so therefore he left what happens after the death of an Enlightened being as “undeclared”.

2.) If The Buddha was aware that there is something next after a being has attained Enlightenment and dies, it must be as good or better than Enlightenment itself. If there is something that does happen after death of an Enlightened being, The Buddha could have wisely left this as an “undeclared” Teaching so that the unEnlightened mind does not develop a craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) for what may come after death.

An unEnlightened Practitioner has so many cravings/desires/attachments to eliminate from the mind, a wise Teacher who knows of something beneficial that comes after the death of an Enlightened being would not provide Teachings on what that is as a way of ensuring their Students do not develop a craving/desire/attachment for any potential afterlife. Gotama Buddha, if he did know of something that does come next, wisely left this as an undeclared Teaching ensuring his Students did not develop a craving/desire/attachment for any potential afterlife hindering Enlightenment. The goal of a Teacher who is sharing Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment, and definitely the goal of a Buddha, is to guide Students to Enlightenment. Through leaving any potential discussion of an afterlife as undeclared, this would be a compassionate way to ensure one’s Teachings are not creating hindrances towards the attainment of Enlightenment but instead, eliminates any and all hindrances through sharing The Teachings that do lead to Enlightenment.

3.) The Buddha only ever shared Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. While all the wisdom a Buddha acquires as part of their independent journey to Enlightenment is represented by all the leaves in all the trees of the forest, what is needed to attain Enlightenment is represented only by the few leaves collected in one’s hands.

If there is something that happens for an Enlightened being after death, knowing that is not required for the attainment of Enlightenment. Only those Teachings that are needed for the attainment of Enlightenment need to be shared with Students so they can focus the mind on learning, reflecting, and practicing those Teachings. Anything beyond that, would just be distracting and potentially take away from the core and central Path to Enlightenment.

An Enlightened being’s mind is so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy residing only in the present moment, an Enlightened being is not going to care or be concerned with what is next after death. They have overcome the most significant challenge ever, which is to eliminate 100% of all discontentedness in the mind. Having attained that goal through determination, dedication, and diligence to one’s practice and having overcome the fear of death, an Enlightened being is not going to care what is next, if anything at all.

At death, an Enlightened being will not be reborn in The Cycle of Rebirth. There is no reason to ever share what may or may not happen to an Enlightened being after death.

Chapter 84

Training a Mind Filled with Loving-Kindness, without Hostility or Ill Will

Monks, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you:

- (1) Their speech may be timely or untimely,
- (2) true or untrue,
- (3) gentle or harsh,
- (4) connected with benefit or unbeneficial,
- (5) spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate.

Herein, Monks, you should train thus:

Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall speak no evil words; we shall reside compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall reside enveloping that person with a mind filled with loving-kindness, and starting with him, we shall reside enveloping the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with loving-kindness, abundant, joyful, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will. That is how you should train, Monks.

Monks, suppose a man came with crimson, turmeric, indigo, or carmine and said: I shall draw pictures and make pictures appear on empty space.

What do you think, Monks? Could that man draw pictures and make pictures appear on empty space?

'No, Venerable Sir'

Why is that?

Because empty space is formless and invisible; he cannot possibly draw pictures there or make pictures appear there. Eventually the man would reap only tiredness and disappointment.

So too, Monks, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you.

Herein, Monks, you should train thus: Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall speak no evil words; we shall reside compassionate for their

welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall reside enveloping them with a mind filled with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall reside enveloping the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with loving-kindness, abundant, joyful, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will: That is how you should train, Monks.

(The Buddha also spoke several other similes. A simile of a man who came with a hoe and a basket and said 'I shall make this great earth to be without earth'. A simile of a man with a blazing grass-torch and said 'I shall heat up and burn away the river Ganges with this blazing grass-torch'. Eventually that man would reap only tiredness and disappointment.)

Monks, even if criminals were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be practicing my Teachings.

Herein, Monks, you should train thus: Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall speak no evil words; we shall reside compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall reside enveloping them with a mind filled with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall reside enveloping the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with loving-kindness, abundant, joyful, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will: That is how you should train, Monks.

Monks, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, insignificant or significant, that you could not endure?

'No, Venerable Sir.'

Therefore, Monks, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and peacefulness for a long time.

(Reference: MN 21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the types of speech that one may encounter in the course of their daily life.

People may speak to you in the following ways:

- (1) Their speech may be timely or untimely,
- (2) true or untrue,
- (3) gentle or harsh,
- (4) connected with benefit or unbeneficial,
- (5) spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate.

However one should choose to speak to you, The Buddha provides guidance that a Practitioner who is training their mind towards the attainment of Enlightenment should remain unaffected residing with a mind filled with loving-kindness. “Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall speak no evil words; we shall reside compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate”.

Hate is not eliminated and extinguished through being hateful. Hate can only be eliminated and extinguished through the practice of loving-kindness.

While this may be challenging and completely opposite of what you have been taught or practiced your entire life, continuing to be angry, hateful, or have ill will is only going to produce more anger, hatred, and ill will towards you. This is The Natural Law of Kamma of “cause and effect” or “action and results”, essentially the results of your decisions.

The reason why anger, hatred, and ill will is continuing around you is because you are continuing to put that out into the world, therefore, it will continue to come back to you. It is only when you train the mind to improve your wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline that you will see a different result.

Continuing to do what you have done in the past will only produce the same results as you are experiencing now. It is only when you make changes to your life practice that you will observe improvements to the condition of the mind and your life.

While others may speak to you untimely, untrue, harsh, unbeneficial, with a mind of inner hate and blamefully, you will need to train the mind to speak at the right time, truthful, gentle, beneficially, with a mind of loving-kindness, and blamelessly to attain Enlightenment.

Learning, reflecting, and practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech is highly important to ensure one is not causing harm through their speech or communication. Improving your practice to accomplish this goal is going to take patience and dedication to ensure you are working in the direction of Right Speech.

Through a well developed practice of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and Loving-kindness Meditation, a Practitioner can transform the mind eliminating craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) making it much easier to practice Right Speech and all the other Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment.

The mind needs to be filled and permeating with loving-kindness for all beings for one to attain Enlightenment. Anger, hatred, ill will and all the lesser versions of these qualities of mind, do not exist in the mind of an Enlightened being. It is training the mind through a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path that the mind can be trained to fully extinguish all unwholesome Kamma to include Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and Loving-kindness Meditation. Then, in daily life, one needs to ensure they are practicing The Eight Fold Path to perfection in all situations and interactions.

Through the continuous patience and diligence to learn and practice in this way, a Practitioner will move the mind towards the ultimate goal of Enlightenment.

Chapter 85

Benefits of Developing Various Kinds of Meditation

Rāhula, develop meditation on loving-kindness; for when you develop meditation on loving-kindness, any ill will will be abandoned.

Rāhula, develop and cultivate the mind on compassion; for when you develop and cultivate the mind on compassion, any cruelty will be abandoned.

Rāhula, develop and cultivate the mind on sympathetic joy; for when you develop and cultivate the mind on sympathetic joy, any jealousy will be abandoned.

Rāhula, develop and cultivate the mind on equanimity; for when you develop and cultivate the mind on equanimity, any aversion will be abandoned.

Rāhula, develop meditation on unattractiveness of the body; for when you develop meditation on unattractiveness of the body, any lust will be abandoned.

Rāhula, develop meditation on the perception of impermanence; for when you develop meditation on the perception of impermanence, the conceit ‘I am’ will be abandoned.

(Reference: MN 62)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares with his son Rāhula to develop meditation on six (6) qualities of mind.

The first four (4) of these mental states are often referred to as “The Brahma-viharas”.

1.) Loving-kindness (Pāli: mettā) is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

2.) Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

3.) Sympathetic joy (Pāli: muditā) is joy for others’ success, even if you did not contribute to it.

4.) Equanimity (Pāli: upekkhā) is mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation; treating everyone impartially.

5.) Unattractiveness of the body is developed to abandon the fetter/taint/pollution of “sensual desire”.

6.) Perception of impermanence is developed to train the mind to realize The Universal Truth of Impermanence so that it will be disinterested in craving/desire/attachment and to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of “conceit”.

“Rāhula, develop meditation on loving-kindness; for when you develop meditation on loving-kindness, any ill will will be abandoned”: Loving-kindness is cultivated through Loving-kindness Meditation and will then need to be practiced in daily life to help the mind eliminate anger/hatred/ill will filling up the mind with loving-kindness.

“Rāhula, develop and cultivate the mind on compassion; for when you develop and cultivate the mind on compassion, any cruelty will be abandoned”: Compassion is cultivated, to a certain extent, with Loving-kindness Meditation as that meditation tends to develop compassion in the mind but, this will also need to be practiced in daily life.

“Rāhula, develop and cultivate the mind on sympathetic joy; for when you develop and cultivate the mind on sympathetic joy, any jealousy will be abandoned”: Sympathetic joy is cultivated through actively cutting off and letting go of any feelings of jealousy or envy in daily life. When situations arise where it is observed that the mind has jealousy or envy, the Practitioner needs to cut off and let go of those unwholesome feelings, and arise the wholesome mental state of sympathetic joy.

“Rāhula, develop and cultivate the mind on equanimity; for when you develop and cultivate the mind on equanimity, any aversion will be abandoned”: Equanimity is cultivated through training the mind in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation to reside peaceful and content but more actively in daily life when difficult situations arise. As a difficult situation is experienced, a Practitioner will need to arise equanimity cutting off and letting go of any uncalmness or unsteadiness that arises in the mind bringing the mind to the middle practicing mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation.

Allowing the mind to be shaken up to become unsteady will only create more difficulties by the mind being uncalm.

Calm —> Mindfulness —> Concentration —> Wisdom

It is calmness of mind that leads to a Practitioner being able to practice mindfulness (i.e. awareness of mind). By practicing mindfulness, the mind can then be concentrated (i.e. singleness of mind with focus). With concentration, a Practitioner can access wisdom to make wise decisions leading to wholesome outcomes.

But, allowing the mind to become uncalm, will have the downstream negative effects of inhibiting the practice of mindfulness (i.e. awareness of mind), concentration (i.e. singleness of mind with focus), and then being unable to access wisdom to make wise decisions leading to wholesome outcomes. Allowing the mind to be uncalm or shaken up can create a situation where, due to a lack of being able to access wisdom, the situation turns from bad to worse or even detrimental. Through maintaining one’s calmness and composure, they can then make wise decisions to improve the situation based in wisdom.

Observing a difficult situation and then arising equanimity to maintain calmness needs to be developed and cultivated so that it becomes first nature during any and all life situations.

“Rāhula, develop meditation on unattractiveness of the body; for when you develop meditation on unattractiveness of the body, any lust will be abandoned”:

A Practitioner can use Thirty-Two Part Body Meditation to develop the unattractiveness of the body to reduce and eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as sensual desire to include sexual contact. There is also a meditation where one can observe images of a corpse or be in the presence of a corpse to develop unattractiveness of the body.

Through training the mind to observe the unattractiveness of the body, a Practitioner can then train the mind to eliminate the desire for sexual contact, when or if they are ready to accomplish this goal.

“Rāhula, develop meditation on the perception of impermanence; for when you develop meditation on the perception of impermanence, the conceit ‘I am’ will be abandoned”: A Practitioner can use Breathing Mindfulness Meditation as a general approach to developing the perception of impermanence and deeply soak this into the mind through observing that all thoughts, feelings, ideas, bodily sensations, sounds, etc. are impermanent as one meditates. But, to eliminate the conceit ‘I am’, it is suggested that you use the Meditation to Realize Non-self, available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

In addition to employing the Meditation to Realize Non-self, a Practitioner will need to be observant of the mind through practice of Right Mindfulness that as conceit arises in the mind, to cut it off and let it go so that it can be actively eliminated.

Meditation alone will not completely transform the mind towards any of the wholesome qualities discussed by The Buddha. But through a combination of meditation and applying the entire Eight Fold Path in daily life, a Practitioner can train the mind to eliminate the unwholesome qualities of mind and arise the wholesome qualities of mind mentioned in this Teaching from The Buddha.

Detailed explanation of The Brahma-viharas is available in this same book series found in Chapter 14 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Detailed explanation to develop a meditation practice is available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 86

One Who Is Capable of Entering and Residing in Right Concentration

Monks, possessing five qualities, a Monk is incapable of entering and residing in Right Concentration.

What five?

Here, a Monk cannot patiently endure forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects. Possessing these five qualities, a Monk is incapable of entering and residing in Right Concentration.

Monks, possessing five (other) qualities, a Monk is capable of entering and residing in Right Concentration.

What five?

Here, a Monk can patiently endure forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects. Possessing these five qualities, a Monk is capable of entering and residing in Right Concentration.

(Reference: AN 5.113)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner's mind will need to be developed to be unaffected by forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects to experience Right Concentration or the Jhānas.

The mind needs to be distant from “sensual desire”, or in other words, have diminished its craving/desire/attachment for seeing agreeable forms through the eyes, hearing agreeable sounds through the ears, smelling agreeable odors through the nose, tasting agreeable flavors through the tongue, and touching agreeable physical objects through the body.

A Practitioner is unable to experience Right Concentration (i.e. experience the Jhānas) if the mind “cannot patiently endure” forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

Chapter 87

Do Concentration in the Morning, in the Middle of the Day, and in the Evening

Monks, possessing three factors, a shopkeeper is capable of acquiring wealth not yet acquired and of increasing wealth already acquired.

What three?

Here, a shopkeeper diligently applies himself to his work in the morning, in the middle of the day, and in the evening.

Possessing these three factors, a shopkeeper is capable of acquiring wealth not yet acquired and of increasing wealth already acquired.

So too, possessing three factors, a Monk is capable of achieving a wholesome state not yet attained and of increasing a wholesome state already attained.

What three?

Here, a Monk diligently applies himself to an object of concentration in the morning, in the middle of the day, and in the evening.

Possessing these three factors, a Monk is capable of achieving a wholesome state not yet attained and of increasing a wholesome state already attained.

(Reference: AN 3.19)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares to train the mind in meditation at three (3) times during the day, morning, midday, and evening.

This is a practice that most Practitioners will need to build up over time. You may or may not be able to accomplish this goal as you first get started but instead, gradually train the mind to establish a practice where you are meditating 2-3 times per day for 30 minutes or more per session.

This will produce the best results.

Detailed explanation to develop a meditation practice is available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 88

Remote Lodgings in Forests and Jungle Groves Are Hard to Endure

‘Venerable Sir, I wish to retreat to remote lodgings in forests and jungle groves.’

Remote lodgings in forests and jungle groves are hard to endure, Upāli. Solitude is hard to undertake and hard to delight in. When he is alone, the woods steal the mind of a Monk who does not gain concentration. It can be predicted that one who says ‘I do not gain concentration, yet I will retreat to remote lodgings in forests and jungle groves’ will either sink or float away.

Suppose, Upāli, there was a large lake, and a bull elephant seven or eight cubits in size would come along. He might think: Let me enter this lake and playfully wash my ears and back. I will bathe and drink, come out, and set off wherever I want. He then enters the lake and playfully washes his ears and back. He bathes and drinks, comes out, and sets off wherever he wants.

How so? Because his large body finds a footing in the depths.

Then a hare or a cat comes along. It might think: How is a bull elephant different from myself? I’ll enter this lake and playfully wash my ears and back. I will bathe and drink, come out, and set off wherever I want. Then, without reflecting, it hastily enters the deep lake. It can be predicted that it will either sink or float away.

Why so? Because its small body does not find a footing in the depths.

So too, it can be predicted that one who would say: I do not gain concentration, yet I will retreat to remote lodgings in forests and jungle groves; will either sink or float away.

Come, Upāli, reside within The Community. While you reside within The Community you will be at ease.

(Reference: AN 10.99)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he provides guidance to his Student Upāli that he should consider not going to the forest as he is not prepared for the harshness of living alone in the jungle.

One of the roles of a Teacher is to understand the development of their Students on The Path to Enlightenment and provide guidance as appropriate for their development. It is the Student's responsibility to seek guidance but having done so, a Teacher will need to provide guidance appropriate to the Student's current stage of development.

The Buddha feels the Student Upāli is not prepared or ready for the seclusion of being alone in the forest and suggests that if he goes into the jungle, he will "either sink or float away" much like a rabbit (hare) or a cat that enters a lake unprepared instead of like an elephant.

The elephant is prepared, strong, and able to enter the lake, experience benefit, and leave safely. But, the hare or cat is unable to accomplish the same beneficial results because they do not have the same qualities as the elephant to be able to establish a footing to exit the lake. The hare or cat "without reflecting, hastily enters the deep lake". They have not taken the time to consider whether they were prepared for the challenge ahead.

A Practitioner who is well developed in their practice may be prepared for seclusion or a lengthy meditation retreat. A Practitioner who is early in the development of their practice most likely will not experience the same benefit or be prepared for seclusion or a lengthy meditation retreat.

It is important to challenge the mind and one's practice as you progress on The Path to Enlightenment. But, it is also important to ensure one is not over challenged as this could dissuade you from further development and detract from the overall goal of progressing towards Enlightenment.

It is important to know whether your practice is well developed such as an elephant where you will find a footing and be able to progress through challenges or you are a hare/cat where you will not find a footing and sink or float away.

Consulting with a Teacher to seek guidance as you progress and embark on various aspects of developing your practice and testing the mind is important. Without the guidance of a Teacher, a Student would be unable to train the mind to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 89

Four Times, Rightly Developed and Coordinated, Gradually Culminate in the Destruction of the Taints

Monks, these four times, rightly developed and coordinated, gradually culminate in the destruction of the taints.

What four?

The time for listening to The Teachings, the time for discussing The Teachings, the time for serenity, and the time for wisdom.

These four times, rightly developed and coordinated, gradually culminate in the destruction of the taints.

Just as, when it is raining and the rain pours down in thick droplets on a mountain top, the water flows down along the slope and fills the clefts, gullies, and creeks; these, becoming full, fill up the pools; these, becoming full, fill up the lakes; these, becoming full, fill up the streams; these, becoming full, fill up the rivers; and these, becoming full, fill up the great ocean; so too, these four times, rightly developed and coordinated, gradually culminate in the destruction of the taints.

(Reference: AN 4.147)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the four (4) times to gradually develop the mind to eliminate The Ten Fetters (i.e. taints/pollution of mind).

1.) “The time for listening to The Teachings” is when a Practitioner seeks understanding through learning with a Teacher as they share discourses to guide Students to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings. A Practitioner will need to make time to learn directly with a Teacher. A Practitioner will be unable to learn these Teachings alone and attain Enlightenment alone without a Teacher. Only a true Buddha would be able to accomplish that goal. The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

Seeking guidance with a Teacher through listening to The Teachings will gradually lead towards the elimination of The Ten Fetters.

2.) “The time for discussing The Teachings” is beneficial as a Practitioner is able to converse with others who are interested to have open discussions about The Teachings. This will help a Practitioner to develop their understanding of The Teachings due to the insight and effort needed to discuss The Teachings with others. Open discussions about The Teachings can further develop the mind’s understanding through needing to articulate The Teachings confirming one’s own understanding. It is important to ensure that you are discussing The Teachings with someone who is interested in discussing The Teachings rather than, attempting to forcefully share with arrogance or pride.

There is no obligation to share these Teachings with others. The discussion that Gotama Buddha is recommending is open dialogue where Students are able to confirm their understanding through joint sharing, not actually through teaching others.

In order to teach others, it is important to have acknowledgement from your Teacher that you are prepared to share these Teachings with others so that it is confirmed that your practice has developed to a point where you are capable to share these Teachings and take on the responsibility of guiding Students on The Path to Enlightenment.

If you attempted to share these Teachings without your Teacher’s support, you would find it extremely difficult to successfully guide others along The Path to Enlightenment and you will most likely be causing more harm than benefit.

Do not be in a hurry or make a rushed decision to share these Teachings. The very best Teacher would need to first be a very deep Practitioner. It is through developing your own practice of these Teachings that you will have the wisdom to be able to help others along The Path to Enlightenment. Focus on your own growth and development so that you can experience liberation of mind or Enlightenment. Rushing to take on Students as a Teacher is oftentimes based in “conceit” (i.e. arrogance or pride). Taking on Students is a significant responsibility and should only be done so with deep reflection and support from your Teacher. Taking on Students too early can actually impede your own progress on The Path to Enlightenment as the time and effort involved in sharing these Teachings with Students can take away from your own learning and development along the path.

3.) “The time for serenity” is ensuring the mind has time to rest and relax. To progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment and to attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to dedicate much time, effort, and energy towards the inner work to train the mind. If the mind is not in the middle, this can be exhausting. Therefore, a Practitioner needs to know when to apply effort towards progressing in their practice and when to rest and

relax while not allowing the mind to become complacent. The mind needs to find the middle as it relates to learning and progressing on The Path to Enlightenment.

There are going to be periods of significant growth and times where growth is more slow. That is normal as the mind gradually progresses towards Enlightenment. And, as a Practitioner is progressing, they will need to know when to allow for rest and relax while ensuring they do not allow the mind to become complacent.

4.) “The time for wisdom” is to apply the wisdom of these Teachings in a given situation to ensure a wholesome outcome.

To eliminate The Ten Fetters and attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to develop wisdom through listening to The Teachings, discussing The Teachings, taking time for rest and relaxation, and then apply the acquired wisdom in daily life. It is through practice of The Teachings through applying wisdom that the condition of the mind is improved.

Applying the wisdom of these Teachings in daily life will gradually lead towards the elimination of The Ten Fetters and attainment of Enlightenment.

Just like during a rain storm the water is directed from the mountain top, down a slope to fill the clefts, gullies, and creeks along with the pools, lakes, streams, and rivers flowing into the ocean, when a Practitioner chooses to listen to The Teachings, discuss The Teachings, take time for rest and relaxation, and then apply the acquired wisdom in daily life, this will all gradually lead to the elimination of The Ten Fetters and attainment of Enlightenment.

You are welcome to progress in your practice by learning these Teachings through the resources provided in books, audiobooks, videos, podcast, online classes, in-person learning, and all the other ways, these Teachings are shared with you openly and freely while seeking guidance with a Teacher. This book has contact information for you to be able to connect with a Teacher and a Community of Practitioners where you will be welcomed to learn and practice these Teachings.

Chapter 90

One Should Be Mindful and Clearly Aware

Monks, a Monk should be mindful and clearly aware, this is my instruction to you.

And how is a Monk mindful?

Here, a Monk resides reflecting on the body as body, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind, and mental objects.

That is how a Monk is mindful.

And how is a Monk clearly aware?

Here, a Monk, when going forward or backward, is aware of what he is doing; in looking forward or back he is aware of what he is doing; in bending and stretching he is aware of what he is doing; in carrying his inner and outer robe and bowl he is aware of what he is doing; in eating, drinking, chewing and tasting he is aware of what he is doing; in passing excrement or urine he is aware of what he is doing; in walking, standing, sitting or lying down, in keeping awake, in speaking or in staying silent, he is aware of what he is doing.

That is how a Monk is clearly aware.

A Monk should be mindful and clearly aware, this is my instruction to you.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance to develop mindfulness (awareness of mind) and reside “clearly aware”.

He points to The Four Foundations of Mindfulness when he shares “here, a Monk resides reflecting on the body as body, dedicated, clearly aware, mindful and having put away all craving and worry for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind, and mental objects”.

“Body as body” is referencing the bodily sensations a Practitioner needs to be aware of throughout daily life. He then shares the same “with regard to feelings, mind, and mental objects”. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness are bodily sensations, feelings, condition of the mind, and mental objects.

A Practitioner who trains the mind to have awareness of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness will be able to actively train the mind to eliminate discontentedness through applying Right Effort from The Eight Fold Path to ultimately develop Right Concentration.

A Practitioner needs to train the mind to “let go” of all craving/desire/attachment and no longer worry about the world. The Buddha explains this as “having put away all craving and worry for the world” as part of his Teachings on how to develop mindfulness.

Right Mindfulness is from The Eight Fold Path and matches his Teachings on developing this aspect of one’s life practice.

The Buddha’s guidance on being “clearly aware” involves ensuring the mind is aware of the mind during each daily task no matter how simple. He provides a list of simple daily tasks where a Practitioner needs to maintain their awareness of mind as it relates to The Four Foundations of Mindfulness in order to be “clearly aware”.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 81-90)

<https://youtu.be/lqaEbef6jWY>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 238 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 81-90)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--238---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-81-90-e19tjn2/a-a6rn05t>

The Importance of The Tathāgata's Words

Chapter 91

Why Every Practitioner Should Study The Tathāgata's Words

Words Which Should Be Studied, Learned, and Investigated in the Foremost Assembly

Here, in this kind of assembly, when those discourses are being recited that are mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by (their) disciples, the Monks do not want to listen to them, do not lend an ear to them, or apply their minds to understand them; they do not think those teachings should be studied and learned.

But when those discourses spoken by The Tathāgata are being recited that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, connected with emptiness, the Monks want to listen to them, lend an ear to them, and apply their minds to understand them; they think those Teachings should be studied and learned. And having learned those Teachings, they question each other about them and investigate them thoroughly, (asking): How is this? What is the meaning of this? (They) disclose to (others) what is obscure and clarify what is unclear, and dispel their confusion about numerous misunderstandings.

This is called the assembly trained in investigation, not in conceited talk.

(Reference: AN 2.42)

Words that Should Be Studied and Mastered

(Simile of the Drum Peg)

Monks, once in the past the Dasārahas had a kettle drum called the Summoner. When the Summoner became cracked, the Dasārahas inserted another peg.

Eventually the time came when the Summoner's original drumhead had disappeared and only a collection of pegs remained.

So too, Monks, the same thing will happen with the Monks in the future. When those discourses spoken by The Tathāgata that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, dealing with emptiness, are being recited, they will not be eager to listen to them, nor lend an ear to them, nor apply their

minds to understand them; and they will not think those Teachings should be studied and mastered. But when those discourses that are mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by (their) disciples, are being recited, they will be eager to listen to them, will lend an ear to them, will apply their minds to understand them; and they will think those teachings should be studied and mastered.

In this way, Monks, those discourses spoken by The Tathāgata that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, dealing with emptiness, will disappear....

Therefore, Monks, you should train yourselves thus: When those discourses spoken by The Tathāgata that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, dealing with emptiness, are being recited, we will be eager to listen to them, will lend an ear to them, will apply our minds to understand them; and we will think those Teachings should be studied and mastered. Thus should you train yourselves.

(Reference: SN 20.7)

Words from Singleness of Mind

Aggivessana, ... The Tathāgata teaches The Teachings to others only to give them knowledge. When the talk is finished, Aggivessana, then I steady my mind internally, quieten it, bring it to singleness, and concentrate it on that same sign of concentration as before, in which I constantly reside.

(Reference: MN 36)

Words that Are Just So Not Otherwise

From the night he fully awakened, Monks, until the night he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment), in this interval, whatever he speaks, talks of, and expounds, all that is just so, not otherwise...

(Reference: AN 4.23)

Words of Immediately Effective Teachings

Good, Monks. So you have been guided by me with these Teachings, which are visible here and now, immediately effective, inviting inspection, onward leading, to be experienced by the wise for themselves...

(Reference: MN 38.25)

Words of The Teachings and Discipline

Words to Be Resided with as One's Own Island as One's Own Refuge

...Ānanda, it may be that you will think: 'The Teacher's instruction has ceased, now we have no Teacher!' It should not be seen like this, Ānanda, for what I have taught and explained to you as Teachings and discipline will, at my passing, be your Teacher...

Those Monks, Ānanda, either now or after I am gone, who reside with themselves as their own island, with themselves as their own refuge, with no other refuge; who reside with The Teachings as their island, with The Teachings as their refuge, with no other refuge — it is these Monks, Ānanda, who will be for me greatest of those dedicated to the training.

(Reference: DN 16)

Words to Be Undertook as Taught Not to Be Abolished

As long as the Monks do not give instruction on anything that has not been taught or abolish anything that has already been taught, but undertake and practice the training guidelines as they have been taught, only growth is to be predicted for them, not decline.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this collection of Teachings from Gotama Buddha, he shares why a Practitioner should learn the discourses as he taught them to represent The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

There are many places where Teachings are being shared and referenced to as being Buddhist Teachings but, due to impermanence, as you investigate you might come to discover that what is being shared is in conflict with The Words of The Buddha.

Learning and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha through his own words will produce the best results. The collection of Teachings assembled here help to support this through The Buddha's own words shared during his lifetime.

Sharing Teachings that are not connected to The Words of The Buddha would only prove to be misleading and create obstacles for a Practitioner in the attainment of Enlightenment.

Everything I share is confirmed in four (4) different ways so that I know it is the truth and you can discover that same truth.

1.) What I share is in The Pāli Canon: The Pāli Canon is the largest, most complete source of Gotama Buddha's Teachings. Sourcing what you learn and practice back to this original source text ensures that you are learning and practicing what The Buddha taught.

2.) I did not believe what was in The Pāli Canon, instead, I practiced it to determine the truth for myself. Through practicing The Teachings, one can observe the condition of the mind is improving and moves to being peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. If a Practitioner is observing this through what they are learning, then they know they are learning and practicing the truth because it is working to improve the condition of the mind.

3.) I share what I discovered with Students and it is working to improve the condition of their mind. Through all the years that I have been teaching, Students report that what they are learning with me is improving the condition of their mind as they are seeing situations that once caused anger or other unwelcome feelings, no longer produce those same feelings. They can observe the condition of their mind is improving.

4.) Thai people confirm that what they learned from well known Enlightened Masters of Buddhist Teachings are the same Teachings that I share. As Thai people have had Buddhist Teachings in their culture for 800-1200 years, they know how to determine if someone is or is not Enlightened. They have people in their community who they know are Enlightened, because they can observe it for themselves. What Thai people learn in the Thai language is the same thing that I share in English, according to Thai people who are deeply familiar with The Buddha's Teachings and The Path to Enlightenment.

Having dedicated time, effort, energy, and resources to confirm The Teachings of The Buddha in this way, a Practitioner can have confidence that what is being shared with you are The Teachings of The Buddha and works to produce an Enlightened mind.

“From the night he fully awakened, Monks, until the night he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment), in this interval, whatever he speaks, talks of, and expounds, all that is just so, not otherwise...”

The Buddha's Enlightenment was accomplished gradually over the course of many lifetimes. In the life that he became a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, he taught for 45 years sharing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment with all those who chose to learn and practice his Teachings. His active journey to Enlightenment in his last life took 6 years of gradual training and gradual practice resulting in gradual progress. His mind gradually realized Enlightenment. However, some people mistakenly believe that his Enlightenment occurred in an instant. This Teaching is essentially explaining that from the time he was known to have attained Enlightenment until the final death, The Buddha shared The Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment with tireless effort and energy. This Teaching is not sharing that he attained Enlightenment in just one night but instead, all that he spoke of and explained as Teachings is The Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 92

The Noble Eight Fold Path is The Wholesome Practice Instituted

Ānanda, I instituted that wholesome practice, which leads to complete liberation, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

And what is that wholesome practice?

It is this Noble Eight Fold Path; that is, Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

Ānanda, I say to you: continue this wholesome practice instituted by me and do not be the last man. Ānanda, when there are two men living, he under whom there occurs a breach of this wholesome practice - he is the last man among them.

Therefore, Ānanda, I say to you: continue this wholesome practice instituted by me and do not be the last man.

(Reference: MN 83)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that The Eight Fold Path is “The Path to Enlightenment” resulting in “complete liberation, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna”.

He encourages one of his close Students Ānanda to stay dedicated to this “wholesome practice” and “do not be the last man” to attain Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path is available in this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

The Story of The Buddha's Last Days

Chapter 93

The Buddha's Last Days

Sāriputta, there are certain Ascetics and Brāhmins whose doctrine and view is this: As long as this good man is still young, a black-haired young man endowed with youthfulness, in the prime of life, so long is he perfect in his clear wisdom.

But when this good man is old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, and come to the last stage, being eighty, ninety, or a hundred years old, then the clarity of his wisdom is lost. But it should not be regarded so. I am now old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, and come to the last stage: my years have turned eighty.

Now suppose that I had four disciples with a hundred years lifespan, perfect in mindfulness, recall (of The Teachings), memory, and clarity of wisdom. Just as a skilled archer, trained, practiced, and tested, could easily shoot a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree, suppose that they were even to that extent perfect in mindfulness, recall (of The Teachings), memory, and clarity of wisdom.

Suppose that they continuously asked me about The Four Foundations of Mindfulness and that I answered them when asked and that they remembered each answer of mine and never asked a subsidiary question or paused except to eat, drink, consume food, taste, urinate, defecate, and rest in order to remove sleepiness and tiredness. Still The Tathāgata's explanation of The Teachings, his explanations of factors of The Teachings, and his replies to questions would not yet come to an end, but meanwhile those four disciples of mine with their hundred years lifespan would have died at the end of those hundred years.

Sāriputta, even if you have to carry me about on a bed, still there will be no change in the clarity of The Tathāgata's wisdom.

Rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: A being not subject to ignorance/delusion has appeared in the world for the welfare and peacefulness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and peacefulness of gods and humans, it is of me indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

Then the Venerable Ānanda approached The Perfectly Enlightened One.

Having approached and paid homage (respect), while massaging The Perfectly Enlightened One's limbs, he said to him: 'It is wonderful, Venerable Sir! It is amazing, Venerable Sir!'

'The Perfectly Enlightened One's complexion is no longer pure and bright, his limbs are all flimsy and wrinkled, his body is stooped, and some alteration is seen in his sense bases in the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, and the body sense base.'

So it is, Ānanda! In youth one is subject to aging; in health one is subject to sickness; while alive one is subject to death. The complexion is no longer pure and bright, the limbs are all flimsy and wrinkled, the body is stooped, and some alteration is seen in the sense bases - in the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, and the body sense base.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

Yuck on you, pitiful aging,
Aging which makes beauty fade!
So much has the charming puppet
Been crushed beneath advancing age.
One who might live a hundred years
Also has death as destination.
Death spares none along the way
But comes crushing everything.

And now again, Ānanda, The Tathāgata has today at Chapala's Shrine consciously and deliberately rejected the rest of his allotted term of life.

And when he had thus spoken the Venerable Ānanda addressed The Fortunate One, and said: Grant us the privilege, Venerable Sir, to remain during the eon: live on through the eon, O Fortunate One! for the good and the peacefulness of the great multitudes (many people), out of pity for the world, for the wholesome and the gain and the well-being of gods and men!

'Enough now, Ānanda, beg not The Tathāgata!' was the reply. 'The time for making such a request has past'.

(And again, the second time and the third time, the Venerable Ānanda begged The Fortunate One (in the same words). And he received from the Fortunate One the same reply).

(In that when a suggestion so evident and a hint so clear were thus given to you, by The Tathāgata, you would be incapable of comprehending them.)

If you should have then so begged The Tathāgata, The Tathāgata might have rejected the appeal even to the second time, but the third time he would have granted it. You, therefore, O Ānanda, are the fault, you are the offense!

But now, Ānanda, have I not formerly declared to you that it is in the very nature of all things, near and dear unto us, that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? How, then Ānanda, can this be possible - whereas anything whatever born, brought into being, and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution - how then can this be possible that such a being should not be dissolved? No such condition can exist!

All conditioned things must grow old.

Work out your salvation with diligence. The final extinction of The Tathāgata will take place before long.

At the end of three months from this time The Tathāgata will die.

My age is now full ripe, my life draws to its close: I leave you, I depart, relying on myself alone! Be diligent then, O brethren, holy, full of thought!

Be steadfast in dedication!

Keep watch over your own hearts!

Who becomes tired not,

But holds fast to this truth and natural law,

Shall cross this sea of life, shall make an end of grief.

(Reference: MN 12 & DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that he will die in three (3) months and that although the body is old and aged, the mind is crisp and sharp with wisdom.

A Practitioner can conclude that while the physical body of an Enlightened being will grow old due to impermanence, the mind of an Enlightened being does not grow old. It is crisp and sharp, the mind is permanently liberated from craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) with deep wisdom.

You can observe that his close Student Ānanda is not yet Enlightened at this point as he attempts to beg The Buddha three (3) separate times to not die as he still has craving/desire/attachment to The Buddha. It is reported that Ānanda did not attain Enlightenment until after the death of The Buddha, most likely due to Ānanda's mind being attached to The Buddha.

Gotama Buddha provides guidance that Students should remain dedicated in their learning and practice of The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment and to never give up.

For some people, they consider the mind to be inside the heart. So when you see a statement such as "keep watch over your own hearts!", this can also be a way to refer to the mind.

The mind is non-physical in nature. Whether the mind is in the heart, in the head, or even outside the body does not matter. The location of the mind cannot be determined because it is non-physical. You cannot physically touch the mind so an exact location cannot be determined.

The exact location does not matter. The fact is, the unEnlightened mind is discontent and it needs to be trained to attain Enlightenment to eliminate 100% of all discontentedness. If the mind is in the heart, in the head, outside the body, or some other location, it does not matter as the mind still needs to be trained no matter what its location. But again, the mind is non-physical it is intangible and a physical location cannot be determined. But, eliminating discontentedness from the mind is not based on determining where the mind is located.

If the mind is in the heart, ok, it still needs to be trained.

If the mind is in the head, ok, it still needs to be trained.

If the mind is outside the body or some other location, ok, it still needs to be trained.

A wise Practitioner will focus on training the mind not spending time to locate the mind as its location is non-physical and intangible. Even if one was able to locate something that is non-physical and intangible, it does not matter because it still needs to be trained.

Focusing on training the mind is what will produce benefits, not figuring out its location.

Chapter 94

Reside with The Teachings as Your Refuge

But have I not already declared, Ānanda, that we must be parted, separated, and severed from all who are dear and agreeable to us?

How, Ānanda, is it to be obtained here: ‘May what is born, come to be, conditioned, and subject to disintegration not disintegrate!’? That is impossible.

Therefore, Ānanda, reside with yourselves as your own island, with yourselves as your own refuge, with no other refuge; reside with The Teachings as your island, with The Teachings as your refuge, with no other refuge.

And how, Ānanda, does a Monk reside with himself as his own island, with himself as his own refuge, with no other refuge; with The Teachings as his island, with The Teachings as his refuge, with no other refuge?

Here, Ānanda, a Monk resides reflecting on the body as body,
He resides reflecting on feelings as feelings,
He resides reflecting on mind as mind,
He resides reflecting on mental objects as mental objects, dedicated, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed craving and displeasure in regard to the world.

Those Monks, Ānanda, either now or after I am gone, who reside with themselves as their own island, with themselves as their own refuge, with no other refuge; who reside with The Teachings as their island, with The Teachings as their refuge, with no other refuge - it is these Monks, Ānanda, who will be for me greatest of those dedicated to the training.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that because he was born, he is subject to death.

In death, The Buddha advises that Practitioners “reside with yourselves as your own island, with yourselves as your own refuge, with no other refuge; reside with The Teachings as your island, with The Teachings as your refuge, with no other refuge”.

This Teaching is widely misunderstood by many who feel this is The Buddha providing guidance that one does not need a Teacher to attain Enlightenment that all they need is The Teachings. This is a gross misunderstanding of what The Buddha is sharing.

Instead, The Buddha is sharing that one should not rely on any others but instead focus on The Path to Enlightenment as an independent journey where one does the work to investigate The Teachings to acquire wisdom.

There is plenty of evidence of The Buddha guiding Practitioners to seek guidance with a Teacher. This Teaching is not guiding one to not have a Teacher but instead, do not rely on anyone but instead, actively pursue your own learning and growth.

It is well understood that all Practitioners will need a Teacher. It is only a Buddha who would be able to attain Enlightenment without the guidance of a Teacher. The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

If it was possible to attain Enlightenment without the guidance of a Teacher, why did The Buddha work for forty-five (45) years of his life dedicated to sharing these Teachings?

If it was possible to attain Enlightenment without the guidance of a Teacher, why didn't The Buddha attain Enlightenment and just say “Ok, I did it now you guys do it by yourselves”?

If The Buddha was suggesting that a Teacher is not needed, why are there so many references to having a Teacher and seeking guidance from a Teacher in his Teachings?

The truth is, that a Practitioner would be unable to only consult The Teachings in the Pāli Canon and attain Enlightenment. If that is the case, we'd have plenty of Enlightened beings in the world as all one would need to do is read The Pāli Canon to attain Enlightenment. But, we do not have countless Enlightened beings in the world because it is not possible to attain Enlightenment through only reading the text. Each Practitioner will need to seek guidance with a Teacher in order to progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

The Buddha then points to The Four Foundations of Mindfulness as the way for a Practitioner to reside with themselves as “his own island, with no other refuge; with The Teachings as his island, with The Teachings as his refuge, with no other refuge?”. He guides Practitioners to reside reflecting on body as body (bodily sensations), feelings as feelings, mind as mind (condition of the mind), and mental objects as mental objects being “dedicated, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed craving and displeasure in regard to the world”.

As The Buddha's life is drawing to a close, he shares that those who cultivate and practice The Four Foundations of Mindfulness as being “greatest of those dedicated to the training”.

Chapter 95

Four Criteria that Assure The Words of The Buddha

Suppose a Monk were to say: ‘Friends, I heard and received this from The Perfectly Enlightened One’s own lips: these are The Teachings, this is the discipline, this is the Master’s Teaching’, then, Monks, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving, his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas (discourses) and reviewed in the light of the discipline.

If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas (discourses) or the discipline, the conclusion must be: ‘Assuredly this is not the word of The Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this Monk’, and the matter is to be ignored.

But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas (discourses) or the discipline, the conclusion must be: ‘Assuredly this is the word of The Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this Monk.’

Suppose a Monk were to say: In such and such place there is a community with elders and distinguished Teachers. I have heard and received this from that community, then, Monks, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words ...

Suppose a Monk were to say: In such and such a place there are many elders who are learned, bearers of the tradition, who know The Teachings, the discipline, the training guidance ...

Suppose a Monk were to say: In such and such a place there is one elder who is learned ... I have heard and received this from that elder... But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas (discourses) and the discipline, then the conclusion must be: ‘Assuredly this is the word of The Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this Monk.’

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how to confirm whether The Teachings one learns are The Words of The Buddha or not.

He advises that a Practitioner should consult his discourses and if it is discovered that The Teachings do not match to his discourses, one can conclude that “assuredly this is not the word of The Buddha, it has been wrongly understood, and the matter is to be ignored”.

But if having consulted The Buddha’s discourses and it is discovered that The Teachings do match to his discourses, one can conclude that “Assuredly this is the word of The Buddha, it has been rightly understood”.

The way to confirm The Words of The Buddha is to ensure one is learning and practicing The Teachings from a reliable source of The Pāli Canon with references so that you can independently confirm that what you are learning are the discourses as spoken by The Buddha. If the source of The Teachings is not located in discourses of The Pāli Canon, there is no confidence that what is being shared are The Words of The Buddha and one can ignore those Teachings as not being spoken by The Buddha.

Chapter 96

The Supreme Honor and Respect

Ānanda, prepare me a bed between these twin sāl-trees with my head to the north. I am sleepy and would like to lie down.

Ānanda, these sāl-trees have burst forth into an abundance of untimely blossoms, which fell upon The Tathāgata's body, sprinkling it and covering it in homage (respect). Divine coral-tree flowers fell from the sky, divine sandal-wood powder fell from the sky, sprinkling and covering The Tathāgata's body in homage (respect).

Divine music and song sound from the sky in homage (respect) to The Tathāgata. Never before has The Tathāgata been so honored, respected, appreciated, admired and adored.

And yet, Ānanda, whatever male or female Ordained Practitioner, male or female Household Practitioner resides practicing The Teachings properly, and perfectly fulfills the way of The Teachings, he or she honors The Tathāgata, has deep respect and appreciates him and pays him the supreme homage (respect).

Therefore, Ānanda, we will reside practicing The Teachings properly and perfectly fulfill the way of The Teachings - this must be your goal and objective.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the best way to show respect to him as a Teacher is to “practice The Teachings”.

This is a documented miracle that takes place in the presence of Ānanda and Gotama Buddha uses it as an opportunity to share that the best way for a Student to show respect to him as their Teacher is to practice The Teachings as their “goal and objective”.

Chapter 97

Teachings and Discipline Will Be Your Teacher

Ānanda, it may be that you will think: ‘The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no Teacher!’ It should not be seen like this, Ānanda, for what I have taught and explained to you as Teachings and discipline will, at my passing, be your Teacher.

Now, Monks, I declare to you: all conditioned things are of a nature to decay strive on untiringly.

(These were The Tathāgata’s last words.)

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares his last words prior to death.

The Buddha was so Enlightened that he was able to provide his Students three (3) months advance notice of his death and he knew the exact moment of his death providing these last words as a final Teaching. People do not normally know of their pending death three (3) months in advance and they do not know the exact moment of their death but The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha did know, due to his deep awareness of mind and wisdom having attained Enlightenment.

After teaching for forty-five (45) years, he had shared The Teachings needed for Practitioners to attain Enlightenment. As all conditioned things are impermanent, it was time for the death of The Buddha. The Universal Truth of Impermanence applies to all conditioned things even a Buddha.

In his last spoken sentence, The Buddha shares the very first Teaching on The Path to Enlightenment that a Practitioner will need to deeply understand to attain Enlightenment.

“I declare to you: all conditioned things are of a nature to decay strive on untiringly” is explaining The Universal Truth of Impermanence while also encouraging one to be determined, dedicated, and diligent in their pursuit towards the attainment of Enlightenment. To attain Enlightenment a Practitioner will need to deeply understand The Universal Truth of Impermanence. The Buddha being a true Buddha teaches until his last breath.

He encourages his Students to not mourn his death that his guidance has not ceased. Instead, that he had shared all that was needed for the attainment of Enlightenment over his forty-five (45) years of teaching and these Teachings should be considered “your Teacher”.

He encourages his Students to “strive on untiringly” applying consistent energy and effort towards the ultimate goal of Enlightenment.

Final Nibbāna

Final Nibbāna, or Final Enlightenment, is when someone attains Enlightenment and dies. This is referred to as Final Enlightenment.

During one's life, the mind can be trained to attain Enlightenment. The mind will reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The mind will no longer experience any mental pain associated with unwelcomed emotions, thoughts, ideas, or any sort of discontentedness of mind. All discontentedness such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc., will be completely eliminated from the mind.

However, a being is unable to completely transcend physical pain while in the human form. This is impossible. While the mind can be developed to not react with anger, sadness, hostility, aggression, or other discontent feelings upon experiencing physical pain, nonetheless, physical pain will still be experienced by the mind.

The mind can eliminate all cravings/desires/attachments while in the human form and during this life to experience Enlightenment. But while still alive, a being cannot eliminate the connection between the body and the mind. The mind is still connected to the physical body during life. Therefore, the mind will still experience physical pain but the mind will experience it differently in the Enlightened mental state versus in the unEnlightened mental state.

In the unEnlightened mental state, when the mind experiences physical pain, one can become angered, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, hostile, aggressive, resentful, fearful, and experience other discontent feelings. This is due to the mind craving permanent health, permanent comfort, and permanent pleasant feelings from the body. It is impossible for the body to experience permanent comfort due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

The pain associated with the physical body is an important aspect of the mind that needs to exist in order for a being to function in the world. If a being did not experience physical pain, they would be unable to remove the physical body from harm when too close to a heat source or if another problematic situation arose. The sensation of physical pain experienced by the mind helps a being understand, potential damage will occur or has occurred and therefore, seek a remedy to the physical pain. This is why we choose to step away from a heat source. The mind is alerted that the physical body is experiencing pain and the being takes action to resolve the situation. This is beneficial and needed during life.

In these situations, an unEnlightened mind will oftentimes experience discontentedness associated with the craving for permanent comfort of the physical body. When there is physical pain, the unEnlightened mind becomes discontent.

An Enlightened mind has been deeply trained to the point that it understands physical pain is impermanent, and that allowing the mind to become discontent due to physical pain, does not help to eliminate the physical pain.

Discontentedness at times of physical pain could actually make the situation worse.

For example, if one was bitten by a poisonous snake and became agitated, overactive, and uncalm, this would increase respirations of the lungs and heart functions creating

conditions for the poison to more rapidly move through the body causing more significant injury and damage with an increased risk of potential death. Through training the mind to reside unagitated and calm, an individual can decrease the harm to the body and improve their ability to survive an injury such as a snake bite because the poison will not permeate in the body as rapidly when the mind is calm. Through the mind remaining calm during physical injuries, a being increases their ability to resolve the situation with a positive outcome.

When an Enlightened mind experiences physical pain, the mind can continue to reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy despite the physical injury, damage, or pain. This is an added benefit experienced by an Enlightened mind producing improved outcomes in situations where physical pain is experienced.

Nonetheless, there is still physical pain for an Enlightened being but it is just that the mind will not react to the pain and instead, respond to resolve the situation finding a solution. The physical pain associated with existence will continue for the remaining time of existence even for an Enlightened being. But, they will not experience mental anguish or any type of discontentedness associated with the physical pain. The Enlightened mind does not relate to the pain in the same way as the unEnlightened mind which will oftentimes become discontent due to physical pain.

It is not until the physical body dies, described by Gotama Buddha as “the breakup of the body”, that the body and mind completely separate. From that point, not only has one transcended discontentedness their entire life due to the attainment of Enlightenment, but the being will then experience the complete elimination of all pain including physical pain. This is referred to as Final Enlightenment or Final Nibbāna.

Enlightenment is experienced during life and the mind has transcended all emotional pain and suffering. But, the physical pain will remain, because it is needed to make wise decisions concerning the physical body during times of injury. The Enlightened mind will have physical pain but will have acquired an improved way of responding to the physical pain rather than reacting to it so there is no mental pain.

Once a being has attained Enlightenment and dies, there is no longer any physical pain because the separation of the body and mind has occurred, therefore one has attained Final Enlightenment. All pain both mental and physical has been completely eliminated - permanently.

It is possible for an unEnlightened being to experience Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment at the time of death. The being would have experienced discontentedness their entire life but at the time of death, they would immediately experience Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment no longer experiencing rebirth through The Cycle of Rebirth.

What happens once one attains Enlightenment and dies experiencing Final Enlightenment is an undeclared Teaching of Gotama Buddha. He did not teach what is next other than an Enlightened being will not experience any further existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

There are other Teachings from Gotama Buddha in this book series related to how to ensure The Teachings of a Buddha are sustained in the world. Chapters 33 and 34 in the book “Foundation in The Teachings” (Volume 3) provides these Teachings and an explanation of these Teachings.

What Happens at Death?

After we die does the body become soil to the earth or after death what remains? Isn't there spirit or energy which exist inside our body? Isn't there some sort of energy?

No, at the time of death the body and mind separate and then there is "break up of the body".

The body was described by Gotama Buddha through The Four Elements of Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water.

Essentially, the physical body is described and classified into these Four Elements.

Earth: The solids of the body. (hair, teeth, nails, bones, etc.)

Wind: The movement of bodily functions. (Circulation, movement of bile, etc.)

Fire: The temperature of the body.

Water: The liquids of the body. (urine, saliva, blood, pus, tears, etc.)

The physical body is nothing more than these four elements coming together with a mind or consciousness. The joining of the body and the mind creates a person.

Once the body and mind separate, the body will deteriorate remaining as these four elements but without a mind or consciousness.

What you are looking at when you see the body is a unique collection of these four elements that is always in a state of change and upon death, the body will continue that change and configuration but it will still be just these four elements.

The body will progressively deteriorate and depending whether there is burial or cremation, will determine how quickly the process of change occurs.

Through burial, the process is much slower. Cremation accelerates the process of change of these four elements.

What happens to the mind upon death?

If the mind is not yet Enlightened, (i.e. the mind has not yet attained Enlightenment), then there is rebirth into one of The Five Realms.

Heavenly Realm
Human Realm
Afflicted Spirits Realm
Animal Realm
Hell Realm

Heavenly, Afflicted Spirits, and Hell realms are formless realms. (i.e. there is no physical form).

Human and Animal realms are form realms, (i.e. there is physical form).

Rebirth is not instantaneous and upon rebirth there is a completely new existence with a new form or formless existence and a new consciousness, (i.e. a new mind).

The new mind will have residual memories of past lives and unextinguished craving/desire/attachment from past lives. The residual memories of past lives may potentially be recalled as the mind awakens towards Enlightenment more and more.

If someone attains Enlightenment what happens to the mind? Does it disappear?

If the mind has experienced Enlightenment during the human or heavenly existence or at death, (i.e. Enlightenment can be attained during an existence in the human or heavenly realm or at death in those realms but not in the lower realms), the body and mind separate and what happens next is an "undeclared" Teaching.

To attain Enlightenment, the mind needs to get to the point where there is no craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) to know what is next.

An Enlightened mind is experiencing so much peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy that is permanent, the mind is not going to care what is next.

An Enlightened mind has already extinguished all fears including the fear of death, therefore, the mind is so peaceful and does not fear death so what happens next, the Enlightened mind does not care.

Having attained Enlightenment, you will know that you are already experiencing complete and utter peacefulness so if there is something next after death for an Enlightened being, it is either as good as you are currently experiencing or better.

And, if there is nothing next, then, ok, you are "done".

Either way, the mind needs to "let go" of wanting to know what is next and just focus on learning and practicing The Teachings with guidance on The Path to Enlightenment to experience Enlightenment in this life now that you are human.

Is the mind or soul/spirit the same thing?

No they are not.

There is no Teaching from The Buddha that there is or is not a soul/spirit. This is not a Teaching he shared. He left The Teaching on a soul/spirit as "undeclared".

How Did The Buddha Die?

Author: Venerable Dr Mettanando Bhikkhu

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(This article was partially edited by the author of this book series to improve the formatting and readability, however, the primary content of the article was not edited. Dr Mettanando Bhikkhu was a physician before becoming an Ordained Practitioner. He was based at Wat Ratchaorasaram Ratchaworawihan, Thailand at the time that this article was published.)

During Vesak Day, we are informed that it is also the day The Buddha attained Final Enlightenment. But not many know how The Buddha died. Ancient texts weave two stories about The Buddha's death. Was it planned and willed by The Buddha, or was it food poisoning, or something else altogether?

Here's an account [to help you better understand how The Buddha died].

The Mahaparinibbana Sutta, (Reference: DN 16) from the Long Discourse of The Pāli Canon, is without doubt the most reliable source for details on the death of Siddhattha Gotama (BCE 563-483), The Buddha. It is composed in a narrative style that allows readers to follow the story of the last days of The Buddha, beginning a few months before he died.

To understand what really happened to The Buddha is not a simple matter, though. The sutta, or discourse, paints two conflicting personalities of The Buddha, one overriding the other.

The first personality was that of a miracle worker who beamed himself and his entourage of Monks across the Ganges River (D II, 89), who had a divine vision of the settlement of gods on earth (D II, 87), who could live until the end of the world on condition that someone invite him to do so (D II, 103), who determined the time of his own death (D II, 105), and whose death was glorified by the shower of heavenly flowers and sandal powder and divine music (D II, 138).

The other personality was that of an aged being who was failing in health (D II, 120), who almost lost his life because of a severe pain during his last retreat at Vesali (D II, 100), and who was forced to come to terms with his unexpected illness and death after consuming a special cuisine offered by his generous host.

These two personalities take turns emerging in different parts of the narrative. Moreover, there also appear to be two explanations of The Buddha's cause of death: One is that the Buddha died because his attendant, Ānanda, failed to invite him to live on to the age of the world or even longer (D II, 117). The other is that he died by a sudden illness which began after he ate what is known as "Sukaramaddava" (D II, 127-157).

The former story was probably a legend, or the result of a political struggle within the Buddhist community during a stage of transition, whereas the latter sounds more realistic and accurate in describing a real life situation that happened in The Buddha's last days.

A number of studies have focused on the nature of the special cuisine that The Buddha ate during his last meal as being the agent of his death. However, there is also another approach based on the description of the symptoms and signs given in the sutta, which modern medical knowledge can shed light on.

In another mural painting at Wat Ratchasittharam, The Buddha is approaching death, but he still takes time to answer questions put forth by the Ascetic Subhadda, his last convert who, after being admitted to the Buddhist Order, became an Arahant (An Enlightened Being).

What We Know

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, we are told that The Buddha became ill suddenly after he ate a special delicacy, Sukaramaddava, literally translated as "soft pork", which had been prepared by his generous host, Cunda Kammaraputta. The name of the cuisine has attracted the attention of many scholars, and it has been the focus of academic research on the nature of the meal or ingredients used in the cooking of this special dish.

The sutta itself provides details concerning the signs and symptoms of his illness in addition to some reliable information about his circumstances over the previous four months, and these details are also medically significant.

The sutta begins with King Ajatasattus' plot to conquer a rival state, Vajji. The Buddha had journeyed to Vajji to enter his last rainy-season retreat. It was during this retreat that he fell ill. The symptoms of the illness were sudden, severe pain.

However, the sutta provides no description of the location and character of his pain. It mentions his illness briefly, and says that the pain was intense, and almost killed him.

Subsequently, The Buddha was visited by Māra, the Evil One, who invited him to pass away. The Buddha did not accept the invitation right away. It was only after Ānanda, his attendant, failed to recognize his hint for an invitation to remain that he died. This piece of the message, though tied up with myth and supernaturalism, gives us some medically significant information. When the sutta was composed, its author was under the impression that The Buddha died, not because of the food he ate, but because he already had an underlying illness that was serious and acute-and had the same symptoms of the disease that finally killed him.

The Timing

[The] Theravada Buddhist tradition has adhered to the assumption that the historical Buddha passed away during the night of the full moon in the lunar month of Vesak (which falls sometime in May to June). But the timing contradicts information given in the sutta, which states clearly that the Buddha died soon after the rainy-season retreat, most likely during the autumn or mid-winter, that is, November to January.

A description of the miracle of the unseasonal blooming of leaves and flowers on the sala trees, when The Buddha was laid down between them, indicates the time frame given in the sutta.

Autumn and winter, however, are seasons that are not favorable for the growth of mushrooms, which some scholars believe to be the source of the poison that The Buddha ate during his last meal.

Diagnosis

The sutta tells us that The Buddha felt ill immediately after eating the Sukaramaddava. Since we do not know anything about the nature of this food, it is difficult to name it as the direct cause of The Buddha's illness. But from the descriptions given, the onset of the illness was quick.

While eating, he felt there was something wrong with the food and he suggested his host have the food buried. Soon afterward, he suffered severe stomach pain and passed blood from his rectum.

We can reasonably assume that the illness started while he was having his meal, making him think there was something wrong with the unfamiliar delicacy. Out of his compassion for others, he had it buried.

Was food poisoning the cause of the illness? It seems unlikely. The symptoms described do not indicate food poisoning, which can be very acute, but would hardly cause diarrhea with blood. Usually, food poisoning caused by bacteria does not manifest itself immediately, but takes an incubation period of two to 12 hours to manifest itself, normally with acute diarrhea and vomiting, but not the passage of blood.

Another possibility is chemical poisoning, which also has an immediate effect, but it is unusual for chemical poisoning to cause severe intestinal bleeding. Food poisoning with immediate intestinal bleeding could only have been caused by corrosive chemicals such as strong acids, which can easily lead to immediate illness. But corrosive chemicals should have caused bleeding in the upper intestinal tract, leading to vomiting blood. None of these severe signs are mentioned in the text.

(NOTE from author of this book series: Chemicals were not yet invented during the lifetime of The Buddha.)

Peptic ulcer diseases can be excluded from the list of possible illnesses as well. In spite of the fact that their onset is immediate, they are seldom accompanied by bloody stool. A gastric ulcer with intestinal bleeding produces black stool when the ulcer penetrates a blood vessel. An ulcer higher up in the digestive tract would be more likely to manifest itself as bloody vomiting, not a passage of blood through the rectum.

Other evidence against this possibility is that a patient with a large gastric ulcer usually does not have an appetite. By accepting the invitation for lunch with the host, we can assume that The Buddha felt as healthy as any man in his early 80s would feel. Given his age we cannot rule out that The Buddha did not have a chronic disease, such as cancer or tuberculosis or a tropical infection such as dysentery or typhoid, which could have been quite common in The Buddha's time.

These diseases could produce bleeding of the lower intestine, depending on their location. They also agree with the history of his earlier illness during the retreat. But they can be ruled out, since they are usually accompanied by other symptoms, such as

lethargy, loss of appetite, weight loss, growth or mass in the abdomen. None of these symptoms were mentioned in the sutta.

A large hemorrhoid can cause severe rectal bleeding, but it is unlikely that a hemorrhoid could cause severe abdominal pain unless it is strangulated. But then it would have greatly disturbed the walking of The Buddha to the house of his host, and rarely is hemorrhoid bleeding triggered by a meal.

Mesenteric Infarction

A disease that matches the described symptoms-accompanied by acute abdominal pain and the passage of blood, commonly found among elderly people, and triggered by a meal-is mesenteric infarction, caused by an obstruction of the blood vessels of the mesentery. It is lethal. Acute mesenteric ischemia (a reduction in the blood supply to the mesentery) is a grave condition with a high rate of mortality.

The mesentery is a part of the intestinal wall that binds the whole intestinal tract to the abdominal cavity. An infarction of the vessels of the mesentery normally causes the death of the tissue in a large section of the intestinal tract, which results in a laceration of the intestinal wall.

This normally produces severe pain in the abdomen and the passage of blood. The patient usually dies of acute blood loss. This condition matches the information given in the sutta. It is also confirmed later when The Buddha asked Ānanda to fetch some water for him to drink, indicating intense thirst.

As the story goes, Ānanda refused, as he saw no source for clean water. He argued with The Buddha that the nearby stream had been muddied by a large caravan of carts. But The Buddha insisted he fetch water anyway.

A question arises at this point: Why did The Buddha not go to the water himself, instead of pressing his unwilling attendant to do so? The answer is simple. The Buddha was suffering from shock caused by severe blood loss. He could no longer walk, and from then to his death bed he was most likely carried on a stretcher.

If this was indeed the situation, the sutta remains silent about The Buddha's traveling to his deathbed, possibly because the author felt that it would be an embarrassment for The Buddha. Geographically, we know that the distance between the place believed to be the house of Cunda and the place where The Buddha died was about 15 to 20 kilometers. It is not possible for a patient with such a grave illness to walk such a distance.

More likely, what happened was that The Buddha was carried on a stretcher by a group of Monks to Kusinara (Kushinagara).

It remains a point of debate whether The Buddha really determined to pass away at this city, presumably not much larger than a town. From the direction of The Buddha's journey, given in the sutta, he was moving north from Rajagaha. It is possible that he did not intend to die there, but in the town where he was born, which would have taken a period of three months to reach.

From the sutta, it is clear that The Buddha was not anticipating his sudden illness, or else he would not have accepted the invitation of his host.

Kusinara was probably the nearest town where he could find a doctor to take care of him. It is not difficult to see a group of Monks hurriedly carrying The Buddha on a stretcher to the nearest town to save his life.

Before passing away, The Buddha told Ānanda that Cunda was not to be blamed and that his death was not caused by eating Sukaramaddava. The statement is significant. The meal was not the direct cause of his death. The Buddha knew that the symptom was a repeat of an experience he'd had a few months earlier, the one which had almost killed him.

Sukaramaddava, no matter the ingredients or how it was cooked, was not the direct cause of his sudden illness.

Progression of the Disease

Mesenteric infarction is a disease commonly found among elderly people, caused by the obstruction of the main artery that supplies the middle section of the bowel-the small intestine-with blood. The most common cause of the obstruction is the degeneration of the wall of the blood vessel, the superior mesenteric artery, causing severe abdominal pain, also known as abdominal angina.

Normally, the pain is triggered by a large meal, which requires a higher flow of blood to the digestive tract. As the obstruction persists, the bowel is deprived of its blood supply, which subsequently leads to an infarction, or gangrene, of a section of the intestinal tract. This in turn results in a laceration of the intestinal wall, profuse bleeding into the intestinal tract, and then bloody diarrhea.

The disease gets worse as the liquid and content of the intestine oozes out into the peritoneal cavity, causing peritonitis or inflammation of the abdominal walls. This is already a lethal condition for the patient, who often dies due to the loss of blood and other fluid. If it is not corrected by surgery, the disease often progresses to septic shock due to bacterial toxins infiltrating the blood stream.

Retrospective Analysis

From the diagnosis given above, we can be rather certain that The Buddha suffered from mesenteric infarction caused by an occlusion of the superior mesenteric artery. This was the cause of the pain that almost killed him a few months earlier during his last rainy-season retreat.

With the progress of the illness, some of the mucosal lining of his intestine sloughed off, and this site became the origin of the bleeding.

Arteriosclerosis, the hardening of the vessel wall caused by aging, was the cause of the arterial occlusion, a small blockage that did not result in bloody diarrhea, but is a symptom, also known to us as abdominal angina.

He had his second attack while he was eating the Sukaramaddava. The pain was probably not intense in the beginning, but made him feel that there was something wrong.

Suspicious about the nature of the food, he asked his host to have it all buried, so that others might not suffer from it.

Soon, The Buddha realized that the illness was serious, with the passage of blood and more severe pain in his abdomen. Due to the loss of blood, he went into shock. The degree of dehydration was so severe that he could not maintain himself any longer and he had to take shelter at a tree along the way.

Feeling very thirsty and exhausted, he got Ānanda to collect water for him to drink, even though he knew that the water was muddied. It was there that he collapsed until his entourage carried him to the nearest town, Kusinara, where there would have been a chance of finding a doctor or lodging for him to recover in.

It was probably true that The Buddha got better after drinking to replace his fluid loss, and resting on the stretcher. The experience with the symptoms told him that his sudden illness was the second attack of an existing disease. He told Ānanda that the meal was not the cause of his illness, and that Cunda was not to blame.

A patient with shock, dehydration and profuse blood loss usually feels very cold. This was the reason why he told his attendant to prepare a bed using four sheets of ifsanghati nf. According to Buddhist monastic discipline, a ifsanghati nfis a cloak, or extra piece of robe, very large, the size of a bed sheet, which The Buddha allowed Ordained Practitioners to wear in winter.

This information reflects how cold the Buddha felt because of his loss of blood. Clinically, it is not possible for a patient who is in a state of shock with severe abdominal pain, most likely peritonitis, pale and shivering, to be ambulatory.

The Buddha was most likely put into a lodging, where he was nursed and warmed, located in the city of Kusinara. This view is also confirmed with the description of Ānanda who, weeping, swoons and holds onto the door of his lodge after learning that The Buddha was about to pass away.

Normally, a patient with mesenteric infarction could live 10 to 20 hours. From the sutta we learn that The Buddha died about 15 to 18 hours after the attack. During that time, his attendants would have tried their best to comfort him, for example, by warming the room where he was resting, or by dripping some water into his mouth to quench his lingering thirst, or by giving him some herbal drinks. But it would be highly unlikely that a shivering patient would need someone to fan him as is described in the sutta.

Off and on, he may have recovered from a state of exhaustion, allowing him to continue his dialogues with a few people. Most of his last words could have been true, and they were memorized by generations of Monks until they were transcribed. But finally, late into the night, The Buddha died during a second wave of septic shock. His illness stemmed from natural causes coupled with his age, just as it would for anyone else.

Conclusion

The hypothesis outlined above explains several scenes in the narrative of the sutta, namely, the pressuring of Ānanda to fetch water, The Buddha's request for a fourfold cloak for his bed, the ordering of the meal to be buried, and so on.

It also reveals another possibility of the actual means of transportation of The Buddha to Kusinara and the site of his death bed. Sukaramaddava, whatever its nature, was unlikely to have been the direct cause of his illness. The Buddha did not die by food poisoning. Rather, it was the size of the meal, relatively too large for his already troubled digestive tract, that triggered the second attack of mesenteric infarction that brought an end to his life.

Author's Thoughts

Due to their importance, The Words of The Buddha book series have the last words of The Buddha in multiple places throughout the book series.

You can investigate these chapters, which some of them are the same. There are basically two different chapters being repeated throughout the book series in all of these books and chapters.

Volume 2 - Chapter 45
Volume 3 - Chapter 97
Volume 9 - Chapter 47
Volume 10 - Chapter 46
Volume 12 - Chapter 48

In all of these locations within the books series, I have inserted the last words of The Buddha and shared what one encounters upon death. This will help you to understand and gain the wisdom of, what transpires for a being as part of the process of dying and death itself.

A Student who reads this article titled “How Did The Buddha Die?” and is unEnlightened may perceive the depiction of how The Buddha died as being an extremely painful death. That it was painful for The Buddha during his last moments of life. But, that is without the wisdom of what an Enlightened being experiences as a result of having attained Enlightenment and then having issues in the physical body to include death.

I suspect that the author of the article may not be aware of how an unEnlightened and Enlightened being experience pain differently. Therefore, when describing what The Buddha experienced, he described it in graphic terms of, his own frame of reference and lifetime experiences with physical and mental pain - as being severely painful.

An Enlightened being does not experience severe physical pain but instead, it is significantly diminished or muted. An Enlightened being does not experience any mental anguish whatsoever.

When I read this article, I know that The Buddha, while experiencing a medical condition that led to his ultimate death, had a peaceful mind during the entire time leading all the way up to and including death. He would not have been in agonizing pain as one might think who has not experienced physical pain while at the same time experiencing the Enlightened mental state.

An Enlightened being will experience physical pain but, it would be very minimal compared to what an unEnlightened being would experience in the same circumstances. An Enlightened being would experience some physical pain but, they will not experience the mental anguish associated with the physical pain. An Enlightened being's mind will continue to reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, despite any and all physical pain. In this way, the physical pain experienced by an Enlightened being is insignificant and a mere fraction of that which would be experienced by an unEnlightened being given the same exact situation.

For further understanding of physical and mental pain in the unEnlightened and Enlightened mental state, you might choose to investigate The Teachings in Volume 8 - Chapter 40 titled "Transcending Physical Pain by Avoiding Mental Pain". This will help you to understand how an unEnlightened being experiences physical pain versus, an Enlightened being.

Detailed explanation of Transcending Physical Pain by Avoiding Mental Pain is available in this same book series found in Chapter 40 of the book "The Foremost Householder" (Volume 9).

You can also gain an appreciation and the wisdom of this topic through understanding The Teachings of The Buddha when he shares "The Simile of The Saw" in the Kakacūpamasutta Sutta (Reference: MN 21) available in Volume 3 - Chapter 84 of this same book series.

The Buddha shares, "Monks, even if criminals were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be practicing my Teachings".

The Buddha shares this Teaching because his own mind, experiencing Enlightenment, would not experience mental anguish in this exact scenario or any others. It would be impossible for an Enlightened being to experience hatred towards anyone for any reason, even if being sawed "limb by limb". Therefore, The Buddha was well aware that if a Student's mind experienced hatred in this situation or any other, the mind would be unEnlightened. He emphasizes this in this Teaching.

This Teaching directly from The Buddha, and others, can provide you further insight to understand how an Enlightened being would not experience any "agonizing pain" during the process of dying or at death.

Detailed explanation of Training a Mind Filled with Loving-Kindness, without Hostility or Ill Will is available in this same book series found in Chapter 84 of the book "Foundations in The Teachings" (Volume 3).

Chapter 98

Four Places Which Should Arouse Confidence in the Dedicated

‘Venerable Sir, formerly Monks who had spent the rains in various places used to come to see The Tathāgata, and we used to welcome them so that such well trained Monks might see you and pay their respects. But with The Perfectly Enlightened One’s passing, we shall no longer have a chance to do this.’

Ānanda, there are four places the sight of which should arouse confidence in the dedicated.

Which are they?

Here The Tathāgata was born is the first.

Here The Tathāgata attained supreme Enlightenment is the second.

Here The Tathāgata set in motion the Wheel of The Teachings (Dhamma Wheel) is the third.

Here The Tathāgata attained Final Enlightenment (Final Nibbāna; Death of Physical Body for an Enlightened being) without remainder is the fourth.

And, Ānanda, the dedicated male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners will visit those places. And any who dies while making the pilgrimage to these shrines with a devout (committed) heart will, at the breaking-up of the body after death, be reborn in a heavenly world.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares four (4) places that Practitioners can visit, after his death, to arise confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.

(1) the location of his birth.

(2) the location attributed with the attainment of his Enlightenment.

(3) the location of his first Teaching.

(4) the location of his death.

All of these locations are well known today and available for Practitioners to visit. These are all located in modern day Nepal and northeastern India.

The Buddha explains that should anyone die in their journey to visit these places, they will be reborn in the heavenly realm.

Chapter 99

Three Places that Should Be Remembered

Monks, there are these three (places) that a head-anointed Khattiya King should remember all his life.

What three?

- (1) The first is the place where he was born.
- (2) The second is the place where he was head-anointed a Khattiya King.
- (3) And the third is the place where, having triumphed in battle, he emerged victorious and settled at the head of the battlefield.

These are the three (places) that a head-anointed Khattiya King should remember all his life.

(Reference: AN 3.12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings about the three (3) places that should always be remembered by a King.

The Buddha taught people at all levels of society including members of the royal family.

He shares that the King should remember the place of his birth, the place where he was anointed as a King, and the place where he won in battle.

A consideration for Practitioners in applying this Teaching to your life practice, I suggest that you always remember the place where you were born, the location of any significant successes you have accomplished in life, and remember those people who have contributed to your success.

Any success that you have accomplished in this life was not purely a success that you achieved through your own independent efforts but instead, there are others who contributed to your success.

In order to continue to experience success, you will need to remember those who contributed to your success showing gratitude and appreciation for their efforts to help you in this life. In doing so, you will have ensured that you have acknowledged the contributions of others to the goals and objectives you accomplish helping to eliminate conceit.

Enlightenment and Discontentedness

Chapter 100

Birth is the Origin of Discontentedness The Union of Three Things

Monks, the conception of an embryo in a womb takes place through the union of three things.

Here, there is the union of the mother and father, but it is not the mother's season, and the consciousness/mind (gandhabba) to be reborn is not present - in this case there is no conception of an embryo in a womb.

Here, there is the union of the mother and father, and it is the mother's season, but the consciousness/mind (gandhabba) to be reborn is not present - in this case too there is no conception of an embryo in a womb.

But when there is the union of the mother and father, and it is the mother's season, and the consciousness/mind (gandhabba) to be reborn is present, through the union of these three things the conception of an embryo in a womb takes place.

The mother then carries the embryo in her womb for nine or ten months with much anxiety, as a heavy burden. Then, at the end of nine or ten months, the mother gives birth with much anxiety, as a heavy burden.

Then, when the child is born, she nourishes it with her own blood; for the mother's breast-milk is called blood in the Noble One's Discipline.

When he grows up and his sense bases mature, the child plays at such games as toy ploughs, tipcat, somersaults, toy windmills, toy measures, toy carts, and a toy bow and arrow.

When he grows up and his sense bases mature (still further), the youth enjoys himself provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure, with forms recognizable by the eye... sounds recognizable by the ear... odors recognizable by the nose... flavors recognizable by the tongue... physical objects recognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and provocative of craving.

On seeing a form with the eye, he craves after it if it is pleasing; he dislikes it if it is unpleasing. He resides with mindfulness of the body unestablished, with a limited mind, and he does not understand as it actually is the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.

Engaged as he is in favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels whether pleasant or painful or neither painful-nor-pleasant he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding to it.

As he does so, excitement arises in him.

Now excitement in feelings is clinging. With his clinging as condition, existence (comes to be); with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

On hearing a sound with the ear ...

On smelling an odor with the nose ...

On tasting a flavor with the tongue ...

On touching a physical object with the body ...

On recognizing a mental object with the mind, he craves after it if it is pleasing; he dislikes it if it is unpleasing. He resides with mindfulness of the body unestablished, with a limited mind, and he does not understand as it actually is the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states are eliminated without remainder.

Engaged as he is in favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels — whether pleasant or painful or neither painful-nor-pleasant — he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As he does so, excitement arises in him.

Now **excitement** in feelings is clinging.

With his **clinging** as condition, existence [comes to be]; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

(Reference: MN 38.26)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a being is born into the world through a mother and father, The Six Sense Bases mature, craving is established through The Six Sense Bases, the mind is unaware of these Teachings having ignorance (unknowing of true reality), and experiences discontentedness.

The Buddha shares how a being comes into the world and experiences discontentedness.

There are three components that are needed to create a living being. An egg, sperm, and a consciousness (i.e. a mind). If these things are present, there is a living being.

Plants do not have a mind. While we may consider them as being “alive”, in some respects, they are not living beings. Bacteria are not a living being because they do not originate from an egg, sperm, nor have a consciousness.

A being’s sense bases mature in the womb and outside of the womb. As a being experiences the arising of pleasant feelings, the mind craves and clings, wanting them to be permanent. The mind excites in pleasant feelings, welcoming them into the mind.

Due to the mind’s craving and clinging to pleasant feelings and those are temporary, the mind then experiences painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

It is craving/desire through The Six Sense Bases that the mind attempts to satisfy its unquenchable thirst for pleasant feelings but it never can be fully and completely satisfied so it continues on with its wandering and roaming throughout The Cycle of Rebirth fettered/tainted/polluted with “sensual desire”.

It is not until a Practitioner chooses to actively learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings that the mind can experience permanent peacefulness and satisfaction through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment to eliminate the entire massive amount of discontentedness experienced by the unEnlightened mind.

Through directly training the mind, a Practitioner can eliminate conditioned feelings, such as excitement, based on impermanent conditions. Then, it can be liberated from its strong feelings finding lasting satisfaction and inner fulfillment.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 91-100)

<https://youtu.be/HSNi1AQ9Wyc>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 241 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 91-100)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--241---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-91-100-e1a8khl/a-a6t6ern>

Chapter 101

Discontentedness is Dependently Arisen

Good, good, Ānanda! Anyone answering rightly would answer just as Sāriputta has done.

I have said, Ānanda, that discontentedness is dependently arisen.

Dependent on what?

Dependent on contact. If one were to speak thus one would be stating what has been said by me and would not misrepresent me with what is contrary to the truth; one would explain in accordance with The Teachings, and no reasonable consequence of one's assertion would give ground for criticism.

Therein, Ānanda, in the case of those Ascetics and Brāhmins, advocates of Kamma, who maintain that discontentedness is created by oneself, that is conditioned by contact.

Also, in the case of those Ascetics and Brāhmins, advocates of Kamma, who maintain that discontentedness is created by another, that too is conditioned by contact.

Also, in the case of those Ascetics and Brāhmins, advocates of Kamma, who maintain that discontentedness is created both by oneself and by another, that too is conditioned by contact.

Also, in the case of those Ascetics and Brāhmins, advocates of Kamma, who maintain that discontentedness has arisen randomly, being created neither by oneself nor by another, that too is conditioned by contact.

(Reference: SN 12:25)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that discontentedness is conditioned, or comes to be, due to contact.

When there is contact through The Six Sense Bases, it is possible for one to experience discontentedness. All discontentedness will be experienced through The Six Sense Bases or the doorways to discontentedness.

Contact requires an internal sense base (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) to experience an external sense base (form, sound, odor, flavor, physical object, mental object), and to have awareness. These are the three (3) things required to have contact.

To create either wholesome or unwholesome Kamma, there needs to be contact.

Once contact is established, the unEnlightened mind will either experience pleasant feelings, painful feelings, or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

- A pleasant feeling (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)
- A painful feeling (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, anxiety, etc.)
- A feeling that is neither painful-nor-pleasant (boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied, etc.)

Once contact is established, the Enlightened mind will not experience pleasant feelings, painful feelings, or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. The Enlightened mind will not base its inner feelings on impermanent conditions created through contact with The Six Sense Bases.

The Enlightened mind will be peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

Chapter 102

With the Destruction of Craving Comes the Destruction of Unwholesome Kamma

Monks, develop the path and the way that leads to the destruction of craving.

And what is the path and the way that leads to the destruction of craving?

It is The Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

What seven?

The Enlightenment factor of mindfulness, the Enlightenment factor of investigation, the Enlightenment factor of energy, the Enlightenment factor of joy, the Enlightenment factor of tranquility, the Enlightenment factor of concentration, and the Enlightenment factor of equanimity.

When this was said, the Venerable Udāyi asked The Perfectly Enlightened One: ‘Venerable Sir, how are The Seven Factors of Enlightenment developed and cultivated so that they lead to the destruction of craving?’

Here, Udāyi, a Monk develops the Enlightenment factor of mindfulness, which is based upon seclusion, freedom from strong feelings and elimination, maturing in release; which is immense, superb, measureless, without ill will. When he develops the Enlightenment factor of mindfulness, which is based upon seclusion, freedom from strong feelings and elimination, maturing in release; which is immense, superb, measureless, without ill will, craving is abandoned. With the abandoning of craving, unwholesome Kamma is abandoned. With the abandoning of unwholesome Kamma, discontentedness is abandoned...

(All of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment are explained in the same way to include the Enlightenment factor of investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, and concentration with the final factor being described in the same way as in the below.)

He develops the Enlightenment factor of equanimity, which is based upon seclusion, freedom from strong feelings and elimination, maturing in release; which is immense, superb, measureless, without ill will. When he develops the Enlightenment factor of equanimity, which is based upon seclusion, freedom from strong feelings and elimination, maturing in release; which is

immense, superb, measureless, without ill will, craving is abandoned. With the abandoning of craving, unwholesome Kamma is abandoned. With the abandoning of unwholesome Kamma, discontentedness is abandoned.

Thus, Udāyi,

With the destruction of craving comes the destruction of unwholesome Kamma;

With the destruction of unwholesome Kamma comes the destruction of discontentedness.

(Reference: SN 46:26)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how through practicing The Seven Factors of Enlightenment a Practitioner is able to eliminate craving. Craving, anger (ill will), and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is the origin of all unwholesome Kamma.

Through the elimination of craving, anger (ill will), and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), all unwholesome Kamma production is eliminated.

Through the elimination of craving and all unwholesome Kamma production, discontentedness is eliminated.

The mind experiences Enlightenment where it is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

He further discusses how a Practitioner who develops The Seven Factors of Enlightenment leads to freedom from strong feelings and elimination, “maturing in release”.

“Maturing in release” is the experience one may have that as they deeply develop the mind, they may experience the bodily sensation of specific cravings/desires/attachments and/or specific taints/fetters being “released” from the mind.

The more one develops The Eight Fold Path starting with Right View (The Four Noble Truths) the mind can develop the ability to readily, and in some cases, instantly eliminate specific craving/desire/attachments and/or specific taints/fetters from the mind. There is much learning, reflecting, and practicing of these Teachings that is required as a prerequisite to developing this aspect of the mind.

Gotama Buddha is explaining the bodily sensation experienced upon the elimination of these pollutions of the mind as “maturing in release”.

Chapter 103

The Destruction of Excitement

Seeing rightly, he experiences the fading away of strong feelings.

With the destruction of excitement comes destruction of craving;

With the destruction of craving comes destruction of excitement.

With the destruction of excitement and craving, the mind is said to be well liberated.

(Reference: SN 22.51)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner “seeing rightly” is aware of “strong feelings”. Observing the arising of pleasant feelings (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.), a Practitioner will need to cut off and let go of the pleasant feelings. In doing so, one will eliminate craving.

With the elimination of pleasant feelings and the associated craving that caused the pleasant feelings, “the mind is said to be well liberated”.

A liberated mind is free of strong feelings, it is Enlightened.

Chapter 104

The Destruction of Craving is Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

‘Venerable Sir, it is said, ‘a being, a being. In what way, Venerable Sir, is one called a being?’

One is stuck, Rādha, tightly stuck, in desire, longing, excitement, and craving for form; therefore one is called ‘a being’.

One is stuck, tightly stuck, in desire, longing, excitement, and craving for feelings; therefore one is called ‘a being’.

One is stuck, tightly stuck, in desire, longing, excitement, and craving for perceptions; therefore one is called ‘a being’.

One is stuck, tightly stuck, in desire, longing, excitement, and craving for volitional formations (choices/decisions); therefore one is called ‘a being’.

One is stuck, tightly stuck, in desire, longing, excitement, craving for consciousness: therefore one is called ‘a being’.

Suppose, Rādha, Some little boys or girls are playing with sand castles. So long as they are not free of desire, longing, excitement, thirst, passion, and craving for those sand castles, they cherish them, play with them, treasure them, and treat them possessively.

But when those little boys or girls lose their desire, longing, excitement, thirst, passion, and craving for those sand castles, then they scatter them with their hands and feet, demolish them, shatter them, and put them out of play.

So too, Rādha, scatter form, demolish it, shatter it, put it out of play; practice for the destruction of craving. Scatter feeling ... Scatter perception ... Scatter volitional formations (choices/decisions) ... Scatter consciousness, demolish it, shatter it, put it out of play; practice for the destruction of craving.

For the destruction of craving, Rādha, is Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

(Reference: SN 23.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how craving for The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), or consciousness (the mind) makes one “stuck” and “therefore one is called a being”.

It is The Five Aggregates that identifies a living being. Holding on to The Five Aggregates with craving/desire/attachment will cause the mind to continue to experience discontentedness and continuous rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha provides a story of children playing with sand castles and as long as the mind is “not free of desire, longing, excitement, thirst, passion, and craving for those sand castles, they cherish them, play with them, treasure them, and treat them possessively” they will experience discontentedness.

“But when those little boys or girls lose their desire, longing, excitement, thirst, passion, and craving for those sand castles, then they scatter them with their hands and feet, demolish them, shatter them, and put them out of play” because the child will no longer hold on to the sand castles and not experience discontentedness.

He encourages Practitioners to “scatter” The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness (the mind) so that the mind is no longer holding on to them with craving/desire/attachment.

Training the mind to eliminate craving is the way to “practice for the destruction of craving”. “For the destruction of craving, Rādhā, is Nibbāna (Enlightenment)”.

Once craving/desire/attachment is eliminated from the mind, a Practitioner will no longer experience discontentedness.

Chapter 105

Excitement is Discontentedness

As a consequence of this, excitement arises. Excitement in consciousness is clinging.

With one's clinging as condition, existence [comes to be];
With existence as condition, birth;
With birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

(Reference: SN 22.5)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the mind (i.e. consciousness) clinging to excitement creates the conditions for continued existence, birth, aging-and-death, along with all discontentedness such as “sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair”.

It is due to birth that a being experiences discontentedness. If a being does not experience birth, they will no longer experience discontentedness.

Holding on to existence means the mind is still clinging and will continue to experience The Cycle of Rebirth and continue to experience discontentedness until the mind is trained to “let go”.

It is only when a Practitioner learns, reflects, and practices these Teachings that the mind will acquire wisdom to remedy ignorance (unknowing of true reality) which eliminates the condition that is creating rebirth. Through deeply understanding Dependent Origination, a Practitioner will come to understand how wisdom is the solution to the unEnlightened mind eliminating discontentedness and will allow one to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 106

A Stream-Enterer is Worth More Than Being a Wheel-Turning Monarch

Monks, although a Wheel-Turning Monarch, having exercised supreme sovereign rulership over the four continents, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world, in the company of the heavenly beings of the heavenly realm, and there in the Nandana Grove, accompanied by an entourage of heavenly nymphs, he enjoys himself supplied and endowed with the five cords of heavenly sensual pleasure, still, as he does not possess four things, he is not freed from hell, the animal realm, and the realm of afflicted spirits, not freed from the plane of misery, the bad destinations, the nether world.

Although, Monks, a Noble Disciple maintains himself by lumps of almsfood and wears rag-robles, still, as he possesses four things, he is freed from hell, the animal realm, and the realm of afflicted spirits, freed from the plane of misery, the bad destinations, the nether world.

What are the four?

- (1) Here, Monks, the Noble Disciple possesses confirmed confidence in The Buddha thus: The Tathāgata is an Arahant, Perfectly Enlightened, accomplished in true wisdom and conduct, fortunate, knower of the worlds, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, Teacher of heavenly beings and humans, The Enlightened One, The Fortunate One.
- (2) He possesses confirmed confidence in The Teachings thus: The Teachings are well expounded by The Perfectly Enlightened One, directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.
- (3) He possesses confirmed confidence in The Community thus: The Community of The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciples is practicing the wholesome way, practicing the straight way, practicing the true way, practicing the proper way; that is, the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals - this Community of The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respectful salutation, the unsurpassed field of merit for the world.

- (4) He possesses the virtues (moral conduct) dear to the Noble Ones - unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unblotched, liberating, praised by the wise, not misunderstood, and leading to concentration.

He possesses these four things. And, Monks, between the obtaining of sovereignty over the four continents and the obtaining of the four things, the obtaining of sovereignty over the four continents is not worth a sixteenth part of the obtaining of the four things.

(Reference: SN 55.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner attaining the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer is more beneficial than a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

A Stream-Enterer would have needed to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to develop wisdom and improve the condition of the mind to eliminate the first three (3) fetters of The Ten Fetters. They would be able to observe that the condition of their mind has significantly improved from progressing on The Path to Enlightenment.

A Wheel-Turning Monarch is an individual who is a leader of a large population of people who chooses to guide them based on The Teachings of The Buddha.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, these were actual Kings.

Today, we could think of a President, Prime Minister, Kings, Queens, politicians, and others who lead a large population of people through wise decision making based on The Natural Laws of Existence shared in The Teachings of The Buddha.

A Wheel-Turning Monarch is a leader of a population of people who decides to implement rules for the population based on these Teachings. With their influence to be able to set rules and guidelines for the population, it is seen as beneficial to guide a population of people through these good wholesome Teachings.

These individuals have deep wisdom of The Teachings and choose to practice them for their own life while also making decisions about their leadership of a large population of people based on The Natural Laws of Existence, specifically, The Natural Law of Kamma.

They are a role model of these Teachings, in that they are setting an example for others to observe that benefits the population of people through more closely understanding how to practice The Teachings in daily life through the example displayed by the “Wheel-Turning Monarch” or today, a leader of a large population of people.

The Natural Laws of Existence are a much higher law than any laws that could be created by human beings. Therefore, for a King or leader to function through these Natural Laws of Existence, this would lead to wholesome outcomes for large groups of people. A Wheel-Turning Monarch has significant influence to help large populations of people through structuring their Kingdom and how it operates based on these natural laws as

this would help individuals in the population more readily progress towards Enlightenment.

But, The Buddha shares that a Practitioner attaining the first Stage of Enlightenment is more beneficial than one who is guiding an entire population of people based on rules for society that are based on these Teachings.

Here, The Buddha is sharing how your attainment of increased levels of training and results from the training is the ultimate goal and what is more beneficial.

A Stream-Enterer will be able to benefit a Community of Practitioners in that their wisdom is able to be shared with others who will then be able to experience the same results of significantly reduced discontentedness and the other benefits mentioned in Volume 5 - Chapter 21. While it would be most wise to seek guidance from a Teacher who has attained Enlightenment, having a Stream-Enterer or any other Practitioner who has attained any of The Four Stages of Enlightenment would be highly beneficial to a population of people as they could gain insight and understanding of The Teachings from those Practitioners.

In this Teaching, The Buddha explains that a Stream-Enterer is more beneficial, or more helpful, than a “Wheel-Turning Monarch”.

Detailed explanation of the first Stage of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)” (Volume 5).

Chapter 107

A Confident Practitioner

Monks, the eye is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. The ear is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. The nose is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. The tongue is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. The body is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. The mind is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise.

One who places confidence in these Teachings and persistent in them thus is called a “Confident Practitioner”, one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of wholesome persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings.

He is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the realm of afflicted spirits; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of Stream-Entry.

(Reference: SN 25.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, and the next, he is describing two types of Practitioners who are making their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment. One, based in confidence and the other based in detailed examination of The Teachings - “A Confident Practitioner” and “A Teachings Practitioner”.

Both of these individuals are headed towards the first Stage of Enlightenment, but have not yet attained it.

In order to get to the first Stage of Enlightenment, there will need to be confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, their Teacher, and their own ability to attain Enlightenment, among other important qualities (i.e. A Confident Practitioner) And, a Practitioner will need to devote time and energy towards developing wisdom of The Path to Enlightenment through detailed investigation and examination of The Teachings (i.e. A Teachings Practitioner).

What The Buddha is sharing, is that, if one has confidence, meaning they have eliminated the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as “doubt” about The Teachings, or they are closely examining The Teachings, both of these individuals will make their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment in this life.

If a Practitioner is in the first Stage of Enlightenment, they are in the first Stage of Enlightenment. There are not two different types of Stream-Enterers but instead, The Buddha is describing that if a Practitioner has confidence (i.e. A Confident Practitioner) or keen interest to study The Teachings (i.e. A Teachings Practitioner), they will make their way, at least, to the first Stage of Enlightenment in this life.

In order to attain the first Stage of Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to have confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, their Teacher, and their own ability to attain Enlightenment, among other important qualities. A Practitioner will also need to know The Teachings closely and practice them closely to experience the results of the first Stage of Enlightenment.

What The Buddha is sharing is that, if someone is starting out with confidence or starting out with detailed investigation of The Teachings, they will make their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment, at a minimum, in this very life.

A Practitioner who has attained the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer is incapable of being reborn into the lower realms and will experience the benefits of their attainment of becoming a Stream-Enterer. There are multiple benefits of having attained this Stage of Enlightenment.

Once the mind is trained to attain the first Stage of Enlightenment, the Practitioner is incapable of regressing backwards or doing anything that will create Kamma, such that, they will be reborn into the lower realms. A Stream-Enterer will be reborn no more than seven (7) times to eventually attain Enlightenment. They will have significantly reduced the discontentedness they experience, and will have a significant portion of all The Teachings they will need to make their way to Enlightenment. A Practitioner who is in the first Stage of Enlightenment has intentionally made their way to this attainment, with the guidance of a Teacher, and will continue to need to seek guidance to make further progress. However, they will have a wide variety of all The Teachings of The Buddha they will need to continue their journey to Enlightenment.

For a Practitioner “who places confidence in these Teachings and persistent in them thus is called a Confident Practitioner” and will make their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer, in this very life.

Detailed explanation of The Stages of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

The Buddha uses the stream as an analogy to describe one headed towards Enlightenment. Just like the flow of the stream moves a log towards the ocean, a Practitioner who enters the stream, heads towards the ocean. The ocean is Enlightenment. A Stream-Enterer is one who is moving towards Enlightenment with a fixed destination of Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains two types of Practitioners who will enter the stream: A Confident Practitioner and a Teachings Practitioner.

A Confident Practitioner is “one who places confidence in these Teachings and persistent in them” continues to be determined, dedicated, and diligent towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

A Confident Practitioner is “one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of wholesome persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings”. They would be dedicated to wholesome conduct as described through The Eight Fold Path which is “the fixed course of rightness” and “entered the plane of wholesome persons” through

deeply practicing The Eight Fold Path. In accomplishing this goal, a Confident Practitioner would be one who has moved past or beyond “the plane of worldlings” or in other words, no longer seeking gratification from the impermanent conditions of worldly affairs or worldly possessions.

A Confident Practitioner “is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the realm of afflicted spirits; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of Stream-Entry”.

A Teachings Practitioner is “one for whom these Teachings are understood thus after being pondered to a sufficient degree with wisdom”. They have deeply understood and reflected upon these Teachings to acquire wisdom. They are “one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of wholesome persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings” as described in the prior paragraphs of this Chapter.

A Teachings Practitioner is also “incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the realm of afflicted spirits; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of Stream-Entry”.

Chapter 108

A Teachings Practitioner

One for whom these Teachings are understood thus after being pondered to a sufficient degree with wisdom is called a “Teachings Practitioner”, one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of wholesome persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings.

He is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the realm of afflicted spirits; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of Stream-Entry.

(Reference: SN 25.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, and the previous, he is describing two types of Practitioners who are making their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment. One, based in confidence and the other based in detailed examination of The Teachings - “A Confident Practitioner” and “A Teachings Practitioner”.

Both of these individuals are headed towards the first Stage of Enlightenment, but have not yet attained it.

In order to get to the first Stage of Enlightenment, there will need to be confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, their Teacher, and their own ability to attain Enlightenment, among other important qualities (i.e. A Confident Practitioner) And, a Practitioner will need to devote time and energy towards developing wisdom of The Path to Enlightenment through detailed investigation and examination of The Teachings (i.e. A Teachings Practitioner).

What The Buddha is sharing, is that, if one has confidence, meaning they have eliminated the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as “doubt” about The Teachings, or they are closely examining The Teachings, both of these individuals will make their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment in this life.

If a Practitioner is in the first Stage of Enlightenment, they are in the first Stage of Enlightenment. There are not two different types of Stream-Enterers but instead, The Buddha is describing that if a Practitioner has confidence (i.e. A Confident Practitioner) or keen interest to study The Teachings (i.e. A Teachings Practitioner), they will make their way, at least, to the first Stage of Enlightenment in this life.

In order to attain the first Stage of Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to have confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, their Teacher, and their own ability to attain Enlightenment, among other important qualities. A Practitioner will also need to know The Teachings closely and practice them closely to experience the results of the first Stage of Enlightenment.

What The Buddha is sharing is that, if someone is starting out with confidence or starting out with detailed investigation of The Teachings, they will make their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment, at a minimum, in this very life.

A Practitioner who has attained the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer is incapable of being reborn into the lower realms and will experience the benefits of their attainment of becoming a Stream-Enterer. There are multiple benefits of having attained this Stage of Enlightenment.

Once the mind is trained to attain the first Stage of Enlightenment, the Practitioner is incapable of regressing backwards or doing anything that will create Kamma, such that, they will be reborn into the lower realms. A Stream-Enterer will be reborn no more than seven (7) times to eventually attain Enlightenment. They will have significantly reduced the discontentedness they experience, and will have a significant portion of all The Teachings they will need to make their way to Enlightenment. A Practitioner who is in the first Stage of Enlightenment has intentionally made their way to this attainment, with the guidance of a Teacher, and will continue to need to seek guidance to make further progress. However, they will have a wide variety of all The Teachings of The Buddha they will need to continue their journey to Enlightenment.

For a Practitioner “who places confidence in these Teachings and persistent in them thus is called a Confident Practitioner” and will make their way to the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer, in this very life.

Detailed explanation of The Stages of Enlightenment is available in this same book series found in Chapter 3 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

The Buddha uses the stream as an analogy to describe one headed towards Enlightenment. Just like the flow of the stream moves a log towards the ocean, a Practitioner who enters the stream, heads towards the ocean. The ocean is Enlightenment. A Stream-Enterer is one who is moving towards Enlightenment with a fixed destination of Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains two types of Practitioners who will enter the stream: A Confident Practitioner and a Teachings Practitioner.

A Confident Practitioner is “one who places confidence in these Teachings and persistent in them” continues to be determined, dedicated, and diligent towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

A Confident Practitioner is “one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of wholesome persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings”. They would be dedicated to wholesome conduct as described through The Eight Fold Path which is “the fixed course of rightness” and “entered the plane of wholesome persons” through deeply practicing The Eight Fold Path. In accomplishing this goal, a Confident Practitioner would be one who has moved past or beyond “the plane of worldlings” or in other words, no longer seeking gratification from the impermanent conditions of worldly affairs or worldly possessions.

A Confident Practitioner “is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the realm of afflicted spirits; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of Stream-Entry”.

A Teachings Practitioner is “one for whom these Teachings are understood thus after being pondered to a sufficient degree with wisdom”. They have deeply understood and reflected upon these Teachings to acquire wisdom. They are “one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of wholesome persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings” as described in the prior paragraphs of this Chapter.

A Teachings Practitioner is also “incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the realm of afflicted spirits; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of Stream-Entry”.

Chapter 109

Six Cases of Incapability by One Accomplished in View

Monks, there are these six cases of incapability.

What six?

One accomplished in view is:

- (1) incapable of depriving his mother of life;
- (2) incapable of depriving his father of life;
- (3) incapable of depriving an Arahant of life;
- (4) incapable of shedding The Tathāgata's blood with a mind of hatred;
- (5) incapable of creating a division in The Community;
- (6) incapable of acknowledging another Teacher.

These are the six cases of incapability.

(Reference: AN 6.94)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “The Six Cases of Incapability” for one who is accomplished and well established in “Right View”.

(1) Incapable of depriving his mother of life: A Practitioner who is “accomplished in view” would not be able to kill their own mother.

(2) Incapable of depriving his father of life: A Practitioner who is “accomplished in view” would not be able to kill their own father.

(3) Incapable of depriving an Arahant of life: A Practitioner who is “accomplished in view” would not be able to kill an Enlightened being, an Arahant.

(4) Incapable of shedding The Tathāgata’s blood with a mind of hatred: A Practitioner who is “accomplished in view” would not be able to harm a Buddha, a Tathāgata.

(5) Incapable of creating a division in The Community: A Practitioner who is “accomplished in view” would not be able to create separation, arguments, or breaking up of The Community of Practitioners learning and practicing these Teachings.

(6) Incapable of acknowledging another Teacher: A Practitioner who is “accomplished in view” would not be able to learn with a Teacher other than The Buddha or a Teacher of his Teachings.

For a person who has deeply learned, reflected, and practiced these Teachings establishing “Right View”, they would be incapable of any of these six deeds. They would deeply understand the harm these deeds would cause and in doing so, they would cause harm to themselves. They would deeply understand that these Teachings are leading to the diminishing of their own discontentedness and is The Path to Enlightenment, therefore, they would be unable to acknowledge another Teacher as their Teacher because they would know that these Teachings are the truth leading to wisdom. They would observe that their mind is becoming liberated through these Teachings and unable to recognize another Teacher.

(1-5) of this list are referred to as The Five Heinous Crimes or The Five Heinous Unwholesome Acts.

Chapter 110

Final Knowledge is Achieved by Gradual Training

Monks, I do not say that final knowledge (wisdom) is achieved all at once. On the contrary, **final knowledge is achieved by gradual training, by gradual practice, by gradual progress.**

And how does there come to be gradual training, gradual practice, gradual progress?

Here;

One **who has confidence** in a Teacher **visits him**;

When he visits him, he **pays respect** to him;

When he pays respect to him, he **gives ear**;

One who gives ear, **hears The Teachings**;

Having heard The Teachings, he **memorizes them**;

He **examines the meaning of The Teachings** he has memorized;

When he examines their meaning, he **gains a reflective understanding of those Teachings**;

When he has gained a reflective understanding of those Teachings, **enthusiasm springs** up in him;

When enthusiasm has sprung up, he **applies his will**;

Having applied his will, he **investigates**;

Having investigated, he **strives**;

Purposely striving, he **realizes** with the ultimate truth and **sees it by penetrating** it with wisdom.

(Reference: MN 70.22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how Enlightenment is not achieved suddenly or “all at once”. Instead, the attainment of Enlightenment is experienced gradually through gradual training and gradual practice resulting in gradual progress.

The Buddha provides guidance of how to attain the wisdom that leads to liberation of the mind. He is providing guidance in “how to learn” and make progress on The Path to Enlightenment by having a Teacher and gradually learning through investigation of The Teachings.

When there is confidence in a Teacher, a Practitioner visits them, pays respect, listens to their Teachings (i.e. gives ear), memorizes The Teachings, examines the meaning of The Teachings, reflects on The Teachings arousing enthusiasm, and applies their will or effort to practice The Teachings. Having investigated The Teachings, a Practitioner will need to strive to independently observe the truth to acquire wisdom.

This is the way one would liberate the mind through seeking guidance with a Teacher.

In order to progress on The Path to Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need a Teacher to receive guidance. One would not be able to only read a book and attain the results of an Enlightened mind.

Nothing in Gotama Buddha’s Teachings is based in belief. All his Teachings can be learned and practiced to independently observe the truth as the mind “gradually” acquires wisdom through independent verification of his Teachings through practice of his Teachings. It is a real struggle to exist in a world that the unEnlightened mind does not understand.

This new found wisdom “gradually” improves the way the mind functions in the world through eliminating discontentedness of mind. The mind can completely eliminate all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through actively learning and practicing Gotama Buddha’s Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

Only a Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without Teachers. These are some of the criteria that make a Buddha a Buddha is that they discover The Teachings on their own attaining Enlightenment without help from a Teacher, shares their independently discovered Teachings to guide countless others to Enlightenment during the remaining time of their life, and they leave their Teachings in a condition that they guide countless others to Enlightenment after their death.

The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

That means you and everyone else will need Teachers on this Path to Enlightenment. A Buddha has already done the hard work of figuring out how to attain Enlightenment. You just need to learn and practice his Teachings to improve the condition of the mind and your life.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 101-110)

<https://youtu.be/EI3EO-D80j8>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 244 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 101-110)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--244---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-101-110-e1ajmfq/a-a6un1bd>

Chapter 111

The Noble Eight Fold Path The Way of Practice Leading to the Elimination of Discontentedness

And what, Monks, is The Noble Truth of the Way of Practice Leading to the Elimination of Discontentedness?

It is just this Noble Eight Fold Path, namely: Right View; Right Intention; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration.

And what, Monks, is Right View?

It is, Monks, the wisdom of discontentedness, the wisdom of the cause of discontentedness, the wisdom of the elimination of discontentedness, and the wisdom of the way of practice leading to the elimination of discontentedness. This is called Right View.

And what, Monks, is Right Intention?

The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill-will, the intention of harmlessness. This, Monks, is called Right Intention.

And what, Monks, is Right Speech?

Refraining from lying, refraining from slander, refraining from harsh speech, refraining from frivolous speech. This is called Right Speech.

And what, Monks, is Right Action?

Refraining from taking life, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct. This is called Right Action.

And what, Monks, is Right Livelihood?

Here, Monks, the Noble Disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, keeps himself by Right Livelihood.

And what, Monks, is Right Effort?

Here, Monks, a Monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development. This is called Right Effort.

And what, Monks, is Right Mindfulness?

Here, Monks, a Monk resides reflecting on body as body, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world; he resides reflecting on feelings as feelings, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world; he resides reflecting on mind as mind, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world; he resides reflecting on mental objects as mental objects, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world. This is called Right Mindfulness.

And what, Monks, is Right Concentration?

Here, a Monk, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

‘Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness’, he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This is called Right Concentration.

And that, Monks, is called the way of practice leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

(Reference: DN 22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Eight Fold Path.

The Eight Fold Path is the complete solution to solving the problem of the unEnlightened mind and The Cycle of Rebirth. The Eight Fold Path is “the way of practice leading to the elimination of discontentedness.”

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path is available in this same book series found in Chapter 5 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

What are the Jhānas and how can I experience them?

The Jhānas are preliminary phases the mind experiences as it is making its way to Enlightenment, and prior to the first Stage of Enlightenment.

When the mind is in the Jhānas, there are heightened qualities that are experienced, which are needed in order to fully develop the mind and experience Enlightenment. These are referred to as “the Jhānas”.

Without experiencing the Jhānas, a Practitioner would have no ability to attain Enlightenment, or even the first Stage of Enlightenment.

The Jhānas are oftentimes misunderstood, especially outside of Asia.

Oftentimes people think that the Jhānas are only experienced through the practice of meditation and, that the Jhānas are turned “on or off” while in meditation or in daily life. This misunderstanding leads to the inability to experience these heightened qualities of mind, the first Stage of Enlightenment, or Enlightenment itself. Thus, an individual continues to stay trapped in the unEnlightened state experiencing sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. over and over and over again. The mind is stuck in this continuous cycle of discontent feelings due to its lack of wisdom of The Path to Enlightenment.

I will demystify the Jhānas and help you to understand what they are and how to experience them so that you can escape the constant struggles and difficulties of the unEnlightened mind.

(Please read further if you are interested in learning this important Teaching so that the mind can become free of these strong feelings and others.)

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As mentioned, the Jhānas are heightened qualities that are experienced as one is progressing on The Path to Enlightenment. These are heightened qualities of awareness (i.e. mindfulness), tranquility, concentration, and equanimity, along with other beneficial qualities of mind that are needed to experience progress on The Path to Enlightenment and Enlightenment itself.

A Practitioner would be unable to experience Enlightenment without these heightened qualities developed and acquired in the Jhānas.

The Jhānas are experienced through learning, reflecting on (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Eight Fold Path.

The Eight Fold Path is the core and central Teaching of The Buddha, it is “THE” Path to Enlightenment. If you are interested in experiencing Enlightenment through The Teachings of The Buddha, you would need to know The Eight Fold Path, inside and out, backwards and forwards, up and down, left and right. And, you would need to learn The Eight Fold Path through the original Words of The Buddha with guidance from a Teacher while you retain the responsibility for your own learning and growth.

It is putting together all the individual factors of The Eight Fold Path that the mind will move into, and reside in, the Jhānas.

Yes, one will need to meditate to experience the Jhānas but, it is not only meditation that one needs to learn and practice to experience the Jhānas. There are many other aspects of The Path to Enlightenment than only meditation, which are described in The Eight Fold Path, and all of these factors are needed to make progress towards Enlightenment to include, experiencing the Jhānas.

Meditation is one aspect of one factor in The Eight Fold Path. If you did the math, that means that meditation is about 6% of The Path to Enlightenment. There is much more to experiencing Enlightenment than only meditation. There is much more to experiencing the Jhānas than only meditation.

Unfortunately, many people are misunderstanding, thinking that The Buddha sat under a tree, meditated, and instantly got to Enlightenment. This is just untrue and a significant misunderstanding. You can know this is true through The Words of The Buddha and his important Teachings.

“Monks, I do not say that final knowledge (wisdom) is achieved all at once. On the contrary, **final knowledge is achieved by gradual training, by gradual practice, by gradual progress.**” (Reference: MN 70.22)

An Enlightened being would have attained “final knowledge” through acquiring wisdom, by learning, reflecting (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha to awaken to The Natural Laws of Existence, the mind is then Enlightened.

Final Knowledge = Enlightenment

Enlightenment is not achieved “all at once”.

You can independently verify that Enlightenment is not experienced “all at once” or instantly because, everything you have ever accomplished in life has been through gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, just like The Buddha is sharing in this important Teaching. It took The Buddha six (6) years to attain Enlightenment.

Think about learning to read, write, and speak English, did it happen all at once? Think about the job or occupation that you perform, was your wisdom and skills acquired “all at once”?

No, of course not.

Therefore, you can understand how acquiring wisdom to attain Enlightenment does not occur “all at once”. The Words of The Buddha are sharing this important Teaching and, you can independently verify it for yourself. All of The Teachings of The Buddha are independently verifiable and is how a Practitioner would need to progress on The Path to Enlightenment to actually experience Enlightenment. It is through gradual training and gradual practice that leads to gradual progress of acquiring wisdom and awakening to the Enlightened mental state.

So, Enlightenment, and the Jhānas, are not experienced “all at once” and they are not experienced only in meditation.

These are The Words of The Buddha on the Jhānas.

“And what, Monks, is Right Concentration? Here, a Monk, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

‘Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness’, he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This is called Right Concentration.”

(Reference: DN 22)

The Buddha describes the four (4) Jhānas in multiple places within his Teachings. There are only four (4) Jhānas, even though you will see different numbers being taught by other people who have misunderstanding but, The Buddha only taught four (4) Jhānas, as you can see in his original words.

The Buddha describes the four (4) Jhānas in the same way in each Teaching. However, this is a reference to the eighth factor of The Eight Fold Path, Right Concentration. This is where he describes the Jhānas, in detail, and this is where the misunderstandings in the world are originating as people are not understanding what was taught by The Buddha.

Right Concentration is accomplished through a well developed meditation practice and practicing “singleness of mind” in daily life. The Buddha describes how to practice Right Concentration as part of The Path to Enlightenment in many of his other Teachings, which all integrate into The Eight Fold Path.

So, because Right Concentration is to practice meditation and developing singleness of mind, some people are misunderstanding the Jhānas as only being experienced in meditation and is something that is turned “on and off”.

This is confusing many people and leading to the inability to experience the Jhānas and Enlightenment.

As you can see in the original Words of The Buddha, he is describing enhanced qualities of mind that the mind “enters and resides” in as part of his description of the Jhānas.

The mind “resides” in the Jhānas.

He is describing the Jhānas as part of The Eight Fold Path because this is the byproduct or benefit, of practicing the entire core and central Teaching of The Buddha, The Eight Fold Path, which will guide you in training the mind to experience the Jhānas and attain Enlightenment.

One enhanced quality of mind that is experienced in the second Jhāna includes “oneness of mind” or “unification of the mind”.

In the unEnlightened state, there is a conscious mind and a subconscious mind, both of these are polluted and need to be purified to experience Enlightenment. However, the subconscious mind is much more heavily polluted than the conscious mind. A Practitioner in the unEnlightened state will have some awareness of the conscious mind but, they will lack awareness of the subconscious mind until, they are experiencing the second Jhāna.

Oneness of mind, or unification of the mind, is when the conscious mind and subconscious mind have merged. They have become “one”. The Practitioner will have “full awareness” of the entire mind, the mind becomes highly introspective being able to easily look inward. This is sometimes referred to as “the opening of the third eye, divine eye, or inward looking eye”.

When “oneness of mind” or “unification of mind” is experienced, there will no longer be a conscious and subconscious mind but instead, there will be just one mind - “oneness of mind” or “unification of the mind”. And, this enhanced quality is needed in order to purify the mind. You would be unable to purify the entire mind to attain Enlightenment if there was no awareness of the entire mind throughout your entire day.

So, to even get to the first Stage of Enlightenment, and Enlightenment itself, a Practitioner needs to experience “oneness of mind” or “unification of the mind” in the second Jhāna. And, this is an enhanced quality of mind that is experienced at all times during one’s day.

This is not a quality of mind that is only experienced during meditation and it is not an aspect of the mind that is turned “on or off”. Instead, the mind is “residing” in this mental quality. This is true for all the enhanced qualities of the Jhānas. They are experienced at all times and, are not turned “on or off”. As shared by The Buddha, the mind “enters” and “resides” in the Jhānas.

For anyone who has experienced the Jhānas, they know this to be true.

The translation of the word “Jhāna” is “mental absorption” and “meditative absorption” because, to experience the Jhānas, a Practitioner will have mentally absorbed a certain amount of The Teachings of The Buddha and be practicing those Teachings. And, the Practitioner will have conducted and benefited from a certain amount of meditation. The mind has mentally “absorbed” The Teachings of The Buddha, and is practicing The Teachings of The Buddha, to include but not limited to, meditation.

When a mind has absorbed something and is experiencing improved qualities of mind, those qualities are not being turned “on or off” nor only experienced during meditation. These mental qualities are always present, the mind is “residing” in these enhanced qualities.

The Jhānas are temporary, as the mind can regress out of the Jhānas if the mind becomes complacent. However, if one continues to remain determined, dedicated, and diligent, the qualities of the Jhānas will continue to persist in the mind, all the way through to Enlightenment and while the mind is experiencing Enlightenment.

The Jhānas are not something to boast about nor take pride in. If the mind is becoming arrogant or prideful due to experiencing the Jhānas, a Practitioner would be wise to “cut that off and let it go”. Otherwise, the mind is complacent and will ultimately regress out of the Jhānas and, this will hinder any further progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

So in short, you will need to experience the Jhānas to make progress on The Path to Enlightenment and to attain Enlightenment itself, and this is accomplished through learning, reflecting on (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Eight Fold Path, the core and central Teaching of The Buddha that you need to know inside and out to experience the Jhānas and Enlightenment.

Experiencing the Jhānas is like the “lightbulb is flickering”, providing an indication to you that the mind has put together The Eight Fold Path well enough to experience these heightened qualities of mind.

The Practitioner will know they are experiencing the Jhānas because they will notice the improved qualities of mind as described by The Buddha in Right Concentration of The Eight Fold Path.

When experiencing the Jhānas it is a significant indication that a Practitioner is making tangible progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

It would be unwise to become arrogant, prideful, or boastful about anything at all, to include experiencing the Jhānas. If so, those unwholesome aspects of the mind would only create a lack of further progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Once a Practitioner is experiencing the Jhānas, it is time for the real work to begin. The mind is now prepared to fully eradicate all of the pollutions of mind. The needed enhanced qualities have been acquired and it is time to start focusing on the elimination of The Ten Fetters starting with, the first three.

Eliminating the first three fetters/taints/pollutions of mind, a Practitioner will then experience the first Stage of Enlightenment. From the first Stage of Enlightenment, the mind will no longer regress. In the first Stage of Enlightenment, one has progressed past the preliminary phases of the Jhānas, where the mind can regress, and is now firmly in the first Stage of Enlightenment, where the mind will not regress.

But, this is not a time to become complacent but instead, learn, reflect on (i.e. independently verify), and practice the elimination of The Ten Fetters. Your practice will need to pivot towards actively learning, reflecting on (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing to eliminate The Ten Fetters.

A Practitioner will need to know what is each of The Ten Fetters, what are the symptoms, how to eliminate the fetters, and how to know they are eliminated. This can all be learned in one of our annual retreats titled “Purification of The Mind to Attain Enlightenment”. In this retreat, there are individual classes devoted to learning each individual fetter of The Ten Fetters.

The Jhānas await you. These improved qualities of mind await you. Enlightenment awaits you.

The only thing holding you back is your own determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect (i.e. independently verify), and practice The Path to Enlightenment, based on The Words of The Buddha, as taught by The Buddha.

Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent, lest you will regret it later. This is my instruction to you. (Reference: SN 43.1)

Be well and enjoy your journey...

To learn more about the Jhānas please see this recorded online class.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgxpbmW6bO4&list=PLFuun1phKgQn_7rDGqXFDF-Pz4cRrIBa_&index=3

Chapter 112

Where Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind Find No Footing

Once, Kevaddha, in this order of Monks the thought occurred to a certain Monk: “I wonder where the four great elements - the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the wind element - are eliminated without remainder.’ And that Monk attained to such a state of mental concentration that the way to the heavenly realm appeared before him.

(And that Monk attained to such a state of mental concentration that the way to the heavenly realm appeared before him. He went to the heavenly realm of The Four Great Kings and asked the question.

When none of them could answer the question, the Monk went to the Thirty-Three Gods who said “We don’t know, but Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, may know...”. Sakka told the Monk to ask the Yama heavenly beings, the Suyama, the Tusita heavenly beings, the Santusita, Nimmanarati, Sunimmita, Paranimmita-Vesavatti heavenly beings, Vasavatti, Brahma’s associates and all the way to the Great Brahma. The Great Brahma avoided to answer and finally said that the heavenly beings believe there is nothing Brahma does not know but the truth is he does not know where the four great elements cease without remainder. It is the Monk’s fault that he did not ask The Perfectly Enlightened One. In the end, the Monk went back to The Perfectly Enlightened One.)

So that Monk, as swiftly as a strong man might flex or unflex his arm, vanished from the Brahma world and appeared in my presence. He prostrated himself before me, then sat down to one side and said: Venerable Sir, where are the four great elements - the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the wind element - eliminated without remainder?

I replied: Monk, once upon a time sea traveling merchants, when they set sail on the ocean, took in their ship a land sighting bird. When they could not see the land themselves, they released this bird. The bird flew to the east, to the south, to the west, to the north, it flew to the zenith (over head) and to the intermediate points of the compass.

If it saw land anywhere, it flew there. But if it saw no land, it returned to the ship. In the same way, Monk, you have been as far as the Brahma world searching for an answer to your question and not finding it, and now you come back to me.

But, Monk, you should not ask your question in this way: Where are the four great elements — the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the wind element — eliminated without remainder?

Instead, this is how the question should have been put: Where do earth, water, fire, and wind find no footing?

Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul — Where are “name-and-form” wholly destroyed?

And the answer is: Where consciousness is quieted, immeasurable, all-radiant, that’s where earth, water, fire, and wind find no footing, There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul — There “name-and-form” are wholly destroyed.

With the elimination of consciousness, this is all destroyed.

(Reference: DN 11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that to eliminate existence is accomplished through the elimination of the consciousness.

During the lifetime of The Buddha and now in traditional medicine, the body is described through The Four Elements. The body is categorized into four (4) different elements such as: earth, water, fire, and wind. Each of these is used to describe the characteristics of the body.

Earth is the solids of the body. For example, hair, teeth, bones, finger and toe nails, etc.

Water is the liquids of the body. For example, tears, saliva, pus, urine, blood, etc.

Fire is the temperature of the body. For example, the heat that is generated to sustain the body. This element is also connected with the process of digestion.

Wind is the movement within the body. For example, the movement of food and feces through the intestines of the body.

Space is the lack of any other of The Four Elements. For example, the voids or empty spaces in the body like the nasal cavity or other locations where there is nothing that exists.

The Four Elements are used in traditional medicine to understand symptoms of illness and provide remedies to the patient.

Not only can the human body be described through The Four Elements, but we can also describe any physical object through The Four Elements as all material objects have a combination of The Four Elements.

The question The Buddha explains is appropriate for the Student to ask is “where are “name-and-form” wholly destroyed?”.

Name-and-form relate to the physical body. The question the Student is asking is “how is this physical existence eliminated?”.

The Buddha teaches the following about “name-and-form” in other discourses of his Teachings.

— — — —

And what, Monks, is name-and-form?

Feeling, perception, volitional formation, contact, consciousness: this is called name. The four great elements and the form derived from the four great elements: this is called form. Thus this name and this form are together called name-and-form.

— — — —

Name-and-form is describing the physical body and what makes “a being a being”.

It is through the elimination of consciousness that a Practitioner eliminates existence in The Cycle of Rebirth. This is further explained in The Buddha’s Teachings on Dependent Origination.

Detailed explanation of Dependent Origination is available in this same book series found in the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)” (Volume 5).

Chapter 113

Where Consciousness is Quieted

Where consciousness is quieted, immeasurable, all-radiant, that's where earth, water, fire, and wind find no footing. There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul - There "name-and-form" are wholly destroyed.

With the elimination of consciousness this is all destroyed.

(Reference: DN 11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that to eliminate existence is accomplished through the elimination of the consciousness.

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Detailed explanation of Dependent Origination is available in this same book series found in Chapter 14 of the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)” (Volume 5).

Chapter 114

The Conditioned

Monks, there are these three characteristics that define the conditioned.

What three?

An arising is seen, a vanishing is seen, and its alteration while it persists is seen.

These are the three characteristics that define the conditioned.

(Reference: AN 3.47)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he describes all “conditioned” objects or feelings.

A conditioned object or feeling arises, changes, and will fade away.

The Buddha uses this language “an arising is seen, a vanishing is seen (i.e. fade away), and its alteration while it persists is seen (i.e. changes)”.

A conditioned object or feeling will arise, change, and then fade away.

Discontentedness experienced in the unEnlightened mind is based on impermanent conditions and can be described as “conditioned feelings”.

- A pleasant feeling (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)
- A painful feeling (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, anxiety, etc.)
- A feeling that is neither painful-nor-pleasant (boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied, etc.)

The unEnlightened, or conditioned mind, will experience conditioned feelings because the feelings are based on impermanent conditions. The impermanent conditions arise, change, and fade away. Therefore, the conditioned feelings in the mind arise, change, and fade away.

An unEnlightened mind will base its happiness on an impermanent condition such as a new car, promotion at work, new relationship, or some other temporary condition. Then, as the car, promotion at work, relationship, or some other condition is no longer pleasing to the mind, the happiness changes and fades away. This is due to the unEnlightened mind being untrained and it bases its inner feelings on an impermanent condition. The mind experiences conditioned feelings that arise, change, and fade away.

This is not what an Enlightened unconditioned mind experiences.

Examples of conditioned objects exist all around you. You can observe for yourself that everything in the world is a conditioned object. The physical body, a tree, car, mobile phone, feelings, etc. You can investigate the world around you and observe, all that you see, hear, smell, taste, come in contact with through the physical body, and think about in the mind is a conditioned object. These are all impermanent because they are conditioned objects. They arise, change, and fade away.

Chapter 115

The Unconditioned

Monks, there are these three characteristics that define the unconditioned.

What three?

No arising is seen, no vanishing is seen, and no alteration while it persists is seen.

These are the three characteristics that define the unconditioned.

(Reference: AN 3.47)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he describes all “unconditioned” mental qualities.

An unconditioned mental quality will not arise, change, and fade away.

The Buddha uses this language “No arising is seen, no vanishing is seen (i.e. no fading away), and no alteration while it persists is seen (i.e. no changes)”.

An unconditioned mental quality will not arise, change, and then fade away.

The peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy experienced in the Enlightened mind is not based on impermanent conditions and can be described as “unconditioned mental qualities”.

The Enlightened, or unconditioned mind, will not experience conditioned feelings because the mental qualities of an Enlightened mind are not based on impermanent conditions. The unconditioned mental qualities will not arise, change, and fade away. Therefore, the unconditioned mental qualities are permanent.

An Enlightened mind will not base its peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy on impermanent conditions such as a new car, promotion at work, new relationship, or some other temporary condition. Due to the Enlightened mind being deeply trained and it does not base its inner feelings on impermanent conditions, the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The mind experiences unconditioned mental qualities that do not arise, change, and fade away - they are permanent.

This is what an Enlightened unconditioned mind experiences.

Examples of unconditioned objects that I have observed are Enlightenment, The Natural Laws of Existence, and love (i.e. unconditional love). These do not arise, change, nor fade away.

Detailed explanation of “Why Enlightenment is Permanent?” is available in this same book series found in the Frequently Asked Questions of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 116

Seeing Non-self with Correct Wisdom

Monks, Form is impermanent.... Feeling is impermanent.... Perception is impermanent.... Volitional formations (choice/decisions) are impermanent.... Consciousness is impermanent.

What is impermanent is discontentedness. What is discontentedness is non-self. What is non-self should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.

When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, one holds no more views concerning the past.

When one holds no more views concerning the past, one holds no more views concerning the future.

When one holds no more views concerning the future, one has no more stubborn craving.

When one has no more stubborn craving, the mind becomes free from strong feelings towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, and is liberated from the taints by non-clinging.

By being liberated, the mind is steady;
by being steady, the mind is content;
by being content, one is not agitated;
Being unagitated, one personally attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

One understands: Destroyed is birth,
the holy life has been lived,
what had to be done has been done,
there is no more for this state of existence.

(Reference: SN 22.46)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings on The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self.

The Buddha explains that The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness (the mind) are impermanent. Like with all Teachings, this is not a Teaching that you should believe but instead, observe the truth for yourself through investigating it and examining it in the world.

He then explains, “What is impermanent is discontentedness. What is discontentedness is non-self”. If the mind holds onto impermanent conditions, it will experience discontentedness. And, when the mind experiences discontentedness, that is not the self, that is not you, that is not who you are.

If you understand The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self then you will come to the conclusion that “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self”. None of The Five Aggregates or any other object is “you” or belongs to “you”.

The Buddha then mentions how the mind should be trained to not hold on to the past nor the future eliminating any sort of craving/desire/attachment for the past and the future. The mind needs to be trained to be in the present moment. “When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, one holds no more views concerning the past. When one holds no more views concerning the past, one holds no more views concerning the future. When one holds no more views concerning the future, one has no more stubborn craving”.

When the mind eliminates craving/desire/attachment, it “becomes free from strong feelings towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, and is liberated from the taints by non-clinging”. As the mind is trained to “let go” of The Five Aggregates, it can be trained to eliminate The Ten Fetters or “the taints”.

When the mind has eliminated The Ten Fetters then it is “liberated, the mind is steady”, “the mind is content”, “not agitated”, and “one personally attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment)”.

Having attained Enlightenment, a Practitioner understands “destroyed is birth”, “the holy life has been lived”, “what had to be done has been done”, “there is no more for this state of existence” and there will no longer be any more rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

With an Enlightened mind experiencing such peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy, a Practitioner knows and can observe this for themselves. They will know that this path has led exactly where Gotama Buddha said it would, to complete liberation and freedom from discontentedness. You will also know that there is no more rebirth to be experienced because the mind has attained Enlightenment.

As has been shared in the other Teachings within this book series, a Practitioner should never convince themselves that the mind is Enlightened as that can be dangerous to the mind. But instead, with humbleness a Practitioner will know the mind is liberated when it has not experienced any discontentedness for a few years.

As the discontentedness in the mind gradually decreases, life only gets better and better as the brilliance and brightness of the Enlightened mind shines through.

Chapter 117

No Desire for the Nutriment One Attains Enlightenment

If, Monks, there is no desire for the nutriment edible food, or for the nutriment contact, or for the nutriment of volitional formations (choices/decisions), or for the nutriment consciousness, if there is no excitement, if there is no craving, consciousness does not become established there and come to growth.

Where consciousness does not become established and come to growth, there is no development of name-and-form. Where there is no development of name-and-form, there is no growth of volitional formations (choices/decisions). Where there is no growth of volitional formations (choices/decisions), there is no production of future renewed existence. Where there is no production of future renewed existence, there is no future birth, aging, and death. Where there is no future birth, aging, and death, I say that: is without sorrow, anguish, and despair.

Suppose, Monks, there was a house, a hall with a peaked roof, with windows on the northern, southern, and eastern sides.

When the sun rises and a beam of light enters through a window, where would it become established?

‘On the western wall, Venerable Sir.’

If there were no western wall, where would it become established?

‘On the earth, Venerable Sir.’

If there were no earth, where would it become established?

‘On the water, Venerable Sir’

If there were no water, where would it become established?

‘It would not become established anywhere, Venerable Sir.’

So too, Monks, if there is no desire for the nutriment edible food ... for the nutriment contact ...for the nutriment of volitional formations (choices/decisions) ... for the nutriment consciousness ... consciousness does not become established there and come to growth.

Where consciousness does not become established and come to growth, there is no development of name-and-form. Where there is no development of name-and-form, there is no growth of volitional formations. Where there is no growth of volitional formations, there is no production of future renewed existence. Where there is no production of future renewed existence, there is no future birth, aging, and death. Where there is no future birth, aging, and death, I say that: is without sorrow, grief, and despair.

(Reference: SN 12.64)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares another Teaching to help a Practitioner understand how the mind attaining Enlightenment a being is no longer reborn in The Cycle of Rebirth.

When the mind eliminates craving/desire/attachment, it will experience Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains that when the mind has eliminated craving/desire/attachment to food, contact, volitional formations, and consciousness, the mind will not experience “excitement” based on those conditions. When “there is no craving, consciousness does not become established there and come to growth” the mind is Enlightened and it will no longer lead to rebirth.

Craving is the fuel that leads to rebirth. If there is craving/desire/attachment in the mind at the time of death, there will be rebirth. The Buddha is explaining how “consciousness does not become established there and come to growth” when “there is no craving”.

He further explains in the second paragraph of this Teaching sharing that “where consciousness does not become established and come to growth, there is no development of name-and-form”. He is describing that where there is no consciousness (i.e. a mind), that there is no forming of a new being. Name-and-form is the living being and if name-and-form does not develop, there is no further rebirth. Name-and-form would only be created if there is a consciousness (i.e. a mind), to enter the physical body. Without a consciousness, there is no rebirth.

Then, The Buddha uses the example of the sun shining into a building to explain that if there is no craving/desire/attachment, that consciousness cannot be established to create a new existence just like the sun cannot establish itself if there is no object to shine on like a wall, earth, or water. If these objects do not exist, then the sun is unable to establish its beam on these objects much like consciousness cannot be established if there is no craving.

If there is no more birth, there will be no more discontentedness such as “sorrow, grief, and despair”.

Chapter 118

How Should the Nutriment Edible Food Be Seen?

And how, Monks, should the nutriment edible food be seen?

Suppose a couple, husband and wife, had taken limited provisions and were traveling through a desert. They have with them their only son, dear and beloved.

Then, in the middle of the desert, their limited provisions would be used up and exhausted, while the rest of the desert remains to be crossed. The husband and wife would think: Our limited provisions have been used up and exhausted, while the rest of this desert remains to be crossed. Let us kill our only son, dear and beloved, and prepare dried and spiced meat. By eating our son's flesh we can cross the rest of this desert. Let not all three of us perish!

Then, Monks, the husband and wife would kill their only son, dear and beloved, prepare dried and toasted meat, and by eating their son's flesh they would cross the rest of the desert.

While they are eating their son's flesh, they would beat their breasts and cry: Where are you, our only son? Where are you, our only son?

What do you think, Monks? Would they eat that food for amusement or for enjoyment or for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness?

'No, Venerable Sir'

Wouldn't they eat that food only for the sake of crossing the desert?

'Yes, Venerable Sir.'

It is in such a way, Monks, that I say the nutriment edible food should be seen. When the nutriment edible food is fully understood, craving for the five cords of sensual pleasure is fully understood. When craving for the five cords of sensual pleasure is fully understood, there is no fetter bound by which a Noble Disciple might come back again to this world.

(Reference: SN 12:63)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one should view food as needed to sustain life and not for enjoyment or pleasure of the tongue and mind.

While there are foods that are flavorful with outstanding taste, if the mind has craving/desire/attachment to food, then it will experience discontentedness when these foods are unavailable due to impermanence. A Practitioner will need to train the mind to view food as a substance to sustain life rather than, a substance that is meant to bring pleasure to the tongue and mind.

To attain Enlightenment, the mind needs to eliminate the craving/desire/attachment for pleasant feelings through The Six Sense Bases. This requires training and careful attention to observe the mind with full awareness or mindfulness.

Once the mind has eliminated craving/desire/attachment for food, it is possible to still eat enjoyable food without craving/desire/attachment.

Chapter 119

The End of Stress

There being no yearning, there is no coming or going.

There being no coming or going, there is no passing away or arising.

There being no passing away or arising, there is neither a here nor a there nor a between-the-two.

This, just this, is the end of stress.

(Reference: UD 8.4)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the way to eliminate stress is to eliminate craving/desire/attachment.

“Yearning” is another way to describe craving/desire/attachment. When there is “no yearning, there is no coming and going”. When the mind has extinguished craving/desire/attachment it is peaceful and content where ever it exists and does not have the craving to always be “on the go” or “coming and going”.

When there is “no yearning (i.e. craving/desire/attachment)”, then there is “no coming and going”. The mind will not experience impermanent feelings that are “passing away or arising”. All impermanent conditioned feelings will have been eliminated.

When the impermanent conditioned feelings are eliminated a Practitioner will not experience “passing away or arising” of discontentedness the mind is permanently peaceful and content, “there is neither a here nor a there nor a between-the-two”. Or in other words, they will not experience rebirth.

With the elimination of rebirth, “this, just this, is the end of stress” as an Enlightened being will no longer experience any stress in the remaining time of their life and they will not experience any future births to experience discontentedness ever again.

The mind is completely liberated and completely free from all discontentedness.

Chapter 120

The Mind Has Attained to the End of Craving

Through the round of many births I roamed
without reward,
without rest,
seeking the house-builder.

Painful is birth
again & again.

House-builder, you're seen!
You will not build a house again.
All your rafters are broken,
the ridge pole is dismantled,
immersed in dismantling,
the mind has attained to the end of craving.

(Reference: DHP 153-154)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares just a little bit of his own experience in The Cycle of Rebirth prior to the attainment of Enlightenment.

He was reborn through constant rounds of rebirth.

As the mind awakens, one might come to observe their past lives. Not all Enlightened beings have this experience but for some Practitioners, it does occur.

At this point in time, you have memory and can recall events, situations, and relationships that have transpired within your current existence - your current life. However, you have had several lives prior to this life that you may not currently recall and cannot remember. Those prior existences may not be part of your current available memories.

As the mind wakes up, closer and closer to Enlightenment, the mind may have memories of previous lives. The process of Enlightenment will allow you to attain a higher and Higher Consciousness, which allows you to see more of your current life and past lives.

As you ascend to a higher place, you can see more of the bigger picture.

Just like if you were in a village or city, you can only see and experience what is in that village or city. But if you relocated to a higher location on a nearby mountain's top, you would be able to see all the other villages from this higher vantage point and how all these villages interconnect from one to the other.

Attaining a Higher Consciousness will have the same effect as being on top of the mountain.

As you attain a Higher Consciousness, you will see more of your existing life and how to create a smooth and peaceful existence within this life. You may also observe previous births in the other realms, including previous births in the human realm.

To obtain rebirth in the human realm, you would have needed to generate significant amounts of wholesome, or good, Kamma in your previous births.

Seeing past lives, is not necessarily important because they are in the past and have no significance on your attaining Enlightenment in this life. Discovering past lives is interesting but will not help you to attain Enlightenment in this life. Only what you do in this life will contribute to Enlightenment in this life. Nothing from past lives and nothing in the past from this life matters - it's in the past and does not affect your ability to attain Enlightenment in this life.

Being born into the human realm means there have already been countless previous births. A certain number of rebirths into the human realm occur from the heavenly realm. The vast majority of all rebirths occur out of the animal realm into the human realm.

If you are new to these Teachings, I suggest that you set aside The Teachings on The Cycle of Rebirth until you have a well established practice of The Three Universal Truths, The Four Noble Truths, The Eight Fold Path to include a well developed meditation practice, and The Five Precepts. These are the core and central Teachings that a Practitioner will need to learn, reflect on, and practice to start observing improvement to the condition of one's mind and life.

In regards to The Cycle of Rebirth, what happened in the past is in the past - we can't change that. What may or may not happen in the future, has not happened yet so there is no need to worry about the future. The challenges that you are experiencing in this present moment and this present life is a discontent mind. A Practitioner needs to deeply investigate the core Teachings implementing them into a well developed life practice to train the mind. It is through gradual training and gradual practice that there is gradual progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Understanding The Cycle of Rebirth early in practice can be a distraction that takes one away from truly discovering the life changing Teachings offered by The Buddha. I suggest, if new to these Teachings, that you focus on the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) with the guidance of a Teacher.

It is through dedicated and determined diligence to developing and practicing these Teachings with guidance that one will come to experience the results.

In addition to acquiring a peaceful mind as the mind becomes more and more Enlightened, there will no longer be any rebirth. One will no longer "build a house again" as one will have laid down the burden and no longer accumulate The Five Aggregates.

The "house-builder, you're seen" as through wisdom it is that one understands The Cycle of Rebirth and how continuous rebirth occurs. Through attaining Enlightenment "you will not build a house again" as one has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth and there is no more existence as birth has been eliminated. There will be no more sickness, aging, death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair because it is all eliminated - once and for all.

Monk Who Perfected Morality

Chapter 121

This is My Instruction to You

Whatever should be done, Monks, by a compassionate Teacher out of compassion for his disciples, aspiring for their welfare, that I have done for you.

These are the feet of trees, Monks these are empty huts.

Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent, lest you regret it later.

This is my instruction to you.

(Reference: SN 43.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he encourages Students to “not be complacent” as in doing so, one would “regret it later”.

Gotama Buddha never used guilt, shame, or fear to encourage people to learn and practice his Teachings. His Teachings are to eliminate guilt, shame and fear among other discontent feelings, so he would not be interested to produce guilt, shame and fear in the mind of his Students.

He humbly accepted invitations to teach based on people’s interest to host him in their village or home. He held regular talks people could attend at Temples to learn and then apply The Teachings in their daily life.

He explains that he shared these Teachings “out of compassion for his disciples, aspiring for their welfare”.

What I feel he might be pointing to here as “regret it later” is that if one lacks the determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to include meditation, a Practitioner could surely “regret this later” through being reborn and through continuing to experience discontentedness.

Here he is providing clear guidance that one needs to meditate in order to attain Enlightenment. One would not be able to attain Enlightenment without meditation. But, one would not be able to attain Enlightenment with only meditation either. A Practitioner will need to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings in daily life to be able to attain Enlightenment.

It is when the mind is fully soaked into The Teachings that a Practitioner can readily apply The Teachings in daily life and experience the results.

Can you explain complacency and how to eliminate it from the mind?

Complacency is a hindrance to Enlightenment and will obstruct an individual from attaining this mental state.

Complacency is experienced in the mind where it is dull, lethargic, and unmotivated, it will hinder a Practitioner from the attainment of Enlightenment.

Complacency includes: being disinterested to learn and practice The Teachings of The Buddha. This can be experienced as a disinterest to read books, come to classes, seek guidance from a Teacher, meditate, etc. The Buddha describes complacency to the point where, if the mind experiences an unwholesome thought/idea/feeling and the Practitioner does nothing about it, then the mind is complacent. What a Practitioner is taught to do on The Path to Enlightenment is to “cut off and let go” of all unwholesome thoughts/ideas/feelings, therefore, if one does nothing about an unwholesome thought/idea/feelings, the mind is complacent.

Again, this will hinder an individual from the attainment of Enlightenment, which is a purification of the mind.

If the mind is unEnlightened, then there is the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as ignorance (unknowing of true reality) still in the mind. A Practitioner does not understand things as they truly are, the mind lacks wisdom of The Natural Laws of Existence. This is an all encompassing pollution of mind and is the last one that will be eliminated from the mind prior to Enlightenment.

As long as one's mind is unEnlightened, it does not have the needed wisdom to attain Enlightenment because it is not yet practicing The Teachings (i.e. The Natural Laws of Existence), thus, there is ignorance, confusion, misunderstanding, misperception, a lack of wisdom, or “the unknowing of true reality” still in the mind. Ignorance is eliminated through learning, reflecting (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha to acquire wisdom. Wisdom is just the opposite of “the unknowing of true reality” and will eradicate the mind's fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as ignorance.

While ignorance is involved in all the fetters/taints/pollutions, the fetters that are directly involved in complacency are “Doubt” and “Sensual Desire”.

The mind doubts The Teachings of The Buddha and their ability to guide an individual to Enlightenment. And, the mind is having sensual desire, in that, it is holding on to certain things with craving/desire/attachment being unmotivated to learn and practice The Teachings while also indulging in unwholesome thoughts/ideas/feelings.

Doubt (Elimination of doubts about The Teachings and the ability of them to attain Enlightenment. Confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, your Teacher, and your own ability to attain Enlightenment.)

Sensual desire (Elimination of the desire for pleasures from The Six Sense Bases: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind.)

There is a remedy, or solution to eliminate complacency, that can be implemented to ensure the mind is able to overcome this obstacle and continue its journey to Enlightenment.

The solution is to practice The Eight Fold Path to include, the Enlightenment factors of investigation, energy, and joy from The Seven Factors of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment factors of investigation, energy, and joy are just the opposites of the dullness, lethargy, and lack of motivation that exists in the mind during the time of complacency. Some older texts use the phrase “sloth and torpor” for complacency but, “complacency” is a much better way to understand this aspect of the unEnlightened mind with language we use today.

Investigation: (Dedicated examination, exploration, research, study, and questioning to learn The Teachings.)

Energy: (Effort, determination, ambition, initiative, motivation, vigor, and enthusiasm; willingness to do something.)

Joy: (Pleased and delighted not associated with any specific object; unconditioned gladness; the Practitioner is not attaining it by craving/desire/attachment.)

Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent, lest you will regret it later. This is my instruction to you. (Reference: SN 43.1)

You can learn more about complacency and its remedy using these resources.

Volume 1 - Chapter 3 and the recorded classes where I teach The Five Hindrances, this is one of those.

Free Books - The Words of The Buddha
<https://www.buddhadailywisdom.com/freebuddhabooks>

The Five Hindrances & The Seven Factors of Enlightenment
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t6VKPshUn0>

Chapter 122

Monk Who is Perfected in Morality (First Discourse)

And how, Sir, is a Monk perfected in morality?

Abandoning the taking of life, he resides refraining from taking life, without stick or sword, diligent, compassionate, trembling for the welfare of all living beings. Thus he is accomplished in morality.

Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he resides refraining from taking what is not given, living purely, accepting what is given, awaiting what is given, without stealing. Thus he is accomplished in morality.

Abandoning unchastity, he lives far from it, distant from the village - practice of sex. Thus he is accomplished in morality.

Abandoning false speech, he resides refraining from false speech, a truth-speaker, one to be relied on, trustworthy, dependable, not a deceiver of the world. Thus he is accomplished in morality.

Abandoning malicious speech, he does not repeat there what he has heard here to the damage of these or repeat here what he has heard there to the damage of those. Thus he is a peacemaker of those in conflict and an encourager of those to come together, rejoicing in peace, loving it, finding joy in it, one who speaks up for peace. Thus he is accomplished in morality.

Abandoning harsh speech, he refrains from it. He speaks whatever is blameless, pleasing to the ear, agreeable, reaching the heart, courteous, pleasing and attractive to the multitude (many people). Thus he is accomplished in morality.

Abandoning idle chatter, he speaks at the right time, what is correct and to the point, of Teachings and discipline. He is a speaker whose words are to be treasured, meeting the needs of the occasion, well thought out, well-defined and connected with the goal. Thus he is accomplished in morality.

(Reference: DN 1.8)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner can become “accomplished in morality” or moral conduct. It is very clear and straight forward so no further explanation will be provided.

Chapter 123

Monk Who is Perfected in Morality (Second Discourse)

He eats once a day and not at night, refraining from eating at improper times. He avoids watching dancing, singing, music and shows. He abstains from using garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, ornaments and adornments. He avoids using high or wide beds. He avoids accepting gold and silver. He avoids accepting raw grain or raw flesh, he does not accept women and young girls, male or female slaves, sheep and goats, cocks and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, fields and plots of land; he refrains from running errands, from buying and selling, from cheating with false weights and measures, from bribery and corruption, deception and insincerity, from wounding, killing, imprisoning, highway robbery, and taking food by force.

Thus he is accomplished in morality.

(Reference: DN 1.10)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner can become “accomplished in morality” or moral conduct. This Teaching is mostly for the guidance of Ordained Practitioners but can also benefit Household Practitioners when understood and practiced based on household life.

This guidance is explained in Chapter 46 of this book as part of The Eight Precepts. “He eats once a day and not at night, refraining from eating at improper times. He avoids watching dancing, singing, music and shows. He abstains from using garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, ornaments and adornments. He avoids using high or wide beds”.

This guidance helps an Ordained Practitioner to further purify Right Action and Right Livelihood. “He avoids accepting gold and silver. He avoids accepting raw grain or raw flesh, he does not accept women and young girls, male or female slaves, sheep and goats, cocks and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, fields and plots of land; he refrains from running errands, from buying and selling, from cheating with false weights and measures, from bribery and corruption, deception and insincerity, from wounding, killing, imprisoning, highway robbery, and taking food by force”.

Detailed explanation of Teachings to guide Ordained Practitioners is available in this same book series found in the book “Lowly Arts” (Volume 12). There are also Teachings in Volume 12 that will help Household Practitioners.

Chapter 124

Monk Who is Perfected in Morality (Third Discourse)

Whereas, Sir, some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, are addicted to the destruction of such seeds as are propagated from roots, from stems, from joints, from cuttings, from seeds, a Monk refrains from such destruction. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, remain addicted to the enjoyment of stored-up goods such as food, drink, clothing, carriages, beds, perfumes, meat, a Monk refrains from such enjoyment. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, remain addicted to attending such shows as dancing, singing, music, displays, recitations, hand-music, cymbals and drums, fairy-shows, acrobatic and conjuring tricks, combats of elephants, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks and quail, fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, sham-fights, parades, manoeuvres and military reviews, a Monk refrains from attending such displays. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts, such wrong means of livelihood as palmistry, divining by signs, portents, dreams, body-marks, mouse gnawings, fire-oblations, oblations from a ladle, of husks, rice-powder, rice grains, ghee or oil, from the mouth or of blood, reading the finger-tips, house- and garden-lore, skill in charms, ghost-lore, earth-house lore, snake lore, poison-lore, rat-lore, bird-lore, crow-lore, foretelling a person's life span, charms against arrows, knowledge of animals' cries, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts as predicting an eclipse of the moon, the sun, a star; that the sun and moon will on their proper course - will go astray; that a star will go on its proper course will go astray; that there will be a shower of meteors, a blaze in the sky, an earthquake, thunder; a rising, setting, darkening, brightening of the moon, the sun, the stars; and 'such will be the outcome of these things', a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts as predicting good or bad rainfall; a good or bad harvest; security, danger; disease, health; or accounting, computing, calculating, poetic composition, philosophizing, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts as arranging the giving and taking in marriage, engagements and divorces; (declaring the time for) saving and spending, bringing good or bad luck, procuring abortions, using spells to bind the tongue, binding the jaw, making the hands jerk, causing deafness, getting answers with a mirror, a girl-medium, a heavenly being; worshipping the sun or Great Brahma (God), breathing fire, invoking the goddess of luck, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood. Thus he is perfected in morality.

Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts, such wrong means of livelihood as appeasing the heavenly beings and redeeming vows to them, making earth-house spells, causing virility or impotence, preparing and consecrating building-sites, giving ritual rinsings and bathings, making sacrifices, giving emetics, purges, expectorants and phlegmagogues, giving ear-, eye-, nose-medicine, ointments and counter-ointments, eye-surgery, surgery, pediatry, using balms to counter the side-effects of previous remedies, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood. Thus he is perfected in morality.

(Reference: DN 1.11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance to help Ordained Practitioners to further purify Right Action and Right Livelihood.

“Feeding on the food of the dedicated” are the Household Practitioners who are providing regular offerings of food to sustain the life of the Ordained Practitioners. Ordained Practitioners should be appreciative and have significant gratitude for the energy and effort applied by Household Practitioners to support their progress on The Path to Enlightenment. The Ordained Practitioners should have deep respect for the Household Practitioners and not be interested in causing harm to them but instead, support the Household Practitioners in their growth on The Path to Enlightenment.

“Whereas, Sir, some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, are addicted to the destruction of such seeds as are propagated from roots, from stems, from joints, from cuttings, from seeds, a Monk refrains from such destruction” helps ensure there is no harm to the crops of farmers. Through Ordained Practitioners roaming the countryside, if they destroyed crops of the farmers this would cause harm to the farmers family and to the surrounding people as the harvest could not support the people.

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, remain addicted to the enjoyment of stored-up goods such as food, drink, clothing, carriages, beds, perfumes, meat, a Monk refrains from such enjoyment” ensures Ordained Practitioners are coming into contact with Household Practitioners on a daily basis. Through this interaction, the Household Practitioners have the opportunity to learn from the Ordained Practitioners who should be dedicated to sharing The Teachings. Through the Household Practitioners supporting the Ordained Practitioners with offerings, the Ordained Practitioners should be supporting the Household Practitioners with Teachings to benefit their life. This is the exchange of Kamma between the two groups of Practitioners.

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, remain addicted to attending such shows as dancing, singing, music, displays, recitations, hand-music, cymbals and drums, fairy-shows, acrobatic and conjuring tricks, combats of elephants, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks and quail, fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, sham-fights, parades, manoeuvres and military reviews, a Monk refrains from attending such displays” helps an Ordained Practitioner eliminate craving/desire/attachment to entertainment and viewing of harmful content that can pollute the mind inhibiting Enlightenment.

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts, such wrong means of livelihood as palmistry, divining by signs, portents, dreams, body-marks, mouse gnawings, fire-oblations, oblations from a ladle, of husks, rice-powder, rice grains, ghee or oil, from the mouth or of blood, reading the finger-tips, house- and garden-lore, skill in charms, ghost-lore, earth-house lore, snake lore, poison-lore, rat-lore, bird-lore, crow-lore, foretelling a person’s life span, charms against arrows, knowledge of animals’ cries, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood”...

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts as predicting an eclipse of the moon, the sun, a star; that the sun and moon will on their proper course - will go astray; that a star will go on its proper course will go astray; that there will be a shower of meteors, a blaze in the sky, an earthquake, thunder; a rising, setting, darkening, brightening of the moon, the sun, the

stars; and ‘such will be the outcome of these things’, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood”...

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts as predicting good or bad rainfall; a good or bad harvest; security, danger; disease, health; or accounting, computing, calculating, poetic composition, philosophizing, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood”...

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts as arranging the giving and taking in marriage, engagements and divorces; (declaring the time for) saving and spending, bringing good or bad luck, procuring abortions, using spells to bind the tongue, binding the jaw, making the hands jerk, causing deafness, getting answers with a mirror, a girl-medium, a heavenly being; worshipping the sun or Great Brahma (God), breathing fire, invoking the goddess of luck, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood”...

“Whereas some Ascetics and Brāhmins, feeding on the food of the dedicated, make their living by such base arts, such wrong means of livelihood as appeasing the heavenly beings and redeeming vows to them, making earth-house spells, causing virility or impotence, preparing and consecrating building-sites, giving ritual rinsings and bathings, making sacrifices, giving emetics, purges, expectorants and phlegmagogues, giving ear-, eye-, nose-medicine, ointments and counter-ointments, eye-surgery, surgery, pediatry, using balms to counter the side-effects of previous remedies, a Monk refrains from such base arts and wrong means of livelihood”...

...all help an Ordained Practitioner to practice Right View basing their life practice on The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. Through the Ordained Practitioners deeply practicing The Teachings, they will be role models for Household Practitioners to deeply learn and practice these Teachings. If Ordained Practitioners are basing their livelihood or even practicing any of these for any reason, it would promote “wrong view” distracting The Community from being able to deeply understand and practice Right View.

Additionally, for an Ordained Practitioner to take time away from learning and practicing The Teachings from The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment, they are choosing to be distracted from their primary objective to attain Enlightenment. Through deciding to ordain and live on “the food of the dedicated”, they should be devoted to learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to attain Enlightenment and then be able to offer guidance to other Ordained Practitioners and Household Practitioners to attain Enlightenment. If Ordained Practitioners were devoting time to learning and practicing any of the above mentioned “lowly arts”, they are not fulfilling their duty and responsibility to the dedicated Household Practitioners who are supporting them in their pursuit to attain Enlightenment. Ordained Practitioners who choose to learn and practice these lowly arts would be unable to responsibly share The Teachings and experiences with others, that lead to Enlightenment, to support others in the attainment of Enlightenment.

“Thus he is perfected in morality” means that having practiced all the other Teachings of The Buddha including these, an Ordained Practitioner is perfect in moral conduct. If an Ordained Practitioner is not practicing in this way, they are not perfect in moral conduct.

Detailed explanation of Teachings to guide Ordained Practitioners is available in this same book series found in the book “Lowly Arts” (Volume 12). There are also Teachings in Volume 12 that will help Household Practitioners.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 111-124)

<https://youtu.be/gjwMO3CJDzM>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 247 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Foundation in The Teachings - Volume 3 - (Chapter 111-124)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--247---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Foundation-in-The-Teachings---Volume-3---Chapter-111-124-e1auhbp>

Now that you have completed reading (Volume 3) of this book series and may decide to read this book multiple times, I would like to take a moment to personally “thank you” for your determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment.

The time, effort, energy, and resources that you devote to this path are serving to help you and countless other beings. As you choose to learn and practice these Teachings, you will significantly reduce then eliminate any harm that you are putting into the world through your unknowing of true reality. The unEnlightened mind does not understand what it does not understand.

You are now applying time, effort, energy, and resources to improving the condition of the mind, the condition of your life, and, thus, the condition of the world through investigating The Teachings to acquire wisdom. The world becomes a better place when we each individually choose to improve our own life practice taking responsibility for our own intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood while improving our wisdom and mental discipline.

I admire individuals who choose to walk towards harmlessness. I admire individuals who choose to realize there is a better way of life and create that better way of life for themselves through seeking guidance. And, I admire individuals who do not shrink back from the struggle to move the mind towards Enlightenment when the natural tendency might be to remain complacent.

Why have I chosen to share these Teachings with you?

“That it may be for the benefit and peacefulness of the multitude (many people), out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and peacefulness of heavenly beings and humans”. (Gotama Buddha)

“Because if they understand even a single sentence, that will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time”. (Gotama Buddha)

May you discover the freedom associated with a mind that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy permanently - the Enlightened mind.

As you need help to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings, you are welcome to seek guidance which is available openly and freely to “all beings”.

Author



David Roylance is a dedicated Practitioner and Teacher of Gotama Buddha's Teachings who has been part of the Thai community since 2001. He visited Thailand for the first time in 2002 and brought the Traditional Thai Healing Arts back to the United States of America to share with people in the Western World.

His Traditional Thai Healing Arts centers, located in the Washington DC area, provided traditional Thai healing arts to clients and educational opportunities to Students to explore the Thai healing arts, Thai culture, and The Teachings of Gotama Buddha. David is a published author with books on the topics of Traditional Thai Healing Arts and The Path That Leads to Enlightenment.

David has taught Gotama Buddha's Teachings since 2005 in the United States of America. In 2015, he closed his businesses and relocated to Chiang Mai, Thailand to be closer to the Thai culture and the Thai Community of Buddhist Practitioners.

David shares Gotama Buddha's Teachings with Household Practitioners and Ordained Practitioners in Chiang Mai, Thailand and around the world through courses, retreats, and special events providing guidance to help people attain Enlightenment - a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy.

For more information on participating in courses, retreats, special events or to invite these Teachings to your learning venue, use the contact information below:

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Restoration of The Buddha's Teachings

The Path to Enlightenment

The Buddha taught over 2,500 years ago. He taught The Path to Enlightenment guiding countless beings to a mental state that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that is permanent, where the mind has eliminated 100% of all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

Immediately following the death of The Buddha (i.e. Gotama Buddha), The Teachings were shining in the world continuing to guide countless people to Enlightenment. But, over the course of many generations, just as Gotama Buddha predicted, people's understanding of his Teachings gradually diminished due to modifications and adjustments made by people after him. The modifications made to his Teachings, handed down through oral transmission, have made it increasingly difficult for human beings to attain Enlightenment.

The goal of David's Teachings is to root the learning and practice he shares in "The Words of The Buddha" based on The Teachings that existed during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, so that countless beings can now attain Enlightenment based on the original Path to Enlightenment discovered and declared by Gotama Buddha.

David does this through connecting what he teaches to the largest most complete source of Teachings from Gotama Buddha - The Pāli Canon. The Pāli Canon is the original source text of The Teachings from Gotama Buddha as spoken by him during his lifetime.

David has spent countless hours dedicated to restoring The Words of The Buddha by updating a significant portion of the translations of Gotama Buddha's Teachings from The Pāli Canon. He now offers several resources for Students to learn, reflect, and practice The Path to Enlightenment to experience the results of an Enlightened mind.

David offers books, audiobooks, videos, podcasts, online learning programs, personal guidance, and retreats without any requirement for financial support. All the work that is being done is offered openly and freely for all beings without any requirement to provide any financial support. David accepts donations but Students are not required to provide donations for any work that he does in supporting them on The Path to Enlightenment.

David does not request donations and instead, just accepts whatever is offered to him, if anything at all.

His dedication to sharing these Teachings is not motivated by finances. He shares openly and freely with everyone who has a sincere interest in learning and practicing The Path to Enlightenment.

Ultimately, David plans to preserve The Teachings of The Buddha in a format that is easily, readily, and openly accessible to anyone in the world while offering support to learn, reflect, and practice to experience the results of the Enlightened mind.

His plan is to guide countless people to Enlightenment during his lifetime and leave a Community of Enlightened beings who can continue to share The Teachings long after his death. Through developing a Community of Enlightened beings and preserving The Path to Enlightenment in resources that are easily, readily, and openly accessible to anyone in the world, David is revealing the hidden Teachings of Gotama Buddha and doing the best he can to remove any obstacles one might have to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings, allowing countless people to experience the results of an Enlightened mind.

Upon his death, David predicts that his closest Student, his son and a continued lineage of Teachers, will share these same Teachings continuing to support and grow The Community of Enlightened beings long into the future - for the next 1,000 years.

These efforts will culminate into restoring The Path to Enlightenment back into the world so that all of humanity can experience Enlightenment evolving the human species to one where every being has the opportunity to attain Enlightenment creating "heaven on earth".

The Goal

An Entire Species of Enlightened Beings

Having experienced Enlightenment and knowing the peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy that comes with having attained Enlightenment, a Buddha's goal is to share his Teachings worldwide so that "all beings" can experience Enlightenment.

The Enlightened mind no longer experiences any discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, anxiety, stress, etc.

All discontent feelings have been eliminated 100% from the Enlightened mind (i.e. all suffering is eliminated).

An Enlightened mind will have loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, and generosity among many other wholesome qualities.

Can you imagine an entire world where all human beings have liberated their mind to no longer experience these discontent feelings and are practicing wholesome qualities of mind at all times?

With "The Buddha" (Gotama Buddha) having attained this permanent mental state of Enlightenment on his own as The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, he would have known that through his dedicated and persistent pursuit to Enlightenment, he had acquired the wisdom needed to guide "all beings" to this same mental state.

However, his teaching career of 45 years would not be enough time to share his Teachings worldwide. He knew, that it would require many centuries for his Teachings to reach all parts of the world. During his lifetime, travel of people and information was limited based on several constraints.

Today, we are in a unique time in history where these same constraints have been eliminated. A time when people and information are able to travel around the world in an instant.

Not only can information travel quickly but all of humanity is slowly coming to the point where there is a common language spoken around the world - the English language.

Criteria exist today that did not exist during Gotama Buddha's lifetime that make now the perfect time for all of humanity to gradually attain Enlightenment realizing a better existence.

- People can travel worldwide.
- Information can be shared worldwide in an instant.
- Commonly spoken language among a large percentage of the worldwide population and this is only growing.

These criteria did not exist during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha and it is only now that the world has come into an age where his original goal is realistically possible.

But, during Gotama Buddha's lifetime it seems they had something that we may not have....

The people during Gotama Buddha's lifetime had perseverance and dedication to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings to realize the results of experiencing the Enlightened mind. They were not afraid of hard work.

With our modern day conveniences, I am unsure how many people are willing to apply their determination, dedication, and diligence with time, effort, energy, and resources towards The Path to Enlightenment with the goal to experience the Enlightened mind.

When a being decides they are finished with the sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, etc., that is the time when one can turn towards The Teachings and goal of experiencing Enlightenment.

Through each individual deciding to learn and practice The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, as a collective world, our species will gradually evolve. We evolve to a higher consciousness where we train the mind to not harm others through our intentions, speech, nor actions.

Through each individual deciding to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, each person benefits and we all benefit as there will be less and less harm in the world.

Through individuals deciding to focus on developing a comprehensive approach to learning and practicing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha with guidance from a Teacher, your life drastically improves and the entire world improves essentially creating "heaven on earth".

We do not need to "fix" the world. That is not the problem. The problem is the unEnlightened mind does not understand The Natural Laws of Existence and it is quite a struggle to live in a world that one does not understand.

Through learning and practicing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, a Practitioner comes to deeply understand The Natural Laws of Existence to acquire wisdom that will end the struggles and misery one may face on a regular basis.

Are you ready to apply determination, dedication, and diligence with time, effort, energy, and resources towards The Path to Enlightenment with the goal to experience Enlightenment?

If one enjoys anger, sadness, boredom, loneliness, resentment, etc., there is nothing to do.

But, if you are interested to eliminate these unwelcomed feelings from the mind, then I suggest you turn towards The Path to Enlightenment and apply your dedication and diligence to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

And then, as all of humanity gradually experiences Enlightenment we will have accomplished “the goal”.

“An entire species of Enlightened beings”.

Why Have I Decided to Teach The Path to Enlightenment as Taught by Gotama Buddha?

I have chosen to share these Teachings out of compassion for the world.

Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

And due to this compassion, it is important to share Teachings that are based in wisdom, not belief.

There are countless traditions and ways of sharing those traditions throughout the world. All of these, in one form or another, are essentially sharing to cultivate and practice 1.) Universal Love for All Beings 2.) Do No Harm and 3.) Be a Good Moral Person.

However, the way each tradition is shared and the clarity of those teachings is unique to each tradition.

The Path to Enlightenment as taught by Gotama Buddha (“The Buddha”) over 2,500 years ago as documented in The Pāli Canon, is the most clear, concise, and precise Teachings I have ever encountered that leads exactly where he said they do, to Enlightenment.

The Enlightened mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The Enlightened mind will no longer experience any discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

This is accomplished through not believing The Teachings of The Buddha but instead, through learning, reflecting, and practicing to discover the truth. The mind can be trained to eliminate all the conditions that are causing it to be stuck in the unEnlightened state. Through eliminating the pollution of mind by training the mind, one can experience liberation of mind, freedom from strong feelings, peace, Enlightenment.

The Buddha’s Teachings are the only Teachings that I have encountered that do not rely on belief. With belief, one does not know what is true or false because they are just believing. Instead, Gotama Buddha’s Teachings are shared in such a way that, a Practitioner can investigate and examine them to determine the truth which leads to wisdom and thus, Enlightenment. If one was to only believe The Teachings of The Buddha, they could not acquire wisdom nor attain Enlightenment.

These Teachings are perfectly suited for today's society where there is a proliferation of misinformation and untruths. These Teachings, with guidance from a Teacher, guide a Practitioner to independently discover the truth through deeply investigating The Natural Laws of Existence (i.e. The Teachings of The Buddha). Through doing this inner work on The Path to Enlightenment, one can discover that these Teachings are the solution to the challenges we experience in the world and the solutions of how to heal from what hurt us so that we never need to hurt again. The mind can completely and entirely eliminate 100% of all discontent feelings once it is Enlightened.

This cannot be accomplished through belief.

Instead, a Practitioner needs to be determined, dedicated, and diligent to doing the inner work to develop the mind and progress towards the Enlightened mental state by acquiring wisdom.

As far as I have discovered, there are no other teachings on the planet that can guide an individual to the complete elimination of discontent feelings through independently verifying the teachings to acquire wisdom. The Buddha did something very unique during his lifetime that no other person or Teacher has accomplished.

He independently attained Enlightenment, dedicated the rest of his life to sharing his independently discovered Teachings guiding countless people to Enlightenment, and he left his Teachings in such a condition that countless more people have attained Enlightenment after his death. He meets all the criteria of a true Buddha. Gotama Buddha was a true Buddha.

My work during this life has been to rediscover these Teachings, in such a way, that they can now be shared worldwide in the international language of English so that countless people all throughout the world can attain Enlightenment during this lifetime and after my death.

The only way to accomplish this goal is to share Teachings that are not based in belief but instead, are based in independently verifiable truth so that a Practitioner can acquire wisdom.

These Teachings are clear, concise, and precise. They invite investigation and examination. Through doing this work, one can gradually train the mind to gradually practice these Teachings and gradually progress to Enlightenment. As discontentedness is gradually diminished and then eliminated from the mind, one can see the truth for themselves that these Teachings work to guide one to Enlightenment.

These Teachings lead exactly where Gotama Buddha said they do, to Enlightenment, and through each individual choosing to attain Enlightenment, humanity will evolve the human species and at the same time create “heaven on earth”.

Why Have I Decided to Reside and Teach in Thailand in Order to Restore The Teachings of The Buddha Back into Humanity and Create “Heaven on Earth”?

1.) Largest Population of Theravada Buddhist Practitioners Anywhere in the World: Thailand is the largest population of Theravada Buddhist Practitioners and Teachers anywhere in the world. Theravada Buddhism considers The Pāli Canon to be the original source Teachings of The Buddha in The Words of The Buddha. Theravada Buddhism teaches the importance of not changing The Teachings of The Buddha and practicing The Path to Enlightenment as a Buddha has taught, without any modifications.

The Pāli Canon is an important text that should not be believed to be the true Teachings of The Buddha but instead, one can learn, reflect, and practice to independently verify The Teachings to acquire wisdom observing the truth in The Teachings as the mind awakens and discontent feelings are gradually diminished and ultimately eliminated.

Once I dedicate the remaining time of this life sharing these Teachings to restore them back into the world, the Thai people and all other diligent Students who choose to learn with me will not ever allow these Teachings to be changed, modified, degraded, or lost over time. The Thai people and diligent Students are well aware that since the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, that is what has occurred and, through having these Teachings restored during the remaining time of this life, the Thai people and diligent Students will not allow this to occur again.

The Thai people will support these Teachings and ensure they continue to be offered in the world for the benefit of “all beings” while being hosted in Thailand and supported by dedicated Students from many international locations.

These Teachings have existed in Thailand for 800-1200 years and they have received significant support from countless people over many generations. The Thai people understand just how impactful The Teachings of The Buddha are to their society and for all of humanity. The Thai people can observe my dedication and commitment to sharing these Teachings, and where possible, they will support me in sharing these Teachings throughout Thailand and throughout the world.

Due to these Teachings existing in Thailand for approximately 800-1200 years, there is a significant amount of infrastructure already created through over 30,000-40,000 Temples where local Thai people and visitors to Thailand can actively learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to acquire wisdom and then integrate them into their lives. The Temple and Ordained Practitioner infrastructure is not isolated to only Thailand but extends throughout the world and is readily accessible to the benefit of “all beings”. The Thai people have laid the groundwork for these Teachings to now be shared worldwide through the Temple and Ordained Practitioner foundation and infrastructure that has been created over multiple generations.

Thailand is a favorite destination for international travelers with many people visiting Thailand to gain exposure and understanding of these Teachings allowing them to be learned and then practiced “worldwide”. There is an international audience that regularly visits Thailand who can learn these Teachings to then return back to their home country where these Teachings will be able to take root within all international societies. As these Teachings flourish around the world, Thailand has the knowledge and resources to support all of humanity to develop a Temple and Ordained Practitioner infrastructure that can be created within each individual country based on the interest of each country to more deeply integrate these Teachings into their local communities.

2.) Students Have the Ability to Learn and Practice Among Millions of Practitioners: One aspect of learning and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha that will aid one’s development and progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment is, to be part of a Community of Practitioners and Teachers that can provide guidance for gradual training and gradual practice to experience gradual progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through me residing and teaching in Thailand, Students have the opportunity to live in a Community of Practitioners and Teachers who are deeply committed to these Teachings and can serve as a role model for Students to gain deeper understanding of how to practice these Teachings in everyday life - even if on a semi-temporary basis during short visits to learn.

Through Students traveling to Thailand to learn while being surrounded by millions of Practitioners, they can more readily absorb how one might choose to integrate these Teachings into their daily life through observing how the people of Thailand live with countless nationalities residing peacefully and harmoniously with each other throughout the Kingdom of Thailand. Students will not only be able to learn these Teachings in a classroom setting at a Temple but, they will also experience day-to-day interactions with people who are choosing to deeply practice these Teachings creating “real life lessons” in a “classroom without walls”.

The entire Kingdom of Thailand can serve as a real life classroom environment where these Teachings are readily practiced and observable by those who choose to visit this Kingdom. I often refer to Thailand as “heaven on earth”.

3.) Can Live With Minimal Expenses: To be able to offer these Teachings at “no cost” I needed to find a location where I could reside with minimal expenses. This allows me to live based on donations rather than charging Students a price for the time, effort, energy, and resources that I expend to share these Teachings worldwide. This allows me to serve the widest audience possible without a need to require payment for my services and The Teachings that are shared.

The basic necessities to live life are readily available and are offered at a minimal cost in Thailand. This provides me the ability to live a basic lifestyle from donations shared by Students. I am able to purchase food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care at a relatively nominal cost. And, services that I might need to support the development of learning resources are also readily available at a nominal cost.

Whether it be an audio studio to record an audiobook, printing services, technology, classroom supplies, or a full range of other needs to support the continued sharing of these Teachings, Thailand offers these at a nominal price so that there is the best utilization of any and all donations received.

As a result, I am able to help any and all beings regardless of their financial situation through creating a lifestyle where I only need basic necessities to survive and those are provided at a nominal cost while being supported by donations that are fully utilized by purchasing goods and services that are made available at a reasonable price.

4.) Healthy Environment to Live Life and Work: A wise choice for a place to live and teach would need to include a healthy food supply, weather, environment, and lifestyle. All of these are readily available in Thailand which is able to support me in leading as healthy of a lifestyle as possible.

The food in Thailand is healthy and readily available. There are many fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, nuts, seeds, and other foods that are a regular part of the Thai food offerings and readily accessible among countless fresh food markets. This allows me to ingest quality food that is supportive to a long and healthy life, thus, being able to support the learning of many Students for as long as possible due to an elongated duration of life.

Thailand's weather and environment provides the least impact to the physical body without significant weather changes or weather events that can be taxing to one's physical health.

The Thai economy is conducive to living a balanced lifestyle that supports a significant amount of time with family and friends. A work-life balance is highly understood, appreciated, supported, and straight forward to create while living in Thailand. I am able to remain dedicated and determined in my work life while also being dedicated to quality time within our immediate family. This creates the very best environment to ensure consistent health and longevity of life while enjoying a fulfilling life.

5.) Can Share Teachings Within Thailand Throughout the Day and Can Share Teachings with the Rest of The World in the Mornings and Evenings:

Through living and sharing these Teachings from Thailand and needing minimal sleep, I am able to help countless people throughout the day based on the Thai timezone, while helping countless people in other timezones during the early morning hours and evenings. This allows me to be effective at sharing these Teachings around the clock and throughout the world without any limitations based on restrictive timezones.

The timezone in Thailand is favorable to allowing me to share these Teachings worldwide without limitations based on the time of day. I can be helpful from morning, afternoon, and evening where there are Students who are readily interested to learn - whether in-person or online.

6.) Students Have Easy Access to Visas to Gain Access to Classes, Courses, and Retreats: To be successful at sharing these Teachings worldwide, in-person learning is ideal. While there is much that can be learned online and that is one way to be able to share these Teachings, there is no better way to develop your life practice than to learn through in-person access to a Teacher.

Through residing and teaching in Thailand, Students from all over the world have easy access to classes, courses, and retreats from within Thailand due to easy access to visas and as a result, me as their Teacher. Thailand does not have restrictive visa requirements that would bar people from certain countries which would inhibit "all beings" from gaining access to these Teachings.

Instead, Thailand is open and accessible to a wide majority of the world and where needed, I am able to travel.

I live in Chiang Mai, Thailand which is an international destination for countless people around the world. I live within a 4000 km distance to fifty percent (50%) of the world's population. This means that half of the world's population is a short drive or plane ride away. This creates the ability for a large majority of humanity to more easily gain access to these Teachings. And, where needed, I am able to easily travel to all other parts of the world and teach online.

People often travel to Thailand for the sole purpose of learning The Teachings of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment. So, by sharing these Teachings from within Thailand, there are countless people who are coming here specifically to learn and practice in the exact location where I reside and teach.

In conclusion, through residing and teaching in Thailand as a “home-base”, I am able to readily share these Teachings worldwide and work towards the restoration of The Teachings of The Buddha back into humanity so that countless people can attain Enlightenment during this lifetime and after my death.

Thailand is the perfect location for these Teachings to be shared and to serve as a “home-base” or “headquarters” for the international community to be invited and welcomed with “open arms”. There is no other location on earth that could provide for a better location to share these important Teachings and to then be preserved for future generations.

The Kingdom is here in Thailand and ready to support you in the development of your life practice towards the attainment of Enlightenment so that we can all create “heaven on earth”.

The Teachings are hosted in the east and visible in the west.

They are readily available to you and there will be a period of 1,000 years that they will “shine in the world” for all those who choose to learn, reflect, and practice to experience the peace and joy of the Enlightened mind. Then, with all of us doing the work towards developing our own individual practice of these Teachings, they will never again diminish, be degraded, or lost. Once restored, these Teachings can continue to support humanity for the rest of time.

May you discover the peace and joy of the Enlightened mind in this lifetime.

May you be peaceful, may you be safe, may you be well, and may you be free of all discontentedness and the suffering it causes.

Invitation to Learn

I would like to invite you to a kind, compassionate and loving community of Practitioners to learn and grow with these Teachings.

I would like to invite you to join this online group.

You will find it to be an online learning center for these Teachings and there is a Teacher there to help provide guidance as you have questions.

Daily Wisdom - Walking The Path with The Buddha

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DailyWisdom999/>

Additional Learning

Visit BuddhaDailyWisdom.com where you will discover a full range of courses, retreats, and online learning resources to assist you on The Path to Enlightenment.

Donations for Learning

Learn The Teachings of Gotama Buddha that lead to a stable, calm, and peaceful mind. A more peaceful and loving world where all beings have care and compassion for each other.

By supporting this learning opportunity, you will learn how to progress along The Path to Enlightenment and help offer these Teachings to others through online and in-person learning. Through these Teachings, the world will become a kinder, more peaceful, and loving society.

Consider contributing \$5, \$10, \$15 or any amount you wish to help us continue to offer these Teachings to you and others around the world.

You can make a donation for the development and creation of these Teachings to help you and others using this link.

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I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for the community of Ordained and Household Practitioners benefiting from the leadership of Venerable Bhikkhu Kukrit Sotthibalo at Wat Na Pah Pong in Krung Thep, Thailand for their dedication and diligence in sharing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha. Their work was the inspiration for “The Words of The Buddha” book series.

Wat Na Pah Pong

<http://watnapp.com>

THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment Revealing The Hidden

Volume 1

Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment

Volume 2

Walking The Path with The Buddha

Volume 3

Foundation in The Teachings

Volume 4

Exploring The Path to Enlightenment

Volume 5

The First Stage of Enlightenment
(Stream-Enterer)

Volume 6

The Natural Law of Kamma

Volume 7

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation

Volume 8

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