

THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment

Revealing The Hidden



The Realms of Existence

Volume 11

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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

Volume 11

The Realms of Existence

Volume 12

Lowly Arts

Volume 13

Generosity

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The Realms of Existence (Volume 11)

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

The book, “The Realms of Existence” 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”.

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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 settling 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

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“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

The Realms of Existence

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)**

Chapter 1

Existence

And what, Monks, is existence?

There are these three kinds of existence: **sense-sphere existence, form-sphere existence, formless-sphere existence**. This is called existence.

With the arising of **clinging**, there is the arising of **existence**; with the elimination of **clinging**, there is the elimination of **existence**.

Just this Noble Eight Fold Path is the way leading to the elimination of existence; that is, Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.

(Reference: SN 12.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the three kinds of existence.

He explains how when the mind has clinging, there will be existence.

Clinging is how the unEnlightened mind wants to hold on. But this only leads to discontentedness and further existence in The Cycle of Rebirth. Through the elimination of clinging there is elimination of existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

It is through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Eight Fold Path that leads to training the mind to eliminate clinging to eliminate existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha left any Teachings on what may or may not occur once one attains Enlightenment and dies, as undeclared. We know that if one does not attain Enlightenment in this life or at death, there will be rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth. But, what happens once a being who has attained Enlightenment and dies is an undeclared Teaching. We know there is no longer existence in The Cycle of Rebirth to experience sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Whether there is or is not something after death for an Enlightened being is undeclared.

The ultimate goal of these Teachings and The Path to Enlightenment is to attain Enlightenment in this current life to experience peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy for the rest of this life, and as a result, no longer be reborn into any future existences within The Cycle of Rebirth.

I have not seen any “Words of The Buddha” that describe these three kinds of existence.

The way I understand these existences is as follows:

Sense-sphere existence: All five (5) realms as all beings that come into existence are fettered/tainted/polluted with “sensual desire”.

Form-sphere existence: The two (2) realms where there is physical form - animal and human.

Formless-sphere existence: The three (3) realms where there is no physical form - hell, afflicted spirits, and heaven.

As part of The Ten Fetters and the attainment of Enlightenment, the mind needs to eliminate the fetters/taints/pollution of mind described as “sensual desire”, “desire for form”, and “desire for formless” which combined, comprises the elimination of craving/desire through The Six Sense Bases and to be reborn in any of the five (5) realms of existence.

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 Afterlife - An Undeclared Teaching

An “afterlife”, which Gotama Buddha left as an “undeclared” Teaching, is what happens when one has attained Enlightenment in this life or at death - what happens next? That is the afterlife.

Gotama Buddha did not teach about an afterlife or a soul. He left these “undeclared” in his Teachings. He did not teach whether we exist nor not exist once we attain Enlightenment and die. He shared that there is no more rebirth as “a being” in The Cycle of Rebirth which is different than no existence at all. If we do not attain Enlightenment during this life or at death, we will be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth.

These are the undeclared Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

- the world is eternal
- the world is not eternal
- the world is finite
- the world is infinite
- the soul is the same as the body
- the soul is one thing and the body is another
- after death The Tathāgata exists
- after death The Tathāgata does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist

Tathāgata is another term used to refer to Gotama Buddha.

Gotama Buddha is referring to himself who was an Arahant, therefore, you can also insert "Enlightened Being" for Tathāgata. This means, he left The Teachings "undeclared" of whether a human being who has attained Enlightenment as an Arahant "after death exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, neither exists nor does not exist".

Just like all craving/desire/attachment, if we crave the answer to these questions, it will cause the mind to be discontent. Knowing the answer to any of these questions will not lead to an individual's own Enlightenment and therefore Gotama Buddha never taught or “declared” these Teachings. They are “undeclared”.

There were many Teachings Gotama Buddha did not share, as his main focus was to help people understand that they needed to work towards their own salvation through the process of attaining Enlightenment.

Gotama Buddha focused everyone's attention, the mind, and their development on The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment - the elimination of discontentedness and the suffering it causes rather than rites, rituals, ceremonies and worship. He taught people to practice The Teachings of being a good moral person that eliminates all unwholesome Kamma production, producing only wholesome Kamma.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings are about non-attachment. He was not even interested in people attaching to him, as Gotama Buddha knew Enlightenment is 100% determined by our own intentions, speech, and actions.

Rebirth, or The Cycle of Rebirth, is the process in which all beings who have not attained Enlightenment during this life or at death, will be reborn into a new form or formless realm of existence, hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, or heaven.

You need to be comfortable with not knowing the answer, in other words, not craving to know what is or is not going to happen in an afterlife as craving to know this outcome will inhibit you from attaining Enlightenment and will cause rebirth. The goal is to extinguish all craving for a “personal existence view”, “desire for form”, and “desire for the formless”. These are just three (3) aspects of The Ten Fetters required for Enlightenment.

If you attain Enlightenment in this human existence, life will be so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that you will have no need to know what comes next in the afterlife, if anything at all. You will be experiencing complete and total peace of mind and will know that if there is something after death having attained Enlightenment, it must be good.

The goal is to attain Enlightenment in this very life so that you will not be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth into another realm of existence. You can attain Enlightenment during your existing life to experience ever lasting peace or at death.

In order to accomplish this goal, one would need to ensure there is no craving/desire/attachment including the craving to know what will or will not occur once one attains Enlightenment and dies.

Chapter 2

The Production of Renewed Existence (First Discourse)

‘Venerable Sir, it is said: ‘existence, existence.’ In what way, Venerable Sir, is there existence?’

If, Ānanda, there were no Kamma ripening in the sensory realm, would sense-sphere existence be discerned?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Thus, Ānanda, for beings hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture for their consciousness to be established in an inferior realm. In this way there is the production of renewed existence in the future.

If, Ānanda, there were no Kamma ripening in the form realm, would form-sphere existence be discerned?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Thus, Ānanda, for beings hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture for their consciousness to be established in a middling realm. In this way there is the production of renewed existence in the future.

If, Ānanda, there were no Kamma ripening in the formless realm, would formless-sphere existence be discerned?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Thus, Ānanda, for beings hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture for their consciousness to be established in a superior realm. In this way there is the production of renewed existence in the future.

It is in this way, Ānanda, that there is existence.

(Reference: AN 3.76)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that due to craving and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), there is rebirth in the realms of existence.

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, many of his Students were very familiar with farming so we see many analogies he shares in The Teachings that can relate to a common person during that time in history. Not only does he use stories from the farming life but also training a horse and various stories related to animal life.

These are relatable references that his Students would easily understand and help them in learning and retaining The Teachings, so they could apply The Teachings in their daily life.

Planting crops and growing food would be a topic of common knowledge during the lifetime of The Buddha. So in this Teaching from The Buddha, he relates The Cycle of Rebirth to planting and growing crops.

The Field: The Natural Law of Kamma

The Seed: Consciousness (i.e. the mind)

The Moisture: Craving

In order for there to be renewed existence into a new life, there needs to be unwholesome Kamma, a consciousness, and craving. If these three factors exist, there will be a new life in a new existence.

If a being does not extinguish craving and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) the mind is still "fettered" in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The word "fetter" is defined as: "a chain or shackle used to restrain a prisoner, typically placed around the ankles". The Ten Fetters are the ten (10) individual aspects of the mind that need to be eliminated to attain Enlightenment. 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.

The Ten Fetters are the chains that bind us into The Cycle of Rebirth and to multiple lifetimes of experiencing continuous discontentedness. You must eliminate The Ten Fetters to attain Enlightenment to be liberated from discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 3

The Production of Renewed Existence (Second Discourse)

‘Venerable Sir, it is said: ‘existence, existence.’ In what way, Venerable Sir, is there existence?’

If, Ānanda, there were no Kamma ripening in the sensory realm, would sense-sphere existence be discerned?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Thus, Ānanda, for beings hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture for their intention and desire to be established in an inferior realm. In this way there is the production of renewed existence in the future.

If, Ānanda, there were no Kamma ripening in the form realm, would form-sphere existence be discerned?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Thus, Ānanda, for beings hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture for their intention and desire to be established in a middling realm. In this way there is the production of renewed existence in the future.

If, Ānanda, there were no Kamma ripening in the formless realm, would formless-sphere existence be discerned?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

Thus, Ānanda, for beings hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture for their intention and desire to be established in a superior realm. In this way there is the production of renewed existence in the future.

It is in this way, Ānanda, that there is existence.

(Reference: AN 3.77)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance very similar to Chapter 2 but rather than mentioning one's consciousness becomes established in a new existence, he shares that "intention and desire" of the old being will be established in the mind of the new being in the new life within the new existence.

The "intention and desire" The Buddha mentions in this Teaching that are established in the new consciousness (i.e. mind) is the craving/desire/attachment of the old being transferring to the new being's mind.

The new being, regardless of their previous life, will have craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) with all of The Ten Fetters. If the previous being learned and practiced these Teachings in that life, the new being will find it easier to learn and practice these Teachings in their new life to make progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

What is reincarnation and rebirth? Are they the same thing?

Reincarnation and rebirth are different. They are not the same.

Reincarnation: the reemerging of a soul in a new body.

Reincarnation typically relates to a new existence from a soul, spirit, or entity of a previously existed being. The new existence is seen as being the same as the previous being just in a new body. Reincarnation requires a permanent soul or entity that emerges repeatedly in new existences. Gotama Buddha did not share this as part of his Teachings.

The concept of reincarnation conflicts with Gotama Buddha's Teachings on The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self, thus, was not taught by Gotama Buddha. In Gotama Buddha's 45-years of teaching, his Teachings never contained any contradictions.

Reincarnation is dependent on a permanent soul or spirit transcending multiple existences. Gotama Buddha left The Teaching concerning a soul as "undeclared" having never taught the concept of a permanent soul or a permanent self that transcends multiple existences.

The concept of reincarnation conflicts with three specific aspects of Gotama Buddha's Teachings. Reincarnation conflicts with 1.) The Universal Truth of Impermanence, 2.) The Universal Truth of Non-self, and 3.) Gotama Buddha left The Teachings on the soul as an "undeclared" Teaching, thus, Gotama Buddha never taught reincarnation.

Rebirth: a new being that has come into existence through The Cycle of Rebirth based on a previous being's craving and Kamma.

Gotama Buddha taught rebirth through The Cycle of Rebirth.

Rebirth is a new existence of a new being that has been reborn based on a previous being's craving. Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth. If there is craving at the time of death, there will be rebirth into a new existence. If Enlightenment has been attained (i.e. all craving, anger, and ignorance are fully extinguished), there will be no rebirth.

The new being may or may not have residual memories of previous existences in its new consciousness that may be recalled over time during the new being's life. Rebirth is not based on a permanent soul or spirit of any kind but instead is caused by the craving of the previous being which produces a new birth into a new existence.

Each new birth is a new existence or new life. In reality, this should be shared and discussed as The Cycle of New Existence because there is nothing that is actually being reborn.

Kamma of the previous being will determine the destination and life situation of the new being. Kamma of the previous being determines in which realm the new being will be reborn, Hell, Animal, Afflicted Spirits, Human, or the Heavenly realm. Kamma from the previous being also determines the quality of life of the new being. For example, the family and life situation (poverty vs. wealth) one is born into, the appearance of the new being, and the condition of the new being's body and mind are all determined based on the Kamma of the previous being.

If the previous being generated significant amounts of wholesome Kamma to be reborn into the human realm, the new being is reborn into a favorable destination within a wealthy family, beautiful appearance, and/or with a healthy body and mind.

If the previous being generated significant amounts of unwholesome Kamma, the new being is reborn into an unfavorable destination of the lower realms (Hell, Animal, or Afflicted Spirits Realm) or if reborn into the human realm, the being will be reborn into difficult circumstances in the new existence based on the previous being's Kamma.

Difficult circumstances that result from the previous being's Kamma would include in what realm the new being is reborn, what part of the world, the type of family, the amount of wealth, ability to acquire necessities to sustain life, appearance, and the health of the body and the mind.

Craving determines if there is rebirth while Kamma determines in what realm, what situation, and the condition of the new being upon rebirth.

Each new existence is a completely new being with a new mind and a new body - if in a form realm. If the next existence is in a formless realm, there would be no physical body just a consciousness (i.e. mind).

Craving and residual memories can be transferred from one being to the next, but the new being is a completely new being.

You can think of the two beings, old and new, as having individual and unique cardboard boxes. Those cardboard boxes represent the mind as a container. The craving and residual memories of the old being are transferred into the mind of the new being. But the new being is a completely new being with a new mind and a new body.

There is nothing else that moves from one existence to another other than craving and residual memories. It is like transferring items from one cardboard box to another.

The cardboard boxes are unique and completely different but the contents in the old box are now the contents in the new box - craving and residual memories.

Chapter 4

The Conduit to Existence

*‘Venerable Sir, it is said, ‘the conduit to existence, the conduit to existence.’
What, Venerable Sir, is the conduit to existence, and what is the elimination of
the conduit to existence?’*

Rādhā, **the craving, desire, excitement, lust, engagement and clinging**, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding **form**; this is called the conduit to existence. Their elimination is the elimination of the conduit to existence.

The craving, desire, excitement, lust, engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding **feeling**; this is called the conduit to existence. Their elimination is the elimination of the conduit to existence.

The craving, desire, excitement, lust, engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding **perception**; this is called the conduit to existence. Their elimination is the elimination of the conduit to existence.

The craving, desire, excitement, lust, engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding **volitional formations (choices/decisions)**; this is called the conduit to existence. Their elimination is the elimination of the conduit to existence.

The craving, desire, excitement, lust, engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding **consciousness**; this is called the conduit to existence. Their elimination is the elimination of the conduit to existence.

(Reference: SN 23.3)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “the conduit to existence”.

The Buddha is explaining that the mind clinging to The Five Aggregates is “the conduit to existence”. “The conduit to existence” is a means for it to continue. As long as the mind is clinging to The Five Aggregates, there will be continued rebirth. Training the mind to let go of The Five Aggregates, the mind is liberated from discontentedness and existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha shares clinging to The Five Aggregates as discontentedness in The Four Noble Truths as The First Noble Truth.

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And what, Monks, is the noble truth of discontentedness?

It should be said: The Five Aggregates subject to clinging; that is, the form aggregate subject to clinging, the feeling aggregate subject to clinging, the perception aggregate subject to clinging, the volitional formation aggregate subject to clinging, the consciousness aggregate subject to clinging. This is called the noble truth of discontentedness.

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The First Noble Truth titled, “the noble truth of discontentedness”, establishes “the problem” with the unEnlightened mind through an understanding of The Five Aggregates.

The Five Aggregates are what makes “a being, a being”. A living being will have all five aggregates, also known as “elements” or “collections”.

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 continued discontentedness. Observing the impermanent nature of The Five Aggregates, a human being can “let go” no longer experiencing discontentedness due to “holding on” to The Five Aggregates experiencing constant rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Due to clinging to The Five Aggregates and a being coming into existence, the mind will experience discontentedness.

All unEnlightened beings will experience discontentedness.

Discontentedness: Gotama Buddha describes three feelings as discontent. The goal of these Teachings is to eliminate discontentedness of mind providing the mind a permanent place to reside in Enlightenment.

- A pleasant feeling (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)
- A painful feeling (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, etc.)
- A feeling that is neither painful-nor-pleasant (boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied, etc.)

Chapter 5

The Production of Future Renewed Existence

Monks, what one intends, and what one desires, and whatever one has an obsession towards; this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis, there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is the production of future renewed existence. When there is the production of future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

If, Monks, **one does not intend**, and one does not desire, **but one still has an obsession towards something**, this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is a basis, there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is the production of future renewed existence. When there is the production of future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of discontentedness.

But, Monks, when one does not intend, and one does not desire, and one does not have an obsession towards anything, no basis exists for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is no basis, there is no support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is unestablished and does not come to growth, there is no production of future renewed existence. When there is no production of future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair are eliminated. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

(Reference: SN 12.38)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a beings craving/desire/attachment is what leads to establishing a new consciousness in a future existence to experience discontentedness all over again.

He describes craving/desire/attachment as “what one intends, and what one desires, and whatever one has an obsession towards”.

All craving/desire/attachment needs to be eliminated from the mind to eliminate discontentedness to attain Enlightenment and end The Cycle of Rebirth.

If there is craving/desire/attachment there will be birth, then there will be aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair or discontentedness of mind.

When there is no birth, there will be no aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair or discontentedness of mind.

The mind has been liberated, it is free from strong feelings, no longer bound to The Cycle of Rebirth and continuous discontentedness. The mind is completely and entirely peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

Chapter 6

Stations of Consciousness (First Discourse)

Ānanda, there are seven stations of consciousness and two spheres.

Which are the seven?

There are beings different in body and different in perception, such as human beings, some heavenly beings and some in states of sorrow. That is the first station of consciousness.

There are beings different in body and alike in perception, such as the heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company, born there [on account of having attained] the first Jhāna. That is the second station of consciousness.

There are beings alike in body and different in perception, such as the Ābhassara heavenly beings. That is the third station of consciousness.

There are beings alike in body and alike in perception, such as the Subhakiṇṇa heavenly beings. That is the fourth station of consciousness.

There are beings who have completely transcended all perception of matter, by the vanishing of the perception of sense-reactions and by non-attention to the perception of variety; thinking: 'Space is infinite', they have attained to the Sphere of Infinite Space. That is the fifth station of consciousness.

There are beings who, by transcending the Sphere of Infinite Space, thinking: 'Consciousness is infinite', have attained to the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness. That is the sixth station of consciousness.

There are beings who, having transcended the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, thinking: 'There is no thing', have attained to the Sphere of Nothingness. That is the seventh station of consciousness.

[The two spheres are:] The Sphere of Unconscious Beings and, secondly, the Sphere of Neither Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.

Now, Ānanda, as regards this first station of consciousness, with difference of body and difference of perception, as in the case of human beings and so on, if anyone were to understand it, its origin, its elimination, its attraction and its dangers, and the liberation from it, would it be fitting for him to take pleasure in it?

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

And as regards the other stations, and the two spheres likewise?

‘No, Venerable.’

Ānanda, to the extent that a Monk, having known as they really are these seven stations of consciousness and these two spheres, their origin and elimination, their attraction and danger, is freed without attachment, that Monk, Ānanda, is called one who is liberated by wisdom.

(Reference: DN 15)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the seven stations of consciousness and two spheres.

After explaining these, he guides his Student Ānanda that a Practitioner who understands these, their origin, elimination, attraction and danger, and the liberation from them would not take pleasure in them.

In other words, a Practitioner who understands how consciousness comes to be in existence would not take pleasure in existence. Through not taking pleasure in existence, there is not craving for existence therefore, one can become liberated from existence in The Cycle of Rebirth through having attained Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains a Practitioner who has attained Enlightenment as “one who is liberated by wisdom”. In order to liberate the mind from The Cycle of Rebirth, as described in Dependent Origination, the Practitioner needs to eradicate ignorance (unknowing of true reality) through acquiring wisdom, thus, “one is liberated by wisdom”.

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 7

Stations of Consciousness (Second Discourse)

Monks, there are these five kinds of seeds.

What five?

Root-seeds, stem-seeds, joint-seeds, cutting-seeds, and germ-seeds as the fifth.

If these five kinds of seeds are unbroken, unspoiled, undamaged by wind and sun, fertile, securely planted, but there is no earth or water, would these five kinds of seeds come to growth, increase, and expansion?

'No, Venerable Sir,'

If these five kinds of seeds are unbroken, unspoiled, undamaged by wind and sun, fertile, securely planted, and there is earth and water, would these five kinds of seeds come to growth, increase, and expansion?

'Yes, Venerable Sir.'

Monks, the four stations of consciousness should be seen as like the earth element. Excitement and **craving should be seen as like the water element. Consciousness together with its nutriment should be seen as like the five kinds of seeds.**

Consciousness, Monks, while standing, might stand engaged with form; based upon form, established upon form, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Or consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with feeling; based upon feeling, established upon feeling, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Or consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with perception; based upon perception, established upon perception, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Or consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with volitional formations (choices/decisions); based upon volitional formations, established upon volitional formations, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Monks, though someone might say: Separated from form, separated from feeling, separated from perception, separated from volitional formations (choices/decisions), I will make known the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and rebirth, its growth, increase, and expansion — that is impossible.

Monks, if a Monk has abandoned craving for **the form aggregate**, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off; there is no support for the establishing of consciousness.

If he has abandoned craving for **the feeling aggregate**, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off; there is no support for the establishing of consciousness.

If he has abandoned craving for **the perception aggregate**, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off; there is no support for the establishing of consciousness.

If he has abandoned craving for **the volitional formations aggregate**, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off; there is no support for the establishing of consciousness.

If he has abandoned craving for **the consciousness aggregate**, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off; there is no support for the establishing of consciousness.

When that consciousness is unestablished, not coming to growth, non-generative, it is liberated.

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 22.54)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares another farming analogy to help his Students understand the stations of consciousness relating The Five Aggregates to five types of “seeds”.

“Monks, the four stations of consciousness should be seen as like the earth element. Excitement and **craving should be seen as like the water element. Consciousness together with its nutriment should be seen as like the five kinds of seeds**”.

If there is a clinging to form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), or consciousness, then this provides the seeds so that a new consciousness can come to exist.

Craving/desire/attachment is the water.

Form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness are “the five seeds” that lead to the production of a new existence, or new consciousness. Without The Five Aggregates, there is no new existence in the human realm.

To be liberated is to have attained Enlightenment. The mind is liberated, or experiencing freedom, from strong feelings. The mind is liberated, or experiencing freedom, from discontentedness.

Here, The Buddha interchanges the word craving/desire/attachment or clinging with “engaged”.

Where you see the word engaged, substitute the word craving/desire/attachment or clinging.

The Buddha then goes further to mention that a being who is “engaged” with The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness will have “a sprinkling of excitement” or pleasant feelings.

Pleasant feelings are part of a discontent mind.

So, if one has craving/desire/attachment or clinging to The Five Aggregates, they will experience pleasant feelings and thus, will also experience painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. The mind is unliberated or unEnlightened.

If the mind is craving/desiring/attached or clinging to form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), or consciousness, the mind is unliberated and will continue to experience discontentedness along with rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha then shares “Monks, though someone might say: ‘Separated from form, separated from feeling, separated from perception, separated from volitional formations (choices/decisions), I will make known the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and rebirth, its growth, increase, and expansion — is impossible”. It is not just merely separating the mind from a certain object that it will experience liberation.

Thus, The Buddha explains that separation from form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations, and consciousness will not lead to liberation as this “is impossible”.

Instead, he shares that abandoning craving for form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness is what leads to liberation of the mind.

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.

A craving/desire/attachment is not the object itself but instead, the mental longing, yearning, and pulling in the direction of the object. A Practitioner needs to eliminate the mental longing, not the object itself necessarily.

Separating the mind from the actual object of its affection can be helpful in eliminating cravings/desires/attachments but through the separation of the being from the object does not necessarily eliminate the craving/desire/attachment.

It is only when the mind is trained to “cut off” craving/desire/attachment that the mind is liberated from that craving/desire/attachment no longer experiencing discontentedness related to that specific craving/desire/attachment.

Once all craving/desire/attachment is eliminated from the mind, it will be liberated. In other words, once the mind is disengaged it is then liberated.

Once craving/desire/attachment has been eliminated, or cut off, there is no more basis or support for renewed consciousness. The mind is liberated from discontentedness in this life and is liberated from The Cycle of Rebirth. The “consciousness is unestablished, not coming to growth, non-generative, the mind is liberated”.

When the mind has eliminated craving 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, calmness, 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 8

A Small Amount of Existence is Not Praiseworthy

Monks, just as even a small amount of feces is foul smelling, so too I do not praise even a small amount of existence, even for a mere finger snap.

Monks, just as even a small amount of urine is foul smelling...a small amount of saliva is foul smelling...a small amount of pus is foul smelling...a small amount of blood is foul smelling, so too I do not praise even a small amount of existence, even for a mere finger snap.

(Reference: AN 1.328)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how existence of any type within The Cycle of Rebirth is not praiseworthy.

Praiseworthy: deserving admiration; commendable.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment solve the problem of the discontent mind and upon a being attaining Enlightenment to eliminate discontentedness, they will have eliminated the conditions which create rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

An Enlightened being will no longer experience existence in The Cycle of Rebirth, therefore, Gotama Buddha is explaining that existence is not deserving of admiration nor commendable. Just as "a small amount of feces is foul smelling", The Buddha considers existence as undesirable.

To exist in any form or formless realm means the mind is hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) still experiencing craving and anger. The Path to Enlightenment is to eliminate craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) to eliminate discontentedness from the mind and having done so, a being will have eliminated The Cycle of Rebirth no longer experiencing existence in any realm.

The Buddha does not favor existence even for a split second or for a "finger snap".

Just as urine, saliva, pus, blood, and feces are all "foul smelling", so too The Buddha does not feel existence in The Cycle of Rebirth is deserving of admiration or commendable.

The Buddha did not teach that one should aspire for continuous rebirth but instead, that one should train the mind to independently verify The Teachings to acquire wisdom eliminating discontentedness and existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Once the mind is Enlightened, there will no longer be any discontentedness nor rebirth. What happens after death for an Enlightened being is an undeclared Teaching.

You may have come across teachings where people believe that The Buddha taught that Practitioners should be a bodhisattva and that the goal of this path and Teachings is to return to existence to help others attain Enlightenment.

You can see from this Teaching in The Words of The Buddha, that he did not teach the bodhisattva approach that some people choose to share today. The Buddha did not share that one should aspire for existence but instead, apply effort and dedication to learning and practicing these Teachings to attain Enlightenment to end The Cycle of Rebirth.

Due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence, there are many different beliefs that have been integrated into The Buddha's Teachings over countless years and generations. But, these beliefs are not based on The Words of The Buddha as they are modifications made after his death and do not lead to Enlightenment. The Path to Enlightenment does not include belief but instead is based on truth to acquire wisdom.

Through you learning and practicing with The Words of The Buddha, you will come to understand exactly what he did and did not teach and be able to see the truth for yourself.

The Buddha never taught anyone to aspire for rebirth or come back to help others attain Enlightenment. That is not the goal of The Path to Enlightenment.

Once a being is Enlightened, there will no longer be any rebirth. And, how could one help others attain Enlightenment if they themselves have not attained Enlightenment? Could an individual who has never driven a car teach another person to drive a car? This is not possible and would only lead to chaos and confusion.

The goal of this path is, if you choose, to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings so you can observe the truth to acquire wisdom liberating the mind from constant discontentedness and continued rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth. Having done so, all sorrow, grief, and despair will be completely eliminated from the mind - permanently.

A Being

Chapter 9

One Called a Being

'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'.

(Reference: SA 122)

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.

Chapter 10

Craving is the Fuel of Rebirth

I declare, Vaccha, rebirth for one with fuel, not for one without fuel.

Just as a fire burns with fuel, but not without fuel,

So, Vaccha, I declare rebirth for one with fuel, not for one without fuel.

'Master Gotama, when a flame is flung by the wind and goes some distance, what does Master Gotama declare to be its fuel on that occasion?'

When Vaccha, a flame is flung by the wind and goes some distance, I declare that it is fueled by the wind.

For on that occasion the wind is its fuel.

'And, Master Gotama, when a being has laid down this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, what does Master Gotama declare to be its fuel on that occasion?'

When, Vaccha, a being has laid down this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, I declare that it is fueled by craving.

For on that occasion craving is its fuel.

(Reference: SN 44.9)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how craving/desire/attachment is the fuel that causes rebirth into a new existence.

Not only is craving/desire/attachment the cause of all discontentedness in the mind but, it is also the fuel that causes rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Through attaining Enlightenment, a being is solving the problem of discontentedness in the mind and at the same time, solving all future problems where they will no longer experience rebirth into a next existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

While in this life the unEnlightened mind experiences significant challenges through discontentedness of mind, the true challenge all beings are experiencing is that they continue to exist in The Cycle of Rebirth.

With ignorance (unknowing of true reality) as condition, continued existence is experienced. The constant and continuous cycle of beings roaming and wandering with a mind polluted by craving creates the conditions for continuous rebirth.

Eliminating craving eliminates discontentedness and eliminates rebirth. A being who attains Enlightenment will no longer experience any sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair or existence in a new life. Therefore, Enlightenment is permanent. An Enlightened being will no longer experience any discontentedness or rebirth. All sickness, aging, and death has been eliminated. The Buddha referred to this as “the deathless”.

Never again will an Enlightened being experience death because they will never again experience birth. Through the elimination of birth, comes the permanent elimination of all discontentedness, sickness, aging, and death.

How do I verify that by eliminating cravings/desires/attachments, this will eliminate rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth? How do I verify that cravings/desires/attachments are the fuel that causes rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth?

Just like with all The Teachings of The Buddha, a Student needs to learn, reflect, and practice to independently verify all The Teachings to acquire wisdom which will result in experiencing the Enlightened mind.

There is never a time when a Student should “believe” these Teachings or a Teacher. Instead, through determined, dedicated, and diligent learning, reflecting, and practicing, a Practitioner will come to understand The Teachings that lead to the complete liberation of mind - Enlightenment.

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

The following provides details of how a Student would verify that “craving is the fuel that causes rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth”.

Keep in mind, a Teacher's role is not to prove or convince their Students that this is the truth but instead, a Student will need to do the work to learn, reflect, and practice to verify the truth for themselves with the guidance of a Teacher by a Student choosing to seek guidance with a Teacher.

A Student needs to do the work to independently acquire the wisdom that craving/desire/attachment is the fuel that causes rebirth with guidance from a Teacher and through eliminating craving/desire/attachment, this will eliminate the causes and conditions that leads to rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth. It is through The Teachings of The Buddha that will guide you to understand The Teachings that are needed to acquire this wisdom but then, through one's own reflections and direct experience, a Student will then gain the wisdom needed to see the truth for themselves.

1.) **Dependent Origination:** The first Teaching to understand and independently verify is "Dependent Origination". You will find this in the book titled "The First Stage of Enlightenment" (Volume 5 - Chapter 14) in The Words of The Buddha book series.

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

Learn this important Teaching and independently verify that it is true based on your own direct experience while seeking guidance from a Teacher. Even to progress to the first Stage of Enlightenment, a Student would need to learn and understand this important Teaching. Without understanding this important Teaching, a Practitioner would be unable to attain the first Stage of Enlightenment or Enlightenment.

Dependent Origination is the "highest law of nature" and the most important Teaching of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment. A beginning Practitioner will not typically readily understand this Teaching but instead, will need to first learn the foundational Teachings shared by The Buddha to build up to understanding Dependent Origination.

To pursue Enlightenment, you must learn and implement The Teachings of:

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

All of these Teachings are provided in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) in The Words of The Buddha book series and there will need to be consistent and ongoing learning, reflecting, and practicing to develop one's life practice to deeply understand and practice these Teachings.

This Teaching is in the book "The First Stage of Enlightenment" (Volume 5) for a reason, it is something that a Student would need to build up to in order to deeply understand and be able to see the truth in this Teaching. As you need help, you are welcome to reach out for guidance.

2.) **The Cycle of Discontentedness:** You can observe the constant cycle of discontentedness within your own unEnlightened mind.

The mind will chase pleasant feelings through craving/desire/attachment and if it gets the objects of its affection, it will experience pleasant feelings. If not, it will experience painful feelings.

You can see how this cycle just continues and continues as the mind is stuck in this constant and continuous “cycle” - The Cycle of Rebirth, as it has 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.

3.) **Have you ever observed any beings that come into existence without craving/desire/attachment?:** Observing new born babies, have you ever seen a being come into existence that did not have craving/desire/attachment?

Thus, you can understand and conclude that “all beings that are born are experiencing rebirth due to craving/desire/attachment”. You will never find a being that is reborn that does not have craving/desire/attachment.

All beings that are born will have craving/desire/attachment, this is part of The Natural Laws of Existence and will always be true.

With this observation and all the other aspects of confirming the truth shared here, that “craving is the fuel that causes rebirth”, one can conclude that “craving is the fuel that causes rebirth” because there are no beings that are born that do not have craving/desire/attachment. Thus, all beings are reborn due to craving/desire/attachment. The cause of rebirth is craving/desire/attachment and that is observable through all newborns having craving/desire/attachment.

There is no being that is born without craving/desire/attachment because it is the fuel that causes rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

4.) **Have you observed the diminishing of discontentedness? If so, what led to that? Abandoning of craving, anger, and ignorance?:** If you have been learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment and have observed improvements to the condition of the mind resulting in diminishing of discontentedness, what led to this reduction in discontentedness?

It is the elimination of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) through the cultivation of generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom.

You can see that with the elimination of craving/desire/attachment there is the elimination of the constant cycle of discontentedness. The mind is being “unstuck” in the constant and ongoing “cycle of discontentedness” (i.e. The Cycle of Rebirth).

If you understand that craving/desire/attachment is the cause of discontentedness and that through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment discontentedness is diminishing

and ultimately eliminated, then you can see that this constant Cycle of Discontentedness is coming to a close due to the elimination of craving/desire/attachment. And, the ending of The Cycle of Rebirth is also eliminated through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment.

5.) **With the elimination of fuel, there can be no spark to create the next fire:** When there is a fire burning and it is sending off sparks into the air, that spark can light a new fire. As long as the original fire has fuel, it can send off sparks and create a new fire.

Craving, Anger, and Ignorance (unknowing of true reality) functions exactly the same way in the mind.

Craving, Anger, and Ignorance (unknowing of true reality) are referred to as The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, or The Three Fires.

These three fires are burning in the mind and as long as they are burning, there will be a new spark that leads to the next life (i.e. rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth).

It is only when all the fuel is extinguished that the fire is eliminated and there can no longer be a spark to create a new fire.

The same is true about The Three Fires burning in the mind.

As long as there is fuel, there will be a new life in The Cycle of Rebirth. Craving/desire/attachment is the fuel.

The craving/desire/attachment in the mind is like a burning fire. You can experience this as you observe the mind longing, yearning, and pulling in the direction of the objects of its affection. If it is raging strong enough, it might even feel uncontrolled, much like a raging fire or inferno in the mind.

As long as craving/desire/attachment exists in the mind, there will be discontentedness and rebirth. As a Practitioner is eliminating craving/desire/attachment they will observe the diminishing of discontentedness as the fire is being extinguished. When there is no longer any fuel of craving/desire/attachment, the fire is no longer burning and there cannot be rebirth into a new life.

Extinguish all of the craving/desire/attachment and there will be no discontentedness, no burning desires that is fueling the mind's unquenchable thirst. An individual can experience complete and total peace of mind in this very life while understanding that due to the work you employed, there will no longer be any rebirth in a future life.

As long as there is work to be done in this world to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, the work is not complete. The mind is still holding on to this world therefore, it will continue to be reborn into this world repeatedly until it has done the work it needs to "let go".

Once the mind gains the wisdom it needs to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, then and only then, can it be eliminated from this world and existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 1-10)

<https://youtu.be/KShAgwigoak>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 333 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 1-10)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--335---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-1-10-e111cnp/a-a87tcos>

Chapter 11

Four Kinds of Generation

Sāriputta, there are these four kinds of generation.

What are the four?

Egg-born generation, Womb-born generation, Moisture-born generation, and Spontaneous generation.

What is egg-born generation?

There are these beings born by breaking out of the shell of an egg; this is called egg-born generation.

What is womb-born generation?

There are these beings born by breaking out from the caul (the amniotic membrane enclosing a fetus); this is called womb-born generation.

What is moisture-born generation?

There are these beings born in a rotten fish, in a rotten corpse, in rotten porridge, in a cesspit, or in a sewer; this is called moisture-born generation.

What is spontaneous generation?

There are gods and inhabitants of hell and certain human beings and some beings in the lower worlds; this is called spontaneous generation.

These are the four kinds of generation.

(Reference: MN 12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the four kinds of generation for beings to come into the world.

Egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born, and spontaneously generated.

The Buddha provides a detailed description of each of these methods for beings to come into the world.

Chapter 12

Nine Abodes of Beings

Monks, there are these nine abodes of beings.

What nine?

There are, Monks, beings that are different in body and different in perception, such as humans, some heavenly beings, and some in the lower world. This is the first abode of beings.

There are beings that are different in body but identical in perception, such as the heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company that are reborn through the first [Jhāna]. This is the second abode of beings.

There are beings that are identical in body but different in perception, such as the heavenly beings of streaming radiance. This is the third abode of beings.

There are beings that are identical in body and identical in perception, such as the heavenly beings of refulgent glory. This is the fourth abode of beings.

There are beings that are non-percipient, without experience, such as the heavenly beings that are non-percipient. This is the fifth abode of beings.

There are beings that, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of forms, with the passing away of perceptions of sensory impingement, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, [perceiving] 'space is infinite,' belong to the base of the infinity of space. This is the sixth abode of beings.

There are beings that, by completely surmounting the base of the infinity of space, [perceiving] 'consciousness is infinite,' belong to the base of the infinity of consciousness. This is the seventh abode of beings.

There are beings that, by completely surmounting the base of the infinity of consciousness, [perceiving] 'there is nothing,' belong to the base of nothingness. This is the eighth abode of beings.

There are beings that, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, belong to the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception. This is the ninth abode of beings.

These are the nine abodes of beings.

(Reference: AN 9.24)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the nine abodes.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, there were many different opinions and perspectives on the realms of existence and the various beings residing in those realms. In modern times, we might view these opinions and perspectives as quite complex.

It helps a Practitioner to understand these Teachings about The Realms of Existence in a more simplistic way rather than diving into all the various aspects of what was being taught during the lifetime of The Buddha.

In reality, to attain Enlightenment by eliminating discontentedness from the mind does not require a Practitioner to understand all the various aspects of each individual realm and all the various beings in those realms as was taught during the lifetime of The Buddha.

Instead, a Practitioner needs to primarily focus on the core and central Teachings that illuminate The Path to Enlightenment so that one can train the mind. It could be considered wise to set aside any detailed learning of The Realms of Existence until a Practitioner has more fully developed their life practice and has attained the second or third Stage of Enlightenment. A Practitioner's progression to Enlightenment and the attainment of the preliminary Stages of Enlightenment, will not be hindered in any way by postponing any series study of The Realms of Existence until that time.

What has happened in the past related to The Cycle of Rebirth is in the past, it truly does not matter for you to attain Enlightenment in this very life. What may or may not happen in the future related to The Cycle of Rebirth is in the future, it truly does not matter for you to attain Enlightenment in this very life.

Instead, a wise Practitioner can focus on the core and central Teachings that train the mind to eliminate discontentedness as these are The Teachings that will ensure the mind experiences Enlightenment and no longer has any future rebirths.

The information about The Cycle of Rebirth, while interesting, does not directly lead to the elimination of discontentedness (i.e. Enlightenment).

During the lifetime of The Buddha, there were no well established educational systems where individuals could pursue various aspects of learning and personal growth. The vast majority of learning was done orally within a family structure by handing knowledge down from one generation to the next.

As individuals chose to leave the household life by leaving their family to pursue The Path to Enlightenment with The Buddha, they were placing their confidence in him to provide education that would guide them to Enlightenment which included Teachings to better understand the world around them.

The Realms of Existence are Teachings that are helpful to understand and can be used as motivation and encouragement for a Practitioner to apply determination, dedication, and diligence to learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to attain Enlightenment. But, these Teachings should not be seen as a way to guilt, shame, or fear anyone into learning and practicing these Teachings.

Instead, they can be viewed as a helpful way to understand the world around us and what is happening as a result of our decisions.

If a Practitioner understands that there are five (5) realms of existence and those realms are hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, and heaven, and existence in these realms is not permanent, this is a helpful start.

Each of these realms and the beings in those realms have various characteristics based on their own choices. It is our own choices and the results of those choices (i.e. Karma) that determine rebirth into one of these realms and the condition of each being in those realms.

The level of detail taught by The Buddha explaining these various realms and the beings in those realms is not a required understanding one would need to gain to experience Enlightenment.

Our understanding of such things as God(s) has evolved since the lifetime of The Buddha. During the lifetime of The Buddha there was belief in many different Gods but today, most people who have an understanding of this topic consider there to be only one God who The Buddha referred to as Brahmā.

In this book, you will find countless details shared during the lifetime of The Buddha related to the various realms and beings within those realms. This is not content that a Practitioner will need to closely learn to experience liberation of mind. Even The Buddha himself when discussing his Teachings always pointed Students to The Four Noble Truths and The Eight Fold Path as the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness to experience Enlightenment.

While this book represents “The Words of The Buddha” and what he shared during his lifetime, unlike all of his other Teachings, there are limited methods available to use to prove or disprove whether what The Buddha taught related to countless details in this book are truth or not.

While I can confirm there are five (5) realms of existence and there are beings in each of these realms, I am unable to confirm the countless details shared by The Buddha related to many aspects he shared. While I can confirm that all beings that exist today have had countless previous lives and that beings who do not attain Enlightenment will be reborn in The Cycle of Rebirth, a Practitioner who aspires to attain Enlightenment in this very life does not need to confirm this understanding to be able to experience Enlightenment.

I suggest that Students learn the content in this book and consider it information that is useful to understand what was being taught during the lifetime of The Buddha while still dedicating the vast majority of your time, effort, energy, and resources to learning, reflecting, and practicing the core and central Teachings of The Path to Enlightenment.

Detailed descriptions will be provided of The Teachings in this book that need to be expanded upon to help Practitioners deepen their understanding to progress on The Path to Enlightenment. Minimal descriptions will be provided of The Teachings in this book that do not need to be expanded upon and are not required to help Practitioners deepen their understanding to progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

This book does have Teachings that connect those core and central Teachings to The Cycle of Rebirth which can be motivators to learn, reflect, and practice The Buddha's Teachings and you will know that once Enlightenment is attained, there will no longer be any rebirth in any of these five realms of existence.

But, the level of detail you choose to understand what was being taught on these topics during the lifetime of The Buddha is up to each individual Practitioner.

The vast majority of the work and effort to attain Enlightenment should be applied to the core and central Teachings and then once the mind has moved into the second and third Stages of Enlightenment, this would be the ideal time to more deeply learn The Realms of Existence, if there is an interest to do so.

With that said, there are Teachings in this book that will be helpful to a Practitioner's progress on The Path to Enlightenment but one should consider that as they encounter various Teachings of intricate detail about each individual realm and the beings in those realms, these Teachings can be viewed as interesting content or even set aside with the understanding that is what was being shared during the lifetime of The Buddha but are not required to attain Enlightenment.

The core and central Teachings a Practitioner should focus on 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

There are plenty of other Teachings and you can explore them all. However, these are some of the core Teachings to create a solid foundation for you to work towards Enlightenment in your life practice. A wise Practitioner might choose to focus on developing an understanding and practice of only The Three Universal Truths, The Four Noble Truths, The Eight Fold Path, The Five Precepts, and developing a meditation practice to get started. Then, as results are being experienced, expand into deepening your practice through all the other Teachings. You will need to seek support and guidance to accomplish the goal of developing your life practice.

Having Teachers or guides to assist you on the path to Enlightenment is very important and beneficial. You will not be able to pursue this path alone. As you seek Teachers, be sure that you find Teachers free of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) with no ego. Enlightenment is the opposite of these things. If you need help on this path, it's important to find someone that does not embody these aspects of mind. You should be interested to have Teachers and guides who have loving-kindness and

compassion towards all beings and are open to helping all people without expectation of payment for their support.

You can pursue Enlightenment no matter what has transpired in the past. No matter what your previous intentions, speech, actions or anything that has transpired in the past, Enlightenment can still be pursued and attained. What really matters on your path to Enlightenment is that you learn, reflect, practice, and observe the results in the present moment. Dedication and commitment to learning and growing will ensure you are moving the mind towards Enlightenment.

This path requires inner growth and development as there is nothing external that is needed in pursuit of this path.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings are not to control an individual nor dictate what they should or should not do. But instead, they provide guidance that when practiced will lead to Enlightenment, the liberation of the mind, a peaceful and content mind and, thus, a peaceful and content life. Everything in this practice is obtained through personal choice.

Chapter 13

Five Destinations and Similes of Destination

Sāriputta, there are these five destinations.

What are the five?

Hell,
the animal realm,
the realm of afflicted spirits,
human realm,
and **heavenly realm.**

I understand **hell**, and the path and way leading to hell. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.

I understand **the animal realm**, and the path and way leading to the animal realm. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in the animal realm.

I understand the realm of **afflicted spirits**, and the path and way leading to the realm of afflicted spirits. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in the realm of afflicted spirits.

I understand **human realm**, and the path and way leading to the human realm. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear among human beings.

I understand **the heavenly realm**, and the path and way leading to the heavenly realm. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly realm.

I understand **Nibbāna (Enlightenment)**, and the path and way leading to Nibbāna (Enlightenment). And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, by realizing for himself 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.

A Simile for Seeing Destinations

Suppose there were a **charcoal pit deeper than a man's height full of glowing coals without flame or smoke**; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same charcoal pit. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same charcoal pit'; and then later on he sees that he has fallen into that charcoal pit and is experiencing exclusively painful, agonizing, piercing feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: **'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.'** And then later on, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, and is **experiencing exclusively painful, agonizing, piercing feelings.**

Suppose there were a **cesspit deeper than a man's height full of filth**; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same cesspit. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same cesspit'; and then later on he sees that he has fallen into that cesspit and is experiencing exclusively painful, agonizing, piercing feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: **'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in the animal realm.'** And then later on, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in the animal realm and is **experiencing exclusively painful, agonizing, piercing feelings.**

Suppose there were a **tree growing on uneven ground with scanty foliage casting a dappled shadow**; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same tree. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same tree'; and then later on he sees that he is sitting or lying in the shade of that tree experiencing much painful feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: **‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in the realm of afflicted spirits.’** And then later on, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in the realm of afflicted spirits and is **experiencing much painful feelings.**

Suppose there were **a tree growing on even ground with thick foliage casting a deep shade;** and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same tree. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: ‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same tree’; and then later on he sees that he is sitting or lying in the shade of that tree experiencing much pleasant feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: **‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear among human beings.’** And then later on, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared among human beings and is **experiencing much pleasant feelings.**

Suppose there were **a mansion, and it had an upper chamber plastered within and without, shut off, secured by bars, with shuttered windows, and in it there was a couch spread with rugs, blankets, and sheets, with a deerskin coverlet, with a canopy as well as crimson pillows for both [head and feet];** and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same mansion. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: ‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same mansion’; and then later on he sees that he is sitting or lying in that upper chamber in that mansion experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: **‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.’** And then later on, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world, and is **experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings.**

Suppose there were **a pond with clean, agreeable, cool water, transparent, with smooth banks, delightful, and nearby a dense wood;** and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only towards that same pond. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: ‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same pond’; and then later on he sees that he has plunged into the pond, bathed, drunk, and relieved all his distress, fatigue, and fever and has come out again and is sitting or lying in the wood experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: **‘This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that by realizing for himself with direct knowledge (experience), he here and now will enter upon and reside in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.’** And then later on I see that by realizing for himself with direct knowledge (experience), he here and now enters upon and resides in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints, and is **experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings.**

(Reference: MN 2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares basic details on The Five Realms and some basic details of the experiences in those realms.

The Buddha explains to his close Student Sāriputta that he can observe the rebirth of a being based on their conduct in this life. This is a quality of mind experienced by a Perfectly Enlightened One - a Buddha.

Hell Realm

Chapter 14

Ten Courses of Unwholesome Kamma (Deposited in Hell)

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.

Monks, one possessing these ten qualities is deposited in hell as if brought there.

(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. This is the conduct that leads to rebirth in the realm of hell. But, a Practitioner can improve their life practice in this life which would lead to the production of wholesome Kamma leading to Enlightenment so that rebirth in the realm of hell is avoided.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, there was a murderer who had murdered 999 people. When he met The Buddha and decided to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings towards the attainment of Enlightenment, he attained Enlightenment in that very life.

I am sure that you have not murdered 999 people in this life, therefore, you can learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings transforming the mind to eliminate rebirth in hell or any other realm of existence.

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 15

Dangers to One of Unwholesome Morality

Householders, there are these five dangers to one of unwholesome morality, of failure in morality (moral conduct).

What are they?

In the first place, he suffers great loss of property through neglecting his affairs.

In the second place, he gets an unwholesome reputation for immorality and misconduct.

In the third place, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brāhmins, Householders or Ascetics, he does so without confidence and is fearful.

In the fourth place, he dies confused.

In the fifth place, after death, at the breaking-up of the body, he arises in an unwholesome state, a bad destination, in suffering and hell.

These are the five dangers to one of unwholesome morality.

(Reference: UD 8.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the five dangers to one of unwholesome moral conduct (i.e. morality).

Wholesome moral conduct is shared in guidance taught as part of The Eight Fold Path. A Practitioner who develops their moral conduct as described in The Eight Fold Path is practicing wholesome moral conduct.

But, if a Practitioner is unknowing of this wisdom or otherwise chooses to practice unwholesome moral conduct for any reason, The Buddha shares five dangers to be experienced by one who is practicing unwholesome moral conduct.

This includes loss of property, unwholesome reputation, lacking confidence and fearful, dies confused, and is reborn in hell.

This is a result of one's own decisions based on The Natural Law of Kamma. There is no entity or being that judges a being to determine if these things should or should not occur, but instead, these are the results or consequences of one's own decisions occurring as a result of one's own decisions.

This Teaching is not shared to guilt, shame, nor fear someone into learning and practicing these Teachings, but instead, The Buddha is sharing the truth of what will occur and then leaves the decision up to the individual of what they will or will not do in this life. Without this wisdom, an individual might make unwise decisions that leads to these outcomes without understanding of why these outcomes occurred.

But with this wisdom, an individual could choose through their own free will whether they are interested in improving their moral conduct or not. A Buddha's mind is already completely peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy. They have escaped The Cycle of Rebirth and only have interest to help others attain this same mental state, but in order to accomplish that goal, a Practitioner would need decide to pursue and progress on The Path to Enlightenment through their own choices and decisions.

An individual cannot be forced to learn and practice these Teachings to attain Enlightenment, it needs to be a personal choice. The Path to Enlightenment is to eliminate 100% of all discontent feelings which includes: guilt, shame, and fear. A Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha would not use guilt, shame, or fear to help an individual eliminate guilt, shame, and fear. That is not possible.

The Buddha shared Teachings based on questions asked of him by his Students. He shared the truth of what will and will not occur based on the interest of Students asking questions. He did not declare, profess, or dictate what would or would not occur, but instead, shared guidance based on the interest of his Students to learn and practice these Teachings.

Students could observe that his mind was completely and entirely peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy at all times. Living closely with their Teacher, if there was any anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, etc. this would have been observed.

But, for an Enlightened being and surely a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, there are no discontent feelings in the mind and having observed this over longer and longer periods of time, his Students knew that he had achieved Enlightenment then sought guidance of how to attain this same mental state.

As part of learning and practicing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment, Students oftentimes have questions about the future to include future rebirth.

A Buddha would have needed to share this information to satisfy the inquisitive mind of his Students but decided to focus his Students on the details of this path that leads to the elimination of discontentedness, to liberation of mind, to peacefulness, to Enlightenment.

So while The Buddha did share Teachings on The Five Realms of Existence and what would and would not occur as part of The Cycle of Rebirth, his core and central Teachings are to learn, reflect, and practice The Path to Enlightenment which involves training the mind on a daily basis.

While some may become overly obsessed with attempting to understand The Five Realms of Existence and rebirth, The Buddha chose to focus his Students on training the mind so that there would not be any rebirth.

If you have been part of a tradition or community of people who used the destination after death as a way to guilt, shame, or fear individuals into believing certain Teachings, you will need to eliminate that conditioning and perspective as it relates to these Teachings from The Buddha.

The Buddha only shared these Teachings to help Students who asked questions and had a curiosity about The Five Realms and who needed to understand The Cycle of Rebirth to connect The Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment to the outcome of their life practice.

While a Buddha applies effort and energy to focus their Students on learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment through training the mind, Students are oftentimes eager to understand all the details of what will or will not occur in their next life.

But for a Buddha, the goal is for their Students to not experience a next life and instead, put an end to their discontentedness in this life so that the mind can experience liberation, peacefulness, and Enlightenment avoiding the continued misery and despair of rebirth.

Chapter 16

Crooked Destination and Rebirth

Monks, I will teach you an exposition of The Teachings on creeping. Listen and attend closely. I will speak.

And what, Monks, is that exposition of The Teachings on creeping?

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, someone destroys life; he is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. He creeps along by body, speech, and mind. His bodily Kamma is crooked; his verbal Kamma is crooked; his mental Kamma is crooked. His destination is crooked; his rebirth is crooked.

But for one with a crooked destination and rebirth, I say, there is one of two destinations: either the exclusively painful hells or a species of creeping animal. And what are the species of creeping animals? The snake, the scorpion, the centipede, the mongoose, the cat, the mouse, and the owl, or any other animals that creep away when they see people.

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 cases of 'Someone takes what is not given...' and 'Someone engages in sexual misconduct...' are expounded in repetitions as the above discourse of 'Someone destroys life...'. The 'four unwholesome verbal actions' and the 'three unwholesome mental actions' are shared with the same phrasing.)

(Reference: AN 10.216)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he connects The Ten Courses of Unwholesome Kamma from Chapter 14 of this book to rebirth in the lower realms of hell and the animal realm. Specifically, he discusses being reborn as a creeping animal such as a “snake, scorpion, centipede, mongoose, cat, mouse, and owl, or any other animals that creep away when they see people”.

He explains 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”.

This helps a Practitioner understand that all of our deeds whether body, speech, or mind (i.e. bodily, verbal, or mental) will have results that we need to experience in this life or some future life. Knowing this wisdom, it can provide the extra motivation to improve our conduct so that we can experience improved results in this life and, if needed, future lives.

While Gotama Buddha never used rebirth as a motivator or incentive towards the attainment of Enlightenment, we can choose to use it as a motivator if we'd like.

While there does not need to be guilt, shame, or fear related to the unwholesome conduct of the past or present, we can choose to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to improve the results that we experience through a determined, dedicated, and diligent approach to developing our life practice. We can choose to clean up our life practice now, during this life, to then experience improved results in this life and, if needed, future lives.

The unwholesome Kamma that we produce through harmful bodily, verbal, and mental conduct is being experienced and will be experienced in this life or a future life. There is no way to avoid the consequences of our past conduct, but we can improve what we are doing now so that we improve the condition of our mind and life eliminating and cleaning up the difficulties and struggles we face through acquiring wisdom.

With the wisdom of these Teachings, we can make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes.

Chapter 17

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 have shorter life span than animals like elephants or turtles who 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 18

The Unwise Person's Unhappy Destination

Suppose a man threw into the sea a ring with one hole in it, and the east wind carried it to the west, and the west wind carried it to the east, and the north wind carried it to the south, and the south wind carried it to the north. Suppose there were a blind turtle that came up once at the end of each century.

What do you think, Monks? Would that blind turtle put his neck into that ring with one hole in it?

'He might, Venerable Sir, sometime or other at the end of a long period.'

Monks, the blind turtle would sooner put his neck into that ring with a single hole in it than an unwise person, once gone to hell, would take to regain the human state, I say. Why is that?

Because there is no practicing of The Teachings there, no practicing of what is righteous, no doing of what is wholesome, no performance of merit. There mutual devouring prevails, and the slaughter of the weak.

If, sometime or other, at the end of a long period, that unwise person comes back to the human state, it is into a low family that he is reborn — into a family of outcasts or hunters or bamboo-workers or cartwrights or scavengers — one that is poor with little to eat and drink, surviving with difficulty, where he scarcely finds food and clothing; and he is ugly, unsightly, and misshapen, sickly, blind, cripple-handed, lame, or paralyzed; he gets no food, drink, clothes, vehicles, garlands, scents and ointments, bed, lodging, and light; he misconducts himself in body, speech, and mind, and having done that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in suffering, even in hell.

Monks, suppose a gambler at the very first unlucky throw loses his child and his wife and all his property and furthermore goes into bondage himself, yet an unlucky throw such as that is negligible; **it is a far more unlucky throw when an unwise person who misconducts himself in body, speech, and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in suffering, even in hell.** This is the complete perfection of the unwise person's condition.

(Reference: MN 129)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how it is more likely for a blind sea turtle to place its neck into a ring floating on the surface of the sea than for a being in hell to regain the human state.

The being in hell would be able to regain the human state at some point in the future but, the length of time in the lower realms is extensive. Being in the lower realms of hell and the animal realm is like being trapped in a prison where it is extremely difficult to experience a human rebirth.

All human beings who are alive today have, at some point in the past, been countless beings in the past. Many of those existences were in the animal realm. It took countless rebirths in the lower realms to get into the human realm, thus, one should appreciate their life in this human realm, and not allow it to go to waste. Instead, through actively developing the mind one can ensure that this life becomes more peaceful and there is no future existences in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 19

To Be Reborn in the ‘Hell of Laughter’

‘Venerable Sir, I have heard it said among actors of old in the lineage of Teachers: ‘If an actor, in the theatre or the arena, entertains and amuses people by truth and lies, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing heavenly beings’. What does The Perfectly Enlightened One say about that?’

Enough, Headman, let it be! Don’t ask me that!

A second time and a third time Talaputa the troupe Headman said the same question.

In the theatre or arena, among beings who are not yet free from craving, who are bound by the bondage of craving, an actor entertains them with teasing things that excite them even more strongly to **craving**.

In the theatre or arena, among beings who are not yet free from anger, who are bound by the bondage of anger, an actor entertains them with provoking things that excite them even more strongly to **anger**.

In the theatre or arena, among beings who are not yet free from ignorance (unknowing of true reality), who are bound by the bondage of ignorance, an actor entertains them with confusing things that excite them even more strongly to **ignorance**.

Thus, being heedless and complacent himself, having made others heedless and complacent, with the breakup of the body, after death, **he is reborn in the ‘Hell of Laughter’**. But should he hold such a view as this: ‘If an actor, in the theatre or the arena, entertains and amuses people by truth and lies, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing heavenly beings’ — that is a wrong view on his part.

For a person with wrong view, I say, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal realm.

(Reference: SN 42.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how it is unwise to entice beings into further craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) as if one did this, they would be reborn into the realm of hell.

And, if one thought that through enticing others to further arise craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) that it would produce a rebirth in the heavenly realm, that is wrong view. A being with wrong view is reborn into either hell or the animal realm.

Chapter 20

To Be Reborn in the ‘Battle-Slain Hell’

‘Venerable Sir, I have heard it said by mercenaries of old in the lineage of Teachers: ‘When a mercenary is one who strives and struggling himself in battle, if others slay him and finish him off while he is striving and struggle himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the battle-slain heavenly being’. What does The Perfectly Enlightened One say about that?’

Enough, Headman, let it be! Don’t ask me that!

A second time and a third time Yodhajiva the Headman said the same question.

When, Headman, a mercenary is one who strives and exerts himself in battle, his mind is already low, wicked, misdirected by the thought: ‘Let these beings be slain, slaughtered, obliterated, destroyed, or exterminated’. If others then slay him and finish him off while he is striving and struggling himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the **‘Battle-Slain Hell’**.

But should he hold such a view as this: ‘When a mercenary strives and struggles himself in battle, if others slay him and finish him off while he is striving and struggling himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the battle-slain heavenly beings’ — **that is a wrong view on his part.**

For a person with wrong view, I say, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal realm.

(Reference: SN 42.3)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how it is unwise to kill a soldier in battle who is wicked, they would be reborn into the realm of hell.

And, if one thought that through killing a soldier in battle who is wicked that it would produce a rebirth in the heavenly realm, that is wrong view. A being with wrong view is reborn into either hell or the animal realm. Killing in general leads to rebirth in the realm of hell but in this Teaching, a specific question was asked of The Buddha, and he answers it based on the question asked relating the answer to soldiers in battle.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 11-20)

https://youtu.be/m-Dg_2niUdM

Podcast(s)

Ep. 337 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 11-20)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--337---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-11-20-e1l8tq9/a-a88ljt6>

Chapter 21

Doomed to Deprivation in Hell for an Eon

Monks, conquered by three forms of false Teachings — his mind overwhelmed — Devadatta (cousin/brother-in-law to Gotama Buddha) is incurably doomed to deprivation, to hell, for an eon.

Which three?

Conquered by unwholesome desires — his mind over-whelmed — Devadatta is incurably doomed to deprivation, to hell, for the duration of an eon.

Conquered by friendship with unwholesome people — his mind overwhelmed — Devadatta is incurably doomed to deprivation, to hell, for the duration of an eon.

And, there being something further to be done, he nevertheless stopped halfway with a lower degree of distinctive attainment.

Conquered by these three forms of false Teachings — his mind overwhelmed — Devadatta is incurably doomed to deprivation, to hell, for an eon.

(Reference: ITI 89)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how his brother-in-law Devadatta is incurably doomed to the realm of hell.

Devadatta is said to have been The Buddha's brother-in-law who was envious and jealous of all that The Buddha had accomplished. Devadatta was ordained but actively conspired to eliminate The Buddha and take over his community of Students.

It is said that Devadatta attempted to kill The Buddha and engaged in other corrupt practices to overthrow The Buddha as the primary Teacher of The Community.

Devadatta attempted to convince The Buddha to leave him as responsible of The Community upon The Buddha's death, but none of his efforts to kill The Buddha or take over The Community were successful.

The Buddha is explaining that his brother-in-law is overwhelmed by false Teachings which will doom him to hell due to his delusion and confusion that motivated unwholesome deeds.

These same Teachings are not just applicable to Devadatta but all beings, as what The Buddha is teaching is based on The Natural Law of Kamma applicable to all beings.

(1) Unwholesome cravings/desires, (2) association with unwholesome people, and (3) becoming complacent to stop learning, reflecting, and practicing the true Teachings that lead to Enlightenment having a low degree of attainment are the three forms of false teachings that The Buddha guides his Students to understand will lead to the realm of hell.

A being whose mind is “overwhelmed” with false teachings is going to be unable to progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment, therefore, will likely experience an unfavorable rebirth as described in this Teaching.

The Buddha explains the rebirth he predicts for Devadatta in hell will last an eon.

An eon is an incalculable length of time. An eon is so significant and lengthy that it is immeasurable.

It is important to note that while The Buddha is providing this guidance and other Teachings related to rebirth in the realm of hell and the lower realms, he states in other Teachings that he himself experienced rebirth in all of these realms in past lives.

So while a being may be reborn into the lower realms and those rebirths are miserable for immeasurable lengths of time, it is possible for a being to move beyond those existences into a progressively improved rebirth.

Even The Buddha himself, at one time, experienced existences in all of these various realms but yet evolved over countless lifetimes to eventually become a Buddha.

Not that you will become a Buddha but this can help to illustrate how rebirth in the lower realms is not permanent but, now that you are in the human realm if one can avoid future rebirths in the lower realms, that would be ideal.

The way to accomplish that goal is through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings with guidance from a Teacher to experience an improved condition of mind and life in this very life to completely escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 22

Simile for the Suffering in Hell

Monks, there are these three characteristics of an unwise person, signs of an unwise person, attributes of an unwise person.

What three?

Here an unwise person is one who thinks unwholesome thoughts, speaks unwholesome words, and does unwholesome actions.

If an unwise person were not so, how would the wise know him thus: This person is an unwise person, an untrue man? But because an unwise person is one who thinks unwholesome thoughts, speaks unwholesome words, and does unwholesome actions, the wise know him thus: **This person is unwise, an untrue man.**

An unwise person feels pain and grief here and now in three ways. If an unwise person is seated in an assembly or along a street or in a square and people there are discussing certain pertinent and relevant matters, then, if the unwise person is one who kills living beings, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sensual pleasures, speaks falsehood, and indulges in liquor, wine, and intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness), which are the basis of heedlessness, he thinks: These people are discussing certain pertinent and relevant matters; these things are found in me, and I am seen engaging in those things.

This is the first kind of pain and grief that an unwise person feels here and now.

Again, when a robber culprit is caught, an unwise person sees Kings having many kinds of torture inflicted on him:

having him flogged with whips,
beaten with canes,
beaten with clubs;
having his hands cut off,
his feet cut off,
his hands and feet cut off;
his ears cut off,
his nose cut off,
his ears and nose cut off;

having him subjected to the 'porridge pot,'
to the 'polished-shell shave,'
to the 'Rahu's mouth,'
to the 'fiery wreath,'
to the 'flaming hand,'
to the 'blades of grass,'
to the 'bark dress,'
to the 'antelope,'
to the 'meat hooks,'
to the 'coins,'
to the 'lye pickling,'
to the 'pivoting pin,'
to the 'rolled-up palliasse';
and having him splashed with boiling oil,
and having him thrown to be devoured by dogs,
and having him impaled alive on stakes,
and having his head cut off with a sword.

Then the unwise person thinks thus: Because of such evil (unwholesome) actions as those, when a robber culprit is caught, Kings have many kinds of tortures inflicted on him: they have him flogged with whips ... and have his head cut off with a sword. Those things are found in me, and I am seen engaging in those things.

This is the second kind of pain and grief that an unwise person feels here and now.

Again, when an unwise person is on his chair or on his bed or resting on the ground, then the evil (unwholesome) actions that he did in the past — his bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct — cover him, overspread him, and envelop him. Just as the shadow of a great mountain peak in the evening covers, overspreads, and envelops the earth, so too, when an unwise person is on his chair or on his bed or resting on the ground, then the evil (unwholesome) actions that he did in the past — his bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct — cover him, overspread him, and envelop him.

Then the unwise person thinks: 'I have not done what is good, I have not done what is wholesome, I have not made myself a shelter from anguish. I have done what is evil (unwholesome), I have done what is cruel, I have done what is wicked. When I pass away, I shall go to the destination of those who have not done what is good ... who have done what is wicked'. He sorrows, grieves, and has displeasure, he cries beating his breast and becomes distraught.

This is the third kind of pain and grief that an unwise person feels here and now.

An unwise person who has given himself over to misconduct of body, speech, and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, even in hell.

Were it rightly speaking to be said of anything: ‘That is utterly unwished for, utterly undesired, utterly disagreeable: it is of hell that, rightly speaking, this should be said, so much so that it is hard to find a simile for the suffering in hell.

‘But, Venerable Sir, can a simile be given?’

It can, Monk, *The Perfectly Enlightened One* said.

Monks, suppose men caught a robber culprit and presented him to the King, saying:

Sir, here is a robber culprit. Order what punishment you will for him. Then the King said: ‘Go and strike this man in the morning with a hundred spears’. And they struck him in the morning with a hundred spears.

Then at noon the King asked: ‘How is that man?’ — ‘Sir, he is still alive’.

Then the King said: ‘Go and strike that man at noon with a hundred spears’. And they struck him at noon with a hundred spears.

Then in the evening the King asked: ‘How is that man?’ — ‘Sir, he is still alive’.

Then the King said: ‘Go and strike that man in the evening with a hundred spears.’ And they struck him in the evening with a hundred spears.

What do you think, Monks? Would that man experience pain and grief because of being struck with the three hundred spears?

‘Venerable Sir, that man would experience pain and grief because of being struck with even one spear, let alone three hundred.’

Then, taking a small stone the size of his hand, The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

What do you think, Monks? Which is the greater, this small stone that I have taken, the size of my hand, or Himālaya, the King of mountains?

‘Venerable Sir, the small stone that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken, the size of his hand, is insignificant beside Himālaya, the King of mountains; it is not even a fraction, there is no comparison.’

So too, Monks, the pain and grief that the man would experience because of being struck with the three hundred spears does not count beside the suffering of hell; it is not even a fraction, there is no comparison.

The Law of The Three Seals

1.) Porridge Pot is smashing the skull open, peeling off the scalp, putting a blazing iron inside with tongs in order to burst the brain out like over boiling pot.

2.) Polished-Shell Shave is cutting and pulling out the strips of skin from the marked two points at the upper lips, to the marked two points at the tops of the ears, continuing to the marked two points in the back of the head and twisting all pieces of skin to tie a knot together with hair. Two people would insert a stick inside the knot, stir up, shake and tear off all the skin, the scalp and the hair. Then they will polish the skull with coarse sand to make it shine as white as a polished shell.

3.) Rahu’s Mouth is widening up the mouth with hooks and setting up a continuous fire inside. Another method is tearing apart the lips through the tops of the ears with a sharp chisel, keeping the mouth wide open with hooks and letting it fill up with blood.

4.) Fiery Wreath is wrapping up the whole body with an oil-soaked cloth and setting it on fire.

5.) Flaming Hand is wrapping around the ten fingers with oil-soaked cloths and setting them on fire.

6.) Blades of Grass is cutting flesh into several unbroken strips bound with skin from the neck base all the way down to the ankles, then tying the flesh strips with rope, forcing and hitting one to walk over his own’s strips of meat until death.

7.) Bark Dress is cutting flesh into strips, from neck base to waist and from waist to ankles, letting the flesh strips hang down just as one is wearing a grassy garment.

8.) Antelope is firmly putting the steel rings on both elbows and both knees, inserting the steel stakes inside those rings, infixing the stakes to the ground in order to prevent all body movements and setting a ring of fire around until death.

9.) Meat Hook is striking the double-sharp edge hooks into the entire body, pulling out small and large pieces of flesh and tendons out until death.

10.) Coins is slicing bits of flesh at the weight of a “tumlung”, letting those pieces fall from the body and continuing to cut until running out of meat.

11.) Lye Pickling is slicing, chopping, cutting the whole body and scraping out all the small and large meat and tendons with acid-soaked brush, leaving only the remains of skeleton.

12.) Pivoting Pin is making one lie on one’s side, hammering down a steel spear through both ear holes in order to tie one tightly down to the ground, then spinning one around by grabbing both feet like a person whirling.

13.) Rolled-Up Palliasse is crushing down the bone into powder with millstones (without tearing off flesh and tendons), seizing hair, folding up flesh, skin and bone together in one mass, then lifting it up, lowering it down to make a round pile, subsequently placing it down as a foot wiping mat.

14.) Splashed with Boiling Oil is stirring up the fiercely boiling oil and pouring it on the body from the head down until death.

15.) Thrown to Be Devoured by Dogs is confining the ferocious dogs, starving them to the fullest extent for several days then letting them out to devour the flesh and skin to the remains of skeleton.

(Reference: MN 130)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares details of the pain and agony experienced by one who has unwholesome conduct. He explains what is experienced in this life to illustrate the extensive amount of despair and displeasure in the realm of hell.

While any one of us could have previously been in the realm of hell, we can appreciate that we are now in the human realm with the opportunity to improve our life practice ensuring this will be our last life with no further rebirths in any realm within The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 23

Many Kinds of Tortures Inflicted on Those Who Do Evil Unwholesome Actions

Monks, suppose there were **two houses** with doors and a man with good sight standing there between them saw people going in and coming out and passing to and from.

So too, with the divine eye (third eye), which is purified and surpasses the human, I see beings passing away and reappearing, unwholesome and wholesome, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. I understand how beings pass on according to their actions thus:

These worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not abusive of Noble Ones, right in their views, giving effect to Right Views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

Or these worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not abusive of Noble Ones, right in their views, giving effect to Right Views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared among human beings.

But these worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, abusive of Noble Ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in the realm of afflicted spirits.

Or these worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, abusive of Noble Ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in the animal world.

Or these worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, abusive of Noble Ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.

Now the wardens of hell seize such a being by the arms and present him to King Yama, saying: Sir, this man has ill-treated his mother, ill-treated his father, ill-treated Ascetics, ill-treated Brāhmins; he has had no respect for the elders of his clan. Let the King order his punishment.

Then King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the first divine messenger:

Good man, did you not see the first divine messenger to appear in the world?

He says: 'I did not, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, have you never seen in the world a young tender infant lying prone, fouled in his own excrement and urine?

He says: 'I have, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, did it never occur to you — an intelligent and mature man — I too am subject to birth, I am not exempt from birth: surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind?

He says: 'I was unable, Venerable Sir, I was complacent.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, through complacency you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your complacency. But this evil (unwholesome) action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by Ascetics and Brāhmins, or by gods; this evil (unwholesome) action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.

Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the first divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the second divine messenger: Good man, did you not see the second divine messenger to appear in the world?

He says: 'I did not, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, have you never seen in the world a man — or a woman — at eighty, ninety, or a hundred years, aged, as crooked as a roof bracket, doubled up, supported by a walking stick, unsteady, weak, youth gone, teeth broken, grey-haired, scanty-haired, bald, wrinkled, with limbs all blotchy?

He says: 'I have, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, did it never occur to you — an intelligent and mature man — I too am subject to aging, I am not exempt from aging; surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind?

He says: 'I was unable, Venerable Sir, I was complacent.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, through complacency you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your complacency. But this evil (unwholesome) action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by Ascetics and Brāhmins, or by gods; this evil (unwholesome) action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.

Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the second divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the third divine messenger: Good man, did you not see the third divine messenger to appear in the world?

He says: 'I did not, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, have you never seen in the world a man — or a woman — afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill, lying fouled in his own excrement and urine, lifted up by some and set down by others?

He says: 'I have, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, did it never occur to you — an intelligent and mature man — I too am subject to sickness, I am not exempt from sickness; surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind?

He says: 'I was unable, Venerable Sir, I was complacent.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, through complacency you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your complacency. But this evil (unwholesome) action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by Ascetics and Brāhmins, or by gods; this evil (unwholesome) action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.

Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the third divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the fourth divine messenger: Good man, did you not see the fourth divine messenger to appear in the world?

He says: 'I did not, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, have you never seen in the world, when a robber culprit is caught, Kings having many kinds of tortures inflicted on him: having him flogged with whips, beaten with canes, beaten with clubs; having his hands cut off, his feet cut off, his hands and feet cut off; his ears cut off, his nose cut off, his ears and nose cut off; having him subjected to the 'porridge pot', to the 'polished-shell shave', to the 'Rahu's mouth', to the 'fiery wreath', to the 'flaming hand', to the 'blades of grass', to the 'bark dress', to the 'antelope', to the 'meat hooks', to the 'coins', to the 'lye pickling', to the 'pivoting pin', to the 'rolled-up palliasse'; and having him splashed with boiling oil, and having him thrown to be devoured by dogs, and having him impaled alive on stakes, and having his head cut off with a sword?

He says: 'I have, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, did it never occur to you — an intelligent and mature man — those who do evil (unwholesome) actions have such tortures of various kinds inflicted on them here and now; so what in the hereafter? Surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind?

He says: 'I was unable, Venerable Sir, I was complacent.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, through complacency you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your complacency. But this evil (unwholesome) action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by Ascetics and Brāhmins, or by gods; this evil (unwholesome) action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.

Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the fourth divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the fifth divine messenger: Good man, did you not see the fifth divine messenger to appear in the world?

He says: 'I did not, Venerable Sir.'

Then King Yama says: Good man, have you never seen in the world a man — or a woman — one-day dead, two-days dead, three-days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing with matter?

He says: ‘I have, Venerable Sir.’

Then King Yama says: Good man, did it never occur to you — an intelligent and mature man — I too am subject to death, I am not exempt from death: surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind?

He says: ‘I was unable, Venerable Sir, I was complacent.’

Then King Yama says: Good man, through complacency you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your complacency. But this evil (unwholesome) action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by Ascetics and Brāhmins, or by gods; this evil (unwholesome) action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.

Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the fifth divine messenger, King Yama is silent.

Now the wardens of hell torture him with the fivefold transfixing. They drive a red-hot iron stake through one hand, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the other hand, they drive a red-hot iron stake through one foot, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the other foot, they drive a red-hot iron stake in the middle through his breast. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell throw him down and pare him with axes. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell set him with his feet up and his head down and pare him with adzes. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell harness him to a chariot and drive him back and forth across ground that is burning, blazing, and glowing. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell make him climb up and down a great mound of coals that are burning, blazing, and glowing. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell take him feet up and head down and plunge him into a red-hot metal cauldron that is burning, blazing, and glowing. He is cooked there in a swirl of froth. And as he is being cooked there in a swirl of froth, he is swept now up, now down, and now across. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell throw him into the Great Hell. Now as to that Great Hell, Monks:

It has four corners and is built
With four doors, one set in each side,
Walled up with iron all around
And shut in with an iron roof.
Its floor as well is made of iron
And heated till it glows with fire.
The range is a full hundred leagues
Which it covers all-pervasively.

Now the flames that surge out from the Great Hell's eastern wall dash against its western wall. The flames that surge out from its western wall dash against its eastern wall. The flames that surge out from its northern wall dash against its southern wall. The flames that surge out from its southern wall dash against its northern wall. The flames that dash out from the bottom dash against the top. And the flames that surge out from the top dash against the bottom. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Some time or other, Monks, at the end of a long period, there comes an occasion when the Great Hell's eastern door is opened. He runs towards it, treading quickly. As he does so, his outer skin burns, his inner skin burns, his flesh burns, his sinews burn, his bones turn to smoke; and it is the same when his foot is uplifted. When at long last he reaches the door, then it is shut. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Some time or other, at the end of a long period, there comes an occasion when the Great Hell's western door is opened ... when its northern door is opened ... when its southern door is opened. He runs towards it, treading

quickly ... When at long last he reaches the door, then it is shut. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Some time or other, Monks, at the end of a long period, there comes an occasion when the Great Hell's eastern door is opened. He runs towards it, treading quickly. As he does so, his outer skin burns, his inner skin burns, his flesh burns, his sinews burn, his bones turn to smoke; and it is the same when his foot is uplifted. He comes out by that door.

Immediately next to the Great Hell is the vast Hell of Excrement. He falls into that. In that Hell of Excrement needle-mouthed creatures bore through his outer skin and bore through his inner skin and bore through his flesh and bore through his sinews and bore through his bones and devour his marrow. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Immediately next to the Hell of Excrement is the vast Hell of Hot Embers. He falls into that. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Immediately next to the Hell of Hot Embers is the vast Wood of Simbali Trees, a league high, bristling with thorns sixteen finger-breadths long, burning, blazing, and glowing. They make him climb up and down those trees. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Immediately next to the Wood of Simbali Trees is a vast Wood of Sword-leaf Trees. He goes into that. The leaves, stirred by the wind, cut his hands and cut his feet and cut his hands and feet; they cut his ears and cut his nose and cut his ears and nose. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Immediately next to the Wood of Sword-leaf Trees is a great river of caustic water. He falls into that. There he is swept along the stream and against the stream and both along and against the stream. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell pull him out with a hook, and setting him on the ground, they ask him:

‘Good man, what do you want’? He says: ‘I am hungry, Venerable Sirs.’ Then the wardens of hell prise open his mouth with red-hot iron tongs, burning, blazing, and glowing, and they throw into his mouth a red-hot metal ball, burning, blazing, and glowing. It burns his lips, it burns his mouth, it burns his throat, it burns his stomach, and it passes out below carrying with it his intestines and mesentery. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Next the wardens of hell ask him: ‘Good man, what do you want’? He says: ‘I am thirsty, Venerable Sirs’, Then the wardens of hell prise open his mouth with red-hot iron tongs, burning, blazing, and glowing, and they pour into his mouth molten copper, burning, blazing, and glowing. It burns his lips, it burns his mouth, it burns his throat, it burns his stomach, and it passes out below carrying with it his intestines and mesentery. There he feels painful, agonizing, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil (unwholesome) action has not exhausted its result.

Then the wardens of hell throw him back again into the Great Hell.

It has happened that King Yama thought: Those in the world who do evil unwholesome actions indeed have all these many kinds of tortures inflicted on them. Oh, that I might attain the human state, that a Tathāgata, accomplished and fully Enlightened, might appear in the world, that I might wait on that Fortunate One, that The Perfectly Enlightened One might teach me The Teachings, and that I might come to understand that Fortunate One’s Teachings!

Monks, I tell you this is not as something I heard from another Ascetic or Brāhmin. I tell you this as something that I have actually known, seen, and discovered by myself.

That is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. When the Fortunate One had said that, The Teacher further said:

Though warned by the divine messengers,
Full many are the complacent,
And people may sorrow long indeed
Once gone down to the lower world.

But when by the divine messengers
Good people here in this life are warned,
They do not dwell in complacency
But practice well the noble Teachings.

Clinging they look upon with fear
For it produces birth and death;
And by not clinging they are freed
In the destruction of birth and death.

They reside in joy for they are safe
And reach Nibbāna (Enlightenment) here and now.
They are beyond all fear and hate;
They have escaped all discontentedness.

(Reference: MN 130)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings on how one should not dwell in complacency in this life overlooking guidance from heavenly beings.

He explains the extensive amount of despair and displeasure in the realm of hell and then, at the end, describes the joy experienced by those who have attained Enlightenment as they have escaped all discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth to include rebirth in the realm of hell.

Beings who attain Enlightenment are freed from the constant rounds of birth and death. But if one is complacent, they would be unable to experience liberation of mind and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Complacency: dullness, lethargy, lack of motivation.

Remedy: Enlightenment Factors of Investigation, Energy, and Joy.

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 24

Simile of the Life Span in Hell

‘Venerable Sir, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have evil (unwholesome) desires and have come under the control of evil (unwholesome) desires’.

Do not say so, Kokālika! Do not say so, Kokālika! Place confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, Kokālika. Sāriputta and Moggallāna are well behaved.

Then for a second time and yet a third time the Monk Kokālika repeated his words, and a second and third time The Perfectly Enlightened One advised him with the same words.

Then the Monk Kokālika rose from his seat, paid homage (respect) to The Perfectly Enlightened One, circled The Perfectly Enlightened One keeping the right side towards him, and departed.

Then, when the night had passed, The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks:

Monks, last night, when the night had advanced, Brahmā Sahampati approached me and said to me: ‘Venerable Sir, the Monk Kokālika has died, and because of his resentment against Sāriputta and Moggallāna, after death he has been reborn in the red-lotus hell’. He then paid homage (respect) to me, circled me keeping the right side towards me, and disappeared right there.

‘How long, Venerable Sir, is the life span in the red-lotus hell?’

The life span in the red-lotus hell is long, Monk. It is not easy to count it and say it is so many years, or so many hundreds of years, or so many thousands of years, or so many hundreds of thousands of years.

‘Then is it possible, Venerable Sir, to give a simile?’

It is, Monk,

Suppose there was a Kosalan cartload of twenty measures of sesamum seed. At the end of every hundred years a man would remove one seed from it.

In this manner the Kosalan cartload of twenty measures of sesamum seed might be depleted and eliminated more quickly than a life in a single abbuda hell would go by.

One life in the nirabbuda hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the abbuda hell;

one life in the ababa hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the nirabbuda hell;

one life in the ahaha hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the ababa hell;

one life in the aṭaṭa hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the ahaha hell;

one life in the water-lily hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the aṭaṭa hell;

one life in the sweet-fragrance hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the water-lily hell;

one life in the blue-lotus hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the sweet-fragrance hell;

one life in the white-lotus hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the blue-lotus hell;

and one life in the red-lotus hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the white-lotus hell.

Now, because he harbored resentment against Sāriputta and Moggallāna, the Monk Kokālika has been reborn in the red-lotus hell.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

When a person has taken birth
an axe is born inside his mouth
with which the unwise person cuts himself
by uttering wrongful speech.

He who praises one deserving blame
or blames one deserving praise
casts with his mouth an unlucky throw
by which he finds no peacefulness.

Slight is the unlucky throw at dice
that results in the loss of one's wealth,
[the loss] of all, oneself included; much worse is this unlucky throw
of harboring hate against the holy ones.

For a hundred thousand
and thirty-six nirabbudas, plus five abbudas,
the slanderer of Noble Ones goes to hell,
having defamed them with evil (unwholesome) speech and mind.

(Reference: SN 6.10)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the enormous life span in the realm of hell. He further shares how unwise it is to harbor resentment especially towards “Noble Ones” including slandering “Noble Ones”.

A Noble One is the way Gotama Buddha explained those Students who had deeply studied and were deeply practicing these Teachings.

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, there was a caste system in place that taught people that as they were born into a low or high family, they were either a low or high person in society. This rigid caste system made people believe that if they were of low status, they were essentially a low or somewhat of a worthless individual. But, if they were of a high status, they were a “noble” individual.

People were taught that if they were interested in a spiritual life, they would need to make offerings and payments to Brāhmins to be able to have them pray to the Gods on their behalf. People believed in multiple Gods during The Buddha's lifetime. People of a low caste were convinced that they were unable to pray to the Gods because of their low status in life and due to that birth, they'd need to give money to the Brāhmin priests to have them pray on their behalf.

The Buddha observed that this was not true and only created opportunity for corruption and false beliefs. He understood that people of all backgrounds and upbringing are capable of attaining Enlightenment. He described his Teachings as “noble”, thus, The Noble Eight Fold Path, and he also referred to Practitioners as “Noble Ones” or a “Noble Disciple”.

The Buddha essentially provided guidance that people should adjust their thinking that being born into a certain family and the material possessions available to them within their family is not an indication of what makes them noble or un-noble. Instead, it is one's wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline that determines if one is wholesome or unwholesome.

In this way, all beings are capable of becoming noble through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to improve the condition of their mind. The Buddha accepted all individuals as Students no matter what caste they were born into or what moral conduct they had participated in prior to deciding to undertake training in these Teachings. The Buddha was known to accept a prostitute and a murderer into his

Community of Practitioners who eventually attained Enlightenment during their lifetime. He did not discriminate based on what family one was born into or past conduct. Instead, he focused on helping all people learn and progress in the development of their life practice to awaken the mind to Enlightenment.

At a time when all of society was discriminating against people of insignificant material possessions, occupations, past conduct, and even gender, The Buddha practiced loving-kindness and compassion towards all beings. He was willing to support anyone who was interested to investigate his Teachings helping them to progress towards Enlightenment through being invited and welcomed to do so within The Community of Practitioners.

This Teaching helps a Practitioner understand that harboring resentment or slandering others is unwise and leads to unwholesome results in this life and future lives.

Chapter 25

The Hell Named ‘The Great Conflagration’

Monks, there exists a hell named **the Great Conflagration**.

There, whatever form one sees with the eye is undesirable, never desirable; unlovely, never lovely; disagreeable, never agreeable.

Whatever **sound** one hears with the ear ... Whatever **odor** one smells with the nose ... Whatever **flavor** one tastes with the tongue ... Whatever **physical object** one touches with the body ... Whatever **mental objects** one recognizes with the mind is undesirable, never desirable; unlovely, never lovely; disagreeable, never agreeable.

When this was said, a certain Monk said to The Perfectly Enlightened One:

‘That conflagration, Venerable Sir, is indeed terrible; that conflagration is indeed very terrible.’

‘But is there, Venerable Sir, any other conflagration more terrible and frightful than that one?’

There is, Monk.

‘But what, Venerable Sir, is that conflagration more terrible and frightful than that one?’

Those Ascetics or Brāhmins, Monk, **who do not understand as it really is:**

This is discontentedness,

This is the cause of discontentedness,

This is the elimination of discontentedness,

This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness — they **excite** in volitional formations (choices/decisions) that lead to birth, in volitional formations that lead to aging, in volitional formations that lead to death, in volitional formations that lead to sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair.

Exciting in such volitional formations, they **generate** volitional formations that lead to **birth**, **generate** volitional formations that lead to **aging**, generate volitional formations that lead to **death**, **generate** volitional formations that lead to **sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair**.

Having generated such volitional formations (choices/decisions), they are **burnt** by the conflagration of birth, burnt by the conflagration of aging, burnt by the conflagration of death, burnt by the conflagration of **sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair**.

They are not freed from birth, aging, and death; not freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; not freed from discontentedness, I say.

(Reference: SN 56.43)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how not understanding The Four Noble Truths is the worst hell.

Through not understanding The Four Noble Truths, a being continues to make choices and decisions that are unwise leading to discontentedness along with continued birth, aging, and death.

It is only when a Practitioner has made the breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths that they deeply understand discontentedness, the cause of discontentedness, the elimination of discontentedness, and the path leading to the complete elimination of discontentedness. Without this breakthrough, a being will continue to roam and wander through The Cycle of Rebirth experiencing massive amounts of discontentedness.

Through gaining the wisdom of The Four Noble Truths then a Practitioner understands the problem and the solution to the unEnlightened mind.

Chapter 26

The Hell Named ‘The Contact’s Sixfold Base’

Monks, it is a gain for you, it is well gained by you, that you have obtained the opportunity for living the holy life.

I have seen, Monks, **the hell named ‘Contact’s Sixfold Base.’**

There whatever **form** one sees with the **eye** is undesirable, never desirable; unlovely, never lovely; disagreeable, never agreeable.

Whatever **sound** one hears with **the ear** ...

Whatever **odor** one smells with **the nose** ...

Whatever **flavor** one tastes with **the tongue** ...

Whatever **physical object** one touches with **the body** ...

Whatever **mental objects** one recognizes **with the mind** is undesirable, never desirable; unlovely, never lovely; disagreeable, never agreeable.

It is a gain for you, Monks, it is well gained by you, that you have obtained the opportunity for living the holy life.

(Reference: SN 35.135)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares in these multiple Chapters how the various hells he was aware of are miserable and undesirable, not a place a being would be interested to experience.

“It is a gain for you, Monks, it is well gained by you, that you have obtained the opportunity for living the holy life”. The Buddha explains to the Students that because they are human and have the opportunity to learn and practice The Teachings through leading a holy life, it is a great gain and benefit to them. Through being able to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings, an individual is able to escape the massive amount of discontentedness experienced through existence and through existing in The Cycle of Rebirth to include existence in the hell realm.

Any amount of existence in any of the realms should be seen as undesirable because if there is birth, there will be sickness, aging, and death to include a massive amount of discontentedness.

Chapter 27

The Suffering of Bondage

So too, Monks, when one does not have confidence in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have a sense of moral wrongdoing in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have moral concern in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have energy in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have wisdom in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, in the Noble One's discipline one is called a poor, impoverished, needy person.

Having no confidence, no sense of moral wrongdoing, no moral concern, no energy, no wisdom in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, that poor, impoverished, needy person engages in misconduct by body, speech, and mind. This, I say, is his getting into debt.

To conceal his bodily misconduct, ... To conceal his verbal misconduct, ... To conceal his mental misconduct, he nurtures an evil (unwholesome) desire. He wishes: 'Let no one know me'; he intends [with the desire]: 'Let no one know me'; he speaks statements [with the desire]: 'Let no one know me'; he makes bodily endeavors [with the desire]: 'Let no one know me.' This, I say, is the interest he must pay.

Well-behaved fellow Monks speak thus about him: 'This Venerable one acts in such a way, behaves in such a way'. This, I say, is his being advised.

When he has gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, evil unwholesome thoughts accompanied by remorse attack him. This, I say, is his prosecution.

Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, that poor, impoverished, needy person who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind is bound in the prison of hell or the prison of the animal realm. I do not see, Monks, any other prison that is as terrible and harsh, [and] such an obstacle to attaining the unsurpassed security from bondage (Enlightenment), as the prison of hell or the prison of the animal realm.

Poverty is called discontentedness in the world;
so too is getting into debt.

A poor person who becomes indebted
is troubled while enjoying himself.

Then they prosecute him
and he also incurs imprisonment.
This imprisonment is indeed discontentedness
for one yearning for gain and sensual pleasures.

Just so in the Noble One's discipline,
one in whom confidence is lacking,
who does not see danger in wrongdoing and rude,
heaps up a mass of evil unwholesome Kamma.

Having engaged in misconduct
by body, speech, and mind,
he forms the wish:
'May no one find out about me.'

He twists around with his body,
(twists around) by speech or mind;
he piles up his evil (unwholesome) deeds,
in one way or another, repeatedly.

This unwise evildoer, knowing
his own misdeeds, is a poor person
who falls into debt,
troubled while enjoying himself.

His thoughts then prosecute him;
painful mental states born of remorse
(follow him wherever he goes)
whether in the village or the forest.

This unwise evildoer,
knowing his own misdeeds,
goes to a certain (animal) realm
or is even bound in hell.

This indeed is the discontentedness of bondage
from which the wise person is freed, ...

(Reference: AN 6.45)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a person who has unwholesome bodily, verbal, and mental conduct makes decisions to go into debt and is troubled by their indebtedness similar to a person who is impoverished.

The Buddha describes the realm of hell and the animal realm as a prison. Essentially, a being will find it extremely difficult to escape from those realms requiring countless rebirths before being able to experience an improved birth in the human or heavenly realms with the opportunity to attain Enlightenment.

When an individual is doing unwholesome conduct, the mind knows and worries about these deeds. The unwise decisions lead to worry and despair. The Buddha explains: “When he has gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, evil unwholesome thoughts accompanied by remorse attack him. This, I say, is his prosecution”.

Conversely, for one who purifies their bodily, verbal, and mental conduct on The Path to Enlightenment and attains Enlightenment knows they have purified their moral conduct. Wise wholesome decisions lead to elimination of all worry and despair. One aspect of eliminating discontentedness as part of The Path to Enlightenment is that a Practitioner knows they have purified their moral conduct and, in doing so, they are not causing any harm to other beings. The mind can be at ease and peaceful knowing their life practice is not causing harm and, therefore, no harm will come to them. All fears can be eliminated of any harm returning to you because you are not causing any harm in the world.

But, for one who continues to make unwise decisions to have unwholesome moral conduct “Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, that poor, impoverished, needy person who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind is bound in the prison of hell or the prison of the animal realm”. A being is reborn based on the results of their decisions. No one, no being, or no entity is sending you to a harmful and painful place such as hell or the animal realm but instead, it is one’s own decisions that create this outcome. Likewise, it is our own decisions that can lead to an improved rebirth or even Enlightenment in this life.

Continued craving/desire/attachment leads to continued discontentedness and the mind is bound or tied to The Cycle of Rebirth continuing to experience wandering and roaming with sorrow, grief, displeasure, and despair. “This indeed is the discontentedness of bondage...”.

For a Practitioner who continues to choose to make unwise unwholesome decisions, these are decisions to remain bound to continued sorrow, grief, displeasure, and despair. It is like a prison to remain in The Cycle of Rebirth while one who has attained Enlightenment is experiencing freedom from strong feelings, the mind is liberated, and no longer bound to discontentedness or continued rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

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 28

Few in Hell to Be Reborn Among Human Beings or Heavenly Beings

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

‘Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.’

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away from hell, are reborn among human beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away from hell, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.’

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

‘Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.’

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away from hell, are reborn among the heavenly beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away from hell, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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 56.114)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how there are few beings who die in the realm of hell who are reborn among human beings. Instead, they are reborn into hell, the animal realm, or the realm of afflicted spirits.

He provides the reason that beings have not seen The Four Noble Truths which is what causes them to be reborn in hell and to not be reborn into the human realm continuing to be exist in the lower realms.

It is The Four Noble Truths that provide the breakthrough for beings to understand the problem and solution to the unEnlightened mind. Beings in hell do not have the ability to learn and practice these Teachings as they are in such agony that they are experiencing exclusively painful feelings being unable to focus on active learning, reflection, and practice of these Teachings to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 29

Other Darkness Greater Than the Blinding Darkness in the World of Dreadful Regions

Monks, there are world interstices, vacant and dreadful regions of blinding darkness and gloom, where the light of the sun and moon, so powerful and mighty, does not reach.

‘That darkness, Venerable Sir, is indeed great; that darkness is indeed very great. But is there, Venerable Sir, any other darkness greater and more frightful than that one?’

There is, Monk.

‘But what, Venerable Sir, is that darkness greater and more frightful than that one?’

Those Ascetics and Brāhmins, Monk, who do not understand as it really is: This is discontentedness; who do not understand as it really is: This is the cause of discontentedness; who do not understand as it really is: This is the elimination of discontentedness; who do not understand as it really is: This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness — they excite in volitional formations (choices/decisions) that lead to birth, in volitional formations that lead to aging, in volitional formations that lead to death, in volitional formations that lead to sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair.

Exciting in such volitional formations, they generate volitional formations (choices/decisions) that lead to birth, generate volitional formations that lead to aging, generate volitional formations that lead to death, generate volitional formations that lead to sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Having generated such volitional formations, they tumble into the darkness of birth, tumble into the darkness of aging, tumble into the darkness of death, tumble into the darkness of sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. They are not freed from birth, aging, and death; not freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; not freed from discontentedness, I say.

But, Monk, those Ascetics and Brāhmins who understand as it really is: This is discontentedness; who understand as it really is: This is the cause of discontentedness; who understand as it really is: This is the elimination of discontentedness; who understand as it really is: This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness — they do not excite in volitional formations (choices/decisions) that lead to birth, in volitional formations that

lead to aging, in volitional formations that lead to death, in volitional formations that lead to sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from discontentedness, I say.

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 56.46)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that it is great darkness for a being to not understand The Four Noble Truths for the reasons mentioned in the previous Chapters.

He encourages Students to make an effort to learn and practice The Four Noble Truths to eliminate discontentedness which will allow a being to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Animal Realm

Chapter 30

To Reappear in the Company of Animals

Monks, there are animals that feed on grass. They eat by cropping fresh or dried grass with their teeth. And what animals feed on grass? Horses, cattle, donkeys, goats, deer, and any other such animals.

An unwise person who formerly excited in flavors here and did evil (unwholesome) actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the company of animals that feed on grass.

There are animals that feed on dung. They smell dung from a distance and run to it, thinking: We can eat, we can eat! Just as Brāhmins run to the smell of a sacrifice, thinking: We can eat here, we can eat here! So too these animals that feed on dung, smell dung from a distance and run to it, thinking: We can eat here, we can eat here! And what animals feed on dung? Fowls, pigs, dogs, jackals, and any other such animals.

An unwise person who formerly excited in flavors here and did evil (unwholesome) actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the company of animals that feed on dung.

There are animals that are born, age, and die in darkness. And what animals are born, age, and die in darkness? Moths, maggots, earthworms, and any other such animals.

An unwise person who formerly excited in flavors here and did evil (unwholesome) actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the company of animals that are born, age, and die in darkness.

There are animals that are born, age, and die in water. And what animals are born, age, and die in water? Fish, turtles, crocodiles, and any other such animals.

An unwise person who formerly excited in flavors here and did evil (unwholesome) actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the company of animals that are born, age, and die in water.

There are animals that are born, age, and die in filth. And what animals are born, age, and die in filth? Those animals that are born, age, and die in a rotten fish or in a rotten corpse or in rotten porridge or in a cesspit or in a sewer.

An unwise person who formerly excited in flavors here and did evil (unwholesome) actions here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in the company of animals that are born, age, and die in filth.

Monks, I could tell you in many ways about the animal realm, so much so that it is hard to finish describing the discontentedness in the animal realm.

(Reference: MN 129)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that a human being who has craving/desire/attachment to flavors through the tongue, which will arise the pleasant feelings of excitement, will be reborn in the animal realm among the various beings that exist there.

Rebirth will occur as an animal that feeds on grass, feeds on dung, and those that are born, age, and die in darkness, water, or in filth, among others.

The animal realm is full of countless beings and The Buddha explains he “could tell you in many ways about the animal realm, so much so that it is hard to finish describing the discontentedness in the animal realm”.

It is very difficult for beings in the animal realm to be reborn into the human or heavenly realms for an opportunity to attain Enlightenment. There will need to be countless rebirths for a being to get to the human realm. All human beings who exist today have already experienced countless rebirths in the animal realm and should not allow this human birth to go to waste through complacency. Instead, one can apply determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to attain Enlightenment experiencing peacefulness, joy, and freedom from strong feelings.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 21-30)

<https://youtu.be/hnKzJjUs2bk>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 340 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 21-30)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--340---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-21-30-e1m45ko/a-a8bg4a6>

Chapter 31

The Serpents

Now at that time, a certain serpent was troubled about his birth as a serpent, he was ashamed of it, loathed it. Then it occurred to that serpent: Now, by what means could I be freed quickly from birth as a serpent and get back to the human realm?

Then it occurred to that serpent: These Ascetics, sons of the Sakyans, are Teachings-farers, even-farers, Brahmā-farers, they are truth-speakers, they are of moral habit, of good conduct. Now if I were to go forth among the Ascetics, sons of the Sakyans, so would I be freed quickly from birth as a serpent and could get back to the human realm?

Then that serpent, in the form of a Brahmān youth, having approached the Monks, asked for the going forth. The Monks let him go forth, they ordained him. Now at that time that serpent, together with a certain Monk, was living in a dwelling place on the edge of a town. Then that Monk, getting up in the night towards dawn, paced up and down in the open air.

Then that serpent, confident that the Monk had gone out, fell asleep. The whole dwelling-place was full of the snake, his coils were protruding through the windows.

Then that Monk, thinking: "I will enter the dwelling-place," opening the door, saw the whole dwelling-place full of the snake, his coils protruding through the windows. Terrified at seeing this, he let out a cry of distress. Monks, having run up, spoke thus to that Monk: Why did you, Venerable Sir, let out a cry of distress?

Venerable Sirs, this whole dwelling-place is full of a snake, his coils are protruding through the windows. Then that serpent having awakened because of this noise, sat down on his own seat. Monks spoke thus: Who are you, friend?

'I am a serpent, honored Sirs.'

But why did you, friend, act in this way?

Then that serpent told this matter to the Monks. The Monks told this matter to The Perfectly Enlightened One.

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One on this occasion, in this connection, having had The Community of Monks come together, spoke thus to this serpent:

Indeed, you serpents are not liable to growth in these Teachings and discipline. You, serpent, go away, observe the Observance Day precisely on the fourteenth, fifteenth and eighth day of the half-month. Thus, you will be freed quickly from birth as a serpent and get back to the human realm.

Then that serpent, thinking: It is said that I am not liable to growth in these Teachings and discipline, pained, troubled, shedding tears, departed having let out a cry of distress.

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks, saying:

Monks, there are these two cases of observation of a serpent's true nature: when he indulges in sexual intercourse with a female of his own species, and when he falls asleep in confidence.

Monks, these are two cases of observation of a serpent's true nature. Monks, if an animal is not ordained, it should not be ordained; if it is ordained, it should be expelled.

(Reference: The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka), Vol. 4: Mahavagga by I.B. Horner)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that animals should not be ordained.

It is only in the human and heavenly realms that one can attain Enlightenment. Ordaining is to give up the household life, living through the generosity of Household Practitioners. By living through the generosity of Household Practitioners, an Ordained Practitioner should dedicate their time, effort, energy, and resources to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment to develop their wisdom.

Once the Ordained Practitioner is well established in The Teachings, they should then offer The Teachings back to the Household Practitioners through sharing The Teachings with those who choose to learn and practice these Teachings. In this way, there is an exchange that is mutually beneficial for the Household Practitioners and Ordained Practitioners.

An animal is unable to develop the mind on The Path to Enlightenment and offer these Teachings back to the Household Practitioners. It would be inappropriate to ordain an animal as they would be unable to fulfill the responsibility of the ordained lifestyle.

Chapter 32

Four Modes of Generation of Nāgas

Monks, there are these four modes of generation of nāgas.

What four?

- (1) Nāgas born from eggs,
- (2) Nāgas born from the womb,
- (3) Nāgas born from moisture,
- (4) Nāgas of spontaneous birth.

Therein, Monks, nāgas born from the womb, from moisture, and born spontaneously are superior to nāgas born from eggs.

Nāgas born from moisture and born spontaneously are superior to nāgas born from eggs and from the womb.

Nāgas born spontaneously are superior to nāgas born from eggs, from the womb, and from moisture.

These, Monks, are the four modes of generation of nāgas.

(Reference: SN 29.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the methods of birth for a nāga.

A nāga is a large snake or serpent.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, there were not well established educational systems where individuals could pursue various aspects of learning and personal growth. The vast majority of learning was done orally within a family structure by handing knowledge down from one generation to the next.

As individuals chose to leave the household life by leaving their family to pursue The Path to Enlightenment with The Buddha, they were placing their confidence in him to provide education that would guide them to Enlightenment which included Teachings to better understand the world around them.

Today, we learn various aspects of science through well established educational systems. But during the lifetime of The Buddha, this did not exist so in some of his Teachings he included a basic understanding of aspects of life that his Students would not have understood but would be needed for their understanding of the world around them and to understand The Cycle of Rebirth.

Without understanding birth, sickness, aging, and death, a Practitioner would have a challenging time to understand The Cycle of Rebirth. So The Buddha needed to share a basic understanding of birth of various beings with his Students so that they could also understand rebirth.

Today, we gain the understanding of birth through various methods of learning as the birthing process is well understood and documented. But, during the lifetime of The Buddha, over 2,500 years ago, this information was not readily accessible or understood to the degree of knowledge that we have today.

While this content does not have any direct application to the attainment of Enlightenment, it is helpful to understand the birthing process of various beings to be able to understand The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha taught all human beings of various classes and ages. He taught very young children and the elderly. He would have ensured that his Students had the opportunity to gain a well rounded education that helped them in life to grow their wisdom to include understanding various aspects of life and the world around them. He saw it as his responsibility to provide education that would support his Students in all aspects of their life. A Student who ordains is giving up their household life to join him in the pursuit of Enlightenment and based on their commitment, he ensured he provided meaningful and deep wisdom that contributed to his Students long term success in life.

He fostered a relationship with his Students much like a parent and child relationship where the parent provides care and attention to the child while also providing wisdom to contribute to their growth in life. He considered Students to be like his children and encouraged his Students to think of him much like a parent or father.

In this way, the proper intentions and proper relationship could be fostered to help a Student develop a mind that is polite, kind, friendly, and respectful towards him as their Teacher but also so that the Student understood The Buddha's unconditional love towards his Students. He sought nothing and wanted nothing from his Students. Instead, he was making himself available for all those who choose to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings.

A healthy relationship that fosters politeness, kindness, friendliness, and respect within the relationship between the Student and the Teacher and between the Teacher and the Student is highly important for the benefit of the Student's growth and development on The Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 33

Nāgas Cause and Reason for Observing the Uposatha

Here, Monks, some egg-born nāgas think thus: In the past we acted undecidedly in body, speech, and mind. Having done so, with the breakup of the body, after death, we were reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas.

If today we practice good conduct of body, speech, and mind, then with the breakup of the body, after death, we shall be reborn in a happy destination, in a heavenly world. Come now, let us practice good conduct of body, speech, and mind.

This, Monk, is the cause and reason why some egg-born nāgas here observe the Uposatha and relinquish [concern for] their bodies.

(The same is repeated for the other three types of nāgas.)

(Reference: SN 29.3-29.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares details of how an animal has some ability to develop their understanding to make wiser decisions related to their bodily, verbal, and mental conduct leading to an improved rebirth including into the heavenly realm.

There is not just one way to move in and out of the various realms of existence. Moving to a higher rebirth requires improved decision making related to bodily, verbal, and mental conduct but beings in all the various realms can be reborn in and out of those realms based on their own decisions.

For example, animals can be reborn into the hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, and heavenly realms. Humans can be reborn into the hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, and heavenly realms. All beings can be reborn in and out of all the various realms. There is not just one permanent method of how all beings are reborn in and out of these various realms or a certain order that this must occur.

The Cycle of Rebirth occurs and functions without regard to whether a being understands these Teachings or not. The Cycle of Rebirth is part of The Natural Laws of Existence and is not based on whether a being has learned or is practicing these Teachings or not.

The Cycle of Rebirth is constantly functioning as a Natural Law of Existence unaffected by a beings understanding of these natural laws. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings (i.e. The Natural Laws of Existence), a being can make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes. Without an understanding of these Teachings, the mind is fettered/tainted/polluted/defiled/hindered by its own ignorance (unknowing of true reality) continuing to struggle and have difficulties in life being unable to make wise decisions to create wholesome outcomes while being constantly reborn to experience continuous discontentedness to include sorrow, misery, displeasure, and despair.

Life is a real struggle and difficult because beings are living in a world that they do not understand due to the mind's ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

Through gaining wisdom to understand the world around us through deep investigation of The Natural Laws of Existence (i.e. The Teachings of The Buddha), ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is eliminated and a being can reside in the world peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy because they can now function with full understanding of these natural laws.

The unEnlightened mind does not understand what it does not understand. But when it does understand through training the mind in The Natural Laws of Existence, then one can make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes which allows the mind to reside at ease within a world that it now fully and completely understands.

Chapter 34

To Be Reborn in the Company of Egg-Born Nāgas (First Discourse)

Here, Monk, someone acts unwisely in body, speech, and mind. He has heard: Egg-born nāgas are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.

He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas! Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas.

This, Monks, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas.

(The same is repeated for the other three types of nāgas.)

(Reference: SN 30.3-30.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a human being can be reborn as a nāga. Rebirth as a nāga is undesirable as once one is reborn into the animal realm it is like a prison and very difficult to move back into a human rebirth.

The Buddha shares that through making unwise decisions about one's own bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, they are reborn into the animal realm. If there are unwise decisions related to bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, a being will produce unwholesome outcomes in this life and future lives.

Through acquiring wisdom of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, a being can then make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes. Through acquiring wisdom, we can make deliberate and intentional decisions that lead to wholesome outcomes both in this life and, if needed, future lives.

The ultimate goal would be to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to acquire wisdom leading to an improved condition of mind and life so that one can experience a peaceful existence in this life and no longer experience any future rebirths.

Chapter 35

To Be Reborn in the Company of Egg-Born Nāgas (Second Discourse)

Here, Monk, someone acts unwisely in body, speech, and mind. He has heard: Egg-born nāgas are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness. He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas!

He gives food.... He gives drink.... He gives clothing.... He gives a vehicle.... He gives a garland.... He gives a fragrance.... He gives an ointment.... He gives a bed.... He gives a dwelling.... He gives a lamp. Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas.

This, Monks, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of egg-born nāgas.

(The same is repeated for the other three types of nāgas.)

(Reference: SN 30.7-30.16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a human being can be reborn as a nāga. Rebirth as a nāga is undesirable as once one is reborn into the animal realm it is like a prison and very difficult to move back into a human rebirth.

The Buddha shares that through making unwise decisions about one's own bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, they are reborn into the animal realm. If there are unwise decisions related to bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, a being will produce unwholesome outcomes in this life and future lives.

Through acquiring wisdom of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, a being can then make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes. Through acquiring wisdom, we can make deliberate and intentional decisions that lead to wholesome outcomes both in this life and, if needed, future lives.

The ultimate goal would be to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to acquire wisdom leading to an improved condition of mind and life so that one can experience a peaceful existence in this life and no longer experience any future rebirths

Chapter 36

Four Modes of Generation of Supaññas

Monks, there are these four modes of generation of supaññas.

What four?

- (1) Supaññas born from eggs,
- (2) supaññas born from the womb,
- (3) supaññas born from moisture,
- (4) supaññas of spontaneous birth.

Therein, Monks, egg-born supaññas carry off only nāgas that are egg-born, not those that are womb-born, moisture-born, or spontaneously born.

Womb-born supaññas carry off nāgas that are egg-born and womb-born, but not those that are moisture-born or spontaneously born.

Moisture-born supaññas carry off nāgas that are egg-born, womb-born, and moisture-born, but not those that are spontaneously born.

Spontaneously born supaññas carry off nāgas that are egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born, and spontaneously born.

These, Monks, are the four modes of generation of supaññas.

(Reference: SN 30.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the methods of birth for a supañña.

A supañña is a mythical bird-like creature also known as a garuḍa, whose traditional enemies are the snakes (nāga).

I share that these are mythical creatures because, as of today, we do not know of these animals existing in the world. We view them as mythical. However, 99% of all animals that once existed on the planet are now extinct. That means, these creatures and others, could have lived during the lifetime of The Buddha but no longer exist today, therefore, we consider them to be mythical. But in reality, if they are being shared in The Pāli Canon as part of these Teachings, that means there is a good chance they existed during the lifetime of The Buddha otherwise, these Teachings would not have been spoken by The Buddha and then written down as part of this important text.

The Buddha's Teachings are not based on belief, therefore, there would not have been people who were attempting to get others to believe these beings existed but instead, they would be focused on sharing The Words of The Buddha through writing down The Teachings that he spoke during his lifetime.

While these animals are being referred to as a supañña, this could potentially be a large bird-like animal that we might think of as a bald eagle, hawk, etc. perhaps even larger than those birds. Just because we feel this animal does not exist today does not mean it did not exist in the past. Due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence, there are many aspects of the animal realm that have changed as a result of evolution and the continuous change.

There are even beings that are similar to the human beings that exist today that pre-date modern humans that no longer exist today, but they did exist in the past. Just because they do not exist today does not mean they did not exist in the past.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, there were not well established educational systems where individuals could pursue various aspects of learning and personal growth. The vast majority of learning was done orally within a family structure by handing knowledge down from one generation to the next.

As individuals chose to leave the household life by leaving their family to pursue The Path to Enlightenment with The Buddha, they were placing their confidence in him to provide education that would guide them to Enlightenment which included Teachings to better understand the world around them.

Today, we learn various aspects of science through well established educational systems. But during the lifetime of The Buddha, this did not exist so in some of his Teachings he included a basic understanding of aspects of life that his Students would not have understood but would be needed for their understanding of the world around them and to understand The Cycle of Rebirth.

Without understanding birth, sickness, aging, and death, a Practitioner would have a challenging time to understand The Cycle of Rebirth. So The Buddha needed to share a basic understanding of birth of various beings with his Students so that they could also understand rebirth.

Today, we gain the understanding of birth through various methods of learning as the birthing process is well understood and documented. But, during the lifetime of The Buddha, over 2,500 years ago, this information was not readily accessible or understood to the degree of knowledge that we have today.

While this content does not have any direct application to the attainment of Enlightenment, it is helpful to understand the birthing process of various beings to be able to understand The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha taught all human beings of various classes and ages. He taught very young children and the elderly. He would have ensured that his Students had the opportunity to gain a well rounded education that helped them in life to grow their wisdom to include understanding various aspects of life and the world around them. He saw it as his responsibility to provide education that would support his Students in all aspects of their life. A Student who ordains is giving up their household life to join him in the pursuit of Enlightenment and based on their commitment, he ensured he provided meaningful and deep wisdom that contributed to his Students long term success in life.

He fostered a relationship with his Students much like a parent and child relationship where the parent provides care and attention to the child while also providing wisdom to contribute to their growth in life. He considered Students to be like his children and encouraged his Students to think of him much like a parent or father.

In this way, the proper intentions and proper relationship could be fostered to help a Student develop a mind that is polite, kind, friendly, and respectful towards him as their Teacher but also so that the Student understood The Buddha's unconditional love towards his Students. He sought nothing and wanted nothing from his Students. Instead, he was making himself available for all those who choose to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings.

A healthy relationship that fosters politeness, kindness, friendliness, and respect within the relationship between the Student and the Teacher and between the Teacher and the Student is highly important for the benefit of the Student's growth and development on The Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 37

To Be Reborn in the Company of Egg-Born Supaṇṇas (First Discourse)

Here, Monk, someone acts unwisely in body, speech, and mind. He has heard: Egg-born supaṇṇas are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.

He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of egg-born supaṇṇas! Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of egg-born supaṇṇas.

This, Monks, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of egg-born supaṇṇas.

(The same is repeated for the other three types of supaṇṇas.)

(Reference: SN 30.3-30.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a human being can be reborn as a supaṇṇa. Rebirth as a supaṇṇa is undesirable as once one is reborn into the animal realm it is like a prison and very difficult to move back into a human rebirth.

The Buddha shares that through making unwise decisions about one's own bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, they are reborn into the animal realm. If there are unwise decisions related to bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, a being will produce unwholesome outcomes in this life and future lives.

Through acquiring wisdom of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, a being can then make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes. Through acquiring wisdom, we can make deliberate and intentional decisions that lead to wholesome outcomes both in this life and, if needed, future lives.

The ultimate goal would be to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to acquire wisdom leading to an improved condition of mind and life so that one can experience a peaceful existence in this life and no longer experience any future rebirths.

Chapter 38

To Be Reborn in the Company of Egg-Born Supaññas (Second Discourse)

Here, Monk, someone acts undecidedly in body, speech, and mind. He has heard: Egg-born supaññas are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness. He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of egg-born supaññas!

He gives food.... He gives drink.... He gives clothing.... He gives a vehicle.... He gives a garland.... He gives a fragrance.... He gives an ointment.... He gives a bed.... He gives a dwelling.... He gives a lamp. Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of egg-born supaññas.

This, Monks, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of egg-born supaññas.

(The same is repeated for the other three types of supaññas.)

(Reference: SN 30.7-30.16 also SN 30.17-30.46)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a human being can be reborn as a supañña. Rebirth as a supañña is undesirable as once one is reborn into the animal realm it is like a prison and very difficult to move back into a human rebirth.

The Buddha shares that through making unwise decisions about one's own bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, they are reborn into the animal realm. If there are unwise decisions related to bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, a being will produce unwholesome outcomes in this life and future lives.

Through acquiring wisdom of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, a being can then make wiser decisions leading to wholesome outcomes. Through acquiring wisdom, we can make deliberate and intentional decisions that lead to wholesome outcomes both in this life and, if needed, future lives.

The ultimate goal would be to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to acquire wisdom leading to an improved condition of mind and life so that one can experience a peaceful existence in this life and no longer experience any future rebirths.

Chapter 39

To Reappear in the Company of Dogs To Reappear in the Company of Oxen

'Venerable Sir, this Seniya is a naked dog-duty Ascetic who does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown to the ground. He has long taken up and practiced that dog-duty. What will be his destination? What will be his future course?'

Enough, Punna, let that be. Do not ask me that.

A second time and a third time Punna, the ox-duty Ascetic asked The Perfectly Enlightened One same question.

Here, Punna, someone develops the dog-duty fully and uninterruptedly; he develops the dog-habit fully and uninterruptedly; he develops the dog-mind fully and uninterruptedly; he develops dog-behavior fully and uninterruptedly.

Having done so, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of dogs. But if he has such a view as this: 'By this virtue or observance or Asceticism or holy life, I shall become a [great] god or some [lesser] god', that is wrong view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong view, I say: hell or the animal realm.

So, Punna, if his dog-duty succeeds, it will lead him to the company of dogs; if it fails, it will lead him to hell.

When this was said, Seniya the naked dog-duty Ascetic cried out and burst into tears.

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'Venerable Sir, this Punna, son of the Koliyans, is an ox-duty Ascetic. He has long taken up and practiced that ox-duty. What will be his destination? What will be his future course?'

Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that.

A second time and a third time Seniya the naked dog-duty Ascetic asked The Perfectly Enlightened One same question.

Here, Seniya, someone develops the ox-duty fully and uninterruptedly; he develops the ox-habit fully and uninterruptedly; he develops the ox-mind fully and uninterruptedly; he develops ox-behavior fully and uninterruptedly.

Having done so, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of oxen. But if he has such a view as this: 'By this virtue or observance or Asceticism or holy life, I shall become a [great] god or some [lesser] god', that is wrong view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong view, I say: hell or the animal realm.

So, Seniya, if his ox-duty succeeds, it will lead him to the company of oxen; if it fails, it will lead him to hell.

When this was said, Punna, son of the Koliyans, the ox-duty Ascetic cried out and burst into tears.

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One told Seniya the naked dog-duty Ascetic:

Seniya, I could not persuade you when I said:

Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that.

[Then Punna the ox-duty Ascetic said:]

Venerable Sir, I am not crying because The Perfectly Enlightened One has said this about me, but because I have long taken up and practiced this ox-duty.

Venerable Sir, I have confidence in The Perfectly Enlightened One thus: 'The Perfectly Enlightened One is capable of teaching me The Teachings in such a way that I can abandon this ox-duty and that this Seniya the naked dog-duty Ascetic can abandon that dog-duty.'

(Reference: MN 57)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how if an individual functions like an animal in this human life, they will be reborn in the animal realm upon their next rebirth.

The unEnlightened mind functions much like an animal. Many people consider human beings to be animals. However, human beings are not animals it is just that the unEnlightened mind functions much like an animal mind. The vast majority of the world is unEnlightened at this time, thus, what many people observe with regards to human beings is animalistic behaviors and conduct leading them to think of human beings as animals.

It is important to understand animals and humans are not the same beings. Animals and humans are in two completely different realms of existence with different qualities of mind. Humans and animals both experience all three feelings of discontentedness such as pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. But, animals are unable to attain Enlightenment from their animal birth, and will need to find their way into a new birth in the human or heavenly realms to attain Enlightenment.

The bodily, verbal, and mental conduct is much like animals from the animal realm. But, human beings who learn and practice these Teachings will function more and more like a human being through a well developed practice of these Teachings.

Aside from creating a better and more peaceful life in this existence, a human being who chooses to improve their life practice will be reborn in a more favorable condition in their next life or completely escape The Cycle of Rebirth to eliminate existence in a future life within The Cycle of Rebirth.

As depicted in this Teaching, Students of The Buddha burst out in tears after hearing his Teaching. While The Buddha was aware that what he had to say had the potential of the Student reacting in this way, the Students pressed on with their desire to know the answer to the questions they asked.

While the Students burst out in tears, it was not The Buddha or The Teachings that caused the Student to cry. Instead, it was their own reaction to what they heard. The Student's mind caused its own discontentedness due to craving/desire/attachment.

For a Teacher to be effective in sharing these Teachings with Students, they need to be unattached to their Students. Students will sometimes cry or have other emotions while in the presence of their Teacher. If a Teacher is attached to their Students, observing emotions from their Students has the potential to create strong feelings in the mind of the Teacher as well as hindering them from being able to deliver beneficial Teachings that the Student needs to understand as part of The Path to Enlightenment.

If a Teacher is attached to their Students, their ability to help a Student would be significantly hindered. Therefore, a Teacher should ensure they are Enlightened prior to accepting Students as a Teacher while sharing these Teachings. If one chooses to share these Teachings while being unEnlightened, if you observe the mind is attached to a Student, the Teacher needs to actively work to eliminate the attachment otherwise, your ability to serve as a beneficial Teacher will be significantly impacted likely causing harm to your own mind and the mind of the Student.

A Teacher needs to "let go" and practice non-clinging to any and all Students. This allows the Teacher to share Teachings that they know in certain situations are going to produce

emotions for their Students but ensures that they do indeed share those Teachings for the benefit of the Student regardless of the potential of emotional reactions from a Student.

If a Teacher were to hold back Teachings that are needed for a Student's progress on The Path to Enlightenment just because they are uncomfortable with seeing the emotions of their Students, then the Teacher would not be providing the needed Teachings to help the Student advance and this would be harmful to the Student.

Instead, if a Teacher is liberated from any cravings/desires/attachments, especially to their Students, then they can share Teachings unimpeded by any defilements. A Teacher who is Enlightened will be best prepared to share these Teachings because their mind is no longer afflicted with craving, anger, or ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

If a Teacher shares Teachings and the Student is displeased, angry, or uncomfortable with The Teachings, the Teacher's mind should be unaffected.

If a Teacher shares Teachings and the Student is pleased, laughs, or happily accepts The Teachings, the Teacher's mind should be unaffected.

A Teacher who is Enlightened will be unaffected by any positive, negative, or neutral reactions or responses from their Students. An effective Teacher is not delivering Teachings to please the ears of their Students but instead, they are sharing Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. Whether The Teachings are learned, reflected upon, practiced, or accepted by a Student should not be part of the Teacher's decision making process of whether to share a specific Teaching or not. If the Student will or will not react or respond positively or negatively to The Teachings, should not be part of a Teachers decision making process. Instead, a Teacher needs to be unhindered and share The Path to Enlightenment speaking the truth whether the Student is going to have a positive, negative, or neutral reaction or response.

A Teacher who is sharing the true Path to Enlightenment, is not going to adjust The Teachings to please the ears of a Student, but instead, share the truth that is needed to move the mind to Enlightenment in a polite, kind, friendly, and respectful manner regardless of how a Student's mind may or may not react or respond.

With that said, a wise Teacher can actively look for ways to more readily help a Student understand The Teachings in a way that is beneficial for the Student. But, The Path to Enlightenment is The Path to Enlightenment. There is no ability to change these Teachings and still have them be effective at improving the condition of the mind that leads Students to experiencing Enlightenment.

The Natural Laws of Existence (i.e. The Teachings of a Buddha) are permanent and do not change based on the emotions of a Teacher or Student or any other condition.

While it may be enticing or appealing for a Teacher to attempt to change what a Buddha has taught, doing so would only cause harm to the Teacher and the Student. An individual who changes The Teachings of a Buddha would be doing so based on their own arrogance and out of their own ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

A Buddha is the discoverer, declarer, and originator of The Path to Enlightenment. A Buddha declares The Teachings that are needed to attain Enlightenment. A person who is not a Buddha would be unable to modify a Buddha's Teachings in a way that would be beneficial.

It is only a Buddha who truly knows with 100% clarity how to attain Enlightenment. A Buddha is Fully and Perfectly Enlightened while all others who attain Enlightenment, while Enlightened, their mind does not have the deep clarity and deep wisdom of that of a Buddha. Therefore, all others will need to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of a Buddha to attain Enlightenment.

Attempting to modify or adjust a Buddha's Teachings will cause great harm to that individual and countless individuals who choose to learn with someone who has modified The Teachings of a Buddha.

There should be no circumstances where an individual who is not a Buddha changes The Teachings of a Buddha as this would only cause great harm at the detriment of all those who choose to learn or practice Teachings that have been modified.

Modified teachings will not lead to Enlightenment and would only mislead Students causing great harm to all those involved.

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. They have deep wisdom to help the world 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.

A Buddha will need to weave their way through a previous Buddha's Teachings as all things are affected by impermanence, thus, a previous Buddha's Teachings will not be in a pure condition.

A Buddha will be able to easily determine the condition of the mind of another person, then be able to help them with Teachings to eliminate the unwholesome qualities of the mind and cultivate wholesome qualities of the mind. A Buddha will be able to observe the condition of another being's mind but only does so with an interest to help the other being eliminate the unwholesome qualities from the mind and cultivate wholesome qualities in the mind to guide one towards Enlightenment.

A Buddha will have a deep practice of their own Teachings, leading by example as a living, breathing, walking example of their Teachings.

A Buddha will be able to make predictions of the future and understand the future progress of the world as a whole while explaining past events and the current condition of the world through their Teachings.

A Buddha will know this is their last life without being reborn into any realm of existence. They will have insight into their previous lives and knowledge of their existence in those previous lives. Their only goal will be to lead as many people to Enlightenment as possible and to create a strong Community of humans with Enlightenment who will assist others to attain Enlightenment and leave strong Teachings that will assist unEnlightened beings to become Enlightened after a Buddha's death.

When a Buddha arises in the world, this is your best opportunity to attain Enlightenment. A Buddha will have independently realized their Enlightenment and will be experiencing "Perfect Enlightenment". A Buddha will have deep knowledge, deep understanding, and deep wisdom of how to attain Enlightenment through their independent realization of Enlightenment.

A Buddha will be able to teach and guide all humans, who are interested to learn, towards Enlightenment.

A Buddha arising in the world is extremely rare. The last Buddha currently known to the world was Gotama Buddha who died over 2,500 years ago.

Why Does a Buddha Appear in the World?

A Buddha appears in the world when a Buddha is needed.

When humanity has reached a point of major confusion, conflict, and there is grave suffering throughout the world, a Buddha will appear.

A Buddha has the ability to help all of humanity to realize a better existence through their independently realized Teachings.

A Buddha will have struggled for countless lives to reach Enlightenment. Their journey on The Path would have been long and difficult over untold numbers of countless rebirths but they would never give up in their pursuit to Full and Perfect Enlightenment. They also would never give up on sharing their Teachings with all of humanity teaching until death.

A Buddha would have deep compassion for every single being in existence - past, present, and future.

A Buddha would know that they have attained Full and Perfect Enlightenment and are able to help all of humanity now and well into the future. But, all of humanity is never ready and willing to learn, grow, and progress on The Path during a Buddha's existence. All unEnlightened beings are already experiencing significant internal struggles so they will also struggle to closely understand and practice The Teachings that will lead to their full liberation. Most will not even know there is a solution to their struggles of the mind because they do not necessarily realize there is a problem.

Complacency is the norm and is the most detrimental quality of the mind.

Humanity may or may not even see the struggles and issues that are apparent and so clear to a Buddha. The vast majority of humanity will not even know that a Buddha has appeared because they are unable to determine who is or is not Enlightened and, thus, would not be able to determine who is or is not a Buddha. Humanity is mostly "unknowing" of true reality and "unknowing" of the countless problems faced by all beings. The large masses do not understand the challenges they are facing with the unEnlightened mind so they are unfamiliar with the solutions to the unEnlightened mind.

A Buddha sees all the problems, and has all the solutions of how to guide a being on The Path to Enlightenment so that a more Enlightened humanity can work together to solve its challenges.

A Buddha's responsibility is not to himself as they have transcended any selfish pursuit or interest in fame or fortune. A Buddha chooses to spread the word of their appearance and Teachings through guiding people to attain Enlightenment without the need for others to know they are a Buddha. A Buddha can be more productive through others not knowing he is a Buddha because he can more accurately assess a Practitioner's mind. If there is a worldwide announcement of the arrival of a Buddha, there would be those who agree and come to that Buddha for guidance, and others who would reject the idea of a Buddha being in existence.

Those who reject the idea of a Buddha's existence would not seek guidance on The Path to Enlightenment, and those who do seek guidance might try to be on their "best behavior" masking the mind's true nature. This would hinder a Buddha's ability to observe the condition of a Student's mind and, thus, be more limiting to how a Buddha could assist their Students in the progress of Enlightenment.

A Buddha would not be interested in a worldwide announcement of their awakening as it would be counterproductive and would instead, choose to humbly and peacefully share their Teachings with those who choose to be taught. A Buddha will encourage people to learn and progress on The Path guiding anyone who is interested to attain Enlightenment.

A Buddha's goal is to help eliminate the massive amount of suffering that is pervasive and the original cause for the Buddha's appearance in the world.

A Buddha appearing in today's society would need to be creative in understanding exactly how to present The Teachings to an "unaware" and otherwise absorbed audience. An audience that is complacent either unknowingly unaware or purposefully ignoring their own suffering.

Either way, upon a Buddha's appearance, the Buddha will have to put much more thought and effort into convincing people that there is a problem rather than the thought and effort that they would put into the actual sharing of The Teachings themselves.

Complacency is not easily eradicated, and the vast majority of the world is complacent unknowing of the true struggles faced and the solutions to these struggles.

Once a person decides they need guidance and accepts responsibility to learn and practice, the Buddha is well prepared to deliver every Teaching that permeates their entire mind.

There is no one or nothing that could eliminate the wisdom acquired by a Buddha through their independently realized Enlightenment.

There are no specific physical features that would identify a Buddha as being a Buddha. You will know who is a Buddha through observing their work to develop a dedicated Community of Practitioners and Teachers while assisting countless Practitioners to attain Enlightenment. You will be able to observe through a Buddha's work towards sharing The Teachings into the world in such a way that helps countless beings attain Enlightenment during his lifetime and after his death leaving The Teachings and a Community to share those Teachings. And, if you know that individual does not have any Teachers but was able to benefit countless beings to attain Enlightenment during their lifetime and after their death, with their Teachings continuing to help countless beings attain Enlightenment, then this person could be considered a Buddha.

Chapter 40

The Vast Plane of Misery

Monks, suppose a man were to cut up the grass, sticks, branches, and foliage in this Jambudīpa (one of the great continents) and collect them into a single heap. Having done so, he would impale the large creatures in the ocean on the large stakes, the middle-sized creatures on the middle-sized stakes, and the small creatures on the small stakes.

Still, Monks, the gross creatures in the ocean would not be exhausted even after all the grass, sticks, branches, and foliage in this Jambudīpa had been used up and exhausted.

The small creatures in the ocean that could not easily be impaled on stakes, would be even more numerous than this.

For what reason?

Because of the narrowness of their bodies.

So vast, Monks, is the plane of misery. The person who is accomplished in view, freed from that vast plane of misery, understands as it really is: This is discontentedness; This is the cause of discontentedness; This is the elimination of discontentedness; This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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 56.36)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how there are countless beings in the animal realm. A plethora of beings exist in the animal realm. Even with 99% of all animals that once existed now extinct, there are still an enormous amount of beings that still exist in the animal realm.

While many of the beings in the animal realm have moved on to other realms and/or attained Enlightenment from the human or heavenly realms, there are still countless beings in the animal realm that need to be reborn into the human or heavenly realms to have the opportunity to attain Enlightenment. This is one of the reasons why human beings should not continue to rely on animal products to sustain our life. Through selfishly sustaining our life on animal products, those beings are then unable to develop enough wholesome Kamma in their short life span to experience an improved rebirth.

The vast majority of all beings born into the human realm have been reborn from the animal realm into the human realm. This is why we have seen a decrease in beings within the animal realm through extinction while there has simultaneously been an increase in the number of beings in the human realm.

With Gotama Buddha predicting that a new Buddha would arise 2,500 years after his death, the human realm is now full of beings who are able to attain Enlightenment.

Over the course of the coming years, the animal realm will continue to decrease with the human population continuing to increase. As more and more humans experience Enlightenment, the number of beings in the human realm will gradually decrease over many generations until all beings have attained Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains, “So vast, Monks, is the plane of misery. The person who is accomplished in view, freed from that vast plane of misery, understands as it really is: This is discontentedness; This is the cause of discontentedness; This is the elimination of discontentedness; This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness”. The Buddha is explaining that there are countless beings in the lower realms and it is when a Practitioner is accomplished and well established in “Right View” that they are then freed from the lower realms. A Practitioner who is accomplished and well established in “Right View”, along with many other criteria, will have attained the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer. Once the first Stage of Enlightenment as a Stream-Enterer is attained, one is finished with the lower realms never to be reborn there again. It is only a matter of time before a Stream-Enterer will attain Enlightenment. They will either attain Enlightenment in this very life or a maximum of seven (7) more rebirths.

The Buddha encourages Students to make an effort to understand The Four Noble Truths because it is understanding and practicing The Four Noble Truths that allows a Practitioner to become accomplished and well established in “Right View” to become freed from the lower realms (i.e. the plane of misery).

Chapter 41

Terrible and Harsh Prison of Hell and Prison of Animal Realm

So too, Monks, when one does not have confidence in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have a sense of moral wrongdoing in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have moral concern in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have energy in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, when one does not have wisdom in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, in the Noble One's discipline one is called a poor, impoverished, needy person.

Having no confidence, no sense of moral wrongdoing, no moral concern, no energy, no wisdom in [cultivating] wholesome qualities, that poor, impoverished, needy person engages in misconduct by body, speech, and mind. This, I say, is his getting into debt.

To conceal his bodily misconduct, ... To conceal his verbal misconduct, ... To conceal his mental misconduct, he nurtures an evil (unwholesome) desire. He wishes: Let no one know me; he intends [with the desire]: Let no one know me; he speaks statements [with the desire]: Let no one know me; he makes bodily endeavors [with the desire]: Let no one know me. This, I say, is the interest he must pay.

Well-behaved fellow Monks speak thus about him: This Venerable One acts in such a way, behaves in such a way. This, I say, is his being advised.

When he has gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, evil unwholesome thoughts accompanied by remorse attack him. This, I say, is his prosecution.

Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, that poor, impoverished, needy person who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind is bound in the prison of hell or the prison of the animal realm.

I do not see, Monks, any other prison that is as terrible and harsh, [and] such an obstacle to attaining the unsurpassed security from bondage (Enlightenment), as the prison of hell or the prison of the animal realm.

(Reference: AN 6.45)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how through lacking confidence, moral wrongdoing, moral concern, energy, and wisdom to cultivate wholesome qualities, one is a “poor, impoverished, needy person”.

Through a lack of confidence, moral wrongdoing, moral concern, energy, and wisdom to cultivate wholesome qualities, one will engage in unwholesome conduct by body, speech, and mind. It is Right Intention, Right Speech, and Right Action that provide the wisdom of moral conduct by body, speech, and mind.

Right Intention: Mind

Right Speech: Speech

Right Action: Body

Through a lack of wholesome bodily, verbal, and mental conduct, one is reborn into the lower realms of hell and the animal realm.

The Buddha explains who being reborn into hell or the animal realm is like a prison. He shares this because once reborn into hell or the animal realm, it is very difficult to return back to the human or heavenly realms for an opportunity to attain Enlightenment.

Hell, nor the animal realm, are permanent, but once reborn into those realms, there is significant pain and misery with no ability to attain Enlightenment from those realms. It requires countless rebirths in those realms before a being can make it back to the human or heavenly realms for the opportunity to attain Enlightenment.

This is one of the reasons Gotama Buddha was so supportive, encouraging, and motivating to help as many beings as possible during his lifetime to attain Enlightenment. His Teachings helped countless people during his lifetime and after his death to live a better way of life, attain Enlightenment, and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Moral wrongdoing is the knowledge and understanding of what is wholesome or unwholesome related to bodily, verbal, and mental conduct.

Moral concern is to have care and an interest to improve one’s life and life practice by choosing to practice wholesome bodily, verbal, and mental conduct. To have regard that one’s moral conduct is unwise or unwholesome and needs to improve.

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 42

Few Animals Are Reborn Among Human Beings or Heavenly Beings

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

‘Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.’

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away from the animal realm, are reborn among human beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away from the animal realm, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.’

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

‘Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.’

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away from the animal realm, are reborn among the heavenly beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away from the animal realm, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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 56.120-56.131)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how there are not many beings who are reborn from the animal realm into the human realm but instead, beings from the animal realm are continuously reborn in the realm of hell, animal, and afflicted spirits. The lower realms of hell and the animal realm are like a prison.

He provides the reason for this as beings have not seen The Four Noble Truths. Without learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths to establish Right View, a being would find it difficult to ever attain Enlightenment. Animals have no opportunity to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to develop the mind to attain Enlightenment. They are incapable of cultivating the mind to the extent needed to attain Enlightenment, therefore, they are continuously reborn in and out of the lower realms of existence.

The Buddha encourages Students to make an effort to understand The Four Noble Truths as from within the human realm we can learn, reflect, and practice to develop and cultivate the mind to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha also shares how there are not many beings who are reborn from the animal realm into the heavenly realm but instead, beings from the animal realm are continuously reborn in the realm of hell, animal, and afflicted spirits. The lower realms of hell and the animal realm are like a prison.

Afflicted Spirits

Chapter 43

Hungry Ghosts (Afflicted Spirits)

1.) The Skeleton

Venerable Mahāmogallāna said.

‘Here, friend, as I was coming down from Mount Vulture Peak, I saw a skeleton moving through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following it in hot pursuit, were pecking at it between the ribs, stabbing it, and tearing it apart while it let out cries of pain.

It occurred to me: It is wonderful, indeed! It is amazing, indeed! That there could be such a being, that there could be such a spirit, that there could be such a type of individual existence!’

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

Monks, there are disciples who reside having become vision, having become knowledge, in that a disciple can know, see, and witness such a sight. In the past, Monks, I too saw that being, but I did not speak about it. For if I had spoken about it, others would not have believed me, and if they had not believed me, that would have led to their harm and discontentedness for a long time.

That being, Monks, used to be a cattle butcher in this same Rājagaha (old capital city of Magadha Kingdom). Having been tormented in hell for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years as a result of that (unwholesome) Kamma, as a residual result of that same (unwholesome) Kamma, he is experiencing such a type of individual existence.

2.) The Piece of Meat

... I saw a piece of meat moving through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following it in hot pursuit, were stabbing at it and tearing it apart as it let out cries of pain. ...

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being, Monks, was a cattle butcher in this same Rājagaha....

3.) The Lump of Meat

... I saw a lump of meat moving through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following it in hot pursuit, were stabbing at it and tearing it apart as it let out cries of pain. ...

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a poultry butcher in this same Rājagaha....

4.) The Flayed Man

... I saw a flayed man moving through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following it in hot pursuit, were stabbing at it and tearing it apart as it let out cries of pain. ...

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a sheep butcher in this same Rājagaha....

5.) Sword Hairs

... I saw a man with body-hairs of swords moving through the air. Those swords kept on rising up and striking his body while he let out cries of pain

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a hog butcher in this same Rājagaha....

6.) Spear Hairs

... I saw a man with body-hairs of spears moving through the air. Those spears kept on rising up and striking his body while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a deer hunter in this same Rājagaha....

7.) Arrow Hairs

... I saw a man with body-hairs of arrows moving through the air. Those arrows kept on rising up and striking his body while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a torturer in this same Rājagaha....

8.) Needle Hairs (1)

... I saw a man with body-hairs of needles moving through the air. Those needles kept on rising up and striking his body while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a horse trainer in this same Rājagaha....

9.) Needle Hairs (2)

... I saw a man with body-hairs of needles moving through the air. Those needles entered his head and came out from his mouth; they entered his mouth and came out from his chest; they entered his chest and came out from his belly; they entered his belly and came out from his thighs; they entered his thighs and came out from his calves; they entered his calves and came out from his feet, while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a slanderer in this same Rājagaha....

10.) Pot Testicles

... I saw a man whose testicles were like pots moving through the air. When he walked, he had to lift his testicles onto his shoulders, and when he sat down, he sat on top of his testicles. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following him in hot pursuit, were stabbing at him and tearing him apart while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was a corrupt magistrate in this same Rājagaha....

11.) With Head Submerged

... I saw a man with head submerged in a pit of dung....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was an adulterer in this same Rājagaha....

12.) The Dung Eater

... I saw a man submerged in a pit of dung, eating dung with both hands....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being, Monks, was a hostile Brāhmin in this same Rājagaha. In the time of the Buddha Kassapa's Dispensation, he invited the male ordained Community to a meal. Having had rice pots filled with dung, he said to the Monks: 'Sirs, eat as much as you want from this and take the rest away with you'. Having been tormented in hell for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years as a result of that (unwholesome) Kamma, as a residual result of that same (unwholesome) Kamma, he is experiencing such a type of individual existence.

13.) The Flayed Woman

... I saw a flayed woman moving through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following her in hot pursuit, were stabbing at her and tearing her apart while she let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That woman was an adulteress in this same Rājagaha. Having been tormented in hell for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years as a result of that (unwholesome) Kamma, as a residual result of that same (unwholesome) Kamma, she is experiencing such a type of individual existence.

14.) The Ugly Woman

... I saw a woman, foul-smelling and ugly, moving through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following her in hot pursuit, were stabbing at her and tearing her apart while she let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That woman was a fortune-teller in this same Rājagaha....

15.) The Sweltering Woman

... I saw a woman, her body roasting, sweltering, sooty, moving through the air, while she let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That woman was the Chief Queen of the King of Kalinga. Of a jealous character, she poured a brazier of coals over one of the King's consorts....

16.) The Headless Trunk

... I saw a headless trunk moving through the air; its eyes and mouth were on its chest. Vultures, crows, and hawks, following it in hot pursuit, were stabbing at it and tearing it apart while it let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That being was an executioner named Harika in this same Rājagaha....

17.) The Unwholesome Male Ordained Practitioner

... I saw a Monk moving through the air. His outer robe, bowl, waistband, and body were burning, blazing, and flaming while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That Monk had been an unwholesome Monk in the Buddha Kassapa's Dispensation....

18.) The Unwholesome Female Ordained Practitioner

... I saw a female Ordained Practitioner moving through the air. Her outer robe, bowl, waistband, and body were burning, blazing, and flaming while she let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That female Ordained Practitioner had been an unwholesome female Ordained Practitioner in the Buddha Kassapa's Dispensation....

19.) The Unwholesome Probationary Nun

... I saw a probationary nun moving through the air. Her outer robe, bowl, waistband, and body were burning, blazing, and flaming while she let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That probationary nun had been an unwholesome probationary nun in the Buddha Kassapa's Dispensation....

20.) The Unwholesome Novice Monk

... I saw a novice Monk moving through the air. His outer robe, bowl, waistband, and body were burning, blazing, and flaming while he let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That novice Monk had been an unwholesome novice Monk in the Buddha Kassapa's Dispensation....

21.) The Unwholesome Novice Nun

... I saw a novice nun moving through the air. Her outer robe, bowl, waistband, and body were burning, blazing, and flaming while she let out cries of pain....

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

That novice nun had been an unwholesome novice nun in the Buddha Kassapa's Dispensation....

(Reference: SN 19.1-19.21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares multiple individuals who have been reborn in the realm of afflicted spirits. He provides a large variety of different types of individuals and their conduct that lead to rebirth in the realm of afflicted spirits.

Chapter 44

Few Afflicted Spirits Are Reborn Among Human Beings or Heavenly Beings

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

‘Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction’.

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away from the realm of afflicted spirits, are reborn among human beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away from the realm of afflicted spirits, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.’

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

‘Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.’

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away from the realm of afflicted spirits, are reborn among the heavenly beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away from the realm of afflicted spirits, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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 56.126-56.131)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how there are not many beings who are reborn from the realm of afflicted spirits into the human realm but instead, beings from the realm of afflicted spirits are continuously reborn in the realm of hell, animal, and afflicted spirits. The lower realms of hell and the animal realm are like a prison.

He provides the reason for this as beings have not seen The Four Noble Truths. Without learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths to establish Right View, a being would find it difficult to ever attain Enlightenment. Afflicted Spirits have no opportunity to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to develop the mind to attain Enlightenment. They are incapable of cultivating the mind to the extent needed to attain Enlightenment, therefore, they are continuously reborn in and out of the lower realms of existence.

The Buddha encourages Students to make an effort to understand The Four Noble Truths as from within the human realm we can learn, reflect, and practice to develop and cultivate the mind to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha also shares how there are not many beings who are reborn from the realm of afflicted spirits into the heavenly realm but instead, beings from the realm of afflicted spirits are continuously reborn in the realm of hell, animal, and afflicted spirits. The lower realms of hell and the animal realm are like a prison.

Human Beings

Chapter 45

Ten Courses of Wholesome Kamma (Deposited in Heaven)

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 Brāhmīns 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.

Monks, one possessing these ten qualities is deposited in heaven as if brought there.

(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. This is the conduct that leads to rebirth in the heavenly realm. But, rebirth in the heavenly realm is not desirable as there is still existence and still discontentedness in that realm. The heavenly realm is not permanent and beings there are still in The Cycle of Rebirth with the potential to be reborn back into lower realms. Beings in the heavenly realm tend to be complacent and unmotivated to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings because they are experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings. There are not painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant, therefore, with complacency to include lack of motivation, those beings are oftentimes continually reborn moving back into the realms of human, afflicted spirits, animal, or even hell.

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 46

Five Advantages to One of Wholesome Morality and of Success in Morality

And, Householders, there are these five advantages to one of wholesome morality and of success in morality.

What are they?

In the first place, through careful attention to his affairs, he gains much wealth.

In the second place, he gets a wholesome reputation for morality and wholesome conduct.

In the third place, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brāhmins, Householders or Ascetics, he does so with confidence and assurance.

In the fourth place, he dies unconfused.

In the fifth place, after death, at the breaking-up of the body, he arises in a good place, a heavenly world.

These are the five advantages to one of wholesome morality, and of success in morality.

(Reference: UD 8.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the five advantages for one who practices wholesome moral conduct.

It is The Eight Fold Path of these Teachings that shares the wholesome conduct through Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood. There are other Teachings that provide details to ensure a Practitioner deeply understands wholesome moral conduct and can be guided to practice in a way that is wholesome.

The Buddha's Teachings are shared in layers with The Eight Fold Path providing a core and central Teaching that many of his other Teachings plug into helping guide a Practitioner to Enlightenment. The Eight Fold Path provides a certain level of detail with other Teachings helping to provide increased degrees of depth as a Practitioner more fully explores all the various Teachings.

This Teaching helps a Practitioner understand the advantage, or benefits, that can be predicted for one who practices wholesome moral conduct as described as part of The Path to Enlightenment.

1.) In the first place, through careful attention to his affairs, he gains much wealth.

By practicing wholesome moral conduct a Practitioner's mind can be at ease allowing them to pay close attention to their daily activities performing each task thoroughly which leads to increased wealth.

Through performing one's duties with wholesome intentions and completing tasks thoroughly, business partners are more than pleased to work with you. People do not do business with businesses, they do business with people. Therefore, when you practice wholesome moral conduct through your career and profession, people enjoy working with you, they know they will receive quality work, they enjoy supporting your efforts and goals, and they are more than willing to send their friends, family, and others to you for products and services. This leads to increased growth in your career or business providing opportunities for you and your family to thrive.

2.) In the second place, he gets a wholesome reputation for morality and wholesome conduct.

By practicing wholesome moral conduct a Practitioner gains a reputation in their community for being wholesome which will lead to wholesome friendships and fulfilling relationships among all beings so that one can live in harmony and peace with others. This provides a daily life where you are able to peacefully interact with all beings in a way that does not cause harm, therefore, your wholesome reputation will circulate opening up continued opportunities for personal and professional relationships that are fully rewarding allowing the mind to be at ease.

3.) In the third place, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brāhmins, Householders or Ascetics, he does so with confidence and assurance.

By practicing wholesome moral conduct, a Practitioner knows they are not causing harm to anyone, therefore, no harm will come to them. The mind can be peaceful, steadied, stable, and at ease.

When they join various groups of individuals, no matter who they are, one can function in harmony with all beings having humbled and respectful confidence assured they will be well received and successful in their interactions.

4.) In the fourth place, he dies unconfused.

Death is one of the most challenging times for an unEnlightened mind. Death of those who are close to you, and your own death, will oftentimes present significant challenges to the unEnlightened mind.

When one is nearing death with a lack of wisdom related to wholesome moral conduct, there can be confusion and difficulties as the mind is holding on to the world and countless objects in the world. The mind can be fearful of what's next because one is unsure if how they conducted their life was wholesome or unwholesome.

But, when you deeply understand and practice these Teachings, you know exactly what is wholesome and unwholesome. Through your own wise decisions, a Practitioner chooses to practice the wholesome Teachings leading to wholesome outcomes. One can observe they have harmony in every single one of their interactions and relationships. There is no fear or confusion at death for a Practitioner who deeply understands and is practicing wholesome moral conduct.

They know they treated all beings well and did not cause harm through their conduct. When it's time for death, a Practitioner who practices wholesome moral conduct can be at ease knowing that they were treating beings politely, kindly, friendly, and respectfully. There is no confusion.

A being who practices these Teachings closely knows that if they have attained Enlightenment, then there is no further rebirth. And if one is not Enlightened, they know because of their wholesome moral conduct, that their next rebirth will be in an improved designation. Therefore, one can exit this life without confusion knowing with 100% certainty that there is either no further rebirth or an improved rebirth in their next life.

If an individual has not practiced wholesome moral conduct up to this point in their life, that is ok. One can learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings now to clean up their life practice producing improved results going forward in life. At death, one is not judged on the totality of their life to determine whether they are reborn in a good or bad designation.

Instead, based on the condition of one's own mind at the time of death, either Enlightened or unEnlightened, that is when one will experience what happens after death which will be determined by the condition of the mind at death. So even if you have done horrible things in the past, one can improve their life practice now to still experience beneficial results in this life and potentially attain Enlightenment to escape The Cycle of

Rebirth. And, if one does not attain Enlightenment in this life, all the work and effort that is invested now will contribute to an improved rebirth and benefit you in that new existence.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, he ordained an individual who murdered 999 people. The murderer completely turned his life around by learning and practicing these Teachings to attain Enlightenment prior to death. I am sure you have not murdered 999 people, therefore, you can make the decision to walk towards the light and away from the darkness now, leading to improved results in this life, and if needed, an improved designation in a future rebirth.

5.) In the fifth place, after death, at the breaking-up of the body, he arises in a good place, a heavenly world.

An individual who is unEnlightened and is practicing wholesome moral conduct will, at death, be reborn in an improved designation. If one is reborn back into the human realm, they will have an improved rebirth. There is also the potential for rebirth to occur in the heavenly realm.

However, as mentioned previously in this book, rebirth into the heavenly realm is not permanent and is not necessarily ideal. Beings in the heavenly realm are still in The Cycle of Rebirth and need to attain Enlightenment to escape further existences. Beings in the heavenly realm oftentimes lack motivation to learn and practice these Teachings due to only experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings. They do not experience painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant, therefore, they are oftentimes complacent and require rebirth back into other realms continuing The Cycle of Rebirth.

A wise Practitioner will be determined, dedicated, and diligent to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings while in this human birth with motivation to attain Enlightenment to eliminate and escape The Cycle of Rebirth in this life.

There is no need to be reborn into the heavenly realm and doing so, does not mean one will experience Enlightenment in that rebirth even though it is possible. If one enters the heavenly realm as a Non-Returner (i.e. the third Stage of Enlightenment) they will attain Enlightenment in that birth. But, that is not the only way to enter the heavenly realm.

There are beings who enter the heavenly realm who are not in the third Stage of Enlightenment and those beings have a highly likely potential to be reborn into additional existences in other realms besides the heavenly realm if they do not attain Enlightenment in the heavenly realm. It would be unwise to anticipate rebirth in the heavenly realm and expect that one will attain Enlightenment from that realm.

There is no guarantee that one will be reborn in the heavenly realm and if reborn in the heavenly realm, there is no guarantee that one will attain Enlightenment from the heavenly realm.

Chapter 47

One is Reborn through One's Deeds

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 does not creep along 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, 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': He also spoke of 'the fourfold wholesome conduct of speech and the threefold wholesome conduct of mind' in the same way.)

(Reference: AN 10.216)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how rebirth occurs based on one's deeds or actions.

While craving is the fuel that determines if there is rebirth, it is the results of our actions that determines where and in what condition one will be reborn. The location and condition of one's rebirth is determined by The Natural Law of Kamma.

Rebirth: a new being that has come into existence through The Cycle of Rebirth based on a previous being's craving and Kamma.

Gotama Buddha taught rebirth through The Cycle of Rebirth.

Rebirth is a new existence of a new being that has been reborn based on a previous being's craving. Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth. If there is craving at the time of death, there will be rebirth into a new existence. If Enlightenment has been attained (i.e. all craving, anger, and ignorance are fully extinguished), there will be no rebirth.

The new being may or may not have residual memories of previous existences in its new consciousness that may be recalled over time during the new being's life. Rebirth is not based on a permanent soul or spirit of any kind but instead is caused by the craving of the previous being which produces a new birth into a new existence.

Each new birth is a new existence or new life. In reality, this should be shared and discussed as The Cycle of New Existence because there is nothing that is actually being reborn.

Kamma of the previous being will determine the destination and life situation of the new being. Kamma of the previous being determines in which realm the new being will be reborn, Hell, Animal, Afflicted Spirits, Human, or the Heavenly realm. Kamma from the previous being also determines the quality of life of the new being. For example, the family and life situation (poverty vs. wealth) one is born into, the appearance of the new being, and the condition of the new being's body and mind are all determined based on the Kamma of the previous being.

If the previous being generated significant amounts of wholesome Kamma to be reborn into the human realm, the new being is reborn into a favorable destination within a wealthy family, beautiful appearance, and/or with a healthy body and mind.

If the previous being generated significant amounts of unwholesome Kamma, the new being is reborn into an unfavorable destination of the lower realms (Hell, Animal, or Afflicted Spirits Realm) or if reborn into the human realm, the being will be reborn into difficult circumstances in the new existence based on the previous being's Kamma.

Difficult circumstances that result from the previous being's Kamma would include what realm the new being is reborn, what part of the world, the type of family, the amount of wealth, ability to acquire necessities to sustain life, appearance, and the health of the body and the mind.

Craving determines if there is rebirth while Kamma determines in what realm, what situation, and the condition of the new being upon rebirth.

The Buddha shares that when one has wholesome conduct through body, speech, and mind, one's Kamma (i.e. results) are also wholesome (i.e. straight). Therefore, with wholesome (i.e. straight) bodily, verbal, and mental conduct one's rebirth is wholesome or straight.

The Buddha provides guidance on wholesome bodily, verbal, and mental conduct throughout his Teachings. Specifically, you can see Chapter 7 of this book for detailed explanation of these Teachings.

Chapter 48

Three Surpassing Respects of Jambudīpa People

Monks, in three respects the people of Uttarakuru surpass the heavenly beings (Tāvatiṃsa) and the people of Jambudīpa (one of the great continents).

What three?

- (1) They are without selfishness and possessiveness;
- (2) their life span is fixed; and
- (3) their living conditions are exceptional.

In these three respects, the people of Uttarakuru surpass the heavenly beings and the people of Jambudīpa.

In three respects, the people of Jambudīpa surpass the people of Uttarakuru and the heavenly beings.

What three?

- (1) They are heroes;
- (2) they are mindful; and
- (3) there is the living of the spiritual life here.

In these three respects, the people of Jambudīpa surpass the people of Uttarakuru and the heavenly beings.

(Reference: AN 9.21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares insight into a few wholesome qualities that he considers to be highly important.

In discussing the people of Uttarakuru he shares that there are three qualities that people of this region surpass heavenly beings. People of Uttarakuru have the qualities of:

- 1.) They are without selfishness and possessiveness;
- 2.) their life span is fixed; and
- 3.) their living conditions are exceptional.

This Teaching alludes to The Buddha pointing out that heavenly beings do not possess these same qualities.

The Buddha then shares that there are three qualities that the people of Jambudīpa surpass the people of Uttarakuru and the heavenly beings. People of Jambudīpa have the qualities of:

- 1.) They are heroes;
- 2.) they are mindful; and
- 3.) there is the living of the spiritual life here.

This Teaching alludes to The Buddha pointing out that the people of Uttarakuru nor heavenly beings possess these same qualities. This also provides insight that The Buddha views being brave, mindful, and living the spiritual life as respectful qualities that one should aspire to cultivate in their life practice.

Chapter 49

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.

Chapter 50

How Is One Developed in the Womb?

Then the Yakkha Indaka (indigenous ethnic group from the Indian subcontinent) approached The Perfectly Enlightened One and addressed him in verse:

‘As the Buddhas say that form is not the soul, how then does one obtain this body?

From where do one’s bones and liver come? How is one developed in the womb?’

The Perfectly Enlightened One:

First there is the **kalala**;
From the **kalala** comes the **abbuda**;
From the **abbuda** the **pesī** is produced;
From the **pesī** the **ghana** arises;
From the **ghana** emerge the limbs,
The head-hair, body-hair, and nails.
And whatever food the mother eats —
The meals and drink that she consumes —
By this, the being there is maintained,
The person inside the mother’s womb.

(Reference: SN 10.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a being develops in the womb.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, there was no modern day science or the ability to study how a womb develops inside a mother’s body. Therefore, for The Buddha to have acquired this wisdom is astounding.

The use of the words koala, abbuda, pesi, and ghana are not known to me. These would most likely have been words in use during the lifetime of The Buddha within the language he taught.

As is typical for The Buddha’s Teachings, he is showing the cause and effect of how one thing leads to another as he describes a maturing being inside a mother’s womb.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 41-50)

<https://youtu.be/lqj8PyK-F2Q>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 343 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 41-50)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--343---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-41-50-e1m67qs/a-a8bn171>

Chapter 51

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 52

Union and Disengagement Concerning Femininity and Masculinity

Monks, I will teach you a discourse on union and disengagement.

Listen....

And what is that discourse on union and disengagement?

A woman, Monks, attends internally to her feminine faculty, her feminine behavior, her feminine appearance, her feminine aspect, her feminine desire, her feminine voice, her feminine decoration. She becomes excited by these and takes delight in them. Excited by them, taking delight in them, she attends externally to [a man's] masculine faculty, his masculine behavior, his masculine appearance, his masculine aspect, his masculine desire, his masculine voice, his masculine decoration. She becomes excited by these and takes delight in them. Excited by them, taking delight in them, she desires union externally, and she also desires the pleasure and joy that arise on account of such union.

Beings who are delighted with their femininity, enter upon union with men. It is in this way that a woman does not transcend her femininity.

A man, Monks, attends internally to his masculine faculty, his masculine behavior, his masculine appearance, his masculine aspect, his masculine desire, his masculine voice, his masculine decoration. He becomes excited by these and takes delight in them. Excited by them, taking delight in them, he attends externally to [a woman's] feminine faculty, her feminine behavior, her feminine appearance, her feminine aspect, her feminine desire, her feminine voice, her feminine decoration. He becomes excited by these and takes delight in them. Excited by them, taking delight in them, he desires union externally, and he also desires the pleasure and joy that arise on account of such union.

Beings who are delighted with their masculinity, enter upon union with women. It is in this way that a man does not transcend his masculinity.

This is how union comes about.

And how does disengagement come about?

A woman, Monks, does not attend internally to her feminine faculty, her feminine behavior, her feminine appearance, her feminine aspect, her feminine desire, her feminine voice, her feminine decoration. She does not become excited by these or take delight in them. Not excited by them, not taking delight in them, she does not attend externally to [a man's] masculine faculty, his masculine behavior, his masculine appearance, his masculine aspect, his masculine desire, his masculine voice, his masculine decoration. She does not become excited by these or take delight in them. Not excited by them, not taking delight in them, she does not desire union externally, nor does she desire the pleasure and joy that arise on account of such union.

Beings who are not delighted with their femininity, become disengaged from men. It is in this way that a woman transcends her femininity.

A man, Monks, does not attend internally to his masculine faculty, his masculine behavior, his masculine appearance, his masculine aspect, his masculine desire, his masculine voice, his masculine decoration. He does not become excited by these or take delight in them. Not excited by them, not taking delight in them, he does not attend externally to [a woman's] feminine faculty, her feminine behavior, her feminine appearance, her feminine aspect, her feminine desire, her feminine voice, her feminine decoration. He does not become excited by these or take delight in them. Not excited by them, not taking delight in them, he does not desire union externally, nor does he desire the pleasure and joy that arise on account of such union.

Beings who are not delighted with their masculinity, become disengaged from women. It is in this way that a man transcends his masculinity.

This is how disengagement comes about. This, Monks, is The Teaching discourse on union and disengagement.

(Reference: AN 7.51)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how some women are interested in men as a sexual partner and that some men are interested in women as a sexual partner.

He further describes women who are not interested in men as a sexual partner and men who are not interested in women as a sexual partner.

During the lifetime of The Buddha there were, of course, human beings who preferred same gender relationships and human beings who preferred opposite gender relationships.

The Buddha made this observation and taught his Students that both of these exist. He did not have any other Teachings on this topic because it is completely normal and fits with his Teaching on The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

The Buddha taught over 2,500 years ago and through his journey to Enlightenment he became The Perfectly Enlightened One. His mind was awake to the wisdom of these natural laws beyond what an average human being can understand.

It is important to note that even 2,500 years ago, The Buddha was so wise that he understood same gender relationships and opposite gender relationships, and that these are all completely normal. He never taught that there was any harm being caused to the individuals, or society as a whole, due to same gender or opposite gender relationships.

When he taught The Five Precepts related to sexual misconduct, being aware of same gender and opposite gender relationships, nothing he taught related to sexual misconduct included gender. Therefore, as you investigate The Natural Laws of Existence, one can come to understand that there is no harm in individuals choosing to be in a loving and consenting relationship with the same gender, opposite gender, or having no relationship with a life partner at all remaining single.

Today, there are some who consider same gender relationships harmful. However, there is no harm in two loving and consenting adults to be in a loving relationship. Individuals who choose a same gender relationship are not causing harm to themselves nor anyone else and is why The Buddha never taught this is harmful.

The challenge for some individuals is that their mind craves/desires permanence wanting all beings to conform to their expectations that all human beings should have an opposite gender relationship. But this is based on one's own craving/desire for permanence, and is why anyone who maintains this thinking will cause themselves discontentedness over someone else's relationship.

One aspect of attaining Enlightenment is to train the mind to not put one's own wants and expectations on others, attempting to get others to conform to one's own cravings and desires. The unEnlightened mind will oftentimes attempt to force others to conform to its own way of thinking as a way to attempt to create lasting satisfaction. The unEnlightened mind has a certain perspective of how it believes the world should function and then attempts to impose that on others, rather than focusing on one's own life challenges and understanding The Natural Laws of Existence.

When the unEnlightened mind discovers the world does not function in the way of its own perceptions, then it struggles and has difficulties to exist in the world thinking that if it could just “fix the world” to function in the way of its choosing, that will solve the problem of its discontent mind.

The unEnlightened mind falsely believes that if it can just get everyone to conform to its perception of how the world should function, the world will be perfect and the mind will be satisfied. But, this is the mind’s own craving/desire/attachment with conceit (i.e. arrogance) thinking that it knows best and the world needs to be “fixed” to conform to one’s own perceptions of how the world should function.

In reality, a Practitioner needs to only understand The Natural Laws of Existence to fix one’s own mind of craving, desiring, wanting, and expecting things to function in a way that is pleasing to the individual rather than the world functions the way it does based on The Natural Laws of Existence. The world cannot be “fixed” but instead, a Practitioner’s goal should be to understand The Natural Laws of Existence so that one can come to understand that not all people are going to function exactly the same way. Craving and desiring for all people to function in exactly the same way is part of the primary problem of the unEnlightened mind that causes itself to be discontent. The mind is craving permanence longing and yearning for all things to be exactly the same. This is impossible due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

The only thing that will solve one’s own discontent mind is to train the mind to understand The Natural Laws of Existence, how the world actually functions, and then the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy because it fully understands and can function with knowledge of these natural laws. The mind can be liberated from moving about the world attempting to fix everyone else and instead, work on the challenges of one’s own mind through developing deep understanding and practice of The Natural Laws of Existence that lead to freedom and liberation.

This is why The Buddha did not have anything to teach related to some people’s misperception that same gender relationships are unwholesome. Based on The Natural Laws of Existence, specifically The Universal Truth of Impermanence, it is not possible for everyone in the world to function in exactly the same way. That would be permanence and cannot exist. All women will not be interested in a relationship with a man. All men will not be interested in a relationship with a woman. All people will not be interested in a relationship at all and some will choose to remain single without children. This is a normal occurrence of life and is explained by The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

Same gender relationships, opposite gender relationships, and choosing to remain single are all part of an individual’s free will choice and that choice does not impact anyone in a harmful way. Rather, this helps one to see The Universal Truth of Impermanence applies to “all things” including relationships.

It is impossible for everyone in the world to conform to one specific way of being as it relates to relationships. There is no harm in same gender relationships and anyone that feels there is, is not understanding the most basic and fundamental Natural Law of Existence known as The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

A being can eliminate their own discontentedness and liberate the mind further by letting go of wanting everyone in the world to have an opposite gender relationship understanding that all beings make free will choices and one’s own choice of who to love

in a intimate relationship does not affect anyone. Love is love and when all beings learn how to love all other beings, then the harmful, unskillful, and destructive behaviors of attempting to force others to conform to one's own wants and expectations can be eliminated from the world making it a more peaceful and harmonious place for everyone to exist free of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

When a human being does not get its cravings/desires fulfilled, the mind will oftentimes revert to anger/hatred/ill will. This is why we see anger, hatred, and ill will directed towards groups and individuals of different genders, religions, sexual preferences, ethnicities, etc. An individual will crave and desire for all beings to be the same way, lacking the wisdom of The Universal Truth of Impermanence. When the mind discovers that their cravings/desires are not satisfied, one experiences painful feelings and directs anger, hatred, and ill will towards individuals and groups who are different. The unEnlightened mind does not like impermanence and its anger, hatred, and ill will arises and motivates unskillful conduct that harms others and thus, harms themselves.

Individuals, and thus the world, can eliminate racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other harmful destructive thinking through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment. When a human being understands The Universal Truth of Impermanence, knowing that it is not possible for everyone in the world to be the same, and that one is causing their own discontentedness through craving/desire/attachment wanting permanence, one can train the mind to become liberated from its own hatred. Through training the mind on The Path to Enlightenment, beings can be liberated from the self imposed suffering (i.e. discontentedness) caused by its own mind, learning how to live in harmony and peace with all other beings.

Eliminating the craving to "fix the world", an individual can focus on the real challenge within one's own mind. Purifying the mind of its own craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), an individual can be liberated from its destructive thinking, behaviors, habits, and conduct choosing to interact with all beings in wholesome ways leading to peacefulness within one's own mind.

Chapter 53

Why Human Beings Are Seen to Be Unwholesome and Wholesome?

Then the Brāhmin Student Subha, Todeyya's son, went to The Perfectly Enlightened One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly talk was finished, he sat down at one side and asked The Perfectly Enlightened One:

'Master Gotama, what is the cause and condition why human beings are seen to be unwholesome and wholesome? For people are seen to be short-lived and long-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, uninfluential and influential, poor and wealthy, low-born and high-born, unwise and wise. What is the cause and condition, Master Gotama, why human beings are seen to be unwholesome and wholesome?'

Student, beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as unwholesome and wholesome.

'I do not understand in detail the meaning of Master Gotama's statement, which he spoke in brief without expounding the meaning in detail. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach me The Teachings so that I might understand in detail the meaning of Master Gotama's statement.'

Then, Student, listen and attend closely to what I shall say.

'Yes, sir' the Brāhmin Student Subha replied.

The Perfectly Enlightened One said this:

Here, Student, some man or woman kills living beings and is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. But if on the dissolution of the body, after death, he does not reappear in a state without basic necessities in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, but instead comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is short-lived.

This is the way, Student, that leads to short life, namely, one kills living beings and is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.

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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to long life, namely, abandoning the killing of living beings, one abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, one resides compassionate to all living beings.

Here, Student, some man or woman is 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 state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is sickly.

This is the way, Student, that leads to sickliness, namely, one is given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife.

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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to health, namely, one is not given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife.

Here, Student, some man or woman is of an angry and irritable character; even when criticized a little, he is offended, becomes angry, hostile, and resentful, and displays anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is ugly.

This is the way, Student, that leads to ugliness, namely, one is of an angry and irritable character, even when criticized a little, he is offended, becomes angry, hostile, and resentful, and displays anger, hate, and bitterness.

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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to being beautiful, namely, one 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.

Here, Student, some man or woman is jealous, one who is selfish, resentful, and feels bitter about the gains, honor, respect, appreciation, 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 state without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is uninfluential.

This is the way, Student, that leads to being uninfluential, namely, one is jealous, resentful, and feels bitter towards the gains, honor, respect, appreciation, salutations, and veneration received by others.

But here, Student, some man or woman is not jealous, one who is not selfish, resentful, and feels bitter about the gains, honor, respect, appreciation, 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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to being influential, namely, one is not jealous, resentful and feels bitter towards the gains, honor, respect, appreciation, salutations, and veneration received by others.

Here, Student, some man or woman does not give 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 state without

basic necessities, in perdition, even in hell. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is poor.

This is the way, Student, that leads to poverty, namely, one does not give food, drink, clothing, carriages, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling and lamps to Ascetics or Brāhmins.

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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to wealth, namely, one gives food, drink, clothing, carriages, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling and lamps to Ascetics or Brāhmins.

Here, Student, some man or woman is stubborn and arrogant; he does not pay homage (respect) to one who should receive homage (respect), does not rise up for one in whose presence he should rise up, does not offer a seat to one who deserves a seat, does not make way for one for whom he should make way, and does not honor, respect, appreciate, and venerate 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 state without basic necessities, in perdition, even in hell. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is low-born.

This is the way, Student, that leads to low birth, namely, one is stubborn and arrogant; he does not pay homage (respect) to one who should receive homage (respect), does not rise up for one in whose presence he should rise up, does not offer a seat to one who deserves a seat, does not make way for one for whom he should make way, and does not honor, respect, appreciate, and venerate one who should be honored, respected, appreciated, and venerated.

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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to high birth, namely, one 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.

Here, Student, some man or woman does not visit an Ascetic or a Brāhmin and ask: Venerable Sir, what is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blameable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my harm and discontentedness for a long time? 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 state without basic necessities, in perdition, even in hell. But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is unwise.

This is the way, Student, that leads to being unwise, namely, one does not visit an Ascetic or Brāhmin and ask such questions.

But here, Student, some man or woman visits an Ascetic or a Brāhmin and asks: Venerable Sir, what is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blameable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my harm and discontentedness for a long time? 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.

This is the way, Student, that leads to wisdom, namely, one visits an Ascetic or Brāhmin and asks such questions.

Thus, Student, the way that leads to short life makes people short-lived, the way that leads to long life makes people long-lived; the way that leads to sickness makes people sickly, the way that leads to health makes people healthy; the way that leads to ugliness makes people ugly, the way that leads to being beautiful makes people beautiful; the way that leads to being uninfluential makes people uninfluential, the way that leads to being influential makes people influential; the way that leads to poverty makes

people poor, the way that leads to wealth makes people wealthy; the way that leads to low birth makes people low-born, the way that leads to high birth makes people high-born; the way that leads to unwise makes people unwise, the way that leads to wisdom makes people wise.

Beings are owners of their actions, Student, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as unwholesome and wholesome.

When this was said, the Brāhmin Student Subha, Todeyya's son, said to The Perfectly Enlightened One:

'Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made The Teachings clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to The Teachings and to The Community of Monks. Let Master Gotama remember me as a Household Practitioner who has gone to him for refuge for life.'

(Reference: MN 135)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the “cause and effect” relationship between actions that we perform and the results they generate.

These Teachings are not being shared to fear anyone into learning and practicing these Teachings but instead, explaining what true reality is, so that a Practitioner is then able to make improved decisions through improved wisdom.

Notice that The Buddha does not share a Teaching unless someone asks him a question. When asked, The Buddha shares the truth to help his Students acquire wisdom.

In this Teaching, The Buddha is sharing how “beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as unwholesome and wholesome”. In other words, there is no action that we perform that does not have some result. And, we are unable to run and hide from that result, unwholesome or wholesome. All actions produce a result. Through the wisdom of these Teachings, Practitioners can discover the qualities of mind and actions that are unwholesome and those that are wholesome. It is one’s actions that determine if they are unwholesome or wholesome.

Essentially, all The Buddha’s Teachings are guiding one to deeply understand The Natural Law of Kamma and through that wisdom, one will make wiser wholesome decisions producing wholesome outcomes.

The Buddha explains how various actions lead to certain results. Keep in mind that there is no being or entity that is overseeing The Natural Law of Kamma. This natural law functions on its own without intervention or judgment by any being.

Rather than believing what you are learning in this Teaching, instead, reflect on what is being shared.

The Buddha is providing actions performed that have certain results.

Killing living beings results in a being having a short life span. Do not believe this but instead, look at the natural world around you to determine if this is truth or not so that you can acquire wisdom.

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.

Now, apply this same method of reflection on The Teachings to discover the truth on each individual Teaching shared by The Buddha, specifically those in this Teaching.

The Buddha shares that beings who injure other beings are sickly. Those who are angry and irritable are ugly. Jealous beings are uninfluential.

You can take time, effort, and energy to gradually investigate each aspect of these Teachings to reflect through looking at the world around you to determine if what The Buddha is sharing is the truth so that you can acquire wisdom. In this way, you are not believing these Teachings but instead, you are investigating them to independently discover the truth to acquire wisdom.

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, now it is time to reflect.

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 unwholesome qualities while training the mind to practice the wholesome qualities shared by The Buddha. 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.

Chapter 54

Duty of a Noble Wheel-Turning Monarch

The Perfectly Enlightened One spoke about a Wheel-Turning Monarch of long long ago, this conversation is between the consecrated Khattiya King (Son) and King Dalhanemi (Father).

But what, Sir, is the duty of a Noble Wheel-Turning Monarch?

“It is this, my son: Yourself depending on The Teachings, honoring it, revering it, cherishing it, doing homage (respect) to it and venerating it, having The Teachings as your badge and banner, acknowledging The Teachings as your master, you should establish guard, security, and protection according to The Teachings for your own household, your troops, your nobles and royal subordinates (vassals), for Brāhmins and Householders, town and country folk, Ascetics and Brāhmins, for beasts and birds.

Let no crime exist in your Kingdom, and to those who are in need, give property.

And whatever Ascetics and Brāhmins in your Kingdom have renounced the life of sensual desire (obsession) and are devoted to patient mental discipline and gentleness, each one taming himself, each one calming himself and each one striving for the end of craving, from time to time you should go to them and consult them as to what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what is to be followed and what is not to be followed, and what action will in the long run lead to harm and sorrow, and what to welfare and peacefulness. Having listened to them, you should avoid the evil unwholesome and do what is wholesome.

That, my son, is the duty of a Noble Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(Reference: DN 26)

In this Teaching, there is a conversation between a father and son who are the heads of a royal family as Kings.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, a son became a King at a certain age allowing the father to retire. This conversation is between a father and son with the father providing guidance to his son of how to run his Kingdom.

The father is explaining how The Teachings of The Buddha are a central aspect of being a wise King and that his Teachings will provide guidance helping him to be a successful King. The father advises his son to consult with “Ascetics and Brāhmins” “as to what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what is to be followed and what is not to be followed, and what action will in the long run lead to harm and sorrow, and what to welfare and peacefulness”.

The father is advising his son to practice The Teachings of The Buddha sharing “Having listened to them, you should avoid the evil unwholesome and do what is wholesome. That, my son, is the duty of a Noble Wheel-Turning Monarch”.

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.

Chapter 55

Beings Bound by Action

One is not a Brāhmin by birth,
Nor by birth a non-Brāhmin.
By action is one a Brāhmin,
By action is one a non-Brāhmin.

For men are farmers by their acts,
And by their acts are craftsmen too;
And men are merchants by their acts,
And by their acts are servants too.

And men are robbers by their acts,
And by their acts are soldiers too;
And men are chaplains by their acts,
And by their acts are rulers too.

So that is how the truly wise
See action as it really is,
See dependent origination,
Skilled in action and its results.

Action makes the world go round;
Action makes this generation turn.
Living beings are bound by action
Like the chariot wheel by the linchpin.

(Reference: SNP 3.9)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how it is one's actions that determine everything about an individual.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, it was believed that based on what type of family you were born into determined what type of life you would live. For example, if you were born into a highly wealthy and influential family, an individual would expect to have a certain type of life versus an individual born into a family of little wealth or influence.

People who were born into Brāhmin families were considered to be holy and able to communicate with the Gods while people of lower castes (i.e. status) were unable to have a spiritual life being dependent on the Brāhmin to do the spiritual work for others. Common people would pay Brāhmin a fee to pray on their behalf. This created an environment where corruption was able to be easily introduced as fees could easily be changed and the common person had no recourse to improve their life because it was

the Brāhmin who controlled access to the Gods that were believed in during that lifetime. Brāhmins were considered to be holy and sacred, all determined by what family an individual was born into not by their deeds or actions.

This Teaching, and others, from The Buddha helped individuals understand that one is not a holy person by birth but by their actions. It is our actions that is the “cause” or “action” that creates certain “effects” or “results” in our life.

If one were to think just because they were born into a certain family, life should be good or bad, then they are not yet understanding The Natural Law of Kamma. The results we experience in this life is not purely based on what family we are born into but is determined by our actions.

As we make wholesome or unwholesome decisions, we experience the corresponding results in our life. As The Buddha shares, “that is how the truly wise see action as it really is”. A wise Practitioner will need to see this cause and effect relationship within all aspects of life. There is nothing that occurs in this world without a “cause” or “action” then there is an “effect” or “result”.

All individuals are able to attain Enlightenment leading a spiritual life, this is not dependent on what family one is born into as part of this life.

The Buddha explains the complete series of events as it relates to The Cycle of Rebirth and the experiencing of discontentedness in his Teaching on Dependent Origination. He points to that in this Teaching when he said, “see dependent origination skilled in action and its results”. Dependent Origination is the ultimate truth that explains the causality or causal relationship between ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and discontentedness along with The Cycle of Rebirth and beings continued wandering in The Cycle of Rebirth.

It is action that determines everything in the world explained by The Buddha as “action makes the world go round; action makes this generation turn. Living beings are bound by action like the chariot wheel by the linchpin”.

It is our actions that determine what we do or do not experience in this life. A chariot or cart is pulled by horses with a primary “linchpin” that connects the cart and horses. Without the “linchpin”, the chariot would not function or move. So too, it is one’s actions that determines what does and does not happen in one’s life. One’s actions are the “linchpin” or primary aspect of one’s life that determines all outcomes.

Purifying one’s bodily, verbal, and mental actions will result in an improved condition of mind and life.

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 56

The Path Leading to Reappearance in Accordance With One's Objective

Monks, I shall teach you reappearance in accordance with one's objective.

Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.

Here, Monks, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Nobles'! He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this effort of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Brāhmins'! He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this effort of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Householders'! He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this effort of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

(Reference: MN 41)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a human being can develop certain qualities of mind, and in doing so, will lead to rebirth in an improved designation.

Again, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of these Teachings and The Path to Enlightenment is to attain Enlightenment so that there isn't rebirth. Likewise, the way leading to rebirth in an improved destination is the same path that leads to Enlightenment.

The qualities of mind that The Buddha highlights are confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom.

For a Practitioner to experience an improved designation upon rebirth, The Buddha describes these qualities of mind as important to accomplishing the objective.

Chapter 57

‘On Knowledge of Beginnings’

There comes a time, Vāseṭṭha, when, sooner or later after a long period, this world contracts. At a time of contraction, beings are mostly born in the heavenly realm (Ābhassara Brahmā world). And there they dwell, mind-made, feeding on excitement, self-luminous, moving through the air, glorious—and they stay like that for a very long time.

But sooner or later, after a very long period, this world begins to expand again. At a time of expansion, the beings from the heavenly realm (Ābhassara Brahmā world), having passed away from there, are mostly reborn in this world. Here they dwell, mind-made, feeding on excitement, self-luminous, moving through the air, glorious—and they stay like that for a very long time.

At that period, Vāseṭṭha, there was just one mass of water, and all was darkness, blinding darkness. Neither moon nor sun appeared, no constellations or stars appeared, night and day were not distinguished, nor months and fortnights, no years or seasons, and no male and female, beings being reckoned just as beings.

And sooner or later, after a very long period of time, savoury earth spread itself over the waters where those beings were. It looked just like the skin that forms itself over hot milk as it cools. It was endowed with color, smell and taste. It was the color of fine ghee or butter, and it was very sweet, like pure wild honey.

Then some being of a greedy nature said: “I say, what can this be?” and tasted the savoury earth on its finger. In so doing, it became taken with the flavor, and craving arose in it. Then other beings, taking their cue from that one, also tasted the stuff with their fingers. They too were taken with the flavor, and craving arose in them. So they set to with their hands, breaking off pieces of the stuff in order to eat it. And the result of this was that their self-luminance disappeared. And as a result of the disappearance of their self-luminance, the moon and the sun appeared, night and day were distinguished, months and fortnights appeared, and the year and its seasons. To that extent the world re-evolved.

And those beings continued for a very long time feasting on this savoury earth, feeding on it and being nourished by it. And as they did so, their bodies became coarser, and a difference in looks developed among them.

Some beings became good-looking, others ugly. And the good-looking ones despised the others, saying: “We are better-looking than they are.” And because they became arrogant and conceited about their looks, the savoury earth disappeared. At this, they came together and grieved, crying: “Oh that flavor! Oh that flavor!” And so nowadays when people say: “Oh that flavor!” when they get something nice, they are repeating an ancient saying without realizing it.

And then, when the savoury earth had disappeared, a fungus cropped up, in the manner of a mushroom. It was of a good color, smell, and taste. It was the color of fine ghee or butter, and it was very sweet, like pure wild honey. And those beings set to and ate the fungus. And this lasted for a very long time. And as they continued to feed on the fungus, so their bodies became coarser still, and the difference in their looks increased still more. And the good-looking ones despised the others ... And because they became arrogant and conceited about their looks, the sweet fungus disappeared. Next, creepers appeared, shooting up like bamboo... , and they too were very sweet, like pure wild honey.

And those beings set to and fed on those creepers. And as they did so, their bodies became even coarser, and the difference in their looks increased still more ... And they became still more arrogant, and so the creepers disappeared too. At this, they came together and grieved, crying: “Oh, our creeper’s gone! What have we lost!” And so now today when people, on being asked why they are upset, say: “Oh, what have we lost!” they are repeating an ancient saying without realizing it.

And then, after the creepers had disappeared, rice appeared in open spaces, free from powder and from husks, fragrant and clean-grained. And what they had taken in the evening for supper had grown again and was ripe in the morning, and what they had taken in the morning for breakfast was ripe again by evening, with no sign of reaping. And these beings set to and fed on this rice, and this lasted for a very long time. And as they did so, their bodies became coarser still, and the difference in their looks became even greater. And the females developed female sex-organs, and the males developed male organs. And the women became excessively preoccupied with men, and the men with women. Owing to this excessive preoccupation with each other, passion was aroused, and their bodies burnt with lust. And later, because of this burning, they indulged in sexual activity.

But those who saw them indulging threw dust, ashes or cow-dung at them, crying: “Die, you filthy beast! How can one being do such things to another!” Just as today, in some districts, when a daughter-in-law is led out, some people throw dirt at her, some ashes, and some cow-dung, without realizing

that they are repeating an ancient observance. What was considered bad form in those days is now considered good form.

And those beings who in those days indulged in sex were not allowed into a village or town for one or two months. Accordingly, those who indulged for an excessively long period in such immoral practices began to build themselves dwellings so as to indulge under cover.

Now it occurred to one of those beings who was inclined to laziness: “Well now, why should I be bothered to gather rice in the evening for supper and in the morning for breakfast? Why shouldn’t I gather it all at once for both meals?” And he did so. Then another one came to him and said: “Come on, let’s go rice-gathering.” “No need, my friend, I’ve gathered enough for both meals.” Then the other, following his example, gathered enough rice for two days at a time, saying: “That should be about enough.” Then another being came and said to that second one: “Come on, let’s go rice-gathering.” “No need, my friend, I’ve gathered enough for two days.” (The same for 4, then 8 days).

However, when those beings made a store of rice and lived on that, husk-powder and husk began to envelop the grain, and where it was reaped it did not grow again, and the cut place showed, and the rice grew in separate clusters.

And then those beings came together grieving: “Wicked ways have become widespread among us: at first we were mind-made, feeding on excitement ... (all events repeated down to the latest development, each fresh change being said to be due to ‘wicked and unwholesome ways’) ... and the rice grows in separate clusters. So now let us divide up the rice into fields with boundaries.” So they did so.

Then, Vāseṭṭha, one greedy-natured being, while watching over his own plot, took another plot that was not given to him, and enjoyed the fruits of it. So they seized hold of him and said: “You’ve done a wicked thing, taking another’s plot like that! Don’t ever do such a thing again!” “I won’t”, he said, but he did the same thing a second and a third time.

Again he was seized and rebuked, and some hit him with their fists, some with stones, and some with sticks. And in this way, Vāseṭṭha, taking what was not given, and condemning, and lying, and punishment, took their origin.

Then those beings came together and grieved the arising of these evil (unwholesome) things among them; taking what was not given, condemning, lying and punishment. And they thought: “Suppose we were to appoint a

certain being who would show anger where anger was due, punish those who deserved it, and banish those who deserved banishment! And in return, we would grant him a share of the rice”

So they went to the one among them who was the handsomest, the best-looking, the most pleasant and capable, and asked him to do this for them in return for a share of the rice, and he agreed.

“The People’s Choice” is the meaning of Mahā-Sammata, which is the first regular title to be introduced. “Ruler Of The Fields” is the meaning of Khattiya, the second such title. And “He Gladdens Others With Teachings” is the meaning of Rājā, the third title to be introduced.

This, then, Vāseṭṭha, is the origin of the class of Khattiyas, in accordance with the ancient titles that were introduced for them. They originated among these very same beings, like ourselves, no different, and in accordance with Teachings, not otherwise.

Teachings are the best thing for people, in this life and the next as well.

Then some of these beings thought: “Evil things have appeared among beings, such as taking what is not given, condemning, lying, punishment and banishment. We ought to put aside evil and unwholesome things.” And they did so. “They Put Aside Evil And Unwholesome Things” is the meaning of Brāhmin, which is the first regular title to be introduced for such people.

They made leaf-huts in forest places and meditated in them. With the smoking fire gone out, with pestle cast aside, gathering almsfood for their evening and morning meals, they went away to a village, town or royal city to seek their food, and then they returned to their leaf-huts to meditate. People saw this and noted how they meditated. “They Meditate” is the meaning of Jhāyaka, which is the second regular title to be introduced.

However, some of those beings, not being able to meditate in leaf-huts, settled around towns and villages and compiled books. People saw them doing this and not meditating. “Now These Do Not Meditate” is the meaning of Ajjhāyaka, which is the third regular title to be introduced.

At that time, it was regarded as a low designation, but now it is the higher. This, then, Vāseṭṭha, is the origin of the class of Brāhmins in accordance with the ancient titles that were introduced for them. Their origin was from among these very same beings, like themselves, no different, and in accordance with Teachings, not otherwise.

Teachings are the best thing for people in this life and the next as well.

And then, Vāseṭṭha, some of those beings, having paired off, adopted various trades, and this “Various” is the meaning of Vessa, which came to be the regular title for such people. This, then, is the origin of the class of Vessas, in accordance with the ancient titles that were introduced for them. Their origin was from among these very same beings ...

And then, Vāseṭṭha, those beings that remained went in for hunting. “They Are Base Who Live By The Chase”, and that is the meaning of Sudda, which came to be the regular title for such people. This, then, is the origin of the class of Suddas in accordance with the ancient titles that were introduced for them. Their origin was from among these very same beings ...

And then, Vāseṭṭha, it came about that some Khattiya, dissatisfied with his own Teachings, went forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking: “I will become an Ascetic.” And a Brāhmin did likewise, a Vessa did likewise, and so did a Sudda. And from these four classes the class of Ascetics came into existence.

Their origin was from among these very same beings, like themselves, no different, and in accordance with Teachings, not otherwise.

Teachings are the best thing for people, in this life and the next as well.

And, Vāseṭṭha, a Khattiya who has led a bad life in body, speech, and thought, and who has wrong view will, in consequence of such wrong views and deeds, at the breaking-up of the body after death, be reborn in a state of loss, an ill fate, the downfall, the hell-state. So too will a Brāhmin, a Vessa or a Sudda.

Likewise, a Khattiya who has led a good life in body, speech, and thought, and who has Right View will, in consequence of such Right View and deeds, at the breaking-up of the body after death, be reborn in a good destiny, in a heaven-state. So too will a Brāhmin, a Vessa or a Sudda.

And a Khattiya who has performed deeds of both kinds in body, speech, and thought, and whose view is mixed will, in consequence of such mixed views and deeds, at the breaking-up of the body after death, experience both pleasure and pain. So too will a Brāhmin, a Vessa or a Sudda.

And a Khattiya who is restrained in body, speech, and thought, and who has developed The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, will attain to Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in this very life. So too will a Brāhmin, a Vessa or a Sudda.

And, Vāseṭṭha, whoever of these four castes, as a Monk, becomes an Arahant who has destroyed the taints (fetters), done what had to be done, laid down the burden, attained to the highest goal, completely destroyed the fetter of existence, and become liberated by the highest wisdom, he is declared to be chief among them in accordance with Teachings, and not otherwise.

Teachings are the best thing for people, in this life and the next as well.

The Khattiya's best among those who value clan;

He with knowledge and conduct is best of gods and men.

(Reference: DN 27)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a story of creation and how the world comes to be.

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 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 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.

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 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".

Chapter 58

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 affects 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 59

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 60

Reasons for Depopulation

'Master Gotama, I have heard older Brāhmins who are aged, burdened with years, Teachers of Teachers, saying: 'In the past this world was so thickly populated one would think there was no space between people. The villages, towns, and capital cities were so close that roosters could fly between them.'

Why is it, Master Gotama, that at present the number of people has declined, depopulation is seen, and villages, towns, cities, and districts have vanished?'

At present, Brāhmin, people are excited by unwholesome lust, overcome by unrighteous greed, affected by wrong harmful teachings. As a result, they take up weapons and slay one another. Hence many people die.

This is a reason why at present the number of people has declined, depopulation is seen, and villages, towns, cities, and districts have vanished.

Again, at present people are excited by unwholesome lust, overcome by unrighteous greed, affected by wrong harmful teachings. When this happens, sufficient rain does not fall. As a result, there is a famine, a scarcity of grain; the crops become spoiled and turn to straw. Hence many people die.

This is another reason why at present the number of people has declined, depopulation is seen, and villages, towns, cities, and districts have vanished.

Again, at present people are excited by unwholesome lust, overcome by unrighteous greed, affected by wrong harmful teachings. When this happens, the Yakkhas (indigenous ethnic group from the Indian subcontinent) release wild spirits. Hence many people die.

This is yet another reason why at present the number of people has declined, depopulation is seen, and villages, towns, cities, and districts have vanished.

(Reference: AN 3.56)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the reasons why depopulation occurred.

He explains that due to unwholesome lust, unrighteous greed, and wrong harmful teachings that:

- 1.) People take up weapons and slay one another. Hence many people die.
- 2.) Sufficient rain does not fall. As a result, there is a famine, a scarcity of grain; the crops become spoiled and turn to straw. Hence many people die.
- 3.) The Yakkhas (indigenous ethnic group from the Indian subcontinent) release wild spirits. Hence many people die.

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime in the region of the world he lived, modern day Nepal and Northeastern India, there were several communities of roaming Ascetics that continued to share what they felt were the teachings that lead to Enlightenment. There were different communities that felt they had discovered The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. So, there were many competing views and opinions of what Enlightenment is, The Teachings to attain Enlightenment, and the methods of training that would produce Enlightenment.

There were competing communities of Ascetics with a Master Teacher all claiming it was their teachings that would produce Enlightenment. Various members of these communities would listen to talks on the teachings and applied various amounts of effort to implementing the teachings into their daily life.

Due to the environment of competing views and opinions, along with there being no way to confirm for others that Gotama Buddha was indeed a Buddha, various Teachers shared their teachings throughout the community.

Gotama Buddha refers to these as "wrong harmful teachings".

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 51-60)
<https://youtu.be/BMxi8ZY-ohw>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 346 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 51-60)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--346---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-51-60-e1m6mns/a-a8bonnj>

Chapter 61

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).

Chapter 62

One Frightened and Terrified of Death One Not Frightened and Terrified of Death

Brāhmin, there are those subject to death that are frightened and terrified of death, but there are also those subject to death that are not frightened and terrified of death.

And, Brāhmin, who are those subject to death that are frightened and terrified of death?

Here, someone is not free of lust, desire, wants, thirst, passion, and craving for sensual pleasures. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he thinks: 'Oh, the sensual pleasures dear to me will leave me, and I will have to leave those sensual pleasures.' He sorrows, suffers, and grieves; he cries beating his breast and becomes confused.

This is one subject to death who is frightened and terrified of death.

Again, someone is not free of lust, desire, wants, thirst, passion, and craving for the body. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he thinks: 'Oh, this body dear to me will leave me, and I will have to leave this body.' He sorrows, suffers, and grieves; he cries beating his breast and becomes confused.

This, too, is one subject to death who is frightened and terrified of death.

Again, someone has not done what is good and wholesome or made a shelter for himself, but he has done what is evil, cruel, and defiled (unwholesome). When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he thinks: 'Oh, I have not done anything good and wholesome, nor have I made a shelter for myself, but I have done what is evil, cruel, and defiled (unwholesome). When I pass on, I will meet the appropriate fate.' He sorrows, suffers, and grieves; he cries beating his breast and becomes confused.

This, too, is one subject to death who is frightened and terrified of death.

Again, someone here is uncertain, doubtful, and unclear about the good wholesome Teachings. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he thinks: 'Oh, I am uncertain, doubtful, and unclear about the good wholesome

Teachings.’ He sorrows, suffers, and grieves; he cries beating his breast and becomes confused.

This, too, is one subject to death who is frightened and terrified of death.

These are four subject to death that are frightened and terrified of death.

And, Brāhmin, who are those subject to death that are not frightened and terrified of death?

Here, someone is free of lust, desire, wants, thirst, passion, and craving for sensual pleasures. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he does not think: ‘Oh, the sensual pleasures dear to me will leave me, and I will have to leave those sensual pleasures.’ He does not sorrow, suffer, and grieve; he does not cry beating his breast and become confused.

This is one subject to death who is not frightened and terrified of death.

Again, someone is free of lust, desire, wants, thirst, passion, and craving for the body. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he does not think: ‘Oh, this body dear to me will leave me, and I will have to leave this body.’ He does not sorrow, suffer, and grieve; he does not cry beating his breast and become confused.

This, too, is one subject to death who is not frightened and terrified of death.

Again, someone has not done what is evil, cruel, and defiled (unwholesome), but has done what is good and wholesome and made a shelter for himself. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he thinks: ‘Indeed, I have not done anything evil, cruel, and defiled (unwholesome), but I have done what is good and wholesome and made a shelter for myself. When I pass on, I will meet the appropriate fate.’ He does not sorrow, suffer, and grieve; he does not cry beating his breast and become confused.

This, too, is one subject to death who is not frightened and terrified of death.

Again, someone is certain, doubt-free, and clear about the good wholesome Teachings. When he incurs a severe and debilitating illness, he thinks: ‘I am certain, doubt-free, and clear about the good wholesome Teachings. He does not sorrow, suffer, and grieve; he does not cry beating his breast and become confused.

This, too, is one subject to death who is not frightened and terrified of death.

These, Brāhmin, are four subject to death that are not frightened and terrified of death.

(Reference: AN 4.184)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how an individual who is subject to death can be frightened and terrified of death, and how one who is subject to death is not frightened and terrified of death.

The Buddha provides guidance on what leads to fear of death and what leads to no fear of death. These are Teachings that are exactly opposite of each other.

What leads to fear of death is:

- 1.) Someone has craving/desire for sensual pleasures.
- 2.) Someone has craving/desire for the physical body.
- 3.) Someone has done evil, cruel, and unwholesome things in the world.
- 4.) Someone is uncertain, doubtful, unclear about these good wholesome Teachings.

In this case, the individual dies with sorrow, suffering, grieving and becomes confused at death since the mind is not liberated.

What leads to not having fear of death is:

- 1.) Someone does not have craving/desire for sensual pleasures.
- 2.) Someone does not have craving/desire for the physical body.
- 3.) Someone has not done evil, cruel, and unwholesome things in the world.
- 4.) Someone is certain, doubt-free, clear about these good wholesome Teachings.

In this case, the individual dies without sorrow, suffering, grieving and does not become confused at death since the mind is experiencing more peace and tranquility at death.

Being “subject to death” means that one’s mind is not yet liberated by having attained Enlightenment. A being who is not subject to death is described as “the deathless” in Gotama Buddha’s Teachings. An Enlightened being’s physical body will die, and the mind separates from the body, this is referred to as Final Enlightenment, but it is not considered death because it is just the impermanent nature of existence. An Enlightened being has liberated the mind from all defilements and there is “no self” to die. Instead, it is viewed as just the separation of the body and the mind at the end of life to experience Final 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 refers 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”.

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 63

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 the 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 64

Beings Are Few Who Are Reborn Among Human Beings or Heavenly Beings Because They Have Not Seen The Four Noble Truths

Then The Perfectly Enlightened One took up a little bit of soil in his fingernail and addressed the Monks thus: What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

'Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, that little bit of soil is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.'

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn among human beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.'

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

'Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.'

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn among the heavenly beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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 56.61)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that there “are few who are reborn among human beings” and there “are more numerous who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...” due to beings not having understood The Four Noble Truths. The Buddha shares a similar Teaching related to how there “are few who are reborn among heavenly beings” and there “are more numerous who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...” due to beings not having understood The Four Noble Truths.

It is The Four Noble Truths that helps a Practitioner to breakthrough to understanding discontentedness, the cause of discontentedness, the elimination of discontentedness, and the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness (i.e. The Eight Fold Path).

Without this understanding and practice, a being would have no opportunity to acquire the wisdom of why their mind experiences discontentedness and how to eliminate it, thus, they would not be able to attain Enlightenment.

It is through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths that a Practitioner can make the breakthrough to understanding that they cause their own discontent feelings, to establish Right View and then have the ability to eliminate all discontentedness from the mind.

The Buddha uses an analogy to describe just how few beings are reborn among human beings and heavenly beings.

The soil of the entire earth represents all the beings that exist while the amount of soil under The Buddha’s fingernail represents the number of beings who are reborn as human beings or heavenly beings with the opportunity to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains “those beings are few who are reborn among human beings” or “heavenly beings”. But “are more numerous who, when they pass away as human beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...” due to beings not having understood The Four Noble Truths.

He then encourages Students to make an effort to breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths with this Teaching. “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’”.

A Teacher can support and encourage Students to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings but it is the Student who will need to apply the effort and energy through determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the results of a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy - permanently. The mind can completely and entirely eliminate 100% of all discontentedness through applying effort towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

Every Practitioner will need to do the work to experience the results.

Heavenly Beings

Chapter 65

The Three Surpassing Respects of the Heavenly Beings (Tāvatiṃsa)

Monks, in three respects the heavenly beings (Tāvatiṃsa) surpass the people of Uttarakuru and the people of Jambudīpa.

What three?

- (1) In heavenly life span,
- (2) in heavenly beauty, and
- (3) in heavenly happiness.

In these three respects the heavenly beings surpass the people of Uttarakuru and the people of Jambudīpa.

(Reference: AN 9.12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares insight into a few wholesome qualities that he considers to be highly important possessed by heavenly beings surpassing the people of Uttarakuru and Jambudīpa.

He shares that there are three qualities that heavenly beings possess surpassing the people of Uttarakuru and Jambudīpa. Heavenly beings have the qualities of:

- 1.) Heavenly life span,
- 2.) heavenly beauty, and
- 3.) heavenly happiness.

This Teaching alludes to The Buddha pointing out that the people of Uttarakuru and Jambudīpa do not possess these same qualities.

Chapter 66

By Reason of Righteous Conduct

‘Master Gotama, what is the cause and condition why some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in states without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell?’

And what is the cause and condition why some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world?’

Householders, it is by reason of conduct not in accordance with The Teachings, by reason of unrighteous conduct that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in states without basic necessities, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.

It is by reason of conduct in accordance with The Teachings, by reason of righteous conduct that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

‘We do not understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama’s spoken words, which he has spoken in brief without explaining the detailed meaning. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach us The Teachings so that we might understand the detailed meaning of his spoken words.’

Then, Householders, listen and attend closely to what I shall say.

Householders, there are three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with The Teachings, unrighteous conduct. There are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with The Teachings, unrighteous conduct. There are three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with The Teachings, unrighteous conduct.

Householders, there are three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct. There are four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct. There are three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct.

(The detailed meaning at Chapter 14 - Ten Courses of Unwholesome Kamma (Deposited in Hell) and Chapter 45 - Ten Courses of Wholesome Kamma (Deposited in Heaven) of this book.)

If, Householders, one who observes conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct, should have the objective: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do nobles!' it is possible that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in the company of well-to-do nobles.

Why is that?

Because he observes conduct that is in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct.

If, Householders, one who observes conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct, should have the objective: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Brāhmins!'

... in the company of well-to-do Householders! ... in the company of the gods of the heaven of The Four Great Kings! ... in the company of the gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three ... the Yāma gods ... the gods of the Tusita heaven ... the gods who excite in creating ... the gods who wield power over others' creations ... the gods of Brahmās company ... the gods of Radiance ... the gods of Limited Radiance... the gods of Immeasurable Radiance ... the gods of Streaming Radiance ... the gods of Glory ... the gods of Limited Glory ... the gods of Immeasurable Glory ... the gods of Refulgent Glory... the gods of Great Fruit ... the Aviha gods ... the Atappa gods... the Sudassa gods ... the Sudassī gods ... the Akaniṭṭha gods ... the gods of the base of infinite space... the gods of the base of infinite consciousness ... the gods of the base of nothingness ... the gods of the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception!' it is possible that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in the company of the gods of the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception.

Why is that?

Because he observes conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct.

If, Householders, one who observes conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct, should have the objective: 'Oh, that by realizing for myself with direct knowledge (experience) I might 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!' - it is possible that, by realizing for himself with direct knowledge (experience), he will 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.

Why is that?

Because he observes conduct in accordance with The Teachings, righteous conduct.

(Reference: MN 41)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares what leads to rebirth in the realm of hell and what leads to rebirth in the heavenly realm.

It is one's own decisions to either have unwholesome or wholesome conduct. It is our own decisions that lead to the results we experience in this life and, if needed, future lives.

There is no being that is judging us on the totality of our entire life to determine if we should permanently go to a bad place or a good place, but instead, it is our own decisions that determine the results we experience in this life or as we move through The Cycle of Rebirth. This is The Natural Law of Kamma.

Kamma, or The Natural Law of Kamma, refers to the fact that everything in life has a "cause and effect" or "action and result". Essentially, our intentions, speech, and actions, wholesome or unwholesome, have an effect on us. One way to think of Kamma is that Kamma is "the results of our own decisions" or "the effects of our own decisions".

You may have been exposed to the word "Karma" which is referring to the same natural law but using a different language. Karma is from the Sanskrit language while Kamma is from the Pāli language. The source of Gotama Buddha's Teachings is in the Pāli language. Those who are learning and practicing these Teachings from The Pāli Canon, the most complete source of Gotama Buddha's Teachings, will typically use the word "Kamma" instead of "Karma".

All of Gotama Buddha's Teachings center on the importance of "not doing any harm". By doing harm to other beings, we do harm to ourselves because of The Natural Law of Kamma.

If we put out wholesome intentions, speech, and actions, wholesomeness will come back to us. With wholesome and pure intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood, we know that our life will be wholesome, calm, steady, and peaceful as we eliminate more and more attachments on our pursuit to Enlightenment.

Likewise, if our intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood are unwholesome, unwholesome things will come back to us. If we harm other beings, through our intentions, speech, actions, or livelihood, harm will return back to us.

Kamma is not necessarily instantaneous or immediate. It may not come back in exactly the same form we put it out in. For example, if we put calm, steady, kind, and polite waves into the world's seas, that's what will come back to us. Maybe not immediately, but over time we will see this steadiness and calmness come back to us.

Conversely, if we put out damaging and vicious waves into our world's seas, then that is what will come back to us. Fierce, strong, and violent waters will create havoc and floods in our life. Kamma is not a system of rewards and punishments but instead a natural law of "cause and effect" or "action and results" - the results of our decisions.

Kamma does not need to be feared. The Natural Law of Kamma needs to be understood so that we can make wise choices in our life that lead to a more peaceful mind and a more peaceful existence for us individually and all of humanity.

There is no fear in these Teachings and there is no fear in Kamma.

The only one who fears Kamma is the person who does not understand The Natural Law of Kamma and is unable to make wise decisions that would lead to a more peaceful existence.

The more you learn and practice The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, the more awakened the mind will become to The Natural Law of Kamma and the better decisions one can make. This will result in a more peaceful existence to include a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings are guiding you in understanding this Natural Law of Kamma to awaken the mind to better life choices that lead to an improved existence.

Each person has 100% ability to make decisions in their life, these are personal choices. Based on the personal choices we make, the resulting effect will be experienced. This is our Kamma.

The Natural Law of Kamma is something that is talked about in modern society but oftentimes as a joke or said in passing. Kamma is sometimes thought to be a mystical or mysterious concept. However, Kamma is the governing factor of all things in life through "cause and effect" or "action and result".

Kamma is the results or effects of our own decisions. It is a natural law that exists, and Gotama Buddha's Teachings are awakening the mind to deeply understand this natural law, so that you can make good wholesome decisions to function peacefully in life. Through understanding The Natural Law of Kamma, you will make much better decisions in life and, thus, experience better results.

There is no one that governs this natural law or oversees its functioning. The Natural Law of Kamma just exists and it is absolutely one-hundred percent truth.

Examples of Kamma are:

- 1.) You murder someone and then you are put into jail. Your quality of life is impacted by becoming worse.
- 2.) You steal something and then you are put into jail and people steal from you. Your quality of life is impacted by becoming worse.
- 3.) You commit sexual misconduct having sexual contact with a person already involved in a relationship. This relationship is discovered, and the partner finds you and a verbal and/or physical attack transpires. Your quality of life is impacted by becoming worse.
- 4.) You are someone who speaks with false truth through lying, gossip, and slander. People cannot trust your words and you find it difficult to have relationships, conduct business, and people constantly lie to you. Your quality of life is impacted by becoming worse.
- 5.) You take substances becoming heedless and find yourself lacking concentration or mindfulness with the inability to focus on work, relationships, and everyday activities. Your quality of life is impacted by becoming worse.

When our intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood are pure without craving, anger, or ignorance (unknowing of true reality), we are creating wholesome Kamma for ourselves, thus, goodness will come back to us.

Three Causes for the Origination of Unwholesome Kamma

Monks, there are these three causes for the origination of (unwholesome) Kamma.

What three?

(1) Craving (Desire/Greed/Attachment) is a cause for the origination of (unwholesome) Kamma;

(2) Anger (Hatred/Ill Will) is a cause for the origination of (unwholesome) Kamma;

(3) Ignorance (Delusion/Unknowing of True Reality) is a cause for the origination of (unwholesome) Kamma.

(Gotama Buddha)

(Reference: AN 3.34)

Three Causes for the Origination of Wholesome Kamma

Monks, there are these three causes for the origination of (wholesome) Kamma.

What three?

- (1) Non-Craving (Generosity) is a cause for the origination of (wholesome) Kamma;
- (2) Non-Anger (Loving-kindness) is a cause for the origination of (wholesome) Kamma;
- (3) Non-Ignorance (Wisdom) is a cause for the origination of (wholesome) Kamma.

(Gotama Buddha)

(Reference: AN 3.34)

It is the goal of Gotama Buddha's Teachings to eliminate The Three Poisons (i.e. The Three Unwholesome Roots) of craving/greed, anger/hatred, and ignorance/delusion/unknowing of true reality realizing non-self and dissolving the ego to attain Enlightenment. This is the awakened mind that can be peaceful and co-exist with others peacefully.

Through eliminating these Three Poisons, one has eliminated all the unwholesome roots that create unwholesome Kamma, thus, Enlightenment will be attained. The more people who attain the mental state of Enlightenment, the more peaceful existence all of humanity will experience. Through everyone actively pursuing Enlightenment, the world will gradually become a more peaceful place to exist.

Always keep in mind that the goal of The Path to Enlightenment is to attain Enlightenment in this life and to not experience rebirth. But, if one does need to experience rebirth, as part of The Buddha's Teachings, he is explaining how and why that occurs.

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 book "The Natural Law of Kamma" (Volume 6).

Chapter 67

Why Is One Gift Not of Great Fruit and Benefit While the Other Is?

‘Venerable Sir, why is it that one gift is not of great fruit and benefit while the other is?’

Here, Sāriputta, someone gives a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

But, Sāriputta, someone does not give a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this’. Rather, he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good’. He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom’. He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Yāma heavenly beings. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook’. He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a

gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Tusita heavenly beings. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as he sees of the elders — that is, Atthaka, Vāmaka, Vāmaheavenly being, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu — held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift’. He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who excite in creation. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as he sees of the elders — that is, Atthaka ... and Bhagu — held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift, my mind becomes tranquil (calm), and energy and joy arise’. He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who control what is created by others. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift, my mind becomes tranquil (calm), and energy and joy arise’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘It’s an enhancement of the mind, an accessory of the mind’. He gives that gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of Brahmā’s (God’s) company. Having exhausted that Kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he does not come back and return to this state of being.

This, Sāriputta, is the reason why a gift given by someone here is not of great fruit and benefit. And this is the reason why a gift given by someone here is of great fruit and benefit.

(Reference: AN 7.52)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a gift that is given is either of great fruit and benefit or not.

The Buddha explains that giving a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards, thinking that one will make use of that gift in the future, that gift is not of great benefit. A gift given in these circumstances means a Practitioner still has craving/desire/attachment, thus, the gift is not of great benefit.

The Buddha further explains additional criteria of giving that hinders one from experiencing the best results from practicing generosity.

- Someone does not give a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this’. Rather, he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good’.

- He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom’.

- He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook’.

- He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as he sees of the elders — that is, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmaheavenly being, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu — held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift’.

- He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as he sees of the elders — that is, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmaheavenly being, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu — held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift’, but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes tranquil (calm), and energy and joy arise’.

Sometimes a Practitioner gives without fully understanding these Teachings, and while not a “great benefit” there is some benefit. There are situations where in order to start practicing generosity, one needs to give and start breaking down the wall of reluctance to give. While it would be of a much greater benefit to give without any expectation of anything in return, that may be something that a Practitioner needs to gradually develop and might choose to start giving as a way to cultivate a mind that does give without any expectations.

The Buddha explains that someone who gives with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards, thinking that one will make use of that gift in the future will ultimately be reborn because there is still craving/desire/attachment in the mind. Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth. If there is craving at the time of death, there will be rebirth. If there is birth, there will be sickness, aging, and death. Discontentedness will continue.

Finally, The Buddha provides guidance that helps a Practitioner understand the true goal and objective of sharing a gift through the practicing of generosity. The objective is to train the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment (i.e. enhancement of the mind, an accessory of the mind).

- He does not give a gift, [thinking]: 'When I am giving a gift my mind becomes tranquil, and energy and joy arise', but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: 'It's an enhancement of the mind, an accessory of the mind'.

In other words, a Practitioner should give a gift without expectations or for any of the other reasons previously shared. Instead, a Practitioner should practice generosity because they know it allows them to eliminate selfishness to cultivate the mind eliminating craving/desire/attachment. This enhances one's life practice by improving the condition of the mind bringing it closer to Enlightenment.

A Practitioner would be unable to attain Enlightenment with selfishness residing in the mind as there would still be craving/desire/attachment leading to discontentedness and rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The primary determination of whether a gift provides benefit for the Practitioner is based on whether one gives with or without expectations.

The practice of generosity helps a Practitioner to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, the cause of discontentedness. Through a well developed practice of generosity, a Practitioner can eliminate selfishness from the mind.

If one practices generosity with the expectation of receiving something in return for their offering, then a Practitioner is only giving because they want something in return. This approach to practicing generosity would not eliminate craving/desire/attachment nor selfishness. Instead, the mind is only giving because it wants something in return and, therefore, the benefit of providing an offering through practicing generosity is not experienced.

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

Chapter 68

Having Fulfilled and Not Having Fulfilled One's Duty Towards The Ascetics (Ordained Practitioners)

Monks, last night, when the night had advanced, a number of heavenly beings of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta's Grove, approached me, paid homage (respect) to me, and stood to one side.

Those heavenly beings then said: In the past, Venerable Sir, when we were human beings, Monks approached our homes. We rose up for them but did not pay homage (respect) to them. Not having fulfilled our duty, full of regret and remorse, we were reborn in an inferior class [of heavenly beings].

Some other heavenly beings approached me and said: In the past, Venerable Sir, when we were human beings, Monks approached our homes. We rose up for them and paid homage (respect) to them, but we did not offer them seats. Not having fulfilled our duty, full of regret and remorse, we were reborn in an inferior class [of heavenly beings].

Some other heavenly beings approached me and said: In the past, Venerable Sir, when we were human beings, Monks approached our homes. We rose up for them, paid homage (respect) to them, and offered them seats, but we did not share things with them to the best of our ability and capacity ...

... we shared things with them to the best of our ability and capacity, but we did not sit close by to listen to The Teachings ...

... we sat close by to listen to The Teachings, but we did not listen to it with eager ears ...

... we listened to it with eager ears, but having heard it, we did not retain The Teachings in mind ...

... having heard it, we retained The Teachings in mind, but we did not examine the meaning of The Teachings that had been retained in mind ...

... we examined the meaning of The Teachings that had been retained in mind, but we did not understand the meaning of The Teachings and then practice in accordance with The Teachings. Not having fulfilled our duty, full

of regret and remorse, we were reborn in an inferior class [of heavenly beings].

Some other heavenly beings approached me and said: In the past, Venerable Sir, when we were human beings, Monks approached our homes. We rose up for them, paid homage (respect) to them, offered them seats, and shared things with them to the best of our ability and capacity. We sat close by to listen to The Teachings and listened to it with eager ears; having heard it, we retained The Teachings in mind; we examined the meaning of The Teachings that had been retained in mind; and we understood the meaning of The Teachings and then practiced in accordance with The Teachings. Having fulfilled our duty, free of regret and remorse, we were reborn in a superior class [of heavenly beings].

These are the feet of trees, Monks, these are empty huts. Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent. Do not have cause to regret it later, like those prior heavenly beings.

(Reference: AN 9.19)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how human beings who were complacent in their learning and practice of these Teachings were reborn into an inferior class of heavenly beings due to lacking determination, dedication, and diligence to develop their life practice based on The Teachings of The Buddha.

But, human beings who were not complacent in their learning and practice of these Teachings were reborn into a superior class of heavenly beings due to their determination, dedication, and diligence to develop their life practice based on The Teachings of The Buddha.

Chapter 69

Reappearance in Accordance with One's Objectives

Monks, I shall teach you reappearance in accordance with one's objectives.

Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.

Here, Monks, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Nobles!' ... 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Brāhmins!'... 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of well-to-do Householders!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the gods of the heaven of The Four Great Kings are long-lived, beautiful, and enjoy great happiness. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the gods of the heaven of The Four Great Kings!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three ... the Yāma gods ... the gods of the Tusita heaven ... the gods who excite in creating ... the gods who wield power over others' creations are long-lived, beautiful, and enjoy great happiness. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the gods who wield power over others' creations!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the Brahmā of a Thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and enjoys great happiness. Now the Brahmā of a Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of a thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared there. Just as a man with good sight might take a gallnut (plant growth that resembles a nut) in his hand and review it, so the Brahmā of a Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of a thousand [worlds], and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared there. The Monk thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the Brahmā of a Thousand!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the Brahmā of Two Thousand ... the Brahmā of Three Thousand ... the Brahmā of Four Thousand ... the Brahmā of Five Thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and enjoys great happiness. Now the Brahmā of Five Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of five thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared here. Just as a man with good sight might take five gallnuts (plant growth that resembles a nut) in his hand and review them, so the Brahmā of Five Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of five thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared there. The Monk thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the Brahmā of Five Thousand!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the Brahmā of Ten Thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and enjoys great happiness. Now the Brahmā of Ten Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of ten thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared there. Just as a fine beryl gem (mineral composed of beryllium aluminium cyclosilicate; a rare stone) of purest water, eight-faceted, well cut, lying on red brocade, glows, radiates, and shines, so the Brahmā of Ten Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of ten thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have

reappeared there. The Monk thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the Brahmā of Ten Thousand!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the Brahmā of a Hundred Thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and enjoys great happiness. Now the Brahmā of a Hundred Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of a hundred thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared there. Just as an ornament of finest gold, very skillfully created in the furnace by a clever goldsmith, lying on red brocade, glows, radiates, and shines, so the Brahmā of a Hundred Thousand resides determined on permeating a world-system of a hundred thousand worlds, and he resides determined on permeating the beings that have reappeared there. The Monk thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the Brahmā of a Hundred Thousand!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the gods of Radiance ... the gods of Limited Radiance ... the gods of Immeasurable Radiance ... the gods of Streaming Radiance ... the gods of Glory ... the gods of Limited Glory ... the gods of Immeasurable Glory... the gods of Refulgent Glory ... the gods of Great Fruit ... the Aviha gods ... the Atappa gods ... the Sudassa gods ... the Sudassī gods ... the Akaniṭṭha gods are long-lived, beautiful, and enjoy great happiness. He thinks: 'Oh, that on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the Akaniṭṭha gods!' He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He hears that the gods of the base of infinite space ... the gods of the base of infinite consciousness ... the gods of the base of nothingness ... the gods of the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception are long-lived, long-enduring, and enjoy great happiness. He thinks: 'Oh, that

on the dissolution of the body, after death, I might reappear in the company of the gods of the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception!’ He fixes his mind on that, determined upon it, develops it. These objectives and this residing of his, thus developed and cultivated, lead to his reappearance there.

This, Monks, is the path, the way that leads to reappearance there.

Again, a Monk possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom. He thinks: ‘Oh, that by realizing for myself with direct knowledge (experience), I might 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!’ And by realizing for himself with direct knowledge (experience), he here and now enters upon and resides in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.

Monks, this Monk does not reappear anywhere at all.

(Reference: MN 120)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a human being can develop certain qualities of mind, and in doing so, will lead to rebirth in an improved designation.

Again, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of these Teachings and The Path to Enlightenment is to attain Enlightenment so that there isn’t rebirth. Likewise, the way leading to rebirth in an improved destination is the same path that leads to Enlightenment.

The qualities of mind that The Buddha highlights are confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom.

For a Practitioner to experience an improved designation upon rebirth, The Buddha describes these qualities of mind as important to accomplishing the objective.

Lastly, The Buddha describes that a Practitioner who possesses confidence, virtue (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom, but sets their objective towards the attainment of Enlightenment, does not reappear anywhere at all. In other words, a being who attains Enlightenment is not reborn.

This is the ultimate goal of The Path to Enlightenment, to eliminate discontentedness and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 70

Eight Kinds of Rebirth on Account of Giving

Monks, there are these eight kinds of rebirth on account of giving.

What eight?

(1) Here, someone gives a gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and ointments; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. Whatever he gives, he expects something in return. He sees affluent Khattiyas, affluent Brāhmins, or affluent Householders enjoying themselves furnished and endowed with the five objects of sensual pleasure. It occurs to him: ‘Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in companionship with affluent Khattiyas, affluent Brāhmins, or affluent Householders!’ He sets his mind on this, fixes his mind on this, and develops this state of mind. That objective of his, determined on what is inferior, not developed higher, leads to rebirth there. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with affluent Khattiyas, affluent Brāhmins, or affluent Householders — and that is for one who is virtuous (practices moral conduct), I say, not for one who is immoral. The heart’s objective of one who is virtuous succeeds because of his purity.

(2) Someone else gives a gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink ... and lighting. Whatever he gives, he expects something in return. He has heard: ‘The heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.’ It occurs to him: ‘Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings!’ He sets his mind on this, fixes his mind on this, and develops this state of mind. That objective of his, determined on what is inferior, not developed higher, leads to rebirth there. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings — and that is for one who is virtuous (practices moral conduct), I say, not for one who is immoral. The heart’s objective of one who is virtuous succeeds because of his purity.

(3) Someone else gives a gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink ... and lighting. Whatever he gives, he expects something in return. He has heard: (4) The Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings ... (5) the Yāma heavenly beings ... the Tusita heavenly beings ... (6) the heavenly beings who excite in creation ... (7) the heavenly beings who control what is created by others are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.’ It occurs to him: ‘Oh, with

the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who control what is created by others!’ He sets his mind on this, fixes his mind on this, and develops this state of mind. That objective of his, determined on what is inferior, not developed higher, leads to rebirth there. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who control what is created by others — and that is for one who is virtuous (practices moral conduct), I say, not for one who is immoral. The heart’s objective of one who is virtuous succeeds because of his purity.

(8) Someone else gives a gift to an Ascetic or a Brāhmin: food and drink ... and lighting. Whatever he gives, he expects something in return. He has heard: ‘The heavenly beings of Brahmā’s (God’s) company are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.’ It occurs to him: ‘Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of Brahmā’s (God’s) company!’ He sets his mind on this, fixes his mind on this, and develops this state of mind. That objective of his, determined on what is inferior, not developed higher, leads to rebirth there. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of Brahmā’s (God’s) company — and that is for one who is virtuous (practicing moral conduct), I say, not for one who is immoral; for one without craving, not for one with craving. The heart’s objective of one who is virtuous succeeds because of his purity.

These, Monks, are the eight kinds of rebirth on account of giving.

(Reference: AN 8.35)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how through practicing generosity a Practitioner improves their rebirth, should rebirth be needed.

Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth. It is generosity that helps to eliminate craving/desire/attachment in the mind. Through developing one’s practice of generosity, among other training guidance, they are training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment. Thus, with craving/desire/attachment diminished, a Practitioner will experience less discontentedness and ultimately eliminate discontentedness when craving/desire/attachment is eliminated.

At the same time that one is eliminating craving/desire/attachment to eliminate discontentedness, they are also eliminating the cause of rebirth. Therefore, through practicing generosity, a Practitioner is improving their ability to attain Enlightenment through cultivating the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment and, if rebirth is needed, improving their destination upon future rebirth.

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

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 61-70)

<https://youtu.be/B0LRP38uj-0>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 349 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 61-70)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--349---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-61-70-e1mise1/a-a8d0s24>

Chapter 71

Three Bases of Meritorious Activity

Monks, there are these three bases of meritorious activity (generating wholesome Kamma).

What three?

The basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving; the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior; and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development.

(1) Here, Monks, someone has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a limited extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a limited extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn among humans in an unfavorable condition.

(2) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a middling extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a middling extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn among humans in a favorable condition.

(3) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings.

There The Four Great Kings, who had practiced supremely the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior surpass the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings in ten respects: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority; and in heavenly forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

(4) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings.

There Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, who had practiced supremely the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings in ten respects: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority; and in heavenly forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

(5) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Yāma heavenly beings.

There the young heavenly being Suyāma, who had practiced supremely the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the Yāma heavenly beings in ten respects: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority; and in heavenly forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

(6) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Tusita heavenly beings.

There the young heavenly being Santusita, who had practiced supremely the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the Tusita heavenly beings in ten respects: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority; and in heavenly forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

(7) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who excite in creation.

There the young heavenly being Sunimmita, who had practiced supremely the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the heavenly beings who excite in creation in ten respects: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority; and in heavenly forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

(8) Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who control what is created by others.

There the young heavenly being Vasavattī, who had practiced supremely the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the heavenly beings who control what is created by others in ten respects: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority; and in heavenly forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects.

These, Monks, are the three bases of meritorious activity.

(Reference: AN 8.35)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the way of practice as generosity, moral conduct (virtuous behavior), and meditation.

Generosity: a readiness and taking the action of frequently giving something more than is strictly necessary, such as time, effort, energy, or resources without any expectation of anything in return.

Moral Conduct (Virtuous Behavior): holding and acting upon high principles for proper conduct.

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 in this Teaching The Buddha describes these are “the three bases of meritorious activity” and describes how a Practitioner can practice these to improve their rebirth, these are also the same Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. These are often referred to as “The Way of Practice”.

A Practitioner would need to have a well developed practice of generosity to eliminate craving/desire/attachment from the mind and remove selfishness from the mind.

A Practitioner would need to have a well developed practice of moral conduct (virtuous behavior), as described as part of The Eight Fold Path, to eliminate the harm one is causing through their bodily, verbal, and mental conduct.

A Practitioner would need to have a well developed practice of meditation to train the mind to eliminate unwholesome qualities and cultivate wholesome qualities.

Without all three of these aspects of “The Way of Practice”, a Practitioner would be unable to attain Enlightenment.

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

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).

Detailed explanation of how 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) and in the book “Breathing Mindfulness Meditation” (Volume 7).

Chapter 72

The Generous One Would Surpass the Other

'Here, Venerable Sir, there might be two disciples of The Perfectly Enlightened One equal in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and wisdom, but one is generous while the other is not. With the breakup of the body, after death, they would both be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. When they have become heavenly beings, would there be any distinction or difference between them?'

There would be, Sumanā, The Perfectly Enlightened One said: The generous one, having become a heavenly being, would surpass the other in five ways: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority. The generous one, having become a heavenly being, would surpass the other in these five ways.

'But, Venerable Sir, if these two pass away from there and again become human beings, would there still be some distinction or difference between them?'

There would be, Sumanā, The Perfectly Enlightened One said: When they again become human beings, the generous one would surpass the other in five ways: in human life span, human beauty, human happiness, human fame, and human authority. When they again become human beings, the generous one would surpass the other in these five ways.

'But, Venerable Sir, if these two should go forth from the household life into homelessness, would there still be some distinction or difference between them?'

There would be, Sumanā, The Perfectly Enlightened One said: The generous one, having gone forth, would surpass the other in five ways.

- (1) He would usually use a robe that has been specifically offered to him, seldom one that had not been specifically offered to him.
- (2) He would usually eat almsfood that has been specifically offered to him, seldom almsfood that had not been specifically offered to him.
- (3) He would usually use a lodging that had been specifically offered to him, seldom one that had not been specifically offered to him.

- (4) He would usually use medicines and supplies for the sick that had been specifically offered to him, seldom those that had not been specifically offered to him.
- (5) His fellow monastics, those with whom he resides, would usually behave toward him in agreeable ways by bodily, verbal, and mental action, seldom in disagreeable ways. They would usually present him what is agreeable, seldom what is disagreeable. The generous one, having gone forth, would surpass the other in these five ways.

‘But, Venerable Sir, if both attain Arahantship, would there still be some distinction or difference between them after they have attained Arahantship?’

In this case, Sumanā, I declare, there would be no difference between the liberation [of one] and the liberation [of the other].

‘It’s outstanding and amazing, Venerable Sir! Truly, one has good reason to give alms (a donation) and do meritorious deeds, since they will be helpful if one becomes a heavenly being, [again] becomes a human being, or goes forth.

So it is, Sumanā! So it is, Sumanā! Truly, one has good reason to give alms (a donation) and do meritorious deeds, since they will be helpful if one becomes a heavenly being, [again] becomes a human being, or goes forth.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said.

Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

As the stainless moon moving through the sphere of space outshines with its radiance all the stars in the world, so one accomplished in virtuous behavior (moral conduct), a person endowed with confidence, outshines by generosity all the selfish people in the world.

As the hundred-peaked rain cloud, thundering, covered in lightning, pours down rain upon the earth, overwhelming the plains and lowlands, so The Perfectly Enlightened One’s disciple, the wise one accomplished in vision, surpasses the selfish person in five specific respects:

Life span and glory, beauty and peacefulness.

Possessed of wealth, after death he rejoices in heaven.

(Reference: AN 5.31)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares answers to questions related to the practice of generosity.

A Student asks The Buddha what would be the difference between two Practitioners who are learning and practicing his Teachings upon rebirth, given that both Practitioners were equally practicing confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and wisdom but one would be generous while the other is not.

The Student asks this question related to rebirth in the heavenly realm, human realm, having become an Ordained Practitioner, and if both Practitioners attained Enlightenment.

Heavenly Realm

The Buddha explains that there would be a difference between the two Practitioners upon rebirth in the heavenly realm. If both Practitioners were equally established in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and wisdom but one was generous in the past life while the other was not, the Practitioner who was generous “would surpass the other in five ways: in heavenly life span, heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory, and heavenly authority”.

Human Realm

The Buddha explains that there would be a difference between the two Practitioners upon rebirth in the human realm. If both Practitioners were equally established in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and wisdom but one was generous in the past life while the other was not, the Practitioner who was generous “would surpass the other in five ways: in human life span, human beauty, human happiness, human fame, and human authority”.

Becoming Ordained Practitioners

The Buddha explains that there would be a difference between the two Practitioners upon rebirth in the human realm and both deciding to become Ordained Practitioners. If both Ordained Practitioners were equally established in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and wisdom but one was generous in the past life while the other was not, the Practitioner who was generous “would surpass the other in five ways”.

- (1) He would usually use a robe that has been specifically offered to him, seldom one that had not been specifically offered to him.
- (2) He would usually eat almsfood that has been specifically offered to him, seldom almsfood that had not been specifically offered to him.
- (3) He would usually use a lodging that had been specifically offered to him, seldom one that had not been specifically offered to him.
- (4) He would usually use medicines and supplies for the sick that had been specifically offered to him, seldom those that had not been specifically offered to him.

(5) His fellow monastics, those with whom he resides, would usually behave toward him in agreeable ways by bodily, verbal, and mental action, seldom in disagreeable ways. They would usually present him what is agreeable, seldom what is disagreeable. The generous one, having gone forth, would surpass the other in these five ways.

Due to the Practitioner having a well developed practice of generosity in a previous life, they will experience individuals being generous to them in their current life. This is as a result of their actions in the previous and current life.

Attaining Enlightenment

The Buddha explains that there would not be a difference between the two Practitioners upon rebirth in the human realm. If both Practitioners were equally established in confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and wisdom but one was generous in the past life while the other was not, for two Practitioners who have attained Enlightenment “there would be no difference between the liberation [of one] and the liberation [of the other]”.

An Enlightened being is an Enlightened being. Any and all Enlightened beings will experience liberation of mind, such that, there will be no discontentedness because both Practitioners have fully and completely eliminated all of The Ten Fetters. With all the fetters/taints/pollution of mind eliminated, both Practitioners will have eradicated discontentedness and escaped The Cycle of Rebirth. The mind of both Practitioners will be peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

Generosity should be practiced on a continuous and ongoing basis. A Practitioner should incorporate generosity as part of their normal life. Giving and sharing with others trains one’s own mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment removing the stain of selfishness from the mind. A Practitioner’s mind would not be liberated to attain Enlightenment without a well developed practice of continuous and ongoing generosity.

Detailed explanation of The Realms of Existence is available in this same book series found in the book “The Realms of Existence” (Volume 11).

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

Chapter 73

A Simile Describing the Happiness of Heaven

A wise man who has given himself over to wholesome conduct of body, speech, and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destination, even in heaven.

Were it rightly speaking to be said of anything: 'That is entirely wished for, entirely desired, entirely agreeable,' it is of heaven that, rightly speaking, this should be said, so much so that it is hard to finish describing the happiness of heaven.

'But, Venerable Sir, can a simile be given?'

It can, Monk, The Perfectly Enlightened One said: Monks, suppose that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possessed the seven treasures and the four kinds of success, and because of that experienced pleasure and happiness.

What are the seven treasures?

(1) Here, when a head-anointed noble King has bathed his head on the Uposatha Day of the fifteenth and has ascended to the upper palace chamber for the Uposatha, there appears to him the divine wheel-treasure with its thousand spokes, its tire, and its hub, complete in every aspect. On seeing it, the head-anointed noble King thinks thus: Now it has been heard by me that when a head-anointed noble King has bathed his head on the Uposatha Day of the fifteenth and has ascended to the upper palace chamber for the Uposatha, and there appears to him the divine wheel-treasure with its thousand spokes, its tire, and its hub, complete in every aspect, then that King becomes a Wheel-Turning Monarch. 'Am I then a Wheel-Turning Monarch?'

Then the head-anointed noble King rises from his seat, and taking a water vessel in his left hand, he sprinkles the wheel-treasure with his right hand, saying: 'Turn forward, good wheel-treasure; triumph, good wheel-treasure!'

Then the wheel-treasure turns forward rolling in the eastern direction and the Wheel-Turning Monarch follows it with his four-constituent army.

Now in whatever region the wheel-treasure pauses, there the Wheel-Turning Monarch takes up residence with his four-constituent army. And opposing Kings in the eastern direction come to the Wheel-Turning

Monarch and speak thus: Come, great King; welcome, great King; command, great King; advise, great King.

The Wheel-Turning Monarch speaks thus: You should not kill living beings; you should not take what has not been given; you should not misconduct yourselves in sensual pleasures; you should not speak falsehood; you should not drink intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness); you should eat what you are accustomed to eat. And the opposing Kings in the eastern direction submit to the Wheel-Turning Monarch.

Then the wheel-treasure plunges into the eastern ocean and emerges again. And then it turns forward rolling in the southern direction ... And the opposing Kings in the southern direction submit to the Wheel-Turning Monarch. Then the wheel-treasure plunges into the southern ocean and emerges again. And then it turns forward rolling in the western direction ... And the opposing Kings in the western direction submit to the Wheel-Turning Monarch. Then the wheel-treasure plunges into the western ocean and emerges again. And then it turns forward rolling in the northern direction ... And the opposing Kings in the northern direction submit to the Wheel-Turning Monarch.

Now when the wheel-treasure has triumphed over the earth to the ocean's edge, it returns to the royal capital and remains as if fixed on its axle at the gate of the Wheel-Turning Monarch's inner palace, as a decoration to the gate of his inner palace. Such is the wheel-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(2) Again, the elephant-treasure appears to the Wheel-Turning Monarch, all white, with sevenfold stance, with supernormal power, flying through the air, the King of elephants named 'Uposatha'. On seeing him, the Wheel-Turning Monarch's mind has confidence in him thus: It would be wonderful to ride the elephant, if he would undergo taming! Then the elephant-treasure undergoes taming just like a fine thoroughbred elephant well tamed for a long time.

And it so happens that the Wheel-Turning Monarch, when testing the elephant-treasure, mounts him in the morning, and after traveling the whole earth to the edge of the ocean, he returns to the royal capital to take his morning meal. Such is the elephant-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(3) Again, the horse-treasure appears to the Wheel-Turning Monarch, all white, with raven-black head, with mane like muñja grass, with supernormal power, flying through the air, the King of horses named 'Valāhaka' ['Thundercloud']. On seeing him, the Wheel-Turning Monarch's mind has confidence in him thus: It would be wonderful to ride the horse, if he would

undergo taming! Then the horse-treasure undergoes taming just like a fine thoroughbred horse well tamed for a long time.

And it so happens that the Wheel-Turning Monarch, when testing the horse-treasure, mounts him in the morning, and after traveling the whole earth to the edge of the ocean, he returns to the royal capital to take his morning meal. Such is the horse-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(4) Again, the jewel-treasure appears to the Wheel-Turning Monarch. The jewel is fine beryl (mineral composed of beryllium aluminium cyclosilicate; a rare stone) of purest water, eight-faceted, and well cut. Now the radiance of the jewel-treasure spreads around for a whole league.

And it so happens that when the Wheel-Turning Monarch is testing the jewel-treasure, he draws up his four-constituent army in formation, and mounting the jewel on top of his banner, he sets forth in the darkness and gloom of the night. Then all the [inhabitants of the] villages nearby begin their work by its light, thinking that it is day. Such is the jewel-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(5) Again, the woman-treasure appears to the Wheel-Turning Monarch, beautiful, comely and graceful, possessing the supreme beauty of complexion, neither too tall nor too short, neither too slim nor too stout, neither too dark nor too fair, surpassing human beauty without reaching divine beauty. The touch of the woman-treasure is such that it is like a cluster of kapok or a cluster of cotton-wool. When it is cool, her limbs are warm; when it is warm, her limbs are cool. From her body the scent of sandalwood comes forth, and from her mouth the scent of lotuses. She rises before the Wheel-Turning Monarch and retires after him. She is eager to serve, agreeable in conduct, and sweet in speech. Since she is never lacking confidence to the Wheel-Turning Monarch even in thought, how could she be so in body? Such is the woman-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(6) Again, the steward-treasure appears to the Wheel-Turning Monarch. The divine eye (third eye) born of past action is established in him whereby he sees hidden stores of treasure both with owners and ownerless. He approaches the Wheel-Turning Monarch and says: Sir, you remain at ease. I shall take care of your monetary affairs. And it so happens that when the Wheel-Turning Monarch is testing the steward-treasure, he boards a boat, and putting out into the river Ganges, in midstream he tells the steward-treasure: I need gold and bullion, steward. — Then, Sir, let the boat be steered towards one bank. — Steward, it is actually here that I need gold and bullion.

Then the steward-treasure plunges both hands into the water and draws up a pot full of gold and bullion, and he tells the Wheel-Turning Monarch: Is this enough, Sir? Is enough done, enough offered? — This is enough, steward, enough is done, enough offered. Such is the steward-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

(7) Again, the counsellor-treasure appears to the Wheel-Turning Monarch, wise, knowledgable, and a good decision-maker, capable of getting the Wheel-Turning Monarch to promote that which is worthy of being promoted, to dismiss that which should be dismissed, and to establish that which should be established. He approaches the Wheel-Turning Monarch and says: Sir, you remain at ease. I shall govern. Such is the counsellor-treasure that appears to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

These are the seven treasures that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possesses.

What are the four kinds of success?

- (1) Here a Wheel-Turning Monarch is handsome, attractive, and graceful, possessing the supreme beauty of complexion, and he surpasses other human beings in that respect. This is the first kind of success that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possesses.
- (2) Again, a Wheel-Turning Monarch lives long and endures long, and he surpasses other human beings in that respect. This is the second kind of success that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possesses.
- (3) Again, a Wheel-Turning Monarch is free from illness and affliction, possessing a good digestion that is neither too cool nor too warm, and he surpasses other human beings in that respect. This is the third kind of success that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possesses.
- (4) Again, a Wheel-Turning Monarch is dear and agreeable to Brāhmins and Householders. Just as a father is dear and agreeable to his children, so too a Wheel-Turning Monarch is dear and agreeable to Brāhmins and Householders. Brāhmins and Householders, too, are dear and agreeable to a Wheel-Turning Monarch. Just as children are dear and agreeable to a father, so too Brāhmins and Householders are dear and agreeable to a Wheel-Turning Monarch.

Once a Wheel-Turning Monarch was driving in a pleasure park with his four-constituent army. Then Brāhmins and Householders went to him and spoke thus: Sir, drive slowly that we may see you longer.

And so he told his charioteer (driver):

Charioteer, drive slowly that I may see the Brāhmins and Householders longer. This is the fourth kind of success that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possesses.

These are the four kinds of success that a Wheel-Turning Monarch possesses.

What do you think, Monks? Would a Wheel-Turning Monarch experience pleasure and happiness because of possessing these seven treasures and these four kinds of success?

'Venerable Sir, a Wheel-Turning Monarch would experience pleasure and happiness because of possessing even one treasure, let alone seven treasures and four kinds of success.'

Then, taking a small stone the size of his hand, The Perfectly Enlightened One addressed the Monks thus:

What do you think, Monks? Which is the greater, this small stone that I have taken, the size of my hand, or Himālaya, the King of mountains?

'Venerable Sir, the small stone that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken, the size of his hand, is minimal beside Himālaya, the King of mountains; it is not even a fraction, there is no comparison.'

So too, Monks, the pleasure and happiness that a Wheel-Turning Monarch would experience because of possessing the seven treasures and the four kinds of success is minimal beside the happiness of heaven; it is not even a fraction, there is no comparison.

If, some time or other, at the end of a long period, the wise man comes back to the human state, it is into a high family that he is reborn — into a family of well-to-do Nobles, or well-to-do Brāhmins, or well-to-do Householders — one that is rich, of great wealth, of great possessions, with abundant gold and silver, with abundant assets and means, and with abundant money and grain. He is handsome, attractive and graceful, possessing the supreme beauty of complexion. He obtains food and drink, clothes, vehicles, garlands, scents and ointments, bed, lodging, and light. He conducts himself well in body, speech, and mind, and having done so, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

Monks, suppose a gambler at the very first lucky throw won a great fortune, yet a lucky throw such as that is insignificant; it is a far more lucky throw when a wise man who conducts himself well in body, speech, and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

This is the complete perfection of the wise man's condition.

(Reference: MN 129)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a simile to describe the amount of pleasure and happiness experienced in the heavenly realm.

He provides a story related to the Wheel-Turning Monarch and all the pleasure and happiness that he might experience sharing that this is minimal compare to that which is experienced in the heavenly realm.

While the heavenly realm is known to be highly pleasurable and happy, it is not a desirable outcome for one's current human life.

Beings in the heavenly realm are experiencing so much pleasure and happiness that they oftentimes lack the motivation to learn and practice these Teachings to attain Enlightenment. Thus, they are reborn back into other realms continuing the problem of rebirth and discontentedness as they roam and wander throughout The Cycle of Rebirth.

The heavenly realm is not a permanent resting place, but instead, a temporary existence that has a certain life span. Once that life span is over, if Enlightenment has not been attained, then one will be reborn into a new existence continuing the problem of The Cycle of Rebirth with the mind continuing to experience discontentedness.

A wise Practitioner would use this human birth, one where we do have motivation to learn and practice these Teachings, to make efforts towards the attainment of Enlightenment. In this human realm, an ideal place to work towards the attainment of Enlightenment, we experience all three (3) feelings of discontentedness. Pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant are all experienced in this human realm.

Discontentedness: Gotama Buddha describes three feelings as discontent. The goal of these Teachings is to eliminate discontentedness of mind providing the mind a permanent place to reside in Enlightenment.

- A pleasant feeling (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)
- A painful feeling (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, etc.)
- A feeling that is neither painful-nor-pleasant (boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied, etc.)

Since human beings experience all three (3) feelings of discontentedness, we are oftentimes more motivated than those beings in the heavenly realm to progress towards Enlightenment.

With heavenly beings only experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings, they will oftentimes be complacent and need to experience continued rebirth before escaping The Cycle of Rebirth through the attainment of Enlightenment.

Beings in the lower realms are unable to attain Enlightenment and beings in the heavenly realm, while they are able to attain Enlightenment, oftentimes lack the motivation to work towards Enlightenment. Therefore, the human realm is the most ideal existence to apply effort and energy towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

Chapter 74

Great Fruit and Benefit of the Noble Ones' Uposatha Observance

There are, Visākhā, three kinds of Uposathas.

What three?

- (1) The cattle workers Uposatha,
- (2) the Nigaṇṭhas' Uposatha,
- (3) and the Noble Ones' Uposatha.

And how, Visākhā, is the cattle workers Uposatha observed?

Suppose, Visākhā, in the evening a cattle worker returns the cows to their owners. He reflects thus: Today the cows grazed in such and such a place and drank water in such and such a place. Tomorrow the cows will graze in such and such a place and drink water in such and such a place.

So too, someone here observing the Uposatha reflects thus: Today I ate this and that food; today I ate a meal of this and that kind. Tomorrow I will eat this and that food; tomorrow I will eat a meal of this and that kind. He thereby passes the day with craving/greed and longing in his mind.

It is in such a way that the cattle workers Uposatha is observed. The cattle workers Uposatha, thus observed, is not of great fruit and benefit, nor is it extraordinarily brilliant and extensive.

And how, Visākhā, is the Nigaṇṭhas' Uposatha observed?

There are, Visākhā, Ascetics called Nigaṇṭhas. They urge their disciples thus: Come, good man, lay down the rod toward living beings residing more than a hundred yojanas' (12-15 km) distance in the eastern quarter. Lay down the rod toward living beings residing more than a hundred yojanas' distance in the western quarter. Lay down the rod toward living beings residing more than a hundred yojanas' distance in the northern quarter. Lay down the rod toward living beings residing more than a hundred yojanas' distance in the southern quarter. Thus they urge them to be sympathetic and compassionate toward some living beings, but not to others. On the Uposatha Day, they urge their disciples thus: Come, good man, having laid aside all clothes, recite: I am not anywhere the belonging of anyone, nor is there anywhere anything in any place that is mine. However, his parents

know: This is our son. And he knows: These are my parents. His wife and children know: He is our supporter. And he knows: These are my wife and children. His slaves, workers, and servants know: He is our master. And he knows: These are my slaves, workers, and servants. Thus on an occasion when they should be urged in truthfulness, [the Nigaṇṭhas] urge them in false speech. This, I say, is false speech. When that night has passed, he makes use of possessions that have not been given. This, I say, is taking what has not been given.

It is in such a way that the Nigaṇṭhas' Uposatha is observed. When one has observed the Uposatha in the way of the Nigaṇṭhas, the Uposatha is not of great fruit and benefit, nor is it extraordinarily brilliant and extensive.

And how, Visākhā, is the Noble Ones' Uposatha observed?

The defiled mind is cleansed by effort. And how is the defiled mind cleansed by effort?

Here, Visākhā, a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) The Tathāgata thus: The Perfectly Enlightened One is an Arahant, Perfectly Enlightened, accomplished in true wisdom and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, Teacher of heavenly beings and humans, the Enlightened One, The Perfectly Enlightened One. When a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) The Tathāgata, his mind becomes tranquil (calm), joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned in the same way that one's head, when dirty, is cleansed by effort.

And how, Visākhā, does one cleanse a dirty head by effort? By means of cleansing paste, clay, water, and the appropriate effort by the person. It is in such a way that one's head, when dirty, is cleansed by effort. So too, the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

This is called a Noble Disciple who observes the Uposatha of Brahmā (God), who resides together with Brahmā (God), and it is by considering Brahmā (God) that his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned. It is in this way that the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

The defiled mind, Visākhā, is cleansed by effort. And how is the defiled mind cleansed by effort?

Here, Visākhā, a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) 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. When a Noble Disciple recollects

(recalls/remembers) The Teachings, his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned in the same way that one's body, when dirty, is cleansed by effort.

And how, Visākhā, does one cleanse a dirty body by effort? By means of a bathing brush, lime powder, water, and the appropriate effort by the person. It is in such a way that one's body, when dirty, is cleansed by effort. So too, the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

This is called a Noble Disciple who observes the Uposatha of The Teachings, who resides together with The Teachings, and it is by considering The Teachings that his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned. It is in this way that the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

The defiled mind, Visākhā, is cleansed by effort. And how is the defiled mind cleansed by effort?

Here, Visākhā, a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) The Community thus: The Community of The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciples is practicing the good 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. When a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) The Community, his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned in the same way that a dirty cloth is cleansed by effort.

And how, Visākhā, does one cleanse a dirty cloth by effort? By means of heat, lye, cow dung, water, and the appropriate effort by the person. It is in such a way that a dirty cloth is cleansed by effort. So too, the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

This is called a Noble Disciple who observes the Uposatha of The Community, who resides together with The Community, and it is by considering The Community that his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned. It is in this way that the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

The defiled mind, Visākhā, is cleansed by effort. And how is the defiled mind cleansed by effort?

Here, Visākhā, a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) his own virtuous behavior (moral conduct) as unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unblotched, liberating, praised by the wise, not misunderstood, and leading to concentration. When a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) his virtuous behavior (moral conduct), his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned in the same way that a dirty mirror is cleansed by effort.

And how, Visākhā, is a dirty mirror cleansed by effort? By means of oil, ashes, a roll of cloth, and the appropriate effort by the person. It is in such a way that a dirty mirror is cleansed by effort. So too, the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

This is called a Noble Disciple who observes the Uposatha of virtuous behavior (moral conduct), who resides together with virtuous behavior (moral conduct), and it is by considering virtuous behavior (moral conduct) that his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned. It is in this way that the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

The defiled mind, Visākhā, is cleansed by effort. And how is the defiled mind cleansed by effort?

Here, Visākhā, a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) the heavenly beings thus: There are heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings, Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings, Yāma heavenly beings, Tusita heavenly beings, heavenly beings who excite in creation, heavenly beings who control what is created by others, heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company, and heavenly beings still higher than these. I too have such confidence as those heavenly beings possessed because of which, when they passed away from here, they were reborn there; I too have such virtuous behavior (moral conduct) as those heavenly beings possessed because of which, when they passed away from here, they were reborn there; I too have such learning as those heavenly beings possessed because of which, when they passed away from here, they were reborn there; I too have such generosity as those heavenly beings possessed because of which, when they passed away from here, they were reborn there; I too have such wisdom as those heavenly beings possessed because of which, when they passed away from here, they were reborn there. When a Noble Disciple recollects (recalls/remembers) the confidence, virtuous behavior (moral conduct), learning, generosity, and wisdom in himself and in those heavenly beings, his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned in the same way that impure gold is cleansed by effort.

And how, Visākhā, is impure gold cleansed by effort?

By means of a furnace, salt, red chalk, a blow-pipe and tongs, and the appropriate effort by the person. It is in such a way that impure gold is cleansed by effort. So too, the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

This is called a Noble Disciple who observes the Uposatha of the heavenly beings, who resides together with the heavenly beings, and it is by considering the heavenly beings that his mind becomes tranquil, joy arises, and the defilements of the mind are abandoned. It is in this way that the defiled mind is cleansed by effort.

- (i) This Noble Disciple, Visākhā, reflects thus: As long as they live, the Arahants abandon and abstain from the destruction of life; with the rod and weapon laid aside, diligent and kindly, they reside compassionate toward all living beings. Today, for this night and day, I too shall abandon and abstain from the destruction of life; with the rod and weapon laid aside, diligent and kindly, I too shall reside compassionate toward all living beings. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.
- (ii) As long as they live, the Arahants abandon and abstain from taking what is not given; they take only what is given, awaiting only what is given, and are honest at heart, free of theft. Today, for this night and day, I too shall abandon and abstain from taking what is not given; I shall accept only what is given, awaiting only what is given, and be honest at heart, free of theft. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.
- (iii) As long as they live, the Arahants abandon sexual activity and observe celibacy, living apart, abstaining from sexual intercourse, the common person's practice. Today, for this night and day, I too shall abandon sexual activity and observe celibacy, living apart, abstaining from sexual intercourse, the common person's practice. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.
- (iv) As long as they live, the Arahants abandon and abstain from false speech; they speak truth, adhere to truth; they are trustworthy and reliable, not deceivers of the world. Today, for this night and day, 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. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.

- (v) As long as they live, the Arahants abandon and abstain from liquor, wine, and intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness), the basis for heedlessness. Today, for this night and day, I too shall abandon and abstain from liquor, wine, and intoxicants, the basis for heedlessness. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.
- (vi) As long as they live, the Arahants eat once a day, abstaining from eating at night and from food outside the proper time. Today, for this night and day, I too shall eat once a day, abstaining from eating at night and from food outside the proper time. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.
- (vii) As long as they live, the Arahants abstain from dancing, singing, instrumental music, and unsuitable shows, and from adorning and beautifying themselves by wearing garlands and applying scents and fragrances. Today, for this night and day, 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 fragrances. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.
- (viii) As long as they live, the Arahants abandon and abstain from the use of high and luxurious beds; they lie down on a low resting place, either a small bed or a straw mat. Today, for this night and day, 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. I shall imitate the Arahants in this respect and the Uposatha will be observed by me.

It is in this way, Visākhā, that the Noble Ones' Uposatha is observed. When one has observed the Uposatha in the way of the Noble Ones, it is of great fruit and benefit, extraordinarily brilliant and extensive.

To what extent is it of great fruit and benefit? To what extent is it extraordinarily brilliant and pervasive?

Suppose, Visākhā, one were to exercise sovereignty and Kingship over these sixteen great countries abounding in the seven precious substances, that is, [the countries of] the Aṅgans, the Magadhans, the Kāsis, the Kosalans, the Vajjis, the Mallas, the Cetis, the Vaṅgas, the Kurus, the Pañcālas, the Macchas, the Sūrasenas, the Assakas, the Avantis, the Gandhārans, and the Kambojans: this would not be worth a sixteenth part of the Uposatha observance complete in those eight factors.

For what reason?

Because human Kingship is inferior compared to heavenly happiness.

For the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings, a single night and day is equivalent to fifty human years; thirty such days make up a month, and twelve such months make up a year. The life span of the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings is five hundred such heavenly years. It is possible, Visākhā, that a woman or man here who observes the Uposatha complete in these eight factors will, with the breakup of the body, after death, be reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings. It was with reference to this that I said human kingship is poor compared to heavenly happiness.

For the Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings a single night and day is equivalent to a hundred human years; thirty such days make up a month, and twelve such months make up a year. The life span of the Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings is a thousand such heavenly years.

For the Yāma heavenly beings a single night and day is equivalent to two hundred human years; thirty such days make up a month, and twelve such months make up a year. The life span of the Yāma heavenly beings is two thousand such heavenly years.

For the Tusita heavenly beings, a single night and day is equivalent to four hundred human years; thirty such days make up a month, and twelve such months make up a year. The life span of the Tusita heavenly beings is four thousand such heavenly years.

For the heavenly beings who excite in creation, a single night and day is equivalent to eight hundred human years; thirty such days make up a month, and twelve such months make up a year. The life span of the heavenly beings who excite in creation is eight thousand such heavenly years.

For the heavenly beings who control what is created by others, a single night and day is equivalent to sixteen hundred human years; thirty such days make up a month, and twelve such months make up a year. The life span of the heavenly beings who control what is created by others is sixteen thousand such heavenly years.

It is possible, Visākhā, that a woman or man here who observes the Uposatha complete in these eight factors will, with the breakup of the body, after death, be reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings who control what is created by others. It was with reference to this that I said human kingship is poor compared to heavenly happiness.

(Reference: AN 3.70)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the three kinds of Uposathas.

The Uposatha is an observance where one might choose to pay particularly close attention to one's life practice, ensuring one does not cause any harm through bodily, verbal, and mental conduct. Household Practitioners will oftentimes increase their practice of The Five Precepts by practicing The Eight Precepts during the Uposatha.

The Buddha guided his Students to observe the Uposatha through dedicated practice of The Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment to help invigorate their practice during these special times of the month dedicated to the cleansing of the defiled/polluted mind.

Observing the Uposatha was traditionally done for two to six days each lunar month.

During the lifetime of The Buddha, the average person could understand time through the lunar calendar as the modern day calendar was not yet invented. People understood time based on the lunar schedule and could observe time by just looking into the sky. Today, depending which community one might live and participate in, there are some communities who practice this one day a week based on the modern calendar or they might still follow the lunar calendar to observe the Uposatha.

The Uposatha is described by The Buddha based on how it is practiced by cattle workers, Niganthas, and his own Students - The Noble Ones.

1.) The cattle workers Uposatha is observed with craving/greed and longing in the mind, therefore, The Buddha explains that the cattle workers Uposatha "is not of great fruit and benefit, nor is it extraordinarily brilliant and extensive" because they are not actively working to cleanse the mind.

2.) The Niganthas' Uposatha is observed with effort applied towards not killing living beings within a certain distance, but beings outside of that distance may still be killed. The Niganthas are "sympathetic and compassionate toward some living beings, but not to others".

They are also urged to recite "I am not anywhere the belonging of anyone, nor is there anywhere anything in any place that is mine". Despite this thinking, The Buddha explains that the Niganthas still think their relationships as "These are my parents", "These are my wife and children", and "these are my slaves, workers, and servants". Even though they are urged to speak the truth on the Uposatha, The Buddha explains they are still using false speech due to the mind not yet letting go of thinking of those things that belong to them.

The Buddha explains that the Niganthas' Uposatha will also include making "use of possessions that have not been given. This, I say, is taking what has not been given". In this situation, the Niganthas' Uposatha is observed with Practitioners stealing.

The Buddha explains that the Niganthas' Uposatha "is not of great fruit and benefit, nor is it extraordinarily brilliant and extensive" because they are not actively working to cleanse the mind.

3.) The Noble Ones' Uposatha (i.e. The Students of The Buddha) is observed by making an effort to cleanse the mind.

The Buddha explains applying effort in various ways creating comparisons to various tasks that his Students would be familiar with to help them understand that they are being guided to "cleanse the mind by effort" on the Uposatha.

He specially guides Students to practice The Eight Precepts on the Uposatha in order to apply extra effort towards the cleansing of the mind.

The Buddha explains that the Noble Ones' Uposatha "is of great fruit and benefit, extraordinarily brilliant and extensive" because they are actively working to cleanse the mind.

He compares how beneficial the Noble One's Uposatha is by drawing comparisons to a Kingship. It is reasonable to consider that the common person during the lifetime of The Buddha aspired to be a member of the royal family, thinking that would solve all their worldly problems. Much like people today feel if they could be a celebrity or win the lottery, all their problems would be solved.

But, The Buddha provides guidance to help his Students see that there is more benefit in practicing The Eight Precepts on the Uposatha than that of being a member of the royal family as a King.

The Eight Precepts are part of The Path to Enlightenment and is what will lead towards the attainment of Enlightenment. The mental state of Enlightenment is so utterly peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, that it is more beneficial to one's life than all of the treasures and benefits of being a member of the royal family or even a King.

Attaining Enlightenment is more beneficial to one's life than that of being a King, celebrity, or winning the lottery. There is no material possession, title, or lifestyle that compares to the experience of having attained Enlightenment. The Enlightened mind is beyond pleasure and pain, so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, that the mind no longer experiences any discontentedness and one has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth. The mind is completely and entirely at peace permanently.

The Buddha even relates how inferior a Kingship is to that of the happiness in the heavenly realm. If you can imagine how happy the mind might be as a King, celebrity, or having won the lottery, The Buddha explains that the happiness experienced in the heavenly realm is even beyond that happiness.

The happiness that you can understand as it relates to being a King, celebrity, or winning the lottery is something that the unEnlightened mind can understand and is used to describe the happiness in the heavenly realm that one can understand. However, this is still conditioned happiness, meaning it is impermanent (i.e. temporary), therefore, unsatisfying.

Being a King, celebrity, or winning the lottery would not and cannot solve the problem of the discontent mind experienced by an unEnlightened being. There is no material possession, title, or lifestyle that one could obtain that would allow the mind to reside in the same degree of peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy that is experienced by the Enlightened mind.

Material possessions, titles, nor a specific lifestyle can create Enlightenment in the mind. In fact, a mind that is longing and yearning for any of these things will continue to experience discontentedness.

The Path to Enlightenment is to eliminate the mind's craving/desire/attachment, its ignorance (unknowing of true reality) thinking that material possessions, titles, or a specific lifestyle is what it needs to experience permanent peacefulness and joy.

The Buddha himself was already a member of the royal family and was destined to become a King, yet, he gave all that up to progress on the journey to attain Enlightenment. The Buddha was well equipped to speak on the benefits of attaining Enlightenment which surpasses any benefits of a Kingship. A Practitioner does not need to give up their existing life to progress towards Enlightenment. Instead, they need to train the mind to eliminate the pollution of mind through cleansing the mind of the defilements. Just because The Buddha left the royal family in his journey towards the attainment of Enlightenment, that does not mean you would need to do the same as him.

Instead, you can actively work towards the attainment of Enlightenment in whatever lifestyle you are currently leading and gradually make adjustments to the mind, and your life practice, through training the mind.

From my experience, to gain the most benefit from increasing the number of precepts one chooses to practice would require consistent, ongoing, and diligent effort towards dedicated practice of The Five Precepts or The Eight Precepts. While a special time of month to observe additional precepts or apply extra effort towards practicing all The Teachings can help to motivate a Practitioner to carry the extra effort forward on days that aren't the Uposatha, to experience the most benefit, one would need to develop a dedicated approach to practicing The Five Precepts or The Eight Precepts for an extended period of time. This provides the most benefit towards cleansing the mind.

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).

Detailed explanation of The Eight Precepts is available in this same book series found in Chapter 46 of the book "Foundations in The Teachings" (Volume 3).

It is important to understand that The Buddha described observing the Uposatha Day in multiple ways, it was not described only in the way detailed within this Chapter. Instead, each additional Teaching is shared in layers, providing further content to deepen one's understanding of his Teachings and how to practice them successfully.

Detailed explanation of The Uposatha Day is also available in this same book series found in Chapters 59-63 of the book "Lowly Arts" (Volume 12).

Chapter 75

The Heavenly Beings of the Gandhabba Order

Monks, I will teach you about the heavenly beings of the gandhabba order (Gandhabbakāyikā heavenly being)

Listen to that...

And what, Monks, are the heavenly beings of the gandhabba order?

There are, Monks,

heavenly beings residing in fragrant roots,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant heartwood,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant softwood,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant bark,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant shoots,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant leaves,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant flowers,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant fruits,
heavenly beings residing in fragrant sap, and
heavenly beings residing in fragrant scents.

These, Monks, are called the heavenly beings of the gandhabba order.

(Reference: SN 31.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how there are heavenly beings that live in various parts of plants.

Chapter 76

To Be Reborn in the Company of the Heavenly Beings of the Gandhabba Order

Here, Monk, someone practices wholesome conduct of body, speech, and mind. He has heard: The heavenly beings of the gandhabba order are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness. He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of the heavenly beings of the gandhabba order! Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the heavenly beings of the gandhabba order.

This, Monks, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of the heavenly beings of the gandhabba order.

(Reference: AN 8.35)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how through developing one's life practice based on wholesome bodily, verbal, and mental conduct (i.e. body, speech, and mind), that one can be reborn into the heavenly realm.

Chapter 77

To Be Reborn in the Company of the Heavenly Beings Who Reside in Fragrant Roots

Here, Monk, someone practices wholesome conduct of body, speech, and mind. He has heard: The heavenly beings who reside in fragrant roots are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.

He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of the heavenly beings who reside in fragrant roots!

He gives food He gives drink He gives clothing He gives a vehicle He gives a garland He gives a fragrance.... He gives an ointment He gives a bed He gives a dwelling He gives a lamp. Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the heavenly beings who reside in fragrant roots.

This, Monk, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of the heavenly beings who reside in fragrant roots.

(The same Teaching was spoken for each of the other groups of gandhabbas – those who reside in fragrant heartwood, residing in fragrant softwood, residing in fragrant bark, residing in fragrant shoots, residing in fragrant leaves, residing in fragrant flowers, residing in fragrant fruits, residing in fragrant sap, and residing in fragrant scents, each the donor of the corresponding type of gift.)

(Reference: SN 31.3 and SN 31.4-SN 31.12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how rebirth into the heavenly realm is not only determined by wholesome conduct by body, speech, and mind but also through practicing generosity.

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

Chapter 78

The Heavenly Beings of the Cloud-Residing Order

Monks, I will teach you about the heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order.

Listen to that ...

And what, Monks, are the heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order?

There are, Monks,

cool-cloud heavenly beings,
warm-cloud heavenly beings,
storm-cloud heavenly beings,
wind-cloud heavenly beings, and
rain-cloud heavenly beings.

These, Monks, are called the heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order.

(Reference: SN 32.1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that there are heavenly beings that live in various parts of clouds.

Chapter 79

To Be Reborn in the Company of the Heavenly Beings of the Cloud-Residing Order

Here, Monk, someone practices wholesome conduct of body, speech, and mind. He has heard: The heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order are long-lived, beautiful, and abound in happiness.

He thinks: Oh, with the breakup of the body, after death, may I be reborn in the company of the heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order!

He gives food ... He gives drink ... He gives clothing ... He gives a vehicle ... He gives a garland ... He gives a fragrance ... He gives an ointment ... He gives a bed ... He gives a dwelling ... He gives a lamp. Then, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order.

This, Monk, is the cause and reason why someone here, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the company of the heavenly beings of the cloud-residing order.

(Reference: SN 32.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how rebirth into the heavenly realm is not only determined by wholesome conduct by body, speech, and mind but also through practicing generosity.

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

Chapter 80

The Agreeable-Bodied Heavenly Beings

'Here, Venerable Sir, I had gone off to pass the day and was in seclusion when a number of agreeable-bodied heavenly beings approached me, paid homage (respect) to me, stood to one side, and said to me:

Venerable Sir Anuruddha, we agreeable-bodied heavenly beings exert mastery and exercise control over three things.

We immediately acquire whatever color we want. We immediately acquire whatever pleasure we want.

And we immediately acquire whatever voice we want...

'Venerable Sir, how many qualities should a woman possess so that, with the breakup of the body, after death, she is reborn in companionship with the agreeable-bodied heavenly beings?'

If she possesses eight qualities, Anuruddha, a woman, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in companionship with the agreeable-bodied heavenly beings.

What eight?

- (1) Here, Anuruddha, to whichever husband her parents give her — doing so out of a desire for her good, seeking her welfare, taking compassion on her, acting out of compassion for her — a woman rises before him and retires after him, undertaking whatever needs to be done, agreeable in her conduct and pleasing in her speech.
- (2) She honors, respects, admires, and venerates those whom her husband respects — his mother and father, Ascetics and Brāhmins — and when they arrive, she offers them a seat and water.
- (3) She is skillful and diligent in attending to her husband's domestic chores, whether knitting or weaving; she possesses sound judgment about them in order to carry out and arrange them properly.

- (4) She finds out what her husband's domestic helpers — whether slaves, messengers, or workers — have done and left undone; she finds out the condition of those who are ill; and she distributes to each an appropriate portion of food.
- (5) She guards and protects whatever income her husband brings home — whether money, grain, silver, or gold — and she is not a spendthrift, thief, wastrel, or squanderer of his earnings.
- (6) She is a female Household Practitioner who has gone for refuge to The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.
- (7) She is virtuous (practicing moral conduct), abstaining from the destruction of life, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech, and liquor, wine, and intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness), the basis for heedlessness.
- (8) She is generous, one who resides at home with a heart free of the stain of selfishness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in letting go, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing.

Possessing these eight qualities, Anuruddha, a woman, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in companionship with the agreeable-bodied heavenly beings.

She does not despise her husband, the man who constantly supports her, who is dedicated and eagerly always brings her whatever she needs.

Nor does a wholesome woman scold her husband with speech caused by jealousy; the wise woman shows veneration to all those whom her husband admires.

She rises early, works diligently, manages the domestic help; she treats her husband in agreeable ways and safeguards the wealth he earns.

The woman who fulfills her duties thus, following her husband's will and wishes, is reborn among the heavenly beings called "the agreeable ones."

(Reference: SN 8.46)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares detailed Teachings to help guide a wife in how to attend to certain responsibilities in the household to ensure the home is operated smoothly and that she will have the ability to be reborn in the heavenly realm upon death.

Notice that this Teaching was a response to a question asked of The Buddha rather than The Buddha telling her what she needed to do for her life. He was not forcing her to learn or telling her what she should or should not do but instead, he was answering a question that was asked of him by a Student seeking guidance to improve their life practice.

While today, household life is different in many ways from that which existed during the lifetime of The Buddha, there are some important lessons that we can gain from this Teaching that can help us operate a smooth household. And, while this Teaching was shared with a woman, since she is the one who asked The Buddha a question, we can apply this Teaching to both individuals in a couple who is choosing to reside together in a household life.

I offer the following guidance as it directly relates to what The Buddha was sharing in this interaction and this Teaching.

1.) It would be wise for a couple to spend quality time together while having wholesome moral conduct towards each other being polite, kind, friendly, and respectful to each other.

While during the lifetime of The Buddha a wife might have awoken from sleep prior to her husband and slept after him, the lesson to glean in this Teaching to be applied today, is to ensure both partners of a relationship are balancing their time between all areas of their life ensuring there is quality time for each other and other family members.

If one was to only spend time working without having dedicated family time, the household would struggle as one's life practice is not balanced and in the middle.

Why do we work? To make money and be the richest person in the world? Well, there can only be one richest person in the world, therefore, with this thinking we will struggle our entire life to just acquire wealth while not necessarily taking time to spend with those who are close to us. Have you ever known anyone to be on their death bed wishing that they had just worked more?

Or, do we work to acquire the resources we need so that we can live a reasonable life with all those who are close to us? Do we have the aim to ensure we have harmonious relationships with all those around us? This way, when we are on our death bed we will feel at ease that we spent quality time throughout our life with all those who are close to us.

Nothing in this life will be taken with us when the body dies. I suggest that our work is to acquire the needed resources to sustain our life while enjoying lasting memories with all those who are close to us.

2.) Not only would it be wise for a couple to have wholesome moral conduct towards each other that is polite, kind, friendly, and respectful but also, The Buddha suggests that a couple is polite, kind, friendly, and respectful towards each other's family and friends.

And, that when a guest arrives to our home, we offer them a seat and water. Through showing good hospitality to our guests, we will experience harmonious relationships in our community. Through having harmonious relationships with those family and friends that are important to our partner, we create lasting and fulfilling relationships that allow a couple to prosper.

3.) A couple can apply effort towards the maintenance and upkeep of their home. Through showing attention to maintaining a clean and orderly home, we create a nurturing home in which to reside comfortably.

While having a home that is well maintained and comfortable based on the preferences of the couple, this does not mean the mind needs to be obsessed with extreme cleanliness.

A couple will need to find and walk, the middle way, as it relates to maintaining their home. Discussions and compromise will be needed to ensure both individuals in a couple feel comfortable with the home where they reside. While there will not always be immediate agreement, with well developed communication skills practicing Right Speech and patience, a couple can find the middle way as it relates to maintaining a comfortable home.

4.) If a couple employs workers at home or outside the home, they should take extra care to ensure their workers are well cared for as it is the workers who care for them. Through maintaining healthy relationships with the workers who help us, inside and outside the home, this creates more harmony in the relationship between the couple.

Practicing loving-kindness and compassion towards the workers who help us at all times, especially when sick, is important. Caring for the employees who care for us is to also care for one's own relationship with their life partner. If there is disharmony among one's employees, there can be disharmony in one's relationship with their life partner. Through caring for one's employees, this helps to ensure stability and steadiness in a couple's relationship as they rely on those close to them to maintain their home life and family income.

5.) A couple should apply effort to dedicate the wealth they acquire to useful efforts that benefit the couple, their family, and others. This would include ensuring that there is a plan to develop financial reserves to support them in a time of need. Living life without financial reserves can create extensive pressure in a couple's relationship. But through having active plans to develop savings that can be used during challenging times, the couple's mind can be at ease reducing or eliminating financial hardships.

Financial challenges can oftentimes lead to the ending of a relationship. But, through having a dedicated plan to create financial reserves to protect the couple from challenging times, a couple is also protecting the harmony of their relationship and ensuring the best possible opportunity for their relationship to thrive.

6.) If both individuals in a couple understand that it is The Teachings of The Buddha that will lead to a peaceful mind and a peaceful household, they can dedicate themselves to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha basing their household decisions in these Teachings.

Having confidence in The Buddha, access to his Teachings, and being part of a Community of Practitioners will support a couple in their growth on The Path to Enlightenment.

7.) If both individuals in a couple are learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings, they will find that it is easier to create harmony in their relationship. With both members of the couple practicing The Five Precepts and all the other Teachings shared by The Buddha, they can be supportive, encouraging, and motivating to each other on The Path to Enlightenment.

If one individual was choosing to learn and practice these Teachings while the other is not, they will oftentimes find that it is a struggle to build and maintain a harmonious relationship. These Teachings share topics such as practicing true love, love without attachment in relationships, among other important Teachings. If one member of the couple was practicing these Teachings while the other member of the couple was not, the two individuals could experience that they are moving in opposite directions in life. Therefore, the relationship could potentially struggle.

But, through both members of the couple creating a nurturing household based on these Teachings, their relationship can flourish as they would both be making decisions using the same wholesome qualities of mind. While there will still be challenges along the way, they will have the skills and abilities to work through those challenges in a way that leads to wholesome outcomes for everyone involved.

An Enlightened being, among other things, is a problem solver. So as one chooses to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings moving closer to Enlightenment, the mind will be better prepared to face the day-to-day challenges encountered as part of living life with a life partner by applying the guidance in these Teachings towards the challenges faced as a couple.

8.) A Practitioner will need a well developed practice of generosity to attain Enlightenment. A couple who is interested in a harmonious relationship can choose to practice generosity towards each other and among all their family, friends, workers, colleagues, Teachers, and others who support them in their life together.

Through residing “at home with a heart free of the stain of selfishness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in letting go, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing”, a couple will discover a more joyous way of living life. They will not only be focused on their own needs in life, but ensuring they care for those who care for them through making generous offerings to support those who support them in developing and maintaining a harmonious relationship.

Practicing these eight qualities, a couple can be sure they are applying effort towards the development and maintenance of their relationship so that it can be successful in all respects. The Buddha explains that through practicing these eight qualities, an individual could be predicted to be reborn among the agreeable-bodied heavenly beings should rebirth be needed.

The Buddha further explains that we should not despise our life partners and instead, constantly support one another bringing each other those things that we need to sustain our life.

We should not use speech that would be harsh or aggressive based on jealousy towards our partner attempting to scold them, but instead, we should show politeness, kindness, friendliness, and respect towards each other. If an individual is clinging to their partner, the mind can easily become jealous and create division in the relationship. Through learning how to practice true love without attachment, a couple can be highly successful in a harmonious relationship.

If we have any type of workers that help us at home, we need to ensure we treat them with dignity and respect, much like a member of our own family. It is the efforts of our household employees that provide a comfortable home to reside that creates a nurturing environment that fosters a healthy relationship.

The Buddha suggests that we do not become a “spendthrift” but instead, use our resources wisely. A couple who puts themselves in debt can oftentimes experience stress and anxiety in a relationship due to the financial pressures and burdens. By living a debt-free life, this can bring even more peacefulness into one’s relationship with their life partner. Working to eliminate craving/desire, a couple can learn to live life debt-free while attending to their needs rather than chasing after their wants.

If a couple is interested in a healthy relationship, they will need to see their financial health as part of cultivating and maintaining a healthy relationship. Through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire, this can produce wiser financial decisions that leads to a successful relationship. Allowing the mind to continue to chase after its wants through craving/desire could be self sabotaging one’s relationship.

Not only does eliminating craving/desire/attachment bring more peacefulness to one’s own mind, but it will also bring peacefulness into all your relationships ensuring harmony. Relationships can be highly fulfilling, when we walk the middle way. This Teaching and others can help you discover and walk the middle way in all your relationships so that you can experience the lasting fulfillment of peaceful and harmonious relationships.

Deciding to progress on The Path to Enlightenment is a way to ensure you are progressing towards the skills and abilities you will need to develop and maintain a healthy relationship with a life partner, if you choose. Relationships can oftentimes be a struggle, but they do not need to be if one chooses to practice true love - love without attachment.

Detailed explanation of “True Love: Love Without Attachment” is available in this same book series found in Chapter 15 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 Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 71-80)

<https://youtu.be/Yv9bzV5pJUc>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 352 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 71-80)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--352---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-71-80-e1mtm3j/a-a8e5tsb>

Chapter 81

Where Heavenly Beings Take Up Lodging

Ānanda, who is building a fortress at Pātaligāma?

Fortunate One, Sunidha and Vassakāra, the Magadhan ministers, are building a fortress against the Vajjians.

Ānanda, just as if they had taken counsel with the Thirty-Three Gods, Sunidha and Vassakāra are building a fortress at Pātaligāma. I have seen with my divine eye (third eye) how thousands of heavenly beings were taking up lodging there.

And in the parts where powerful heavenly beings settled, they caused the minds of the most powerful royal officials to pick those sites for their dwellings, and where middle and lower-ranking heavenly beings settled, so too they caused the minds of royal officials of corresponding grade to pick those sites for their dwellings.

Ānanda, as far as the Ariyan (Indo-Iranian people) land extends, as far as its trade extends, this will be the chief city, Pātaliputta, scattering its seeds far and wide. And Pātaliputta will face three dangers: from fire, from water, and from internal conflict.

(Reference: UD 8.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that beings in the heavenly realm are able to communicate with beings in the human realm.

He mentions how “powerful heavenly beings” “caused the minds of the most powerful royal officials to pick those sites for their dwellings”. The Buddha mentions the same for “middle and lower-ranking heavenly beings”.

While beings from all other realms are able to communicate with us, it is our free will choices to determine what does or does not happen in our life. Beings from other realms are able to communicate with us, but they are unable to force us to make any specific decisions.

The Buddha explains that this new city will face the dangers of fire, water (i.e. floods), and internal conflict based on observations he made through the third eye. The Buddha observed this through the “divine eye” or “third eye”.

The “third eye” is an inward looking eye where the mind is able to become aware of insight and wisdom not readily accessible to the unawakened mind. As the mind awakens, it develops the ability to look inward to discover insight and truth to acquire wisdom. The wisdom acquired helps to further liberate the mind.

Through having the third eye awakened, the mind can also become aware of things that are happening currently or will happen in the future. We might refer to this as omniscience or psychic abilities. Some Practitioners with an awakened third eye can read the mind of others, know one’s past or future, and even observe one’s past or future lives. These are all part of the special abilities that one might acquire as the mind gradually awakens towards Enlightenment.

While these things can potentially be experienced, a Practitioner should not crave/desire to acquire these abilities nor hold on to them if experienced. Instead, focus the mind on liberation not holding on to these special abilities or desiring them in any way.

A Practitioner should also not use these special abilities to sustain their life through charging fees for people to access these special abilities from you.

If the mind craves/desires acquiring these special abilities or holds on to them once experienced, the mind will not be able to experience liberation, freedom from strong feelings, peace, or Enlightenment.

With training of the mind, a Practitioner can then control the mind through practicing wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline.

Chapter 82

Seven Vows for Achieving the Status of 'Ruler of the Heavenly Beings'

Monks, in the past, when Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, was a human being, he was a Brāhmin youth named Magha; therefore he is called Maghavā.

Monks, in the past, when Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, was a human being, he gave gifts in city after city; therefore he is called Purindada, the Urban Donor.

Monks, in the past, when Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, was a human being, he gave gifts considerately; therefore he is called Sakka.

Monks, in the past, when Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, was a human being, he gave a rest house; therefore he is called Vāsava.

Monks, Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, thinks of a thousand matters in a moment; therefore he is called Sahassakkha, Thousand-eyed.

Monks, Sakka's wife is the asura maiden named Sujā; therefore he is called Sujampati, Sujā's husband.

Monks, Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, exercises supreme sovereignty and rulership over the Tāvatiṃsa heavenly beings; therefore he is called Ruler of the Heavenly Beings.

Monks, in the past, when Sakka, Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, was a human being, he adopted and undertook seven vows by the undertaking of which he achieved the status of Sakka.

What were the seven vows?

- (1) As long as I live, may I support my parents.
- (2) As long as I live, may I respect the family elders.
- (3) As long as I live, may I speak gently.
- (4) As long as I live, may I not speak argumentatively.

(5) As long as I live, may I reside at home with a mind free of the stain of selfishness, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in letting go, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing.

(6) As long as I live, may I speak the truth.

(7) As long as I live, may I be free from anger, and if anger should arise in me, may I eliminate it. (cut it off)

(Reference: SN 11.11 and SN 11.12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares seven vows that a human being practiced in order to ultimately become Ruler of the Heavenly Beings.

While the goal of this path is not to aspire to become a “Ruler of the Heavenly Beings” nor even be reborn in the heavenly realm at all, a Practitioner can learn and practice these same qualities of mind in order to move the mind towards Enlightenment.

All seven of these practices would help a Practitioner progress in their life practice towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

Supporting one’s parents, respecting elders, speaking gently, not speaking argumentatively, practicing generosity to eliminate selfishness, speaking the truth, and eliminating anger are all important qualities of mind to cultivate.

These are all aspects of developing one’s life practice that they would need to be practicing, along with others, to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 83

Offering for the Heavenly Beings

The Perfectly Enlightened One gave thanks thus to Sunidha and Vassakāra, the Chief Ministers of Magadha, in these verses after he had finished eating his meal.

In whatever realm the wise man makes his home, he should feed the virtuous leaders of the holy life.

Whatever heavenly beings there are who report this offering, they will pay him respect and honor for this.

They tremble for him as a mother for her son, and he for whom heavenly beings tremble is always happy.

(Reference: UD 8.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how it is wise to make offerings to those “virtuous leaders of the holy life”.

Virtuous leaders of the holy life are those individuals who are actively learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings while sharing them as Teachers. If we do not take care of The Teachers who are sharing these Teachings throughout our communities, then these Teachings are not sustained in the world.

By a community of people making offerings to “virtuous leaders of the holy life”, they are creating space in their community for these individuals to focus on deeply learning, reflecting, and practicing. As a result of making offerings, the individual Teachers have the time, space, and ability to dedicate towards their own practice of these Teachings ensuring they are completely and utterly focused on development of their life practice.

As a result of the offerings made, Teachers should then have the ability to deeply focus on developing their practice and then share The Teachings with those who support them.

In this way, there is an exchange.

Offerings are made to create space for people to deeply focus on developing their practice and share these Teachings. Then, those in The Community who are providing that support and others are able to benefit from the Teacher who is able to actively share The Teachings that are leading them or have led them to Enlightenment for the benefit of others.

This is all based on The Natural Law of Kamma - “cause and effect” or “action and result”. This is the results of our decisions, our Kamma.

Through active support of individuals to deeply learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings, a community of people then have Teachers to help them and guide them on The Path to Enlightenment. Without practicing generosity to make offerings in support of Teachers, a community of people would lack the ability to gain the insight of these Teachings to progress in development of their life practice to improve the condition of their mind and their life.

Chapter 84

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 85

The Path to the Company of Brahmā (The Brahmā-vihāras)

What, Student, is the path to the company of Brahmā (God)?

Here a Monk resides cultivating one quarter of the mind filled with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with loving-kindness, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, and without ill will. When the liberation of mind by loving-kindness is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by loving-kindness is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

This is the path to the company of Brahmā (God).

A Monk resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with compassion, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with compassion, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, and without ill will. When the liberation of mind by compassion is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by compassion is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

This is the path to the company of Brahmā (God).

A Monk resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with sympathetic joy, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with sympathetic joy, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, and without ill will. When the liberation of mind by sympathetic joy is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by sympathetic joy is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

Again, a Monk resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the all-encompassing world with a mind filled with equanimity, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, and without ill will. When the liberation of mind by equanimity is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by equanimity is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.

This too is the path to the company of Brahmā (God).

(Reference: MN 97)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Brahmā-vihāras helping Students to understand learning and practicing these is “the path to the company of Brahmā (God)” as part of a rebirth in the heavenly realm, but that is not the goal.

The qualities of mind that are needed to attain a rebirth in the heavenly realm are the same qualities of mind that need to be cultivated to attain Enlightenment. The goal is to attain Enlightenment to eliminate discontentedness and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

A well developed understanding and practice of The Brahmā-vihāras is an important part of The Path to Enlightenment. Without a well developed practice of The Brahmā-vihāras, a Practitioner would be unable to attain Enlightenment.

Cultivating Healthy Mental States: Loving-kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity

As you learn and implement The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, you will need to cultivate the healthy mental states of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity to attain Enlightenment.

These four (4) mental states are often referred to as “The Brahmā-vihāras”.

The Four (4) Brahmā-vihāras are:

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.

These mental states can be cultivated through meditation and in your daily life. Your intentions, speech, and actions should emanate from these mental states.

Loving-kindness is the remedy for anger, hatred, ill will, hostility, aggression, and other harsh intentions, speech, and actions. Loving-kindness also helps eliminate judgment of others looking down on them with arrogance or conceit. A Practitioner can train the mind to treat all beings in polite, kind, friendly, and respectful way, without judgment.

Compassion is the remedy for lack of care, indifference, worry, and anxiety.

Sympathetic joy is the remedy for envy, jealousy, and pride.

Equanimity is the remedy for an overactive mind that has restlessness and worry. Equanimity will also assist a Practitioner to eliminate measuring and comparing beings treating all beings equally.

As you experience life, it is important to practice equanimity in all situations. Mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper while treating everyone impartially without judgment, are mental states that will help you trust all beings.

One way of cultivating these mental states is through generous deeds, practicing generosity. Through the practice of giving and helping others, you do so with a mind of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

No one can give you a magic potion or secret spell that will cultivate these qualities for the mind. You will need to apply these in practice through your intentions, speech, and actions.

Meditation can help you cultivate these mental states internally so that your intentions, speech, and actions emanate these mental qualities. Give the mind time to *gradually* cultivate these mental states through meditation and your life practice.

By practicing these mental states and ensuring that your intentions, speech, and actions reflect these mental qualities, you will ensure you are producing healthy and wholesome Kamma at all times.

Another quality of the mind that you need to cultivate is one of generosity. Generosity is to give and help others without any expectation of benefit for yourself. Through giving and helping others, we develop loving-kindness and compassion while also practicing non-attachment to our own possessions or wealth. By sharing, the mind practices generosity and non-attachment, which helps the mind to realize the interconnected nature of all beings through sharing with humanity.

We can also be giving with our time and effort. By helping others through our unselfish acts of giving our time and effort for beneficial causes, we are producing good and healthy benefit to other beings and to humanity while applying effort to eliminate selfishness. The unEnlightened mind will oftentimes pursue its own selfish desires but this can be remedied through giving and sharing.

You should make regular efforts to help others in need through giving with daily efforts to strive in cultivating loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

The Path to Enlightenment encompasses many Teachings a Practitioner will need to learn and practice to attain Enlightenment. The Brahmā-vihāras are four mental states that are crucial in the development of the mind. It is not until a Practitioner has fully cultivated The Brahmā-vihāras and practice them daily that the mind will move closer to Enlightenment.

Chapter 86

The Difference Between the Instructed Noble Disciple and Uninstructed Worldling

Monks, there are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

What four?

(1) Here, Monks, 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. He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company.

The life span of the heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company is an eon (indescribable period of time). The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(2) Again, some person, 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. He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of streaming radiance.

The life span of the heavenly beings of streaming radiance is two eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(3) Again, some person, 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. He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of refulgent glory.

The life span of the heavenly beings of refulgent glory is four eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(4) Again, some person, 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. He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of great fruit.

The life span of the heavenly beings of great fruit is five hundred eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

These, Monks, are the four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

(Reference: AN 4.123)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

While The Buddha shares this Teaching in this unique way, this is not the only Teaching he taught related to “The Four Kinds of Persons Found Existing in The World”. He is not sharing this as, these are the “only” four kinds of persons found existing in the world. Instead, these are four types of people found existing in the world.

The Buddha shares the difference between an uninstructed worldling and an instructed Noble Disciple as they enter and reside in the Jhānas.

An uninstructed worldling is a person who is not learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to train the mind on The Path to Enlightenment.

An instructed Noble Disciple is a Practitioner of The Buddha’s Teachings who is deeply learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings.

The Buddha explains the difference is that upon both of these two types of beings experience the Jhānas and then rebirth into the heavenly realm, the uninstructed worldling will live out that existence and then be reborn into the realm of hell, animal, or afflicted spirits. But, an instructed Noble Disciple will attain Final Enlightenment in the heavenly realm.

As has been shared multiple times in this book, the goal for a Practitioner is to attain Enlightenment in this very life, not in their next existence.

There is no guarantee where you will be reborn upon death, therefore, it would be unwise to take a chance on rebirth into a heavenly realm and think that one will experience Enlightenment in that existence.

Instead, do what Gotama Buddha did. Become determined, dedicated, and diligent to learn, reflect, and practice in this life to experience Enlightenment in this very life. As discontentedness gradually diminishes in the mind, you will be so thankful that you focused on progressing towards Enlightenment. And, if you attain Enlightenment, then you will live the rest of your life with a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy - permanently.

What else could be more rewarding or beneficial for one’s life than to completely and entirely eliminate discontentedness from the mind?

Chapter 87

Rebirth of One Reflecting on Impermanence

Monks, there are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

What four?

(1) Here, Monks, 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.

He contemplates whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

(2) Again, some person, 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.

He contemplates whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

(3) 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.

He contemplates whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as

misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

(4) With 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.

He contemplates whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

These, Monks, are the four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

(Reference: AN 4.124)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares another depiction of the four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

The Buddha is describing the Jhānas and that as one enters and resides in the Jhānas, that “He contemplates whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self”.

Essentially The Buddha is describing that one understands and reflects on The Five Aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness. In doing so, a Practitioner will understand that The Five Aggregates are impermanent and should not be clung to as that would only cause discontentedness in the mind. And, that a Practitioner will understand The Five Aggregates are not “the self”, they are “non-self” or “not the self”.

Impermanence, discontentedness and non-self are referred to as The Three Universal Truths.

The Buddha explains that a Practitioner who understands and practices The Three Universal Truths will, “with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes. This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings”.

In other words, an uninstructed individual (i.e. worldling) would not know The Three Universal Truths nor see them as the truth. They would have not trained the mind to see clearly and understand these important truths about The Natural Laws of Existence. Therefore, with this lack of wisdom and development of the mind, they would not experience a rebirth “in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes”.

Detailed explanation of The Three Universal 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).

Detailed explanation of The Five Aggregates is available in this same book series found in Chapter 7 of the book “Walking The Path with The Buddha” (Volume 2).

Chapter 88

The Future Destination of the Instructed Noble Disciple Filled with The Brahmā-vihāras Versus the Uninstructed Worldlings

Monks, there are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

What four?

(1) Here, Monks, some person resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with loving-kindness, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with loving-kindness, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company.

The life span of the heavenly beings of Brahmā's (God's) company is an eon (indescribable period of time). The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(2) Again, some person resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with compassion, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with compassion, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of streaming radiance.

The life span of the heavenly beings of streaming radiance is two eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(3) Again, some person resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with sympathetic joy, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with sympathetic joy, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of refulgent glory.

The life span of the heavenly beings of refulgent glory is four eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(4) Again, some person here resides cultivating one quarter with a mind filled with equanimity, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with equanimity, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of great fruit.

The life span of the heavenly beings of great fruit is five hundred eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

These, Monks, are the four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

(Reference: AN 4.125)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the future destination of the instructed Noble Disciple filled with The Brahmā-vihāras versus the uninstructed worldlings.

As shared in a previous Chapter, The Brahmā-vihāras are: Loving-kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity. A Practitioner would need to develop and cultivate The Brahmā-vihāras to progress towards and attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha shares the difference between an uninstructed worldling and an instructed Noble Disciple as they develop and practice The Brahmā-vihāras.

An uninstructed worldling is a person who is not learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to train the mind on The Path to Enlightenment.

An instructed Noble Disciple is a Practitioner of The Buddha's Teachings who is deeply learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings.

The Buddha explains the difference is that upon both of these two types of beings who are actively developing and practicing The Brahmā-vihāras and they then experience rebirth into the heavenly realm, the uninstructed worldling will live out that existence and then be reborn into the realm of hell, animal, or afflicted spirits. But, an instructed Noble Disciple will attain Final Enlightenment in the heavenly realm.

As has been shared multiple times in this book, the goal for a Practitioner is to attain Enlightenment in this very life, not in their next existence.

There is no guarantee where you will be reborn upon death, therefore, it would be unwise to take a chance on rebirth into a heavenly realm and think that one will experience Enlightenment in that existence.

Instead, do what Gotama Buddha did. Become determined, dedicated, and diligent to learn, reflect, and practice in this life to experience Enlightenment in this very life. As discontentedness gradually diminishes in the mind, you will be so thankful that you focused on progressing towards Enlightenment. And, if you attain Enlightenment, then you will live the rest of your life with a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy - permanently.

What else could be more rewarding or beneficial for one's life than to completely and entirely eliminate discontentedness from the mind?

Chapter 89

Rebirth of a Person Cultivating The Brahmā-vihāras and Reflecting on Impermanence

Monks, there are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

What four?

(1) Here, Monks, some person resides filling one quarter with a mind filled with loving-kindness, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with loving-kindness, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He reflects on whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

(2) Again, some person resides filling one quarter with a mind filled with compassion, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with compassion, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He reflects on whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

(3) Again, some person resides filling one quarter with a mind filled with sympathetic joy, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with sympathetic joy, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He reflects on whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

(4) Again, some person resides filling one quarter with a mind filled with equanimity, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he resides filling the entire world with a mind filled with equanimity, tremendous, distinguished, measureless, without hostility, without ill will.

He reflects on whatever objects there related to form, feeling, perception, volitional formation (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, as discontentedness, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the pure abodes.

This is a rebirth not shared with worldlings.

These, Monks, are the four kinds of persons found existing in the world.

(Reference: AN 4.126)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance very similar to previous Chapters in this book with the combination of The Brahmā-vihāras, The Five Aggregates, and The Three Universal Truths.

Chapter 90

The Distinction Between the Instructed Noble Disciple with Formless Attainments and the Uninstructed Worldling

Monks, there are these three kinds of persons found existing in the world.

What three?

(1) Here, Monks, with the complete overcoming of perceptions of forms, with the passing away of perceptions of sensory impingement, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, [perceiving] ‘space is infinite,’ some person enters and resides in the base of the infinity of space.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the base of the infinity of space.

The life span of the heavenly beings of the base of the infinity of space is 20,000 eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One’s disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(2) Again, by completely overcoming the base of the infinity of space, [perceiving] ‘consciousness is infinite,’ someone here enters and resides in the base of the infinity of consciousness.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the base of the infinity of consciousness.

The life span of the heavenly beings of the base of the infinity of consciousness is 40,000 eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

(3) Again, Monks, by completely overcoming the base of the infinity of consciousness [perceiving] 'there is nothing,' some person here enters and resides in the base of nothingness.

He enjoys it, motivated towards it, and finds satisfaction in it. If he is firm in it, focused on it, often resides in it, and has not lost it when he dies, he is reborn in companionship with the heavenly beings of the base of nothingness.

The life span of the heavenly beings of the base of nothingness is 60,000 eons. The worldling remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the realm of afflicted spirits. But The Perfectly Enlightened One's disciple remains there all his life, and when he has completed the entire life span of those heavenly beings, he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) in that very same state of existence.

This is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed Noble Disciple and the uninstructed worldling, that is, when there is future destination and rebirth.

These, Monks, are the three kinds of persons found existing in the world.

(Reference: AN 3.116)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares guidance very similar to previous Chapters in this book related to the attainments of "the base of the infinity of space", "the base of the infinity of consciousness", and "the base of nothingness".

Detailed explanation of these attainments is available in this same book series found in Chapter 13 of the book "Breathing Mindfulness Meditation" (Volume 7).

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 81-90)

<https://youtu.be/BpB70rQl2Os>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 355 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 81-90)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--355---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-81-90-e1n8gt9/a-a8fbv8d>

Chapter 91

Fruits from Residing in Formless Perceptions and Considering Impermanence

Here, with the complete overcoming of perceptions of forms, with the passing away of perceptions of sensory impingement, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, [perceiving] ‘space is infinite,’ a Monk enters and resides in the base of the infinity of space.

He considers whatever objects exist there related to feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness as impermanent, discontentedness, an illness, a boil, a dart, misery, affliction, alien, disintegrating, empty, and non-self.

He turns his mind away from those objects and directs it to the deathless element (Enlightenment) thus: ‘This is peaceful, this is superb, that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all material gain, the destruction of craving, freedom from strong feelings, elimination, Nibbāna (Enlightenment).’

If he is firm in this, he attains the destruction of the taints (fetters). But if he does not attain the destruction of the taints because of that craving for The Teachings, because of that excitement in The Teachings, then, with the complete destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one of spontaneous birth, due to attain Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) there without ever returning from that world.

Just as an archer or an archer’s apprentice undergoes training on a straw man or a heap of clay, and then at a later time becomes a long-distance shooter, a sharp-shooter, one who splits a great body.

(In reference to the base of infinite consciousness, and the base of nothingness, identical Teachings to the base of infinite space were spoken.

The cases of ‘the first Jhāna, the second Jhāna, the third Jhāna, and the fourth Jhāna’ were spoken but the difference is to see impermanence in The Five Aggregates; Form, Feeling, Perception, Volitional Formations (Choices/Decisions), and Consciousness.)

(Reference: AN 9.36)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the attainments of “the base of infinite space”, “the base of infinite consciousness”, “the base of nothingness”, and the first, second, third, and fourth Jhānas, all lead to “destruction of the taints (fetters)”.

The “destruction of the taints (fetters)” is to eliminate The Ten Fetters and once accomplished, the mind is Enlightened. Upon death, an Enlightened being will experience Final Enlightenment.

If a Practitioner does not progress to Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment in this human realm through the complete elimination of The Ten Fetters, but instead, they may with the “complete destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one of spontaneous birth, due to attain Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment) there without ever returning from that world”. The Buddha is explaining that one who eliminates the five lower fetters/taints/pollution of mind will attain the third Stage of Enlightenment as a Non-Returner. A Non-Returner from the human realm will be reborn in the heavenly realm attaining Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment from that realm in their next existence without returning back to the human realm.

The Buddha explains “Just as an archer or an archer’s apprentice undergoes training on a straw man or a heap of clay, and then at a later time becomes a long-distance shooter, a sharp-shooter, one who splits a great body”. He is sharing that just like training as an archer requires the gradual development of their skills and abilities that ultimately leads to the final goal as “a long-distance shooter, a sharp-shooter”, the attainments described in this Teaching lead to the final goal of Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment.

Without a Practitioner progressing through the attainments, they would be unable to progress through to the first, second, third, and fourth Stages of Enlightenment to ultimately experience Final 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 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".

Chapter 92

The Heavenly Beings of the Pure Abodes

Once, Monks, I was staying at Ukkaṭṭha in the Subhaga grove at the foot of a great sāl-tree. And as I resided there in seclusion it occurred to me: There is no abode of beings easily accessible that has not been visited by me for so long as that of the heavenly beings of the Pure Abodes. Suppose I were to visit them now?

And then, as swiftly as a strong man might stretch his flexed arm, or flex it again, I vanished from Ukkaṭṭha and appeared among the Aviha heavenly beings.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me, and stood to one side.

Then they said:

Sir, it is ninety-one eons since The Buddha Vipassī appeared in the world....

And we, Sir, who lived the holy life with guidance from The Buddha Vipassī, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me, and stood to one side.

Then they said:

Sir, it is thirty-one eons since The Buddha Sikhī appeared in the world.

And we, Sir, who lived the holy life with guidance from The Buddha Sikhī, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me, and stood to one side.

Then they said:

Sir, it is in the same thirty-first eon since The Buddha Vessabhū appeared in the world.

And we, Sir, who lived the holy life with guidance from The Buddha Vessabhū, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me, and stood to one side.

Then they said:

Sir, in this present fortunate eon since The Buddha Kakusandha appeared in the world.

And we, Sir, who lived the holy life with guidance from The Buddha Kakusandha, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me and stood to one side.

Then they said:

Sir, in this present fortunate eon since The Buddha Konāgamana appeared in the world.

And we, Sir, who lived the holy life with guidance from The Buddha Konāgamana, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me, and stood to one side.

Then they said:

Sir, in this present fortunate eon since The Buddha Kassapa appeared in the world.

And we, Sir, who lived the holy life with guidance from The Buddha Kassapa, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

And many thousands of them came to me, saluted me, and stood to one side.

They said:

Sir, in this fortunate eon now The Buddha has arisen in the world. He was born of Khattiya ethnic group, and arose in a Khattiya family; he is of the Gotama clan; ...

And we, Sir, who have lived the holy life under The Buddha, having freed ourselves from sense-desires, have arisen here.

Then I went with the Aviha heavenly beings to see the Atappa heavenly beings, and with these to see the Sudassa heavenly beings, and with these to see the Sudassī heavenly beings, and with all of these to see the Akaniṭṭha heavenly beings.

And there many thousands of heavenly beings came, saluted me, and stood to one side, saying:

Sir, it is ninety-one eons since The Buddha Vipassī appeared in the world ...

And so it is, Monks, that by his penetration of the fundamentals of The Teachings that The Tathāgata remembers the past Buddhas who have attained Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment), cutting through multiplicity, blazing a trail, have exhausted the round, have passed by all discontentedness; he recalls their births, their names, their clan, their life span, their twin-disciples, their assemblies of disciples: These Fortunate Buddha's were born thus, were called thus, thus was their clan, thus was their morality, their Teachings, their wisdom, their residing, thus was their liberation.

(Reference: DN 14)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares his recall of past Buddhas that existed, taught, and as a result, there are heavenly beings who reside in the heavenly realm that once studied with those past Buddhas.

Prior to the awakening and arising of a Buddha, the heavenly realm typically has very few beings. In order to experience a rebirth in the heavenly realm, beings would need to learn and practice The Teachings of a Buddha.

Through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of a Buddha, human beings are able to improve their wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline to attain Enlightenment. But, if they fall short of Enlightenment, they are oftentimes reborn in the heavenly realm.

Prior to a Buddha's awakening and arising in the world, The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment are largely unknown to the world. It is the responsibility of a Buddha to provide guidance during their lifetime, to those who choose to be taught, sharing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. The same Teachings that lead to Enlightenment, if Enlightenment is not attained, will in many cases, lead to rebirth in the heavenly realm.

During the lifetime of a Buddha, there will be countless Enlightened beings that awaken. Additionally, there will be countless beings who are reborn into the heavenly realm.

The Buddha's description of interacting with heavenly beings who were reborn there based on previous Buddhas' Teachings, helps to illustrate his ability to interact with heavenly beings and that the heavenly realm has countless beings experiencing rebirth during the lifetime of a Buddha.

A Buddha does not gain, expect, nor want anything for sharing their Teachings. A Buddha is not required to share their Teachings with the world but instead, chooses to do so out of loving-kindness and compassion for the world, to end all discontentedness and the suffering it causes.

Chapter 93

The Heavenly Beings from Ten World-Systems Coming to See The Tathāgata and His Order of Monks

Monks, it has often happened that the heavenly beings from ten world-systems have come to see The Tathāgata and his order of Monks. So it has been with the supreme Buddhas of the past, and so it will be with that of the future, as it is with me now. I will detail for you the names of the groups of heavenly beings, announce them and teach them to you.

Pay close attention, and I will speak...

Seven thousand yakkhas of Kapila's realm,
Well-endowed with power and mighty skills,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

And six thousand yakkhas from Himālaya,
Of varied hue, and well-endowed with powers,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

From Sāta's Mount three thousand yakkhas more
Of varied hue, and well-endowed with powers,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

The sum is sixteen thousand yakkhas all,
Of varied hue, and well-endowed with powers,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

Of Vessāmitta's host five hundred more
Of varied hue, and well-endowed with powers,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

Kumbhīra too from Rājagaha comes
(Whose dwelling-place is on Vepulla's slopes):
A hundred thousand yakkhas follow him.

King Dhatarat̥ṭha, ruler of the East,
The gandhabbas' Lord, a mighty King,
Has come with company. Many sons
Are his, who all bear Indra's name,
All well-endowed with mighty skills,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

King Virūḷha, ruler of the South,
The Kumbaṇḍhas' lord, a mighty King,
Has come with company. Many sons
Are his, who all bear Indra's name,
All well-endowed with mighty skills,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

Virūpakkha, ruler of the West,
Ruler of nāgas and a mighty King,
Has come with company. Many sons
Are his, who all bear Indra's name,
All well-endowed with mighty skills,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

King Kuvera, ruler of the North,
Ruler of Yakkhas and a mighty King,
Has come with company. Many sons
Are his, who all bear Indra's name,
All well-endowed with mighty skills,
Fair to see, with splendid train have come
Rejoicing to this wood to see such Monks.

From the East King Dhatarat̥ṭha shone,
From South Virūḷhaka, and from the West
Virūpakkha, Kuvera from the North:
Thus ranged in Kapilavatthu's wood
The Four Great Kings in all their splendor stood.

With them came their vassals versed in guile,
Skilled deceivers all: Kuṭeṇḍu first,
Then Veṭeṇḍu, Viṭu and Viṭucca,
Candana and Kāmaseṭṭha next,
Kinnughaṇḍu and Nighaṇḍu, these,
Panāda, Opamañña, Mātali

(Who was the heavenly beings' charioteer), Naḷa,
Cittasena of the gandhabbas,
Rājā, Janesabha, Pañcasikha,
Timbarū with Suriyavaccasā
His daughter — these, and more, rejoicing came
To that wood to see the Buddha's Monks.

From Nabhasa, Vesāli, Tacchaka
Came Nāgas, Kambalas, Assataras,
Payāgas with their kin. From Yamunā
Dhataratṭha came with splendid host,
Erāvana too, the mighty nāga chief
To the forest meeting-place has come.

And the twice-born, winged and clear of sight,
Fierce garuḍa birds (the nāgas' foes) have come
Flying here — Citrā and Supaṇṇā.
But here the nāga Kings are safe: the Lord
Has imposed a truce. With gentle speech
They and the nāgas share the Buddha's peace.

Asuras too, whom Indra's hand once struck,
Ocean-dwellers now, in magic skilled,
Vāsava's resplendent brothers came,

The Kālakañjas, terrible to see,
Dānaveghasas, Vepacitti,
Sucitti and Pahārādha too,
Fell Namucī, and Bali's hundred sons
(Who all were called Veroca) with a band
Of warriors who joined their master Rāhu,
Who had come to wish their meeting well.

Gods of water, earth, fire, and wind,
The Varuṇas and their retainers. Soma
And Yasa too. Heavenly beings born of love
And compassion, with a splendid train,
These ten, with tenfold varied hosts, ...

Veṅhu too with his Sahalis came,
The Asamas, the Yāma twins, and those
Heavenly beings who attend on moon and sun,
Constellation-gods, sprites of clouds,
Sakka Ruler of the Heavenly Beings, ancient donor,
These ten, with tenfold varied hosts, ...

The Sahabhus, radiant, bright, came next,
Fiery-crested. The Aritṭhakas,
The Rojas, cornflower-blue, with Varuṇā
And Sahadhammā, Accutā, Anejakā,
Sūleyya, Rucirā, the Vāsavanesis,
These ten, with tenfold varied hosts, ...

The Samānas and Mahā-Samānas both,
Beings manlike and more than manlike came,
The 'Pleasure-corrupted' and 'Mind-corrupted' gods,
Green heavenly beings, and the red ones too,
Pāragas, Mahā-Pāragas with train,
These ten, with tenfold varied hosts, ...

Sukkas, Karumhas, Aruṇas, Veghanasas,
Follow in the Odātagayhas' wake.
Vicakkhaṇas, Sadāmattas, Harāgajas,
Those gods called 'Mixed in Splendor', and Pajunna
The Thunderer, who also causes rain,
These ten, with tenfold varied hosts, ...

The Khemiyas, the Tusitas and Yāmas,
The Kaṭṭhakas with train, Lambītakas,
The Lāma chiefs, and the gods of flame
(The Āsavas), those who excite in shapes
They've made, and those who seize on others' work,
These ten, with tenfold varied hosts, ...

These sixty heavenly being-hosts, of varied kinds,
All came arranged in order of their groups,
And others too, in due array. They said:
'He who's transcended birth, he for whom
No obstacle remains, who's crossed the flood,
Him, fetterless, we'll see, the Mighty One,
Traversing free without transgression, as
It were the moon that passes through the clouds.'

SuBrahmā next, and with him Paramatta,
Sanankumāra, Tissa, who were sons
Of the Mighty One, these also came.
Mahā-Brahmā, who ruled a thousand worlds,
In the Brahmā-world supreme, arisen there,
Shining bright, and terrible to see,
With all his train. Ten lords of his who each

Rule a Brahmā-world, and in their midst
Hārita, who ruled a hundred thousand.

And when all these had come in vast array,
With Indra and the hosts of Brahmā too,
Then too came Māra's hosts, and now observe
That Black One's folly. For he said:
'Come on, seize and bind them all! With lust
We'll catch them all! Surround them all about,
Let none escape, whoever he may be!'
Thus the war-lord urged his murky troops.
With his palm he struck the ground, and made
A horrid din, as when a storm-cloud bursts
With thunder, lightning and with heavy rain —
And then — shrank back, enraged, but powerless!

And He-Who-Knows-by-Wisdom saw all this
And understood its meaning. To his Monks he said:
'The hosts of Māra come, Monks — pay good heed!'
They heard the Buddha's words, and stayed alert.

And Māra's hosts drew back from those on whom
Neither crave nor fear could gain a hold.

'Victorious, transcending fear, they've won:
His followers rejoice with all the world!'

(Reference: DN 20)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a recounting of all the groups of heavenly beings.

He explains that “heavenly beings from ten world-systems have come to see The Tathāgata and his order of Monks” and this was also experienced by all “the supreme Buddhas of the past” and “it will be [experienced by] that of the future” “as it is with me now”.

At the end of this Teaching, The Buddha explains that a Practitioner who “knows-by-wisdom” and “understood its meaning” of these Teachings, that Māra will come to visit them but through staying alert, Māra’s hosts drew back from those who do not have craving nor fear because Māra could not get a hold of the mind.

Through becoming victorious, transcending fear, the Practitioners of these Teachings who attain Enlightenment have won and can rejoice with all of the world.

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.

Chapter 94

Once the Heavenly Beings and the Asuras Were Arrayed for Battle

Monks, once in the past a certain man set out from Rājagaha and went to the Sumāgadhā Lotus Pond, thinking: ‘I will reflect about the world.’ He then sat down on the bank of the Sumāgadhā Lotus Pond reflecting about the world.

Then, Monks, the man saw a four-division army entering a lotus stalk on the bank of the pond. Having seen this, he thought: I must be mad! I must be insane! I’ve seen something that doesn’t exist in the world. The man returned to the city and informed a great crowd of people: I must be mad, Sirs! I must be insane! I’ve seen something that doesn’t exist in the world.

[They said to him:] But how is it, good man, that you are mad? How are you insane? And what have you seen that doesn’t exist in the world?

Here, Sirs, I left Rājagaha and approached the Sumāgadhā Lotus Pond, thinking: ‘I will reflect about the world.’ He then sat down on the bank of the Sumāgadhā Lotus Pond reflecting about the world. I saw a four-division army entering a lotus stalk on the bank of the pond. That’s why I’m mad, that’s why I’m insane, and that’s what I’ve seen that doesn’t exist in the world.

Surely you’re mad, good man! Surely you’re insane! And what you have seen doesn’t exist in the world.

Nevertheless, Monks, what that man saw was actually real, not unreal. Once in the past the heavenly beings and the asuras were arrayed for battle. In that battle the heavenly beings won and the asuras were defeated. In their defeat, the asuras were frightened and entered the asura city through the lotus stalk, to the bewilderment of the heavenly beings.

Therefore, Monks, do not reflect about the world, thinking: ‘The world is eternal’ or ‘The world is not eternal’; or ‘The world is finite’ or ‘The world is infinite’; or ‘The soul and the body are the same’ or ‘The soul is one thing, the body is another’; or ‘The Tathāgata exists after death,’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death,’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death,’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this reflection is unbeneficial, irrelevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and does not lead to fading away of strong feelings, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

When you reflect, Monks, you should reflect: This is discontentedness; you should reflect: This is the cause of discontentedness; you should reflect: This is the elimination of discontentedness; you should reflect: This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this reflection is beneficial, relevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and leads to fading away of strong feelings, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

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 56.41)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how he recommends that a Practitioner should focus on reflection about The Four Noble Truths, not about “the world”.

While The Buddha shared many Teachings during his forty-five (45) year teaching career, and those are The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment, there are certain Teachings that he did not share. A Buddha would share an extensive amount of Teachings that lead to Enlightenment during their lifetime but, they would not share everything they know.

The wisdom acquired by a Buddha throughout their journey over countless lifetimes, and the life where they became a Buddha, would be deep, profound, and extensive. A Buddha would need to be selective about what they do and do not share, and how they share it, in order to guide countless beings to Enlightenment. If a Buddha attempted to share everything they know and have acquired as wisdom during their current life and past lives, the average human being would be unable to comprehend the wisdom and it would detract the Student from the core and central path to Enlightenment.

Instead, a Buddha chooses to only share those Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. They will share the core and central Teachings that are needed to guide individual Students to Enlightenment. In some situations, there are Teachings that a Buddha will not share, and these are referred to as “undeclared Teachings”.

In this Teaching and others, The Buddha explains his undeclared Teachings, while at the same time, directing his Students to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings that he did declare. The Buddha points to The Four Noble Truths again and again throughout his teaching career because it is The Four Noble Truths that is the beginning of The Path to Enlightenment. Without understanding and practicing The Four Noble Truths, a Practitioner would be unable to experience the breakthrough to understand discontentedness, the cause of discontentedness, the elimination of discontentedness, and the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

A Practitioner will need to deeply learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths to establish Right View, and then build everything else they learn on The Path to Enlightenment on this solid foundation. Therefore, The Buddha will continually point to The Four Noble Truths as the start of this path. The Four Noble Truths was his first discourse upon awakening to Enlightenment and he continually points to this discourse throughout his entire teaching career.

There are also places where he points to those Teachings that are undeclared.

These are the undeclared Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

- the world is eternal
- the world is not eternal
- the world is finite
- the world is infinite
- the soul is the same as the body
- the soul is one thing and the body is another
- after death The Tathāgata exists
- after death The Tathāgata does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist

Tathāgata is another term used to refer to Gotama Buddha.

Gotama Buddha is referring to himself who was an Arahant, therefore, you can also insert “Enlightened Being” for Tathāgata. This means, he left The Teachings “undeclared” of whether a human being who has attained Enlightenment as an Arahant “after death exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, neither exists nor does not exist”.

An “afterlife”, which Gotama Buddha left as an “undeclared” Teaching, is what happens when one has attained Enlightenment in this life or at death - what happens next? That is the afterlife.

Gotama Buddha did not teach about an afterlife or a soul. He left these “undeclared” in his Teachings. He did not teach whether we exist nor not exist once we attain Enlightenment and die. He shared that there is no more rebirth as “a being” in The Cycle of Rebirth which is different than no existence at all. If we do not attain Enlightenment during this life or at death, we will be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth.

Just like all craving/desire/attachment, if we crave the answer to these questions, it will cause the mind to be discontent. Knowing the answer to any of these questions will not lead to an individual’s own Enlightenment and therefore Gotama Buddha never taught or “declared” these Teachings. They are “undeclared”.

There were many Teachings Gotama Buddha did not share, as his main focus was to help people understand that they needed to work towards their own salvation through the process of attaining Enlightenment.

Gotama Buddha focused everyone’s attention, the mind, and their development on The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment - the elimination of discontentedness and the suffering it causes rather than rites, rituals, ceremonies and worship or any other aspects of life that do not lead to Enlightenment. He taught people to practice The Teachings of being a good moral person that eliminates all unwholesome Kamma production, producing only wholesome Kamma.

Chapter 95

Gender of Five Beings

Ānanda, a Monk understands: It is impossible, it cannot happen that a woman could be a Fortunate One, a Fully Perfectly Enlightened One — there is no such possibility. And he understands: It is possible that a man might be a Fortunate One, a Fully Perfectly Enlightened One — there is such a possibility.

He understands: It is impossible, it cannot happen that a woman could be a Wheel-Turning Monarch — there is no such possibility. And he understands: It is possible that a man might be a Wheel-Turning Monarch — there is such a possibility.

He understands: It is impossible, it cannot happen that a woman could be Sakka (Ruler of the Heavenly Beings) — there is no such possibility. And he understands: It is possible that a man might be Sakka — there is such a possibility.

He understands: It is impossible, it cannot happen that a woman could be Māra The Evil One — there is no such possibility. And he understands: It is possible that a man might be Māra — there is such a possibility.

He understands: It is impossible, it cannot happen that a woman could be Brahmā (God) — there is no such possibility. And he understands: It is possible that a man might be Brahmā (God) — there is such a possibility.

(Reference: AN 1.278-AN 1.286)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the gender of five (5) different beings as being a male.

It is important to understand that The Buddha is not sharing that a woman "cannot" become these beings but instead, he is just sharing that these beings are of a male gender.

You might think of this as sharing that, all monkeys are male.

In fact, in nature there are animals that are exclusively just one gender.

Clownfish are all born as male.

Whiptail lizards are all female.

A great majority of tunicates, pulmonate snails, opisthobranch snails, earthworms, and slugs are hermaphrodites.

Hermaphrodites: a being having both male and female reproductive organs or other sexual characteristics, either nontypical or (in the case of some organisms) as the natural condition.

This is just the way the world is created and related to these five beings, The Buddha is explaining that, they are male.

If one's mind has been conditioned to think about discrimination and other aspects of the world where we are told that only men can do this or only women can do that, reading something like this might invoke that type of thinking.

The Buddha is not doing that but instead, just describing the world as it is through The Natural Laws of Existence.

These beings are male and notice that he describes "Mara The Evil One" as male. That is one way that you know he is not just preserving high esteemed roles for the male gender but instead, he is even explaining this highly undesirable being as a male as well.

The Buddha is just explaining the truth of what does and does not exist. The good news is that I doubt anyone is interested in becoming any of these beings but instead would like to attain Enlightenment in this lifetime and be done with The Cycle of Rebirth having eliminated 100% of all discontentedness. That is the goal, to never be reborn to even become one of these beings - ever.

It is wonderful that the world now sees that all roles in society can be fulfilled by all genders, but these are not roles, they are beings that have specific genders.

All clownfish are born as male. It is not possible for a being that is a clownfish to be born as a female.

All whiptail lizards are female. It is not possible for a being that is a whiptail lizard to be a male.

That is just the way it is as a Natural Law of Existence.

Chapter 96

Four Observable Benefits for One Who Learned The Teachings by Ear

Monks, when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view, four benefits are to be observed.

What four?

Here, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has learned those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones recite passages of The Teachings to him. The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the first benefit to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

Again, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verse inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has practiced those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones do not recite passages of The Teachings to him, but a Monk with psychic potency who has attained mastery of mind teaches The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. It occurs to him: This is The Teachings and discipline in which I formerly lived the spiritual life. The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

Suppose a man were skilled in the sound of a kettledrum. While traveling along a highway, he might hear the sound of a kettledrum and would not be at all confused or uncertain about the sound; rather, he would conclude: That is the sound of a kettledrum. So too, a Monk masters The Teachings ... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the second benefit to be observed when one has followed The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

Again, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has learned those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones do not recite passages of The Teachings to him, nor does a Monk with psychic potency who has attained mastery of mind teach The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. However, a young heavenly being teaches The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. It occurs to him: These are The Teachings and discipline in which I formerly lived the spiritual life. The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

Suppose a man were skilled in the sound of a conch. While traveling along a highway, he might hear the sound of a conch and he would not be at all confused or uncertain about the sound; rather, he would conclude: That is the sound of a conch. So too, a Monk masters The Teachings ... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the third benefit to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

Again, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has practiced those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones do not recite passages of The Teachings to him, nor does a Monk with psychic potency who has attained mastery of mind teach The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings, nor does a young heavenly being teach The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. However, one being who has been spontaneously reborn reminds another who has been spontaneously reborn: Do you remember, dear sir? Do you remember where we formerly lived the spiritual life? The other says: I remember, dear sir. I remember... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

Suppose there were two friends who had played together in the mud. By chance they would meet one another later in life. Then one friend would say to the other: Do you remember this, friend? Do you remember that, friend? And the other would say: I remember, friend. I remember. So too, a Monk masters The Teachings... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the fourth benefit to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

These are the four benefits to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

(Reference: AN 4.191)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, we can observe the method of learning during The Buddha's lifetime. "When one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view" is how Students would learn with him over 2,500 years ago.

Gotama Buddha shared The Teachings orally and nothing was written down during his lifetime. It was not until later, after his death, that it was decided to capture The Teachings in written format.

An Enlightened mind has such a high degree of memory that all the Enlightened beings who had attained Enlightenment during Gotama Buddha's lifetime were committed to recite what they remembered and to document The Teachings for future generations.

The spoken words of The Buddha were recited by his more developed Students and captured for the ultimate development of what we refer to as The Pāli Canon or The Pāli Text.

"The Words of The Buddha" book series is comprised of those spoken words that came from the mind of Gotama Buddha, into the minds of his Students, produced countless Enlightened minds, remembered for the duration of The Buddha's lifetime, then recited and captured to eventually end up in The Pāli Canon and into your hands at this moment.

These Teachings have been preserved throughout history because they work. These Teachings in the format of this book series provides a method of learning that was not available during the lifetime of The Buddha. Today, you have access and we can distribute these Teachings worldwide in an instant with the ability to reference these Teachings throughout your life as you develop your life practice.

Today, recitation of The Teachings "word for word" is not needed. Instead, one needs to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings for deep understanding.

Gotama Buddha shared this same method of learning during his lifetime.

1.) Learn: "when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally".

2.) Reflect: "examined them with the mind".

3.) Practice: "penetrated them well by view".

While today we have books, videos, podcasts, and other methods of sharing The Teachings, it is important to also learn directly with a Teacher in an environment where a Teacher can verbally explain The Teachings and you have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

It would be impossible for someone to read a book, watch videos, listen to a podcast, and/or use other resources in a way that would produce an Enlightened mind without any interaction with The Community to include a Teacher.

There are many questions and points of clarification that are needed along The Path to Enlightenment. There are many challenges and having a relationship with a Teacher will allow you to gain insight through seeking guidance.

As one does, they come to develop the mind in this life and have an improved ability to attain Enlightenment experiencing the life changing results of developing one's life practice with guidance from a Teacher.

If one applies effort towards learning and does not attain Enlightenment, like those described in this Teaching, then there is an improved rebirth for one's next existence.

The goal is to attain Enlightenment as an Arahant and to no longer experience rebirth into a new existence. But, should that not occur, one will have gained the benefits of learning, reflecting, and practicing in this life. In fact, you may have learned, reflected, and practiced in a previous life and this is now part of your continuation of The Path to Enlightenment in this current life.

In this Teaching, The Buddha is describing four unique situations where one who has been learning, reflecting, and practicing yet the mind is still "muddled" having not attained Enlightenment, died, and was reborn into the heavenly realm. But the heavenly realm is not the goal of this path as Enlightenment is the goal where one has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth. If one is reborn into the heavenly realm, there is still existence and one has the potential to then fall down into another realm from the heavenly realm.

Each of the situations described in this Teaching involves a being who learns, reflects, and practices The Teachings during a human birth, is reborn into the heavenly realm, continues their learning in the heavenly realm, and then with "the arising of his memory [being] is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction" or in other words, quickly reaches Enlightenment from the heavenly realm.

Understanding the individual situations described in this Teaching is not necessarily important for one's progression to Enlightenment. The important lesson being shared here is that one's efforts to learn, reflect, and practice are moving the mind towards Enlightenment in this very life but if for some reason one does not attain Enlightenment, then, all is not lost. With improved development of the mind, a Practitioner will be able to experience an improved rebirth and continue their progress from within that new existence.

Chapter 97

The Heaven Named 'Contact's Sixfold Base'

It is a gain for you, Monks, it is well gained by you, that you have obtained the opportunity for living the holy life. I have seen, Monks, the heaven named 'Contact's Sixfold Base'.

There whatever form one sees with the eye is desirable, never undesirable; lovely, never unlovely; agreeable, never disagreeable.

Whatever sound one hears with the ear ...

Whatever odor one smells with the nose ...

Whatever flavor one tastes with the tongue ...

Whatever physical object one touches with the body ...

Whatever mental objects one recognizes with the mind is desirable, never undesirable; lovely, never unlovely; agreeable, never disagreeable.

It is a gain for you, Monks, it is well gained by you, that you have obtained the opportunity for living the holy life.

(Reference: SN 35.135)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares an aspect of the heavenly realm where The Six Sense Bases always have contact with desirable, lovely, and agreeable forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects.

This will produce exclusively pleasant feelings in the mind, therefore, the mind of heavenly beings is discontent (i.e. not Enlightened).

Heavenly beings are experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings, therefore, they will oftentimes lack the motivation to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. They will continue to be reborn throughout all the realms of existence until they apply determination, dedication, and diligence to progress to Enlightenment.

While many have been taught that rebirth in the heavenly realm is desirable and a goal to achieve, the heavenly realm is not permanent and those beings have not yet attained Enlightenment to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

They continue to exist and continue to experience discontentedness. Their challenges and struggles continue as long as the mind is complacent and unEnlightened. They will continue to be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth in all the various realms of hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, and heaven until they attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 98

Impermanent, Short-Term, Non-Eternal Heavenly Beings

Monks, in the evening the lion, the King of Beasts, comes out from his lair, stretches his body, surveys the four quarters all around, and roars his lion's roar three times. Then he sets out in search of game.

Whatever animals hear the lion roaring for the most part are filled with fear, a sense of urgency, and terror. Those who live in holes enter their holes; those who live in the water enter the water; those who live in the woods enter the woods; and the birds resort to the sky. Even those royal bull elephants, bound by strong thongs in the villages, towns, and capital cities, burst and break their bonds apart; frightened, they urinate and defecate and flee here and there. So powerful among the animals is the lion, the King of Beasts, so majestic and mighty.

So too, Monks, when The Tathāgata arises in the world, an Arahant, Perfectly Enlightened, accomplished in true wisdom and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, Teacher of heavenly beings and humans, The Enlightened One, The Perfectly Enlightened One, he teaches The Teachings thus:

- (1) Such is personal existence,
- (2) such the origin of personal existence,
- (3) such the elimination of personal existence,
- (4) such the way to the elimination of personal existence.

When those heavenly beings who are long-lived, beautiful, abounding in happiness, residing for a long time in magnificent palaces, hear The Tathāgata's teaching of The Teachings, for the most part they are filled with fear, a sense of urgency, and terror thus:

It seems that we are actually impermanent, though we thought ourselves permanent; it seems that we are actually short-term, though we thought ourselves everlasting; it seems that we are actually non-eternal, though we thought ourselves eternal. It seems that we are impermanent, short-term, non-eternal, included in personal existence. So powerful is The Tathāgata, so majestic and mighty is he in this world together with its heavenly beings.

(Reference: SN 4.33)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how when a Buddha arises in the world and the heavenly beings hear from his Teachings that existence in the heavenly realm is not permanent, “they are filled with fear, a sense of urgency, and terror”.

The Buddha explains that The Teachings of a Buddha are very powerful. The Teachings of a Buddha are clear and concise explaining The Natural Laws of Existence. And while the vast majority of beings have no understanding of a Buddha’s Teachings, once they learn, reflect, and practice them, they can observe they are the truth to acquire wisdom.

Upon one’s initial understanding of a Buddha’s Teachings, one might be shaken up to learn aspects of the world they were unaware of and differ from their current understanding. As one learns and practices more deeply, the mind can establish a high degree of stability and steadiness through independent verification of The Teachings and training the mind to be unshakable.

Chapter 99

A Harmful View of Baka the Brahmā

Monks, on one occasion I was living at Ukkatṭha in the Subhaga Grove at the root of a royal sāla tree.

Now on that occasion a harmful view had arisen in Baka the Brahmā thus: This is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is total, this is not subject to pass away; for this is where one is neither born nor ages nor dies nor passes away nor reappears, and beyond this there is no other escape.

I knew with my mind the thought in the mind of Baka the Brahmā, so just as quickly as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm, I vanished from the root of the royal sāl-tree in the Subhaga Grove at Ukkatṭha and appeared in that Brahmā-world. Baka the Brahmā saw me coming in the distance and said: Come, good sir! Welcome, good sir! It is long, good sir, since you found an opportunity to come here. Now, good sir, this is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is total, this is not subject to pass away; for this is where one is neither born nor ages nor dies nor passes away nor reappears, and beyond this there is no other escape.

When this was said, I told Baka the Brahmā: The worthy Baka the Brahmā has lapsed into ignorance (unknowing of true reality); he has lapsed into ignorance in that he says of the impermanent that it is permanent, of the short-term that it is everlasting, of the non-eternal that it is eternal, of the incomplete that it is total, of what is subject to pass away that it is not subject to pass away, of where one is born, ages, dies, passes away, and reappears, that here one is neither born nor ages nor dies nor passes away nor reappears; and when there is another escape beyond this, he says there is no other escape beyond this.

(Further details can be found by reading Brahmānimantanika Discourse (The Invitation of a Brahmā) Pāli version in the Majjhima Nikaya section of Tripitaka.)

Having seen fear in being
And [having seen] that being will cease to be,
I did not welcome any kind of being,
Nor did I cling to excitement.

At that the Brahmā and the Brahmā's Assembly and the members of the Brahmā's Assembly were struck with wonder and amazement, saying: It is wonderful, Sirs, it is marvelous, the great power and great might of the Ascetic Gotama! We have never before seen or heard of any other Ascetic or Brāhmin who had such great power and such great might as has this Ascetic Gotama, who went forth from a Sakyan clan. Sirs, though living in a generation that excites in existence, that takes excitement in existence, that rejoices in existence, he has eliminated existence at its root.

(Reference: MN 49)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares an experience of him sharing Teachings with "Baka the Brahmā" and that they complimented him on his Teachings.

You can observe that during the lifetime of The Buddha, many people referred to him only as "Ascetic Gotama". While today we refer to him as "The Buddha", and many different names associated with being a Buddha, during his lifetime, many were unaware that he was a Buddha.

It would only be Students who learned and practiced his Teachings that observed the condition of their mind gradually improving that they would discover that he was a Buddha.

There are multiple criteria of what makes a Buddha, a Buddha and these criteria cannot be fully satisfied until one dies. Therefore, during his lifetime, he was another Teacher who, while successful, was just another Teacher who shared Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment.

However, being a Buddha and having deep, profound, and penetrating wisdom, he was very successful at guiding countless people to Enlightenment during his lifetime. His Teachings were successful during his lifetime and after his death at leading countless people to the peaceful, calm, serene, content, and joyful mental state of Enlightenment.

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. They have deep wisdom to help the world 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.

A Buddha will need to weave their way through a previous Buddha's Teachings as all things are affected by impermanence, thus, a previous Buddha's Teachings will not be in a pure condition.

A Buddha will be able to easily determine the condition of the mind of another person, then be able to help them with Teachings to eliminate the unwholesome qualities of the mind and cultivate wholesome qualities of the mind. A Buddha will be able to observe the condition of another being's mind but only does so with an interest to help the other being eliminate the unwholesome qualities from the mind and cultivate wholesome qualities in the mind to guide one towards Enlightenment.

A Buddha will have a deep practice of their own Teachings, leading by example as a living, breathing, walking example of their Teachings.

A Buddha will be able to make predictions of the future and understand the future progress of the world as a whole while explaining past events and the current condition of the world through their Teachings.

A Buddha will know this is their last life without being reborn into any realm of existence. They will have insight into their previous lives and knowledge of their existence in those previous lives. Their only goal will be to lead as many people to Enlightenment as possible and to create a strong Community of humans with Enlightenment who will assist others to attain Enlightenment and leave strong Teachings that will assist unEnlightened beings to become Enlightened after a Buddha's death.

When a Buddha arises in the world, this is your best opportunity to attain Enlightenment. A Buddha will have independently realized their Enlightenment and will be experiencing "Perfect Enlightenment". A Buddha will have deep knowledge, deep understanding, and deep wisdom of how to attain Enlightenment through their independent realization of Enlightenment. A Buddha will be able to teach and guide all humans, who are interested to learn, towards Enlightenment.

A Buddha arising in the world is extremely rare. The last Buddha currently known to the world was Gotama Buddha who died over 2,500 years ago.

Why Does a Buddha Appear in the World?

A Buddha appears in the world when a Buddha is needed.

When humanity has reached a point of major confusion, conflict, and there is grave suffering throughout the world, a Buddha will appear.

A Buddha has the ability to help all of humanity to realize a better existence through their independently realized Teachings.

A Buddha will have struggled for countless lives to reach Enlightenment. Their journey on The Path would have been long and difficult over untold numbers of countless rebirths but they would never give up in their pursuit to Full and Perfect Enlightenment. They also would never give up on sharing their Teachings with all of humanity teaching until death.

A Buddha would have deep compassion for every single being in existence - past, present, and future.

A Buddha would know that they have attained Full and Perfect Enlightenment and are able to help all of humanity now and well into the future. But, all of humanity is never ready and willing to learn, grow, and progress on The Path during a Buddha's existence. All unEnlightened beings are already experiencing significant internal struggles so they will also struggle to closely understand and practice The Teachings that will lead to their full liberation. Most will not even know there is a solution to their struggles of the mind because they do not necessarily realize there is a problem.

Complacency is the norm and is the most detrimental quality of the mind.

Humanity may or may not even see the struggles and issues that are apparent and so clear to a Buddha. The vast majority of humanity will not even know that a Buddha has appeared because they are unable to determine who is or is not Enlightened and, thus, would not be able to determine who is or is not a Buddha. Humanity is mostly “unknowing” of true reality and “unknowing” of the countless problems faced by all beings. The large masses do not understand the challenges they are facing with the unEnlightened mind, so they are unfamiliar with the solutions to the unEnlightened mind.

A Buddha sees all the problems and has all the solutions of how to guide a being on The Path to Enlightenment so that a more Enlightened humanity can work together to solve its challenges.

A Buddha’s responsibility is not to himself as they have transcended any selfish pursuit or interest in fame or fortune. A Buddha chooses to spread the word of their appearance and Teachings through guiding people to attain Enlightenment without the need for others to know they are a Buddha. A Buddha can be more productive through others not knowing he is a Buddha because he can more accurately assess a Practitioner’s mind. If there is a worldwide announcement of the arrival of a Buddha, there would be those who agree and come to that Buddha for guidance and others who would reject the idea of a Buddha being in existence.

Those who reject the idea of a Buddha’s existence would not seek guidance on The Path to Enlightenment, and those who do seek guidance might try to be on their “best behavior” masking the mind’s true nature. This would hinder a Buddha’s ability to observe the condition of a Student’s mind and, thus, be more limiting to how a Buddha could assist their Students in the progress of Enlightenment.

A Buddha would not be interested in a worldwide announcement of their awakening as it would be counterproductive and would instead, choose to humbly and peacefully share their Teachings with those who choose to be taught. A Buddha will encourage people to learn and progress on The Path guiding anyone who is interested to attain Enlightenment.

A Buddha’s goal is to help eliminate the massive amount of suffering that is pervasive and the original cause for the Buddha’s appearance in the world.

A Buddha appearing in today’s society would need to be creative in understanding exactly how to present The Teachings to an “unaware” and otherwise absorbed audience. An audience that is complacent either unknowingly unaware or purposefully ignoring their own suffering.

Either way, upon a Buddha’s appearance, the Buddha will have to put much more thought and effort into convincing people that there is a problem rather than the thought and effort that they would put into the actual sharing of The Teachings themselves.

Complacency is not easily eradicated, and the vast majority of the world is complacent unknowing of the true struggles faced and the solutions to these struggles.

Once a person decides they need guidance and accepts responsibility to learn and practice, the Buddha is well prepared to deliver every Teaching that permeates their entire mind.

There is no one or nothing that could eliminate the wisdom acquired by a Buddha through their independently realized Enlightenment.

There are no specific physical features that would identify a Buddha as being a Buddha. You will know who is a Buddha through observing their work to develop a dedicated Community of Practitioners and Teachers while assisting countless Practitioners to attain Enlightenment. You will be able to observe through a Buddha's work towards sharing The Teachings into the world in such a way that helps countless beings attain Enlightenment during his lifetime and after his death leaving The Teachings and a Community to share those Teachings. And, if you know that individual does not have any Teachers but was able to benefit countless beings to attain Enlightenment during their lifetime and after their death, with their Teachings continuing to help countless beings attain Enlightenment, then this person could be considered a Buddha.

Chapter 100

The Partly Eternalists and The Partly Non-Eternalists

There are, Monks, some Ascetics and Brāhmins who are partly Eternalists and partly Non-Eternalists, who proclaim the partial eternity and the partial non-eternity of the self and the world in four ways.

On what grounds?

(1) There comes a time, Monks, sooner or later after a long period, when this world contracts. At a time of contraction, beings are mostly reborn in the Ābhassara Brahmā world. And there they dwell, mind-made, feeding on excitement, self-luminous, moving through the air, glorious — and they stay like that for a very long time.

But the time comes, sooner or later after a long period, when this world begins to expand. In this expanding world an empty palace of Brahmā appears. And then one being, from exhaustion of his life span or of his merits, falls from the Ābhassara world and arises in the empty Brahmā-palace. And there he dwells, mind-made, feeding on excitement, self-luminous, moving through the air, glorious — and he stays like that for a very long time.

Then in this being who has been alone for so long there arises unrest, discontent and worry, and he thinks: Oh, if only some other beings would come here! And other beings, from exhaustion of their life span or of their merits, fall from the Ābhassara world and arise in the Brahmā-palace as companions for this being.

And then, Monks, that being who first arose there thinks: I am Brahmā (God), the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the Lord, the Maker and Creator, Ruler, Appointer and Orderer, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. These beings were created by me. How so? Because I first had this thought: Oh, if only some other beings would come here! That was my wish, and then these beings came into this existence! But those beings who arose subsequently think: This, friends, is Brahmā (God), Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the Lord, the Maker and Creator, Ruler, Appointer and Orderer, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. How so? We have seen that he was here first, and that we arose after him.

And this being that arose first is longer-lived, more beautiful and more powerful than they are.

And it may happen that some being falls from that realm and arises in this world. Having arisen in this world, he goes forth from the household life into homelessness. Having gone forth, he by means of effort, exertion, application, earnestness, and right attention attains to such a degree of mental concentration that he thereby recalls his last existence, but recalls none before that. And he thinks: That Brahmā (God), ... he made us, and he is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same for ever and ever. But we who were created by that Brahmā (God), we are impermanent, unstable, short-lived, fated to fall away, and we have come to this world.

This is the first case whereby some Ascetics and Brāhmins are partly Eternalists and partly Non-Eternalists.

(2) And what is the second way? There are, Monks, certain heavenly beings called Corrupted by Pleasure. They spend an excessive amount of time addicted to happiness, play and enjoyment, so that their mindfulness disappears, and by the disappearance of mindfulness those beings fall from that state.

And it can happen that a being, having fallen from that state, arises in this world. Having arisen in this world, he goes forth from the household life into homelessness. Having gone forth, he by means of effort, exertion, application, earnestness and right attention attains to such a degree of mental concentration that he thereby recalls his last existence, but recalls none before that.

He thinks: Those divine heavenly beings who are not corrupted by pleasure do not spend an excessive amount of time addicted to happiness, play and enjoyment. Thus their mindfulness does not disappear, and so they do not fall from that state. They are permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same for ever and ever. But we, who are corrupted by pleasure, spent an excessive amount of time addicted to happiness, play and enjoyment. Thus we, by the disappearance of mindfulness, have fallen from that state, we are impermanent, unstable, short-lived, fated to fall away, and we have come to this world. This is the second case.

(3) And what is the third way? There are, Monks, certain heavenly beings called Corrupted in Mind. They spend an excessive amount of time regarding each other with jealousy. By this means their minds are corrupted. On account of their corrupted minds, they become weary in body and mind. And they fall from that place.

And it can happen that a being, having fallen from that state, arises in this world. Having arisen in this world, he goes forth from the household life into homelessness. Having gone forth, he by means of effort, exertion, application, earnestness and right attention attains to such a degree of mental concentration that he thereby recalls his last existence, but recalls none before that.

He thinks: Those divine heavenly beings who are not corrupted in mind do not spend an excessive amount of time regarding each other with jealousy ... They do not become corrupted in mind, or weary in body and mind, and so they do not fall from that state. They are permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same for ever and ever. But we, who are corrupted by mind, spent an excessive amount of time regarding each other with jealousy. Thus we, by the disappearance of mindfulness, have fallen from that state, we are impermanent, unstable, short-lived, fated to fall away, and we have come to this world. This is the third case.

(4) And what is the fourth way? Here, a certain Ascetic or Brāhmin is an expert in logic, a reasoner. Hammering it out by reason, following his own line of thought, he argues: Whatever is called eye or ear or nose or tongue or body, that is impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, liable to change. But what is called thought, or mind or consciousness, that is a self that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same for ever and ever! This is the fourth case.

(Reference: DN 1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how some Practitioners will think that some things are permanent while other things are impermanent. The Buddha is referring to this as “partly Eternalists and partly Non-Eternalists”.

The Buddha provides four (4) cases where one might consider something else permanent while considering themselves as impermanent. Thus, the mind is confused on The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to deeply learn, reflect, and practice to observe the truth to acquire wisdom. If the mind is unable to understand the difference of a conditioned object and unconditioned object, impermanence versus permanence, then one will need to investigate this further, perhaps through seeking guidance from a Teacher.

To learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to attain the results of Enlightenment, every Practitioner will need a Teacher. It is only a Buddha who would be able to attain Enlightenment without the guidance of a Teacher.

So if you are currently not understanding the difference between a conditioned object and an unconditioned object, I suggest you seek guidance from your Teacher as The Universal Truth of Impermanence is a very important and foundational Teaching to understand to attain Enlightenment.

You are welcome to seek guidance with the author of this book. You will find contact information using this link.

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

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 91-100)

<https://youtu.be/1oa0SpcdJi4>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 361 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 91-100)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--361---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-91-100-e1ndf9m/a-a8ftbrv>

Chapter 101

The Heavenly Beings' Good Destination

Monks, when a heavenly being is about to pass away from the company of heavenly beings, five signs appear: his garlands wither, his clothes get soiled, sweat comes out of his armpits, a dullness descends on his body, he no longer excites in his own heavenly being-seat.

The heavenly beings, knowing from this that 'This heavenly being is about to pass away,' encourage him with three sayings:

Go from here, honorable Sir, to a good destination. Having gone to a good destination, gain the gain that is good to gain. Having gained the gain that is good to gain, become well-established.

When this was said, a certain Monk said to The Perfectly Enlightened One, 'What, Venerable Sir, is the heavenly beings' fate of going to a good destination? What is their fate of the gain that is good to gain? What is their fate of becoming well-established?'

The human state, Monks, is the heavenly beings' fate of going to a good destination.

Having become a human being, acquiring conviction in The Teachings and Discipline taught by The Tathāgata: this is the heavenly beings' fate of the gain that is good to gain.

When that conviction is settled within one — rooted, established, and strong, not to be destroyed by any Brāhmin or Ascetic; heavenly being, Māra, or Brahmā (God); or anyone else in the world: this is the heavenly beings' fate of becoming well-established.

When a heavenly being passes away from the company of heavenly beings through his lifespan's ending, three sounds sound forth — the heavenly beings' encouragement.

Go from here, honorable Sir, to a good destination, to companionship with human beings.

On becoming a human being, acquire a conviction unsurpassed in the True Teachings.

That conviction of yours in the True Teachings, well-taught, should be settled, rooted, established, — undestroyed as long as you live.

Having abandoned bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, mental misconduct, and whatever else is flawed; having done with the body what's skillful, and much that is skillful with speech, having done what's skillful with a heart without limit, with no material gain, then — having made much of the merit that's a ground for spontaneously arising [in heaven] through giving — establish other mortals in the True Teachings and the holy life.

With this sympathy, the heavenly beings — when they know a heavenly being is passing away — encourage him: Come back, heavenly being, again and again.

(Reference: ITI 83)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how moving from the heavenly realm into a human existence is a “good destination”.

The human realm is the ideal existence to attain Enlightenment.

While heavenly beings are capable of attaining Enlightenment in their existence as a heavenly being, they oftentimes lack the motivation to progress to Enlightenment.

Moving into the human realm, a being would not just experience pleasant feelings, like in the heavenly realm, but instead, will experience pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. Being able to experience all three (3) feelings of discontentedness will, oftentimes, provide the motivation for a being to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 102

Beings Are Few Who Are Reborn Among Heavenly Beings or Human Beings Because They Have Not Seen The Four Noble Truths

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

'Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.'

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn among the heavenly beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.'

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the little bit of soil in my fingernail or the great earth?

'Venerable Sir, the great earth is more. The little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is insignificant. Compared to

the great earth, the little bit of soil that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his fingernail is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount even to a fraction.'

So too, Monks, those beings are few who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn among human beings. But those beings are more numerous who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ...

For what reason?

Because, Monks, they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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 56.61)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that there "are few who are reborn among heavenly beings" and there "are more numerous who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ..." due to beings not having understood The Four Noble Truths. The Buddha shares a similar Teaching related to how there "are few who are reborn among human beings" and there "are more numerous who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ..." due to beings not having understood The Four Noble Truths.

It is The Four Noble Truths that helps a Practitioner to breakthrough to understanding discontentedness, the cause of discontentedness, the elimination of discontentedness, and the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness (i.e. The Eight Fold Path).

Without this understanding and practice, a being would have no opportunity to acquire the wisdom of why their mind experiences discontentedness and how to eliminate it, thus, they would not be able to attain Enlightenment.

It is through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths that a Practitioner can make the breakthrough to understand they cause their own discontent feelings to

establish Right View and then have the ability to eliminate all discontentedness from the mind.

The Buddha uses an analogy to describe just how few beings are reborn among human beings and heavenly beings.

The soil of the entire earth represents all the beings that exist while the amount of soil under The Buddha's fingernail represents the number of beings who are reborn as human beings or heavenly beings with the opportunity to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha explains "those beings are few who are reborn among human beings" or "heavenly beings". But "are more numerous who, when they pass away as heavenly beings, are reborn in hell ... in the animal realm ... in the realm of afflicted spirits ..." due to beings not having understood The Four Noble Truths.

He then encourages Students to make an effort to breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths with this Teaching. "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'".

A Teacher can support and encourage Students to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings but it is the Student who will need to apply the effort and energy through determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the results of a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy - permanently. The mind can completely and entirely eliminate 100% of all discontentedness through applying effort towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

Every Practitioner will need to do the work to experience the results.

The Long Course of The Cycle of Rebirth

Chapter 103

A Simile of an Eon (First Discourse)

‘Venerable Sir, how long is an eon?’

An eon is long, Monk. It is not easy to count it and say it is so many years, or so many hundreds of years, or so many thousands of years, or so many hundreds of thousands of years.

‘Then is it possible to give a simile, Venerable Sir?’

It is possible, Monk, *The Perfectly Enlightened One* said.

Suppose, Monk, there was a great stone mountain a yojana (12-15 km) long, a yojana wide, and a yojana high, without holes or crevices, one solid mass of rock. At the end of every hundred years a man would stroke it once with a piece of Kāsian cloth. That great stone mountain might by this effort be worn away and eliminated but the eon would still not have come to an end.

So long is an eon, Monk. And of eons of such length, we have wandered through so many eons, so many hundreds of eons, so many thousands of eons, so many hundreds of thousands of eons.

For what reason?

Because, Monk, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.5)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a Teaching to help Students understand the length of time of an “eon” is immeasurable and incalculable.

He also explains how the beginning of when The Cycle of Rebirth started is not identifiable. Essentially what The Buddha is explaining is that the beginning of time is not identifiable.

Oftentimes human beings attempt to figure out when the world started. The Buddha is explaining that it is not discernible and is not something that can be discovered. In reality, it does not matter when the beginning of time was or how the world started. The fact is, we are here now, beings are struggling with discontentedness and continuing to roam and wander through The Cycle of Rebirth, and it would be wise to apply effort to eliminating discontentedness to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

When or how the world started (i.e. when or how The Cycle of Rebirth started) is not important. That is in the past and the goal for each being who is interested to end their discontentedness should be to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings in order to attain Enlightenment and escape the constant and continuous rounds of discontentedness through continued existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha explains that “for such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery”. He is sharing that each being alive today has experienced countless rebirths in the past.

Based on The Teachings of Dependent Origination and occasional statements such as “A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving”, you can observe that The Buddha is explaining that the primary problem that is keeping beings trapped in The Cycle of Rebirth is ignorance (unknowing of true reality), and second to that is craving/desire/attachment.

It is The Buddha’s Teachings that help a Practitioner to acquire the wisdom to remedy ignorance (unknowing of true reality) to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, eliminate discontentedness, and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

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 104

A Simile of an Eon (Second Discourse)

‘Venerable Sir, how long is an eon?’

An eon is long, Monk. It is not easy to count it and say it is so many years, or so many hundreds of years, or so many thousands of years, or so many hundreds of thousands of years.

‘Then is it possible to give a simile, Venerable Sir?’

It is possible, Monk, *The Perfectly Enlightened One* said.

Suppose, Monk, there was a city with iron walls a yojana (12-15 km) long, a yojana wide, and a yojana high, filled with mustard seeds as dense as a topknot. At the end of every hundred years a man would remove one mustard seed from there. The great heap of mustard seeds might by this effort be depleted and eliminated but the eon would still not have come to an end.

So long is an eon, Monk. And of eons of such length, we have wandered through so many eons, so many hundreds of eons, so many thousands of eons, so many hundreds of thousands of eons.

Because, Monk, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.6)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a Teaching to help Students understand the length of time of an “eon” is immeasurable and incalculable.

He also explains how the beginning of when The Cycle of Rebirth started is not identifiable. Essentially what The Buddha is explaining is that the beginning of time is not identifiable.

Oftentimes human beings attempt to figure out when the world started. The Buddha is explaining that it is not discernible and is not something that can be discovered. In reality, it does not matter when the beginning of time was or how the world started. The fact is, we are here now, beings are struggling with discontentedness and continuing to roam and wander through The Cycle of Rebirth, and it would be wise to apply effort to eliminating discontentedness to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

When or how the world started (i.e. when or how The Cycle of Rebirth started) is not important. That is in the past and the goal for each being who is interested to end their discontentedness should be to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings in order to attain Enlightenment and escape the constant and continuous rounds of discontentedness through continued existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha explains that “for such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery”. He is sharing that each being alive today has experienced countless rebirths in the past.

Based on The Teachings of Dependent Origination and occasional statements such as “A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving”, you can observe that The Buddha is explaining that the primary problem that is keeping beings trapped in The Cycle of Rebirth is ignorance (unknowing of true reality), and second to that is craving/desire/attachment.

It is The Buddha’s Teachings that help a Practitioner to acquire the wisdom to remedy ignorance (unknowing of true reality) to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, eliminate discontentedness, and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

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 105

The Cycle of Rebirth Is Without Discoverable Beginning (First Discourse)

‘Venerable Sir, how many eons have elapsed and gone by?’

Monks, many eons have elapsed and gone by. It is not easy to count them and say they are so many eons, or so many hundreds of eons, or so many thousands of eons, or so many hundreds of thousands of eons.

‘But is it possible to give a simile, Venerable Sir?’

It is possible, Monks, *The Perfectly Enlightened One* said.

Suppose, Monks, there were four disciples here each with a life span of a hundred years, living a hundred years, and each day they were each to remember a hundred thousand eons. There would still be eons not yet remember by them when those four disciples each with a life span of a hundred years, living a hundred years, would pass away at the end of a hundred years.

It is not easy to count them and say that they are so many eons, or so many hundreds of eons, or so many thousands of eons, or so many hundreds of thousands of eons.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.7)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that how many eons have transpired throughout the history of the world is not possible to count and that the beginning of time is not identifiable.

In previous Teachings shared in this book, The Buddha shared that one (1) eon is not measurable, it is immeasurable. In this Teaching, he is sharing that how many eons have transpired from the beginning of time is also not measurable, it is immeasurable.

Oftentimes human beings attempt to figure out when the world started. The Buddha is explaining that it is not discernible and is not something that can be discovered. In reality, it does not matter when the beginning of time was or how the world started. The fact is, we are here now, beings are struggling with discontentedness and continuing to roam and wander through The Cycle of Rebirth, and it would be wise to apply effort to eliminating discontentedness to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

When or how the world started (i.e. when or how The Cycle of Rebirth started) is not important. That is in the past and the goal for each being who is interested to end their discontentedness should be to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings in order to attain Enlightenment and escape the constant and continuous rounds of discontentedness through continued existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

What is reincarnation and rebirth? Are they the same thing?

Reincarnation and rebirth are different. They are not the same.

Reincarnation: the reemerging of a soul in a new body.

Reincarnation typically relates to a new existence from a soul, spirit, or entity of a previously existed being. The new existence is seen as being the same as the previous being just in a new body. Reincarnation requires a permanent soul or entity that emerges repeatedly in new existences. Gotama Buddha did not share this as part of his Teachings.

The concept of reincarnation conflicts with Gotama Buddha's Teachings on The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self, thus, was not taught by Gotama Buddha. In Gotama Buddha's 45-years of teaching, his Teachings never contained any contradictions.

Reincarnation is dependent on a permanent soul or spirit transcending multiple existences. Gotama Buddha left The Teaching concerning a soul as "undeclared" having never taught the concept of a permanent soul or a permanent self that transcends multiple existences.

The concept of reincarnation conflicts with three specific aspects of Gotama Buddha's Teachings. Reincarnation conflicts with 1.) The Universal Truth of Impermanence, 2.) The Universal Truth of Non-self, and 3.) Gotama Buddha left The Teachings on the soul as an "undeclared" Teaching, thus, Gotama Buddha never taught reincarnation.

Rebirth: a new being that has come into existence through The Cycle of Rebirth based on a previous being's craving and Kamma.

Gotama Buddha taught rebirth through The Cycle of Rebirth.

Rebirth is a new existence of a new being that has been reborn based on a previous being's craving. Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth. If there is craving at the time of death, there will be rebirth into a new existence. If Enlightenment has been attained (i.e. all craving, anger, and ignorance are fully extinguished), there will be no rebirth.

The new being may or may not have residual memories of previous existences in its new consciousness that may be recalled over time during the new being's life. Rebirth is not based on a permanent soul or spirit of any kind but instead is caused by the craving of the previous being which produces a new birth into a new existence.

Each new birth is a new existence or new life. In reality, this should be shared and discussed as The Cycle of New Existence because there is nothing that is actually being reborn.

Kamma of the previous being will determine the destination and life situation of the new being. Kamma of the previous being determines in which realm the new being will be reborn, Hell, Animal, Afflicted Spirits, Human, or the Heavenly realm. Kamma from the previous being also determines the quality of life of the new being. For example, the family and life situation (poverty vs. wealth) one is born into, the appearance of the new being, and the condition of the new being's body and mind are all determined based on the Kamma of the previous being.

If the previous being generated significant amounts of wholesome Kamma to be reborn into the human realm, the new being is reborn into a favorable destination within a wealthy family, beautiful appearance, and/or with a healthy body and mind.

If the previous being generated significant amounts of unwholesome Kamma, the new being is reborn into an unfavorable destination of the lower realms (Hell, Animal, or Afflicted Spirits Realm) or if reborn into the human realm, the being will be reborn into difficult circumstances in the new existence based on the previous being's Kamma.

Difficult circumstances that result from the previous being's Kamma would include in what realm the new being is reborn, what part of the world, the

type of family, the amount of wealth, ability to acquire necessities to sustain life, appearance, and the health of the body and the mind.

Craving determines if there is rebirth while Kamma determines in what realm, what situation, and the condition of the new being upon rebirth.

Can I be a Buddhist without believing in rebirth?

Yes, one does not need to understand, believe, or know the truth regarding rebirth to learn and practice The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

Let's explore this topic further to provide you additional information for a deeper understanding.

Considering a person Buddhist or not is only a label. Labels of being a Buddhist or not will not determine whether you are or are not learning and practicing these Teachings closely. There is nothing to determine whether you are or are not a Buddhist.

In fact, Gotama Buddha himself was not a Buddhist. This label did not exist during his lifetime. The Teachings and practices Gotama Buddha shared were offered to humanity as a "life practice" that would improve the condition of the mind through awakening it to true reality, Enlightenment.

There are many people who have advanced in their practice to the point of observing past lives. It is through these observations that people, including Gotama Buddha, know that rebirth is the truth. You may or may not ever observe past lives as part of your pursuit to attaining Enlightenment.

The good news is that you do not need to observe past lives in order to attain Enlightenment. What transpired in the past is in the past and has no impact on whether you attain Enlightenment in this very life. Part of this good news is that your Kamma in your previous lives was wholesome enough that you were able to obtain the human state for this rebirth and now you have an opportunity to attain Enlightenment in this very life.

What happened in the past or may happen in the future is not important to attain Enlightenment in this very life. The mind needs to reside in the present moment learning and practicing The Teachings that lead to good wholesome decisions to attain Enlightenment.

Additionally, there are no Teachings in this practice that one should merely "believe". Belief does not allow you to attain the wisdom that would ultimately liberate the mind. It is only when you learn The Teachings putting

them into practice that you will be able to independently verify the truth in The Teachings that will ultimately liberate the mind to attain Enlightenment.

You should never believe anything in these Teachings but instead, work to learn and practice The Teachings so that you can independently verify the truth for yourself. This will ensure you are gaining wisdom to liberate the mind.

For more details on how rare it is for one to obtain the human state, see Gotama Buddha's simile "Rare That One Obtains the Human State" available in this book series in the Chapter titled "Why Study Gotama Buddha's Teachings?" (Volume 1 - Chapter 2).

Confirming The Cycle of Rebirth

The Cycle of Rebirth is part of The Natural Laws of Existence.

An individual should not believe in The Cycle of Rebirth but instead, learn, reflect (i.e. independently verify), and practice to be able to see the truth. The Cycle of Rebirth is what is actually occurring but, the mind will need to independently verify this through direct experience to be able to know with 100% certainty that it is the truth.

If there is craving/desire/attachment in the mind at the time of death, this will produce rebirth in one of The Five Realms of Existence: hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, or heavenly realms. Then, it is Kamma that determines what realm and in what condition the being will be in within that realm.

This natural law is observable through independent verification if one chooses to observe the aspects of their direct experience that points to The Cycle of Rebirth.

For example, these are all indications that one can observe and confirm to know The Cycle of Rebirth is the truth.

- 1.) Experiencing deja vu (i.e. residual memories that surface in the mind from previous lives)
- 2.) Profound memories and experiences from previous lives.
- 3.) Observing how there are human beings who function much like beings that exist in the hell, animal, afflicted spirits, or heavenly realms. The more you know about each of these realms, you can observe how there are human beings currently functioning like beings in those realms.

- 4.) Observing how human beings are fascinated with the animal realm through studying and researching animals along with, having animals as pets, observe them in zoos and natural habitats, and even wear animal prints for clothing.
- 5.) Observing how the unEnlightened human mind functions much like an animal as the majority of us have had countless animal rebirths and now being in the human realm, the mind's conditioning from the animal realm is also being experienced in the human realm.
- 6.) Aggression and hostility of animals is mimicked by humans through the unEnlightened mind's aggressive and hostile intentions, speech, and actions as one might attempt to use fear to get what it wants.
- 7.) Animals have a pecking order for the purposes of survival while human beings maintain this in the unEnlightened state as part of the mind's ego where there is conceit (i.e. arrogance, pride, boastfulness, measuring and comparing as superior and inferior) which is conditioning of the mind based on countless animal existences.
- 8.) Just like animals "mark their territory" through urine and other scent glands while becoming aggressive and hostile to intruders, human beings do the same with borders and fences to mark one's territory and oftentimes become aggressive and hostile to those who cross over a border or fence.
- 9.) Observing and confirming the existence of beings in this life that are in the realms of hell, animal, afflicted spirits, human, and heavenly realms. You can observe beings from all of these five realms within this life.
- 10.) Observing that as beings in the animal realm have been decreasing, there is an increase of beings in the human realm. This is exactly what we would observe as beings are being reborn from one realm to the next.
- 11.) Communication with beings in all the five realms.
- 12.) Observing cravings/desires/attachments that are from previous lives that are experienced in this life within your own mind.
- 13.) Observing how the unEnlightened mind is stuck in a cycle of experiencing the same exact situations over and over and over again until it has cultivated wisdom to overcome those challenges and escape the constant cycle. Examples might be, continuously broken relationships, continuous arguments, various continued difficulties and struggles in life, etc.
- 14.) Observing the obsession and continuous "loop" the mind is on when it is having specific cravings/desires/attachments and the escape from this is to eliminate the craving/desire/attachment.
- 15.) Observing how some children at the age of 4-6, for example, are capable of doing things such as, playing piano as a master pianist without having ever seen a piano or taken any lessons. There are individuals who are a master/expert with capabilities in this life that were not trained or developed in this

life. These are residual memories from previous lives that are in the mind and accessible to that being in this life.

16.) Research news where others have reported observing past lives.

Four-year-old boy says he was Princess Diana in past life

<https://littlethings.com/family-and-parenting/boy-reincarnation-princess-diana/boy-reincarnation-princess-diana-6>

Recounting Past Lives: Meet 6 People Who Have Memories of Living Before

<https://www.rd.com/true.../chilling-reincarnation-stories/>

17.) Learn, reflect on (i.e. independently verify), and practice The Buddha's Teachings on Dependent Origination - The Highest Law of Nature in Volume 5 - Chapter 14.

Not everyone has all of these experiences but, some people do. This is how I have observed The Cycle of Rebirth and know it to be true with 100% certainty.

The truth is, that one should never believe in The Cycle of Rebirth and instead, as they have experiences that confirm The Cycle of Rebirth, note that and continue to move forward in life to develop their life practice.

Confirming The Cycle of Rebirth is not required to attain Enlightenment. However, it can give one 100% confidence to know the truth, especially if a Practitioner observes their past lives.

The goal is to train the mind to eliminate The Ten Fetters to attain Enlightenment. Observation and confirmation of The Cycle of Rebirth is not required to accomplish this goal. However, as one is eliminating the pollutions of mind (i.e. The Ten Fetters), it is normal to experience the recollection of past lives, be able to communicate with beings in other realms, observe beings in the other realms, etc. So, it is highly beneficial to know about The Cycle of Rebirth so that one understands that they are not insane or going crazy when these things occur. It is quite normal and typical and one can just move on with life making their way to Enlightenment.

Just as you can communicate with another human or animal in this life, if you see or are able to communicate with beings in the formless realms of hell, afflicted spirits, or heavenly realms, this is very normal and one does not

need to be shaken up or otherwise have fear related to this. It is completely normal and if you are not causing harm, no harm will come to you.

If a Practitioner was unaware of The Cycle of Rebirth and started having some of these experiences, as mentioned above, it could shake them up and they could think they are going insane when in reality, it is just the opposite. The mind lifting out more and more pollution and being able to observe/communicate with beings in other realms is quite normal. These individuals are oftentimes being labeled as having a mental disorder such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, multiple personality disorders, or others when in reality, what they are experiencing is quite normal and they nor the doctors understand it to be able to lessen the effects of these experiences.

Additionally, with regards to The Cycle of Rebirth and in general, what has happened in the past is in the past. What may or may not happen in the future, is in the future. There is no need to worry or fear that now in the present moment, as the mind would only be discontent. It will only hinder you from experiencing complete liberation of mind to attain Enlightenment.

Instead, focus on training the mind to eliminate The Ten Fetters and attain Enlightenment realizing, there are past lives and there will be future lives if the mind is unEnlightened but, the goal is to attain Enlightenment and escape this Cycle of Rebirth so that one can experience the peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy that is Enlightenment, which will be a permanent mental state.

The Cycle of Rebirth is 100% the truth but, an individual may just not have the wisdom of how to independently confirm it, as I have shared here, or have had these experiences to be able to confirm it. But, not knowing how to confirm it or not having had the experiences to confirm it does not mean it is not the truth. It is just that one lacks the wisdom of how to confirm The Cycle of Rebirth or has not had the experiences to confirm The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Cycle of Rebirth is happening at all times all around us and confirming it can help, but is not required to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 106

The Cycle of Rebirth Is Without Discoverable Beginning (Second Discourse)

‘Master Gotama, how many eons have elapsed and gone by?’

Brāhmin, many eons have elapsed and gone by. It is not easy to count them and say they are so many eons, or so many hundreds of eons, or so many thousands of eons, or so many hundreds of thousands of eons.

‘But is it possible to give a simile, Master Gotama?’

It is possible, Brāhmin, *The Perfectly Enlightened One* said.

Suppose, Brāhmin, the grains of sand between the point where the river Ganges originates and the point where it enters the great ocean: it is not easy to count these and say there are so many grains of sand, or so many hundreds of grains, or so many thousands of grains, or so many hundreds of thousands of grains.

Brāhmin, the eons that have elapsed and gone by are even more numerous than that. It is not easy to count them and say that they are so many eons, or so many hundreds of eons, or so many thousands of eons, or so many hundreds of thousands of eons.

For what reason?

Because, Brāhmins, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Brāhmin, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.8)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that how many eons have transpired throughout the history of the world is not possible to count and that the beginning of time is not identifiable.

In previous Teachings shared in this book, The Buddha shared that one (1) eon is not measurable, it is immeasurable. In this Teaching, he is sharing that how many eons have transpired from the beginning of time is also not measurable, it is immeasurable.

Oftentimes human beings attempt to figure out when the world started. The Buddha is explaining that it is not discernible and is not something that can be discovered. In reality, it does not matter when the beginning of time was or how the world started. The fact is, we are here now, beings are struggling with discontentedness and continuing to roam and wander through The Cycle of Rebirth, and it would be wise to apply effort to eliminating discontentedness to escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

When or how the world started (i.e. when or how The Cycle of Rebirth started) is not important. That is in the past and the goal for each being who is interested to end their discontentedness should be to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings in order to attain Enlightenment and escape the constant and continuous rounds of discontentedness through continued existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 107

Beings Roaming and Wandering on Through this Beginning-less Cycle of Rebirth

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. One person, roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, would leave behind a stack of bones, a heap of bones, a pile of bones as large as this Mount Vepulla, if there were someone to collect them and what is collected would not perish.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

The heap of bones one person leaves behind with the passing of a single eon

Would form a heap as high as a mountain; So said the Great Sage.

This is declared to be as massive as the tall Vepulla Mountain

Standing north of Vulture Peak in the Magadhan mountain range.

But when one sees with correct wisdom the truths of
the Noble Ones — Discontentedness and its cause,
The elimination of discontentedness, and
The Noble Eight Fold Path
That leads to discontentedness's calming —
Then that person, having wandered on
For seven more times at most,
Makes an end to discontentedness
By destroying all the fetters.

(Reference: SN 15.10)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the beginning of The Cycle of Rebirth is not discoverable and that we have all been countless beings in the past.

Once a dedicated Student “sees with correct wisdom the truths of the Noble Ones” (i.e. The Four Noble Truths), that person can then make an end to discontentedness by “destroying all the fetters” (i.e. The Ten Fetters). Having eliminated The Ten Fetters, a being will no longer be reborn in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 108

The Long Course in The Cycle of Rebirth

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

Suppose, Monks, a man would cut up whatever grass, sticks, branches, and foliage there are in this Jambudīpa (one of the great continents) and collect them together into a single heap. Having done so, he would put them down, saying [for each one]: This is my mother, this my mother's mother.

The sequence of that man's mothers and grandmothers would not come to an end, yet the grass, wood, branches, and foliage in this Jambudīpa would be used up and exhausted.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

Suppose, Monks, a man would reduce this great earth to balls of clay the size of jujube kernels (6 mm or 1/4 inch long) and put them down, saying [for each one]: This is my father, this my father's father.

The sequence of that man's fathers and grandfathers would not come to an end, yet this great earth would be used up and exhausted.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.1 and SN 15.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the beginning of The Cycle of Rebirth is not discoverable and that we have all been countless beings in the past.

Chapter 109

Not Easy to Find Unrelated Beings In This Long Course of The Cycle of Rebirth

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. One person, roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

It is not easy, Monks, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your mother.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is not easy, Monks, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your father.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is not easy, Monks, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your brother.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is not easy, Monks, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your sister.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is not easy, Monks, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your son.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning.... It is enough to be liberated from them.

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

It is not easy, Monks, to find a being who in this long course has not previously been your daughter.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.14 - SN 15.19)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the beginning of The Cycle of Rebirth is not discoverable and that we have all been countless beings in the past.

In this long roaming and wandering of countless existences that we have all experienced in the past, The Buddha explains that it would be difficult to find a being today who has not previously been your mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, or some other relative.

Due to our countless rebirths in multiple existences, every being that exists today has been your relative at some point in the past.

For example, when you and I were lizards, we may have been brothers, sisters, etc. I have been your mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, or some other relative at some point in a past existence.

Keeping this in mind, one can find it easier to practice loving-kindness and compassion for “all beings”. Knowing that each being on this planet has been your relative at some point in the past, would you be interested in causing harm to that being? Are you more interested to live in harmony with “all beings” thinking of each other as relatives? Can you choose to eat the flesh of an animal when you understand that this being has been your mother, father, brother, sister, son, or daughter at some point in the past?

These are all reflections that you can consider to improve your practice of loving-kindness and compassion towards “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 110

The Stream of Tears

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course, crying and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable — this or the water in the four great oceans?

‘As we understand The Teachings taught by The Perfectly Enlightened One, Venerable Sir, the stream of tears that we have shed as we roamed and wandered through this long course, crying and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable — this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans’.

Good, good, Monks! It is good that you understand The Teachings taught by me in such a way. The stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered through this long course, crying and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable — this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans.

For a long time, Monks, you have experienced the death of a mother; as you have experienced this, crying and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable, the stream of tears that you have shed is more than the water in the four great oceans.

For a long time, Monks, you have experienced the death of a father ... the death of a brother ... the death of a sister ... the death of a son ... the death of a daughter ... the loss of relatives ... the loss of wealth ... loss through illness; as you have experienced this, crying and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable, the stream of tears that you have shed is more than the water in the four great oceans.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.3)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the tears we have cried in our past lives is equal to more water than in all of the seas.

We have lived so many past existences and experienced such great misery and despair in those existences, that The Buddha explains that the tears we have cried amounts to more volume than all of the water in all of the seas.

Separated from those things that are agreeable to the mind, one may grieve due to their craving/desire/attachment. Separated from mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, other relatives, wealth, health and other objects, are all things that can cause the mind to experience discontentedness if the mind is not trained to understand the impermanent nature of all these conditioned objects.

Discontentedness can cause the mind to cry having tears that amount to more volume than all of the seas due to our countless existences in various realms. A being experiences a massive amount of discontentedness throughout various existences before becoming motivated enough and wise enough to make an end to discontentedness through pursuit and progress to the Enlightened mind.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 101-110)

<https://youtu.be/AMJo-8VuAIA>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 364 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 101-110)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--364---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-101-110-e1nvsjk/a-a8ht15s>

Chapter 111

The Mother's Milk

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

What do you think, Monks, which is more: the mother's milk that you have drunk as you roamed and wandered on through this long course — this or the water in the four great oceans?

'As we understand The Teachings taught by The Perfectly Enlightened One, Venerable Sir, the mother's milk that we have drunk as we roamed and wandered on through this long course — this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans.'

Good, good, Monks! It is good that you understand The Teachings taught by me in such a way. The mother's milk that you have drunk as you roamed and wandered through this long course — this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.4)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the mother's milk we have drunk in our past lives is equal to more water than in all of the seas.

We have lived so many past existences and experienced such great misery and despair in those existences, that The Buddha explains that the mother's milk we have drunk amounts to more volume than all of the water in all of the seas.

As a being is hindered by its own ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, we continue to roam and wander throughout The Cycle of Rebirth continuing to experience existence and discontentedness in each existence.

Chapter 112

In Misfortune, In Misery, In This Long Course

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. Whenever you see anyone in misfortune, in misery, you can conclude: We too have experienced the same thing in this long course.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how any being that you observe who is experiencing misfortune, that you too have experienced the same misfortunes throughout continued existence.

While in this existence you may not have experienced a certain misfortune that you observe someone else experiencing, The Buddha explains that at some point in a previous life you have experienced that same situation.

This understanding can help to develop loving-kindness and compassion for “all beings”. If you observe someone else’s misfortune, rather than looking down on them with conceit, keep in mind that you have also experienced that exact same misfortune in this existence or some other existence.

Cultivate loving-kindness and compassion for this being and, if possible, see if you can help them to move out of their unfortunate circumstances.

Chapter 113

In Happiness, In Fortune, In this Long Course

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. Whenever you see anyone happy and fortunate, you can conclude: We too have experienced the same thing in this long course.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how any being that you observe who is experiencing happiness and good fortune, that you too have experienced the same happiness and good fortunes throughout continued existence.

While in this existence you may not have experienced a certain happiness and good fortune that you observe someone else experiencing, The Buddha explains that at some point in a previous life you have experienced that same situation.

This understanding can help to develop sympathetic joy for “all beings”. If you observe someone else’s happiness and good fortune, rather than looking down on them with conceit, keep in mind that you have also experienced that exact same happiness and good fortune in this existence or some other existence.

This can help you eliminate craving/desire for the good fortunate that others experience knowing that you too have experienced this same situation in the past. The mind can eradicate envy and jealousy through practicing sympathetic joy.

Sympathetic joy (Pāli: *muditā*) is joy for others’ success, even if you did not contribute to it.

Chapter 114

The Stream of Blood

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. What do you think, Monks, which is more: the stream of blood that you have shed when you were beheaded as you roamed and wandered on through this long course — this or the water in the four great oceans?

‘As we understand The Teachings taught by The Perfectly Enlightened One, Venerable Sir, the stream of blood that we have shed when our heads were cut off as we roamed and wandered on through this long course — this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans.’

Good, good, Monks! It is good that you understand The Teachings taught by me in such a way. The stream of blood that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course — this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans.

For a long time, Monks, you have been cows, and when as cows you were beheaded, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the waters in the four great oceans.

For a long time you have been buffalo, sheep, goats, deer, chickens, and pigs, you were beheaded, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the waters in the four great oceans.

For a long time you have been arrested as burglars, highwaymen, and adulterers, and when you were beheaded, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the water in the four great oceans.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.13)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the blood we have shed in our past lives is equal to more water than in all of the seas.

We have lived so many past existences and experienced such great misery and despair in those existences, that The Buddha explains that the blood we have shed amounts to more volume than all of the water in all of the seas.

As a being is hindered by its own ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, we continue to roam and wander throughout The Cycle of Rebirth continuing to experience existence and discontentedness in each existence.

The Buddha explains how we have been countless animal existences in the past and have died in those existences. He explains that we have been “arrested as burglars, highwaymen, and adulterers” throughout our past existences.

Again, this can help one to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion for beings who may be involved in these activities now. While in this existence you may have chosen to not do these things based on wisdom you have acquired, other beings have not been so fortunate.

Rather than looking down on others for their lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline, we can practice loving-kindness and compassion towards “all beings” realizing that each individual being has been our mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, or some other relative in a past life.

Through viewing all beings as our relatives, this can cultivate a significant amount of loving-kindness and compassion in the mind that can be practiced through our intentions, speech, and actions resulting in improved personal and professional relationships.

Chapter 115

Beings Roaming and Wandering on from this World to the Other World and from the Other World to this World

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

Just as a stick thrown up into the air falls now on its bottom, now on its side, and now on its top, so too as beings roam and wander on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, now they go from this world to the other world, now they come from the other world to this world.

For what reason?

Because, Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving. For such a long time, Monks, you have experienced discontentedness, misery, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery.

It is enough to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

(Reference: SN 15.9)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the beginning of The Cycle of Rebirth is not discoverable and that we have all been countless beings in the past.

He is explaining that beings “go from this world to the other world, now they come from the other world to this world”. In other words, he is explaining how beings move in and out of the human realm, moving from all the other realms in and out of the human realm.

The cause of all of this roaming and wandering throughout The Cycle of Rebirth is explained through The Words of The Buddha as: “beings roam and wander on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving”.

It is through eliminating ignorance (unknowing of true reality) by acquiring wisdom in these Teachings that beings can eliminate discontentedness and the constant struggles of rebirth.

Chapter 116

So Impermanent, So Unstable, So Unreliable Conditions

Monks, this Cycle of Rebirth is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not identifiable of beings roaming and wandering on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving.

In the past, Monks, this Mount Vepulla was called Pācīnavam̐sa, and at that time these people were called Tivaras. The life span of the Tivaras was 40,000 years. They could climb Mount Pācīnavam̐sa in four days and descend in four days.

At that time The Perfectly Enlightened One Kakusandha, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One, had arisen in the world. His two chief disciples were named Vidhura and Sañjīva, an excellent pair.

See, Monks! That name for this mountain has disappeared, those people have died, and that Fortunate One has attained Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment). So impermanent are conditions, Monks, so unstable, so unreliable.

It is enough, Monks, to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

[At another time] in the past, Monks, this Mount Vepulla was called Vaṅkaka, and at that time these people were called Rohitassas. The life span of the Rohitassas was 30,000 years. They could climb Mount Vaṅkaka in three days and descend in three days.

At that time The Perfectly Enlightened One Koṇāgamana, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One, had arisen in the world. His two chief disciples were named Bhiyyosa and Uttara, an excellent pair.

See, Monks! That name for this mountain has disappeared, those people have died, and that Fortunate One has attained Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment). So impermanent are conditions, Monks, so unstable, so unreliable.

It is enough, Monks, to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

[At still another time] in the past, Monks, this Mount Vepulla was called Supassa, and at that time these people were called Suppiyas. The life span of the Suppiyas was 20,000 years. They could climb Mount Supassa in two days and descend in two days.

At that time The Perfectly Enlightened One Kassapa, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One, had arisen in the world. His two chief disciples were named Tissa and Bhāradvāja, an excellent pair.

See, Monks! That name for this mountain has disappeared, those people have died, and that Fortunate One has attained Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment). So impermanent are conditions, Monks, so unstable, so unreliable.

It is enough, Monks, to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

At present, Monks, this Mount Vepulla is called Vepulla, and at present these people are called Magadhans. The life span of the Magadhans is short, limited, fleeting; one who lives long lives a hundred years or a little more. The Magadhans climb Mount Vepulla in an hour and descend in an hour.

At present I have arisen in the world, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One. My two chief disciples are named Sāriputta and Moggallāna, an excellent pair.

There will come a time, Monks, when the name for this mountain will have disappeared, when these people will have died, and I will have attained Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment).

So impermanent are conditions, Monks, so unstable, so unreliable.

It is enough, Monks, to experience fading away of strong feelings towards all conditions, enough to become free from strong feelings towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

This was called Pācīnavam̐sa by the Tivaras,
And Vaṅkaka by the Rohitassas,
Supassa by the Suppiya people,
Vepulla by the Magadhan folk.

Impermanent, oh, are conditions, Subject to arising and vanishing.
Having arisen, they are eliminated: Their calming is peaceful.

(Reference: SN 15.20)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Universal Truth of Impermanence as it relates to the name of a mountain. He is explaining the different names this mountain has had over time to explain its nature of impermanence.

He explains this through recounting the various lifetimes of past Buddhas and their “chief disciples” (i.e. their most dedicated Students).

The Buddha explains his two chief disciples are “Sāriputta and Moggallāna”.

Chapter 117

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 pleasure, pain, and 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, ear 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 118

Not Understanding and Not Penetrating The Four Noble Truths

Monks, just as a stick thrown up into the air falls now on its bottom, now on its top, so too as beings roam and wander on, hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving, now they go from this world to the other world, now they come from the other world to this world.

For what reason?

Because they have not seen The Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.'

... ..

Monks, it is because of not understanding and not penetrating The Four Noble Truths that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

What four?

It is, Monks, because of not understanding and not penetrating the noble truth of discontentedness ...

the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness ...

the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness ...

the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

That noble truth of discontentedness, Monks, has been understood and penetrated.

That noble truth of the cause of discontentedness has been understood and penetrated.

That noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness has been understood and penetrated.

That noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness has been understood and penetrated.

Craving for existence has been cut off; the conduit to existence has been destroyed; now there is no more renewed existence.

(Reference: SN 56.33)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how beings continue to roam and wander throughout The Cycle of Rebirth due to “ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and fettered by craving”.

The wisdom that beings are not understanding are those found throughout all these Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment. To get started, The Buddha specifically points to the wisdom found in The Four Noble Truths.

Without deeply understanding and practicing The Four Noble Truths to experience the breakthrough knowing discontentedness, the cause of discontentedness, the elimination of discontentedness, and the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness, a being will not establish Right View and, therefore, be unable to eliminate discontentedness and escape The Cycle of Rebirth.

Through understanding the cause of discontentedness as craving/desire/attachment, a Practitioner can then apply effort towards the elimination of craving/desire/attachment through training the mind. Then, “craving for existence has been cut off; the conduit to existence has been destroyed; now there is no more renewed existence”, a being has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth through attaining Enlightenment.

Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

Chapter 119

A Simile of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

Sāriputta, I understand **Nibbāna (Enlightenment)**, and the path and way leading to Nibbāna (Enlightenment). And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, by realizing for himself 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 (fetters).

Suppose there were a pond with clean, agreeable, cool water, transparent, with smooth banks, delightful, and nearby a dense wood; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only towards that same pond. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same pond; and then later on he sees that he has plunged into the pond, bathed, drunk, and relieved all his distress, fatigue, and fever and has come out again and is sitting or lying in the woods experiencing exclusively peaceful feelings.

So too, by encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that by realizing for himself with direct knowledge (experience), he here and now will enter upon and reside in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.

And then later on I see that by realizing for himself with direct knowledge (experience), he here and now enters upon and resides in the liberation of mind by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints, and is experiencing exclusively peaceful feelings.

(Reference: MN 12)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how the mind of one who has attained Enlightenment will experience “exclusively peaceful feelings”.

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to eliminate all of The Ten Fetters.

Chapter 120

An Untaught Ordinary Person

Here, Monks, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for Noble Ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Teachings, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Teachings, perceives earth as earth.

(1) Having perceived earth as earth, he conceives [himself as] earth, he conceives [himself] in earth, he conceives [himself apart] from earth, he conceives earth to be 'mine,' he excites in earth. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

(2) He perceives water as water. Having perceived water as water, he conceives [himself as] water, he conceives [himself] in water, he conceives [himself apart] from water, he conceives water to be 'mine,' he excites in water. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

(3) He perceives fire as fire...

(4) He perceives wind as wind...

(5) He perceives beings as beings...

(6) He perceives gods as gods...

(7) He perceives Pajāpati as Pajāpati...

(8) He perceives Brahmā as Brahmā (God)...

(9) He perceives the gods of Streaming Radiance as the gods of Streaming Radiance...

(10) He perceives the gods of Refulgent Glory as the gods of Refulgent Glory...

(11) He perceives the gods of Great Fruit as the gods of Great Fruit...

(12) He perceives the Overlord as the Overlord...

(13) He perceives the base of infinite space as the base of infinite space...

- (14) He perceives the base of infinite consciousness as the base of infinite consciousness...
- (15) He perceives the base of nothingness as the base of nothingness...
- (16) He perceives the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception as the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception...
- (17) He perceives the seen as the seen...
- (18) He perceives the heard as the heard...
- (19) He perceives the sensed as the sensed...
- (20) He perceives the recognized as the recognized...
- (21) He perceives unity as unity...
- (22) He perceives diversity as diversity...
- (23) He perceives all as all...
- (24) He perceives Nibbāna as Nibbāna (Enlightenment). Having perceived Nibbāna as Nibbāna, he conceives [himself as] Nibbāna, he conceives [himself] in Nibbāna, he conceives [himself apart] from Nibbāna, he conceives Nibbāna to be 'mine,' he excites in Nibbāna. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.
-

(Reference: MN 1)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how if a Practitioner's mind clings to any of these things thinking that it is "mine", then the mind will have excitement due to not fully understanding.

Through fully understanding these Teachings and training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations/grasping/holding/clinging one would not experience conditioned pleasant feelings such as excitement and would understand, nothing is "mine".

All conditioned objects are impermanent, therefore, nothing can belong to you. All that exists will cease to exist, is impermanent, and therefore, cannot belong to you. If the mind mentally holds on to anything, it will cause the mind to experience discontentedness.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 111-120)

<https://youtu.be/mHEHv8xJqHA>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 367 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 111-120)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--367---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-111-120-e1oeg85/a-a8jhkrf>

Chapter 121

Nibbāna

The Destruction of the Taints

‘Venerable Sir, it is said, the removal of craving, the removal of anger, the removal of ignorance (unknowing of true reality). Of what now, Venerable Sir, is this the designation?’

This, Monk, is a designation for the element of Nibbāna (Enlightenment): the removal of craving, the removal of anger, the removal of ignorance (unknowing of true reality). The destruction of the taints is spoken of in that way.

(Reference: SN 45.7)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that Enlightenment is attained through the elimination of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

It is through purifying the mind of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) that a Practitioner will experience Enlightenment. The mind will be peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The Enlightened mind will no longer experience any discontentedness.

Craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) are referred to as The Three Poisons, The Three Unwholesome Roots, and 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).

Chapter 122

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, Rādha, is Nibbāna (Enlightenment)”.

Once craving/desire/attachment is eliminated from the mind, a Practitioner will no longer experience discontentedness.

Chapter 123

Directly Visible Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

‘Master Gotama, it is said: ‘Directly visible Nibbāna, directly visible Nibbāna (Enlightenment).’

In what way is Nibbāna directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise?’

Brāhmin, one excited by craving, overcome by craving, with mind obsessed by it, intends for his own harm, for the harm of others, or for the harm of both, and he experiences mental discontentedness and sadness. But when craving is abandoned, he does not intend for his own harm, for the harm of others, or for the harm of both, and he does not experience mental discontentedness and sadness.

It is in this way, too, that Nibbāna (Enlightenment) is directly visible.

One full of anger, overcome by anger, with mind obsessed by it, intends for his own harm, for the harm of others, and for the harm of both, and he experiences mental discontentedness and sadness. But when anger is abandoned, he does not intend for his own harm, for the harm of others, or for the harm of both, and he does not experience mental discontentedness and sadness.

It is in this way, too, that Nibbāna is directly visible.

One who is unwise, overcome by ignorance (unknowing of true reality), with mind obsessed by it, intends for his own harm, for the harm of others, or for the harm of both, and he experiences mental discontentedness and sadness. But when ignorance (unknowing of true reality) is abandoned, he does not intend for his own harm, for the harm of others, or for the harm of both, and he does not experience mental discontentedness and sadness.

It is in this way, too, that Nibbāna is directly visible.

When, Brāhmin, one experiences the remainderless destruction of craving, the remainderless destruction of anger, and the remainderless destruction of ignorance (unknowing of true reality), it is in this way, too, that Nibbāna is directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.

(Reference: AN 3.55)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how through the elimination of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) that one can experience 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 124

Directly Visible Nibbāna Spoken by The Perfectly Enlightened One (Shared by the Venerable Ānanda)

‘It is said, friend, ‘directly visible Nibbāna (Enlightenment), directly visible Nibbāna.’ In what way has The Perfectly Enlightened One spoken of directly visible Nibbāna?’

Here, friend, 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.

To this extent, too, The Perfectly Enlightened One has spoken of directly visible Nibbāna (Enlightenment) in a provisional (temporary) sense...

(In reference to the second Jhāna, the third Jhāna, the fourth Jhāna, the base of the infinite of space, the base of the infinite of consciousness, the base of nothingness, the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception, identical aspects correlating to the first Jhāna were spoken. Also the state of ‘directly visible Nibbāna’ is provisionally (temporarily) revealed.

‘The elimination of perception and feeling’ as is ‘the destruction of the taints’ is non-provisionally (permanent) explained to be ‘directly visible Nibbāna’ as in the following passages.)

Again, friend, by completely overcoming the base of neither perception-nor-non-perception, a Monk enters and resides in the elimination of perception and feeling, and having seen with wisdom, his taints (fettors) are completely destroyed.

To this extent, friend, The Perfectly Enlightened One has spoken of directly visible Nibbāna in a non-provisional (permanent) sense.

(Reference: AN 9.44)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, shared by one of his closer Students Ānanda, he explains that the Jhānas and other attainments are preliminary phases that the mind moves through prior to attaining Enlightenment and they are temporary.

As the mind enters and resides in the Jhānas, a Practitioner will experience glimpses of Enlightenment. The mind will experience temporary mental states that help a Practitioner understand what Enlightenment feels like, but the mind is not yet Enlightened.

It is not until a Practitioner fully eliminates all of The Ten Fetters moving through the Jhānas and the Stages of Enlightenment, that they will experience Enlightenment, which is permanent.

Detailed explanation of The Ten Fetters and The Four 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).

Chapter 125

Nibbāna in This Very Life (Enlightenment)

There are, Householder, forms recognizable by the eye that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tempting.

If a Monk does not seek excitement in them, does not welcome them, and does not remain holding to them, his consciousness does not become dependent upon them or cling to them. A Monk without clinging attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

There are, Householder, sounds recognizable by the ear ... odors recognizable by the nose ... flavors recognizable by the tongue ... physical objects recognizable by the body ... mental objects recognizable by the mind that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tempting.

If a Monk does not seek excitement in them, does not welcome them, and does not remain holding to them, his consciousness does not become dependent upon them or cling to them. A Monk without clinging attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

This is the cause and reason, Householder, why some beings here attain Nibbāna in this very life.

Monk, if, through fading away of strong feelings towards the eye ... the ear ... the nose ... the tongue ... the body ... the mind, through its fading away and elimination, one is liberated by non-clinging, one can be called a Monk who has attained Nibbāna (Enlightenment) in this very life.

(Reference: SN 35.124)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a Practitioner attains Enlightenment through the elimination of fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as 'sensual desire'.

The mind will experience desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, and tempting forms that the mind sees through the eyes. If a Practitioner does not long or yearn for excitement in these agreeable forms, welcome them, or remain holding on to them, then the mind can eliminate its craving/desire/attachment to impermanent conditions that are creating the impermanent pleasant feelings causing the mind to be dissatisfied (i.e. discontent). Because the pleasant feelings are based on impermanent conditions and are not permanent, the mind eventually becomes discontent or dissatisfied with the constant struggle attempting to hold on to the pleasant feelings permanently. While the mind experiences temporary pleasantness, it will eventually swing to painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant due to the mind basing its inner feelings on impermanent conditions.

Through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment for desirable and agreeable forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, a Practitioner will gradually eliminate all discontentedness.

The unEnlightened mind will continue to long with a strong eagerness for pleasant feelings through The Six Sense Bases and as long as the mind is seeking, welcoming, and holding on to the cravings/desires for these pleasant feelings chasing after the objects of its affection, the mind will continue to experience discontentedness including painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

The mind needs to be trained to be "satisfied with what is" rather than continuously chase after the objects of its affection to experience pleasant feelings. Allowing the mind to continue to chase after pleasant feelings is to invite painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant into the mind.

Because the conditions that create pleasant feelings are impermanent, eventually the mind will be unable to acquire those conditions to create the pleasant feelings, thus, painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant will be experienced.

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

Chapter 126

That Spoken Elimination

‘Venerable Sir, it is said, ‘elimination, elimination.’ Through the elimination of what things is elimination spoken of?’

Form, Ānanda, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, to vanishing, to fading away, to elimination. Through its elimination, elimination is spoken of.

Feeling is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, to vanishing, to fading away, to elimination. Through its elimination, elimination is spoken of.

Perception is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, to vanishing, to fading away, to elimination. Through its elimination, elimination is spoken of.

Volitional formations (choices/decisions) are impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, to vanishing, to fading away, to elimination. Through its elimination, elimination is spoken of.

Consciousness is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, to vanishing, to fading away, to elimination. Through its elimination, elimination is spoken of.

It is through the elimination of these things, Ānanda, that elimination is spoken of.

(Reference: SN 22.21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that through eliminating The Five Aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness that one has eliminated The Cycle of Rebirth.

A being is described by The Buddha in other Teachings as a collection of The Five Aggregates. For there to be a living being, there needs to be form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness. If these five things do not exist, it is not a living being.

Therefore, to eliminate The Cycle of Rebirth, a Practitioner needs to eliminate clinging to The Five Aggregates, which causes discontentedness.

The Four Noble Truths as explained by The Buddha helps a Practitioner understand that discontentedness is caused by clinging to The Five Aggregates.

It is through the elimination of clinging to The Five Aggregates that there is elimination of discontentedness and elimination of existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Five Aggregates are what makes “a being, a being”. A living being will have all five aggregates, also known as “elements” or “collections”.

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 continued discontentedness. Observing the impermanent nature of The Five Aggregates, a human being can “let go” no longer experiencing discontentedness due to “holding on” to The Five Aggregates experiencing constant rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Due to clinging to The Five Aggregates and a being coming into existence, the mind will experience discontentedness.

All unEnlightened beings will experience discontentedness.

Discontentedness: Gotama Buddha describes three feelings as discontent. The goal of these Teachings is to eliminate discontentedness of mind providing the mind a permanent place to reside in Enlightenment.

- A pleasant feeling (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)
- A painful feeling (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, etc.)
- A feeling that is neither painful-nor-pleasant (boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied, etc.)

Detailed explanation of The Four Noble Truths as explained by The Buddha is available in this same book series found in Chapter 7 of the book “Walking The Path with The Buddha” (Volume 2).

Chapter 127

The Elimination of The Five Aggregates is The Elimination of Discontentedness

Monks, the elimination, subsiding, and passing away of form ... of feeling ... of perception ... of volitional formations (choices/decisions) ... of consciousness is the elimination of discontentedness, the subsiding of disease, the passing away of aging-and-death.

... ..

Monks, when a Monk is practicing in accordance with The Teachings, this is what accords with The Teachings: he should reside engrossed in fading away of strong feelings towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who resides engrossed in fading away of strong feelings towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness is freed from form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

He is freed from birth, aging, and death; freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from discontentedness, I say.

... ..

Monks, when a Monk is practicing in accordance with The Teachings, this is what accords with The Teachings: he should reside reflecting on **impermanence** in form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who resides reflecting on **impermanence** in form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness is freed from form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

He is freed from birth, aging, and death; freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from discontentedness, I say.

... ..

Monks, when a Monk is practicing in accordance with The Teachings, this is what accords with The Teachings: he should reside reflecting on **discontentedness** in form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who resides reflecting on **discontentedness** in form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness is freed from form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

He is freed from birth, aging, and death; freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from discontentedness, I say.

... ..

Monks, when a Monk is practicing in accordance with The Teachings, this is what accords with The Teachings: he should reside reflecting on **non-self** in form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who resides reflecting on **non-self** in form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

One who fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness is freed from form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

He is freed from birth, aging, and death; freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from discontentedness, I say.



(Reference: SN 22.39 - SN 22.42)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that through eliminating The Five Aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness that one has eliminated The Cycle of Rebirth.

A being is described by The Buddha in other Teachings as a collection of The Five Aggregates. For there to be a living being, there needs to be form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness. If these five things do not exist, it is not a living being.

Therefore, to eliminate The Cycle of Rebirth, a Practitioner needs to eliminate clinging to The Five Aggregates, which causes discontentedness.

The Buddha also explains that reflecting on The Three Universal Truths and how form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), nor consciousness is permanent, contentedness, or the self. Instead, The Five Aggregates are impermanent, discontentedness, and non-self.

Chapter 128

The Elimination of The Six Sense Bases is The Elimination of Discontentedness

Monks, the elimination, subsiding, and passing away of the eye ... of the ear ... of the nose ... of the tongue ... of the body ... of the mind is the elimination of discontentedness, the subsiding of sickness, the passing away of aging-and-death.

Monks, the elimination, subsiding, and passing away of forms ... of sounds ... of odors ... of flavors ... of physical objects ... of mental objects is the elimination of discontentedness, the subsiding of sickness, the passing away of aging-and-death.

(Reference: SN 26.1 and SN 26.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that through the elimination of The Six Internal Sense Bases (i.e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) and The Six External Sense Bases (i.e. forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, mental objects) that there is the elimination of discontentedness, sickness, aging, and death.

Chapter 129

Craving Abandoned No More Subject to Future Arising

Rādha, whatever desire there is for form, whatever lust, excitement, craving — abandon it.

Thus that form, will be abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so that it is no more subject to future arising.

Rādha, whatever desire there is for feeling ... perception ... volitional formations (choice/decisions) ... and consciousness whatever lust, excitement, craving — abandon it.

Thus that feeling ... perception ... volitional formations ... and consciousness, will be abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so that it is no more subject to future arising.

Rādha, whatever desire there is for form, whatever lust, excitement, craving, whatever engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies — abandon them.

Thus that form, will be abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so that it is no more subject to future arising.

Rādha, whatever desire there is for feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness whatever lust, excitement, craving, whatever engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies abandon them.

Thus that feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness will be abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so that it is no more subject to future arising.

(Reference: SN 22.111)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares to eliminate craving/desire for The Five Aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness.

Through the elimination of clinging to The Five Aggregates, a being can be freed from discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth.

Chapter 130

Elimination of Craving Called The Laying Down of the Burden

And what, Monks, is the laying down of the burden?

It is the remainderless fading away and elimination of that same craving, the giving up and letting go of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.

This is called the laying down of the burden.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

The Five Aggregates are truly burdens,
The burden-carrier is the person.
Taking up the burden is discontentedness in the world,
Laying the burden down is joyful.

Having laid the heavy burden down
Without taking up another burden,
Having taken out craving from its root,
One is free from hunger, fully extinguished.

(Reference: SN 22.22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that through eliminating craving one is “laying down the burden”.

The mind is heavily burdened carrying around craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations, etc. as the mind constantly pursues the objects of its affections. Through the elimination of craving (mental longing with a strong eagerness) the mind can be at peace, once and for all, as it is no longer making decisions through its own selfish desires.

While craving is described by The Buddha as “the burden”, it is truly a burden to carry around craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) where a being then comes into existence accumulating “The Five Aggregates” to become “a being”.

“The Five Aggregates are truly burdens” to carry around. With the physical body and a mind, a being needs to constantly be burdened by feeding, watering, clothing, sheltering, and acquiring medical care for the physical body. A being will need to maintain the physical body through bathing, haircuts, cutting nails, and a whole range of other maintenance activities which can be exhausting for one to come into existence and then maintain throughout life.

Through The Path to Enlightenment, one can “lay down the heavy burden” of carrying around The Five Aggregates, realizing peace of mind, and then no longer experiencing another existence through The Cycle of Rebirth where all the challenges of life start all over again.

If one believes they only have one life, when faced with the burden of life then one might sometimes consider suicide as an option to end the displeasure of existence in life. However, when one comes to understand The Cycle of Rebirth that all beings are continuously reborn until the mind is fully developed, you come to understand that suicide is not the solution, but instead makes the problem worse. One would only be committing themselves to countless more lives and rounds of roaming and wandering, struggling to find a way out of The Cycle of Rebirth. If one is interested in ending the challenges of life, then the solution is found through cultivation of the mind, training it to eliminate The Ten Fetters, so that one no longer needs to experience existence.

There is going to continue to be renewed existence until one learns, reflects, and practices The Teachings to eliminate craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) acquiring wisdom. Essentially, continued existence in The Cycle of Rebirth is continuous opportunities to learn what one did not learn in prior existences through cultivation of the mind.

It is not until one eliminates all unwholesome qualities and cultivates the wholesome qualities that, through wisdom, the entire cycle is eliminated and the burden of existence can finally be “laid down”.

“One is free from the hunger” and thirst of constant craving and pursuing selfish desires - all has been “fully extinguished”. “Laying the burden down is joyful” as a being will no longer experience any discontent feelings, truly enjoying the remaining time of their last existence with a mind that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 121-130)

https://youtu.be/x_H--6oOkaM

Podcast(s)

Ep. 370 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 121-130)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--370---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-121-130-e1opfna/a-a8kouo6>

Chapter 131

Abandoning Being Capable of Destroying Discontentedness

Monks, without directly knowing and fully understanding **form ... feeling ... perception ... volitional formations (choices/decisions) ... consciousness**, without becoming free from strong feelings towards it and abandoning it, one is incapable of destroying discontentedness.

Monks, by directly knowing and fully understanding form ... feeling ... perception ... volitional formations ... consciousness, by becoming free from strong feelings towards it and abandoning it, one is capable of destroying discontentedness.

Monks, abandon desire and craving **for form ... for feeling ... for perception ... for volitional formations ... for consciousness.**

Thus that **form ... feeling ... perception ... volitional formations ... consciousness** will be abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so that it is no more subject to future arising.

(Reference: SN 35.26)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares to eliminate craving/desire for The Five Aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness.

Through the elimination of clinging to The Five Aggregates, a being can be freed from discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth.

A Practitioner will need to know through direct experience and fully understand what The Five Aggregates are and how to eliminate clinging to The Five Aggregates in order to eliminate discontentedness from the mind.

Chapter 132

There Is No You There

Then, Bahiya,...

When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the recognized in reference to the recognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in connection with that.

When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor there nor between-the-two.

This, just this, is the end of stress.

(Reference: UD 1.10)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he points to The Universal Truth of Non-self.

The Universal Truth of Non-self is required to be learned, reflected upon, and practiced to eliminate the fetter/taint of “Personal Existence View”. This is a Teaching that I suggest a Practitioner gain some basic familiarity with then sets aside while they focus on establishing a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path.

Then, as the mind enters the Jhānas, a Practitioner could more deeply learn, reflect, and practice The Teaching of “The Universal Truth of Non-self” to eliminate the fetter/taint of “Personal Existence View” to move the mind into the first Stage of Enlightenment and beyond. A Practitioner would be unable to eliminate the fetter/taint of “Personal Existence View” early in practice as the mind is not yet prepared to release this fetter/taint. It is only once a Practitioner deeply prepares the mind through a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path will it be ready and able to release the “Personal Existence View” through understanding and practicing The Universal Truth of Non-self.

Through the elimination of “Personal Existence View” by realizing “non-self” the mind will be able to “end stress” and all other discontent feelings as all of The Ten Fetters are eliminated.

Detailed explanation of The Universal Truth of Non-self is available in Chapter 4 and 16 of this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 133

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 134

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 135

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. 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.

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 136

In This Fathom-Long Body

I say, friend, that by traveling one cannot know, see, or reach that end of the world where one is not born, does not grow old and die, does not pass away and get reborn. Yet I say that without having reached the end of the world, there is no making an end of discontentedness.

It is in this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the elimination of the world, and the way leading to the elimination of the world.

(Reference: AN 4.45)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that he has “proclaimed” The Four Noble Truths. He is using the word “world” as a “retelling” of how he describes The Four Noble Truths.

It is The Four Noble Truths where one can make the breakthrough to establishing “Right View” and in doing so, one can make a complete end to discontentedness. In doing so, one would no longer be reborn. As more and more beings are born through The Cycle of Rebirth coming to understand and penetrate The Four Noble Truths, there will be fewer and fewer beings coming into existence. As all beings gradually attain Enlightenment ending The Cycle of Rebirth, there will eventually come “the elimination of the world” in terms of you no longer needing to experience “the world”.

A “fathom” is a unit of measurement considered to be approximately 1.8 meters or six (6) feet. He is only using this to reference himself and there is no meaning here in the use of that word that needs to be further understood.

Through traveling in The Cycle of Rebirth, “one cannot know, see, or reach that end of” discontentedness, thus, ending The Cycle of Rebirth or “ending the world”. Through ending The Cycle of Rebirth “one is not born, does not grow old and die, does not pass away and get reborn”.

“Without having reached the end of” The Cycle of Rebirth, “there is no making an end of discontentedness”. Here, The Buddha is sharing the interlinking between making an end to discontentedness through attaining Enlightenment is equivalent to making an end to The Cycle of Rebirth, thus, an end to existence in “the world”.

He is not sharing that the world will actually come to an end, as he left The Teaching on this as an “undeclared” Teaching.

Gotama Buddha did not teach about an afterlife or a soul. He left these “undeclared” in his Teachings. He did not teach whether we exist nor not exist once we attain Enlightenment and die. He shared that there is no more rebirth as “a being” in The Cycle of Rebirth which is different than no existence at all. If we do not attain Enlightenment during this life or at death, we will be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth.

These are the undeclared Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

- the world is eternal
- the world is not eternal
- the world is finite
- the world is infinite
- the soul is the same as the body
- the soul is one thing and the body is another
- after death The Tathāgata exists
- after death The Tathāgata does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist

Tathāgata is another term used to refer to Gotama Buddha.

Gotama Buddha is referring to himself who was an Arahant, therefore, you can also insert “Enlightened Being” for Tathāgata. This means, he left The Teachings “undeclared” of whether a human being who has attained Enlightenment as an Arahant “after death exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, neither exists nor does not exist”.

Just like all clinging and attachments, if we cling and crave the answer to these questions, it will cause the mind to be discontent. Knowing the answer to any of these questions will not lead to an individual’s own Enlightenment and therefore Gotama Buddha never taught or “declared” these Teachings. They are “undeclared”.

There were many Teachings Gotama Buddha did not share, as his main focus was to help people understand that they needed to work towards their own salvation through the process of attaining Enlightenment.

Gotama Buddha focused everyone’s attention, the mind, and their development on The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment - the cessation of discontentedness and the suffering it causes rather than ceremonies and worship. He taught people to practice The Teachings of being a good moral person that eliminates all unwholesome Kamma production, producing only wholesome Kamma.

Gotama Buddha’s Teachings are about non-attachment. He was not even interested in people attaching to him nor the existence of God, as Gotama Buddha knew Enlightenment is 100% determined by our own intentions, speech, and actions.

Rebirth, or The Cycle of Rebirth, is the process in which all beings who have not attained Enlightenment during this life or at death will be reborn into a new form or formless realm of existence, hell, afflicted spirits, animal, human, or heaven.

An “afterlife”, which Gotama Buddha left as an “undeclared” Teaching, is what happens when one has attained Enlightenment in this life or at death - what happens next? That is the afterlife.

You need to be comfortable with not knowing the answer, in other words, not being attached to what is or is not going to happen in an afterlife as being attached to needing to know this outcome could inhibit you from attaining Enlightenment and will cause rebirth. The goal is to extinguish all craving for a “Personal existence view”, “Desire for form”, and “Desire for the formless”. These are just three (3) aspects of The Ten Fetters required for Enlightenment as it relates to the discussion in this Chapter.

If you attain Enlightenment in this human existence, life will be so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that you will have no need to know what comes next in the afterlife, if anything at all. You will be experiencing complete and total peace of mind and will know that if there is something after death having attained Enlightenment, it must be good.

The goal is to attain Enlightenment in this very life so that you will not be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth into another realm of existence. You can attain Enlightenment during your existing life to experience ever lasting peace or at death.

Chapter 137

But Because There is an Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Unconditioned

There is, Monks, an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned. If there were not that unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, there would not be the case that escape from the born, become, made, conditioned would be identified. But precisely because there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, escape from the born, become, made, conditioned is thus identified.

The born, become, produced, made, conditioned, impermanent, conditioned of aging-and-death, a nest of illnesses, perishing, come-into-being through nourishment and the guide [that is craving] — is unfit for excitement.

The escape from that is peaceful, permanent, a sphere beyond conjecture, unborn, unproduced, the sorrowless, stainless state, the elimination of stressful qualities, stilling-of-fabrications and completely peaceful.

... ..

There is, Monks, an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned.

If, Monks, there were no unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, no escape would be discerned from what is born, become, made, conditioned.

But because there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, therefore an escape is identified from what is born, become, made, conditioned.

(Reference: ITI 43)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that the escape from conditioned experiences is to attain Enlightenment where the mind will be “unconditioned”, “peaceful” and in the “permanent” mental state of Enlightenment which is “sorrowless” and has “elimination of stressful qualities” “completely peaceful”.

Chapter 138

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.

Chapter 139

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 140

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).

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 131-140)

<https://youtu.be/E-1769-eQQk>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 370 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 131-140)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--373---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-131-140-e1p1958/a-a8lm770>

Appendix

Chapter 141

Remember Me Brāhmin As Awake (A Buddha)

‘Could you be a heavenly being, sir?’

I will not be a heavenly being, Brāhmin.

‘Could you be a gandhabba, sir?’

I will not be a gandhabba, Brāhmin.

‘Could you be a yakkha, sir?’

I will not be a yakkha, Brāhmin.

‘Could you be a human being, sir?’

I will not be a human being, Brāhmin.

‘...What, then, could you be, sir?’

Brāhmin, I have abandoned those taints (fettors) because of which I might have become a heavenly being; I have cut them off at the root, made them like palm stumps, obliterated them so that they are no longer subject to future arising.

I have abandoned those taints (fettors) because of which I might have become a gandhabba ... might have become a yakkha ... might have become a human being; I have cut them off at the root, made them like palm stumps, obliterated them so that they are no longer subject to future arising.

Just as a blue, red, or white lotus flower, though born in the water and grown up in the water, rises above the water and stands unsoiled by the water, even so, though born in the world and grown up in the world, I have overcome the world and reside unsoiled by the world.

Remember me, Brāhmin, as Awake (A Buddha).

(Reference: AN 4.36)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that he will not be reborn again into any realm of existence. He shares that he has awakened to Enlightenment as a Buddha.

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. They have deep wisdom to help the world 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.

A Buddha will need to weave their way through a previous Buddha's Teachings as all things are affected by impermanence, thus, a previous Buddha's Teachings will not be in a pure condition.

A Buddha will be able to easily determine the condition of the mind of another person, then be able to help them with Teachings to eliminate the unwholesome qualities of the mind and cultivate wholesome qualities of the mind. A Buddha will be able to observe the condition of another being's mind but only does so with an interest to help the other being eliminate the unwholesome qualities from the mind and cultivate wholesome qualities in the mind to guide one towards Enlightenment.

A Buddha will have a deep practice of their own Teachings, leading by example as a living, breathing, walking example of their Teachings.

A Buddha will be able to make predictions of the future and understand the future progress of the world as a whole while explaining past events and the current condition of the world through their Teachings.

A Buddha will know this is their last life without being reborn into any realm of existence. They will have insight into their previous lives and knowledge of their existence in those previous lives. Their only goal will be to lead as many people to Enlightenment as possible and to create a strong Community of humans with Enlightenment who will assist others to attain Enlightenment and leave strong Teachings that will assist unEnlightened beings to become Enlightened after a Buddha's death.

When a Buddha arises in the world, this is your best opportunity to attain Enlightenment. A Buddha will have independently realized their Enlightenment and will be experiencing "Perfect Enlightenment". A Buddha will have deep knowledge, deep understanding, and deep wisdom of how to attain Enlightenment through their independent realization of Enlightenment.

A Buddha will be able to teach and guide all humans, who are interested to learn, towards Enlightenment.

A Buddha arising in the world is extremely rare. The last Buddha currently known to the world was Gotama Buddha who died over 2,500 years ago.

Chapter 142

The Eight Kinds of Assemblies

Ānanda, these eight [kinds of] assemblies.

What are they?

They are the assembly of Khattiyas, the assembly of Brāhmīns, the assembly of Householders, the assembly of Ascetics, the assembly of heavenly beings of the Realm of The Four Great Kings, the assembly of the Thirty-Three Gods, the assembly of Māras, the assembly of Brahmās (God).

I remember well, Ānanda, many hundreds of assemblies of Khattiyas ... of Brāhmīns ... of Householders ... of Ascetics ... of heavenly beings of the Realm of The Four Great Kings ... of the Thirty-Three Gods ... of Māras ... of Brahmās that I have attended; and before I sat down with them, spoke to them or joined in their conversation, I adopted their appearance and speech, whatever it might be.

And I instructed, inspired, fired, and delighted them with a discourse on The Teachings.

And as I spoke with them, they did not know me and wondered: Who is it that speaks like this — a heavenly being or a man?

And having thus instructed them, I disappeared, and still they did not know: He who has just disappeared — was he a heavenly being or a man?

(Reference: AN 8.69)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how he provided instruction in these Teachings to many different communities of different beings.

Chapter 143

The Marks of a Great Man Thirty-Two Marks of A Buddha

And wise Teachers of other communities know these thirty-two marks, but they do not know the karmic reasons for the gaining of them.

A.) Monks, in whatever former life, former existence or dwelling-place The Tathāgata, being born a human being, undertook mighty deeds to wholesome purpose, unwavering in wholesome conduct of body, speech and mind, in generosity, self-discipline, observance of the fast-day, in honoring parents, Ascetics and Brāhmins and the head of the clan, and in other highly meritorious acts; by performing that (wholesome) Kamma, heaping it up, lavishly and abundantly, at the breaking-up of the body after death he was reborn in a happy state, in a heavenly world, where he was endowed beyond other heavenly beings in ten respects: in length of heavenly life, beauty, happiness, splendor, influence, and in heavenly sights, sounds, smells, flavors and contacts. Falling away from there and coming to be reborn here on earth, he acquired this mark of the Great Man:

(1) feet with level tread, so that he places his foot evenly on the ground, lifts it evenly, and touches the ground evenly with the entire sole. Being endowed with this mark, ... He cannot be impeded by any enemy or adversary from within or without, from craving, anger, or ignorance (unknowing of true reality), nor by any Ascetic or Brāhmin, any heavenly being, Māra or Brahma (God), or any being in the world.

B.) Monks, in whatever former life...The Tathāgata, being born a human being, lived for the happiness of the many, as a dispeller of fright and terror, provider of lawful protection and shelter, and supplying all necessities, by performing that (wholesome) Kamma, ... was reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world ... Falling away from there and coming to be reborn here on earth, he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (2) on the soles of his feet are wheels of a thousand spokes, complete with an outer-wheel and hub.

Being endowed with this mark, ... He has a large community: he is surrounded by male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas and Gandhabbas.

C.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata, being born a human being, rejecting the taking of life and abstaining from it, and laying aside stick

and sword, resided, kind and compassionate, having friendship and compassion for all living beings, by performing that (wholesome) Kamma, was reborn in a happy state ... Falling away ... from there and coming to be reborn on earth, he acquired these three marks of the Great Man: (3) projecting heels, (4) long fingers and toes, and (15) an excellently straight body.

Being endowed with these marks, ... He is long-lived, long-enduring, attaining a great age, ... no foe, whether an Ascetic or Brāhmin, a heavenly being, Māra or Brahma, or anyone in the world can possibly take his life.

D.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata became a donor of fine food, delicious and tasty, hard and soft, and of drinks, by performing that (wholesome) Kamma, ... he was reborn in a heavenly world ... Falling away from there and being reborn here on earth, he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (16) the seven convex surfaces, on both hands, both feet, both shoulders and his trunk.

Being endowed with this mark, He receives fine food and drinks.

E.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata made himself beloved through the four bases of compassion: generosity, pleasing speech, beneficial conduct, and impartiality, ... on returning to this earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (5) soft and tender hands and feet, and (6) net-like hands and feet.

Being endowed with these two marks, ... All his Students are well-disposed to him: male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas, and gandhabbas.

F.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata became a speaker to the people about their welfare, about Teachings, explaining this to people and being a bearer of welfare and peacefulness to beings, a dispenser of Teachings, ... returning to this earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (7) high-raised ankles, and (14) upward-growing body-hairs.

Being endowed with these marks, ... As a Buddha, he becomes the chief, foremost, highest, supreme among all beings.

G.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata became a skilled advocate of a craft, a science, a way of conduct or action, thinking: What can I learn quickly and acquire, quickly practice, without undue weariness? ... on returning to earth, he acquires this mark of the Great Man: (8) legs like an antelope's.

Being endowed with this mark, as a ruler he quickly acquires whatever things are fitting for a ruler, the things that pertain to a ruler, delight him and are appropriate to him. As a Buddha, likewise.

H.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata approached an Ascetic or Brāhmin and asked: Sir, what is the wholesome, what is the unwholesome? What is blameworthy, what is not? What course is to be followed, what is not? What, if I do it, will be to my lasting sorrow and harm, what to my lasting peacefulness? ... on returning to this earth, he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (12) his skin is so delicate and smooth that no dust can adhere to his body.

Being endowed with this mark, ... he will have great wisdom, extensive wisdom, joyous wisdom, swift wisdom, penetrative wisdom, discerning wisdom, and among all beings there will be none equal to him or wholesome to him in wisdom.

I.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata lived without anger, perfectly unruffled, and even after many words had been spoken was not abusive, or agitated, or wrathful, or aggressive, displaying neither anger nor hatred nor resentment, but was in the habit of giving away fine, soft rugs, cloaks, fine linen, cotton, silk and woolen stuffs, ... on returning to this earth, he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (11) a bright complexion, the color of gold.

Being endowed with this mark, ... he will receive such fine stuffs.

J.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata reunited those long-lost with relatives, friends and companions who had missed them, reunited mother with child and child with mother, father with child and child with father, brother with brother, brother with sister and sister with brother, making them one again with great rejoicing, ... on returning to earth he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (10) his male organs are enclosed in a sheath.

Being endowed with this mark, ... he will have numerous sons (disciples), more than a thousand sons, powerfully built heroes, crushers of the enemy host.

K.) Monks, in whatever former life ... The Tathāgata, considering the welfare of people, knew the nature of each, knew each one himself, and knew how each one differed: "This one deserves such-and-such, that one deserves so and-so", so he distinguished them, ... on returning to earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (19) he is proportioned like a banyan-tree, and (9) standing, without bending, he can touch and rub his knees with both hands.

Being endowed with these marks, ... he will be wealthy and rich, and these will be his treasures: confidence, morality, moral wrongdoing, moral concern, learning, generosity and wisdom.

L.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata ... interested in the welfare of the many, their advantage, comfort, freedom from bondage, thinking how they might increase in confidence, morality, learning, generosity, in Teachings, in wisdom, in wealth and possessions, in two-legged animals and four-legged animals, in wives and children, in servants, workers and helpers, in relatives, friends and acquaintances ... on returning to earth he acquired these three marks of the Great Man: (17) the front part of his body is like a lion's, (18) there is no hollow between his shoulders, and (20) his bust is evenly rounded.

Being endowed with these marks, ... he cannot lose anything: confidence, morality, learning, generosity or wisdom - losing nothing, he will succeed in all things.

M.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata ... was one who avoided harming beings by hand, by stones, stick or sword, ... on returning to earth he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (21) he has a perfect sense of taste. Whatever he touches with the tip of his tongue he tastes in his throat, and the taste is dispersed everywhere.

Being endowed with this mark, ... he will suffer little distress or sickness, his digestion will be good, being neither too cold nor too hot. As a Buddha likewise, he is also equable and tolerant of struggle.

N.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata ... was accustomed to look at people not with an attitude, suspicion, or disapproval, indirectly or secretly but directly, openly and straight-forwardly, and with a kindly glance, ... on returning to earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (29) deep blue eyes, and (30) eyelashes like a cow's.

Being endowed with these marks, ... he will be looked upon with love by the common people; he will be popular with and loved by male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas and gandhabbas.

O.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata ... became the foremost in skilled behavior, a leader in Right Action of body, speech and mind, in generosity, virtuous conduct (moral conduct), observance of fasts, in honoring father and mother, Ascetics and Brāhmins and the head of the clan,

and in various other proper activities, ... on returning to earth he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (32) a head like a royal turban.

Being endowed with this mark, ... he will receive the loyalty of male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas, and gandhabbas.

P.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata, ... rejecting false speech, put away lies and became a truth-speaker, wedded to the truth. reliable, consistent, not deceiving the world, ... on returning to earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (13) his body-hairs separate, one to each pore, and (31) the hair between his brows white and soft like cotton-down.

Being endowed with these marks, ... he will be obeyed by male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas and gandhabbas

Q.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata, ... rejecting slander, abstained from it, not repeating there what he had heard here to the detriment of these, or repeating what he had heard there to the detriment of those ... Thus he was a reconciler of those at variance and an encourager of those at one, rejoicing in peace, loving it, delighting in it, one who spoke up for peace ... on returning to earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (23) forty teeth, and (25) no spaces between the teeth.

Being endowed with these marks, ... his followers: male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas and gandhabbas will not be divided among themselves.

R.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata, ... rejecting harsh speech, abstained from it, spoke what was blameless, pleasing to the ear, agreeable, reaching the heart, courteous, pleasing and attractive to the multitude (many people), ... on returning to earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (27) his tongue was very long, and (28) he had a Brahma-like (God-like) voice, like the karavika bird.

Being endowed with these marks, ... he will have a persuasive voice: all his Students: male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas and gandhabbas will take his words to heart.

S.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata, ... rejecting idle chatter, spoke at the right time, what was correct and to the point, of Teachings and

discipline, and what was bound up with profit...on returning to earth he acquired this mark of the Great Man: (22) jaws like a lion's.

Being endowed with this mark,...he cannot be overcome by any foe or hostile thing from within or without, by craving, anger or ignorance (unknowing of true reality), by any Ascetic or Brāhmin, heavenly being, Māra, Brahma (God) or anything in the world.

T.) Monks, in whatever former life The Tathāgata, ... rejecting wrong livelihood, lived by Right Livelihood, refraining from cheating with false weights and measures, from bribery and corruption, deception and insincerity, from wounding, killing, imprisoning, lightway robbery, and taking goods by force, ... on returning to earth he acquired these two marks of the Great Man: (24) even teeth, and (26) very bright canine teeth.

Being endowed with these marks, ... as a Buddha, his Students ... male and female Ordained Practitioners, male and female Household Practitioners, heavenly beings and humans, asuras, nagas and gandhabbas will be pure.

(Reference: DN 30)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares certain aspects of his existence as a Buddha and what lead to the acquiring of these characteristics.

From The Buddha's description of these qualities, a Practitioner can learn wholesome qualities to cultivate and practice in one's life practice, to further develop on The Path to Enlightenment. The Buddha is providing qualities he cultivated over several lifetimes that led to him becoming a Buddha.

A Buddha's journey to Enlightenment is not started and concluded in just one lifetime. Instead, a Buddha attains Enlightenment through a pursuit of wisdom over several lifetimes as described in this Teaching.

Due to the accumulation of wisdom over several lifetimes, the individual who is a Buddha will be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without the guidance of any Teachers, guide countless beings to Enlightenment based on their independently discovered Teachings, and leave The Teachings in a condition that upon their death countless more beings will be able to attain Enlightenment with their Teachings.

A Buddha's deep wisdom is acquired through their own independent journey to Enlightenment and then he will choose to share that wisdom for the remaining time of his life, out of compassion for all other beings.

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

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 144

Benefits for One's Confidence in The Tathāgata

A thousand times the world in which the sun and moon revolve and light up the quarters with their brightness is called a thousandfold minor world system. In that thousandfold world system there are a thousand moons, a thousand suns, a thousand Sinerus King of mountains, a thousand Jambudīpas, a thousand Aparagoyānas, a thousand Uttarakurus, a thousand Pubbavidehas, and a thousand four great oceans; a thousand four great Kings, a thousand [heavens] of heavenly beings [ruled by] The Four Great Kings, a thousand Tāvatiṃsa [heavens], a thousand Yāma [heavens], a thousand Tusita [heavens], a thousand [heavens] of heavenly beings who excite in creation, a thousand [heavens] of heavenly beings who control what is created by others, a thousand Brahmā worlds.

A world that is a thousand times a thousandfold minor world system is called a thousand-to-the-second-power middling world system. A world that is a thousand times a thousand-to-the-second-power middling world system is called a thousand-to-the-third-power great world system.

Ānanda, The Tathāgata can convey his voice as far as he would like in a thousand-to-the-third-power great world system.

'But in what way, Venerable Sir, can The Tathāgata convey his voice as far as he would like in a thousand-to-the-third-power great world system?'

Here, Ānanda, The Tathāgata fills with his radiance a thousand-to-the-third-power great world system. When those beings perceive that light, then The Tathāgata projects his voice and makes them hear its sound.

It is in such a way, Ānanda, that The Tathāgata can convey his voice as far as he would like in a thousand-to-the-third-power great world system.

When this was said, the Venerable Ānanda said to The Perfectly Enlightened One: 'It is my good fortune! I am very fortunate that my Teacher is so powerful and mighty.'

When this was said, the Venerable Udāyī said to the Venerable Ānanda: 'What is it to you, friend Ānanda, that your Teacher is so powerful and mighty?'

When this was said, The Perfectly Enlightened One said to the Venerable Udāyī: Do not say so, Udāyī! Do not say so, Udāyī!

Udāyī, if Ānanda were to die without being free of craving, then because of his confidence he would exercise heavenly kingship among the heavenly beings seven times and great kingship in this Jambudīpa (one of the great continents) seven times.

However, in this very life Ānanda will attain Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment).

(Reference: AN 3.80)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that his voice can be heard across many of the “world systems” (i.e. realms).

His close Student Ānanda is proud that his Teacher’s voice can be heard across multiple realms.

The Buddha shares that Ānanda will attain Final Enlightenment in this life. This did happen as it is shared in The Pāli Canon that Ānanda attained Enlightenment and then Final Enlightenment after The Buddha’s death. The Buddha was able to foresee and predict Ānanda attaining Final Enlightenment.

Chapter 145

Recipient and the Fruit of Such Gift

Here, Ānanda, by giving a gift to an animal, the offering may be predicted to repay a hundredfold.

By giving a gift to an unwholesome ordinary person, the offering may be predicted to repay a thousandfold.

By giving a gift to a virtuous (practicing moral conduct) ordinary person, the offering may be predicted to repay a hundred-thousandfold.

By giving a gift to one outside [The Community] who is free from craving for sensual pleasures, the offering may be predicted to repay a hundred-thousand times a hundred-thousandfold.

By giving a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry, the offering may be predicted to repay incalculably, immeasurably.

What, then, should be said about giving a gift to a Stream-Enterer? What should be said about giving a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of Once-Returner ... to a Once-Returner ... to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of Non-Returner ... to a Non-Returner ... to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of Arahantship ... to an Arahant ... to a Paccekabuddha? What should be said about giving a gift to a Tathāgata, accomplished and Fully Perfectly Enlightened?

There are seven kinds of offerings made to The Community, Ānanda.

One gives a gift to a Community of both [male and female Ordained Practitioners] headed by The Buddha; this is the first kind of offering made to The Community.

One gives a gift to The Community of both [male and female Ordained Practitioners] after The Tathāgata has attained Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment); this is the second kind of offering made to The Community.

One gives a gift to The Community of Male Ordained Practitioners; this is the third kind of offering made to The Community.

One gives a gift to The Community of Female Ordained Practitioners; this is the fourth kind of offering made to The Community.

One gives a gift, saying: Appoint so many male and female Ordained Practitioners for me from The Community; this is the fifth kind of offering made to The Community.

One gives a gift, saying: Appoint so many male Ordained Practitioners for me from The Community; this is the sixth kind of offering made to The Community.

One gives a gift, saying: Appoint so many female Ordained Practitioners for me from The Community; this is the seventh kind of offering made to The Community.

In future times, Ānanda, there will be members of the clan who are 'yellow-necks', immoral, of unwholesome character. People will give gifts to those unwholesome persons for the sake of The Community.

Even then, I say, an offering made to The Community is incalculable, immeasurable. And I say that in no way is a gift to a person individually ever more fruitful than an offering made to The Community.

There are, Ānanda, four kinds of purification of offering.

What four?

There is the offering that is purified by the donor, not by the recipient.

There is the offering that is purified by the recipient, not by the donor.

There is the offering that is purified neither by the donor nor by the recipient.

There is the offering that is purified both by the donor and by the recipient.

And how is the offering purified by the donor, not by the recipient?

Here the donor is virtuous (practicing moral conduct), of wholesome character, and the recipient is immoral, of unwholesome character.

Thus the offering is purified by the donor, not by the recipient.

And how is the offering purified by the recipient, not by the donor?

Here the donor is immoral, of unwholesome character, and the recipient is virtuous, of wholesome character.

Thus the offering is purified by the recipient, not by the donor.

And how is the offering purified neither by the donor nor by the recipient?

Here the donor is immoral, of unwholesome character, and the recipient is immoral, of unwholesome character.

Thus the offering is purified neither by the donor nor by the recipient.

And how is the offering purified both by the donor and by the recipient?

Here the donor is virtuous, of wholesome character, and the recipient is virtuous, of wholesome character.

Thus the offering is purified both by the donor and by the recipient.

These are the four kinds of purification of offering.

That is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. When The Fortunate One had said that, The Teacher said further:

When a virtuous person to an unwholesome person gives
With trusting heart, a gift righteously obtained,
Placing confidence that the fruit of action is great,
The donor's virtue purifies the offering.

When an unwholesome person to a virtuous person gives
With untrusting heart, a gift unrighteously obtained,
Nor places confidence that the fruit of action is great,
The recipient's virtue purifies the offering.

When an unwholesome person to an unwholesome person gives
With untrusting heart, a gift unrighteously obtained,
Nor places confidence that the fruit of action is great,
Neither's virtue purifies the offering.

When a virtuous person to a virtuous person gives
With trusting heart, a gift righteously obtained,
Placing confidence that the fruit of action is great,
That gift, I say, will come to full fruition.

When a passionless person to a passionless person gives
With trusting heart, a gift righteously obtained,
Placing confidence that the fruit of action is great,
That gift, I say, is the best of worldly gifts.

(Reference: MN 142)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how a gift increase in benefit as the being who is the recipient has increasing amounts of virtuous moral conduct and wholesome character. He describes how an offering is purified.

Starting with an animal and progressing to an actual Buddha, Gotama Buddha provides guidance to help Students understand that the benefits one experiences increases.

Making an offering to an animal would help a Practitioner to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, but there is no ability to learn The Teachings from an animal. The Buddha then progress through multiple beings such as an unwholesome person, one practicing virtuous moral conduct, one outside of The Community of Practitioners who is free from craving for sensual pleasures, a Stream-Enterer, a Once-Returner, a Non-Returner, an Arahant, a Paccekabuddha, a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha.

To attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need a well developed practice of generosity. Without a practice of generosity, one would not be able to attain Enlightenment because the mind will continue to have craving/desire/attachment holding on to resources and being unwilling to share. The mind will continue to be selfish, therefore, it cannot experience Enlightenment.

As a Practitioner develops their practice of generosity, The Buddha suggests that one do so with discernment (i.e. wise decision making).

It would be unwise and not practicing the middle way, if one was to attempt to practice generosity without discernment.

The Buddha provides guidance of how offerings are beneficial for your practice.

The ideal situation would be that the individual you make an offering to is practicing wholesome moral conduct and that you are practicing wholesome moral conduct. This ensures the offering is purified by both the donor and recipient. This would include making offerings to Practitioners who are Stream-Enterers, Once-Returners, Non-Returners, and Arahants. Should you live during the lifetime of a Buddha, it is highly beneficial to make an offering to a Buddha.

The reason gifts to these individuals is beneficial is that it brings you in close contact with Practitioners who are practicing The Teachings closely so that you can gain insight and wisdom about The Teachings to implement into your own life practice. Through you making offerings to Practitioners who are in one of The Four Stages of Enlightenment, you are able to build a relationship, observe their practice, and ask them questions to help you learn, all to improve your life practice.

There is nothing mystical or magical about making offerings to these individuals, but instead, by making offerings to them you will be in close proximity, such that, you will be able to learn The Teachings to benefit your own life.

The Buddha shares other variations helping you see the options of how giving can be of benefit or not.

An offering can be purified by just the donor or recipient if either of them are practicing virtuous moral conduct and are of a wholesome character. If the donor or recipient are immoral and of unwholesome character, the offering is not purified by them but instead, is purified by the one who is practicing virtuous moral conduct and are of a wholesome character.

If the donor and recipient are immoral and of unwholesome character, the offering is not purified at all.

The Buddha describes that an offering made by a donor and received by a recipient who are both practicing virtuous moral conduct and are of a wholesome character, both the donor and recipient fully purify the offering.

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

Chapter 146

The Rare Appearance of Five Treasures

Licchavis, the appearance of five treasures is rare in the world.

What five?

(1) The appearance of a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One is rare in the world.

(2) A person who can teach The Teachings and discipline proclaimed by a Tathāgata is rare in the world.

(3) When The Teachings and discipline proclaimed by a Tathāgata has been taught, a person who can understand it is rare in the world.

(4) When The Teachings and discipline proclaimed by a Tathāgata has been taught, a person who can understand it and practice in accordance with The Teachings is rare in the world.

(5) A grateful and thankful person is rare in the world.

Licchavis, the appearance of these five treasures is rare in the world.

(Reference: AN 5.195)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Rare Appearance of Five Treasures.

- 1.) The arising of a Buddha, a Perfectly Enlightened One, is extremely rare in the world. The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago. The world is currently unaware of a Buddha that has arisen since Gotama Buddha.
- 2.) A person who can share these Teachings that guide others to Enlightenment on The Path to Enlightenment, as declared and proclaimed by a Buddha, is rare in the world.
- 3.) A person who can understand The Path to Enlightenment, as declared and proclaimed by a Buddha, is rare in the world. To understand these Teachings requires determination, dedication, and diligence from a Practitioner who is willing to invest significant amounts of time, effort, and energy to the development of their life practice.
- 4.) A person who can practice The Path to Enlightenment, as declared and proclaimed by a Buddha, is rare in the world. A Practitioner will need to apply focus and attention to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings making gradual improvements over a significant period of time.
- 5.) A person who is grateful and thankful is rare in the world. Learning and practicing these Teachings is challenging. Oftentimes, the unEnlightened mind struggles and has difficulties along the way. The pollution of mind hinders a Practitioner from being able to see clearly and when faced with challenges, it can be seen by the unEnlightened mind as the best answer is to give up.

I do not suggest a Practitioner views The Path to Enlightenment in this way. The challenges and struggles are part of this path and moving the mind to Enlightenment. When the mind is struggling the most, that is when it is gaining the most wisdom to make improvements. While the struggles can sometimes feel overwhelming, if one does the work, on the other side of the struggles is more peacefulness and calm as the mind will have gained significant amounts of wisdom during the difficulties it faced.

Giving up on The Path to Enlightenment is to relegate oneself to continued discontentedness in this life and future lives. That is an option that one is free to make, however, would it be wise?

This Teaching can help a Practitioner understand that a true Buddha is rare in the world. While some have considered all Enlightened beings to be a Buddha, this is not what “The Buddha” taught. He taught that it is extremely rare for a Buddha to arise in the world. He did not share that all Enlightened beings are a Buddha. A Buddha is a unique individual as shared previously in this book and book series. (See Chapter 99 of this book.)

Additionally, one might think it would be wise to change or modify a Buddha’s Teachings. This is not what The Buddha shared or recommended. In this Teaching and others, you can understand that it is only a Buddha’s Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. It would be unwise for anyone to think that their wisdom is, such that, modifying a Buddha’s Teachings would be wise or even helpful in any way. A Buddha’s Teachings are timeless, in that, they are describing The Natural Laws of Existence. Whether a Buddha taught 2,500 years ago or 25,000 years ago, the natural laws they describe that lead to Enlightenment do not change. They are permanent.

Therefore, when a Buddha declares Teachings, they are describing The Natural Laws of Existence as they exist. A Buddha can clearly observe these natural laws and explains them in clear, concise, and precise language that should be learned, reflected upon, and practiced to observe the truth for yourself as the condition of the mind and your life gradually improve.

There should never be a time when an individual should attempt to modify or change a Buddha's Teachings, because doing so, would only cause harm to that individual and countless others who choose to learn the mixed, diluted, and watered down Teachings. It is a Buddha's Teachings that lead to Enlightenment, not modifications to a Buddha's Teachings.

There is no being who is wise enough to adjust, modify, or change a Buddha's Teachings, such that, it would be beneficial in any shape, form, or fashion.

A Buddha shares Teachings with an unpolluted mind out of compassion for the world. A Buddha is Perfectly Enlightened. Their mind is unaffected by any outside influences. Therefore, they can observe the true path to Enlightenment and their Teachings illuminate that path for all others.

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.

Buddha, Buddhahood, or Buddha Nature: Some traditions of these Teachings consider all people to be a Buddha and when you attain Enlightenment, you are a Buddha. This is not what Gotama Buddha taught.

Gotama Buddha was often referred to as "Ascetic Gotama" during his lifetime. Prior to giving up his royal heritage, he was known as Siddhartha Gotama. Upon leaving the royal palace to seek a better understanding of life through attaining Enlightenment, he was known as "Ascetic Gotama" or in other words "Monk Gotama". Some people referred to him as Teacher or Master Teacher Gotama.

He would most often refer to himself as "The Tathāgata".

The term Tathāgata is often thought to mean "one who has discovered the truth", "one who shares the truth", "one who has thus gone", or "one who has thus come". This is understood as signifying that The Tathāgata is beyond all coming and going - beyond impermanence sharing the truth of The Natural Laws of Existence that lead to Enlightenment. There are, however, other interpretations, and the precise original meaning of the word is not certain.

Gotama Buddha is quoted on numerous occasions in The Pāli Canon (the source of his Teachings) as referring to himself as "The Tathāgata" instead of using the pronouns me, I, or myself. This may be meant to emphasize by implication that The Teaching is spoken by one who has transcended the human condition, one beyond the otherwise endless Cycle of Rebirth and death, (i.e. beyond discontentedness of mind).

The term Tathāgata has a number of possible meanings.

Gotama Buddha understood the use of the pronouns, me, I, or myself is unfitting to refer to the human condition as there is “no self”, as explained in the previous chapter titled “The Four Noble Truths: Establishing Right View” and “Ego: Ego Serves No Purpose” on The Teachings of “non-self”. The term Tathāgata is a way to refer to himself without using the pronouns me, I, or myself.

Other meanings for the term Tathāgata include:

- He who has arrived in such a fashion, (i.e. who has worked his way upwards to perfection from the world’s good).
- He who by the path of knowledge has come at the real understanding of things.
- He who has won Truth.
- He who has discerned Truth.
- He who declares Truth.

Regardless of what the term Tathāgata means or whether you refer to Gotama Buddha as a Teacher or Master Teacher, he rarely, if ever, even referred to himself as a Buddha and he never referred to people who attained Enlightenment as a Buddha.

So, the man we appreciate, respect, and have admiration for because he shared his Teachings with the world to fully liberate the mind to attain the mental state of Enlightenment rarely, if ever, even refer to himself as a Buddha and never referred to another person who had attained Enlightenment during his lifetime as a Buddha.

The use of the term Buddha to refer to Ascetic Gotama or Monk Gotama was mostly applied to him after his death in 483 BCE. It was after his death that people widely referred to him as a Buddha.

Master Teacher Gotama Buddha never referred to people who attained Enlightenment as a Buddha. He did not refer to Enlightenment as Buddhahood. He did not teach that people have Buddha Nature. He did not tell people they are potentially a Buddha. He rarely, if ever, even referred to himself as a Buddha and all these uses of the title Buddha referring to a person who has attained Enlightenment is not what Gotama Buddha taught.

You will not find these Teachings and use of the term Buddha for an Enlightened being in the source of his Teachings within The Pāli Canon because Gotama Buddha did not teach that everyone is a Buddha, that one would attain Buddhahood, or use the term Buddha Nature to refer to Enlightenment. A person who has attained Enlightenment at the highest stage with the guidance of Teachers would be referred to as an Arahant or perhaps an Enlightened person or an Enlightened being.

Because Gotama Buddha did not teach in this way to use the title Buddha, the title Buddha should not be used to refer to someone who has attained Enlightenment (i.e. is Enlightened) but one could be considered an Arahant.

Gotama Buddha left his royal palace, attained Enlightenment on his own through a 6-year pursuit of hard work and dedication bringing him close to death, taught countless people how to attain Enlightenment during his lifetime, left Teachings that would help countless people after his death to attain Enlightenment, established the ordained path for individuals to attain Enlightenment as Ascetics which is still alive today, and most importantly he was the deepest Practitioner ever known to humankind of The Teachings he shared. He was the discoverer, originator, and declarer of The Path to Enlightenment.

There is no one that has come after Gotama Buddha or will come after Gotama Buddha that has had the same dedication and commitment to sharing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment as Gotama Buddha did - a true Buddha. There is no one that has or will have as much of an impact to benefit all of humanity in the same way as Gotama Buddha, a true Buddha, including the expected appearance of the next Buddha Maitreya.

To refer to another human who has merely attained Enlightenment as a Buddha, as attained Buddhahood, or having Buddha Nature is to disrespect and minimize the hard work and effort our Master Teacher Gotama Buddha exhibited during his 45-years of Teaching, whose Teachings have drastically improved the existence of countless human beings over the past 2,500 years, and will continue to have an impact well into the future of humanity.

If someone refers to themselves as a Buddha, having attained Buddhahood, or having Buddha Nature is to place themselves on the same level as the individual who is admired and respected across the entire world for a lifetime of dedication and service to others, whose Teachings have stood the test of time even now, over 2,500 years later. Gotama Buddha was a true and real Buddha.

You are not a Buddha and will never be a Buddha. You will not attain Buddhahood. You do not have Buddha Nature. You can attain Enlightenment as an Enlightened being considered an Arahant but your work and effort will never amount to the impact shared in the world as that of a true Buddha who attains Enlightenment through their own independent journey while guiding countless other beings to attain Enlightenment.

Referring to oneself as a Buddha, having attained Buddhahood, or having Buddha Nature is to do so with ego and, therefore, it is widely known an individual who does so is not even Enlightened.

If one has ego placing themselves on the same level as Gotama Buddha, a true Buddha, they still have ego and cannot have even attained Enlightenment.

To attain Enlightenment, one needs to dissolve the ego. If someone refers to themselves as a Buddha, having attained Buddhahood, or having Buddha Nature, the ego is still present and has not yet been dissolved. Therefore, you can consider that a person who claims to be a Buddha, having attained Buddhahood, or has Buddha Nature that they are not yet even Enlightened, and lack the appreciation, respect, and admiration as exists for the man once known as Siddhartha Gotama, Ascetic Gotama, Monk Gotama, Teacher Gotama, Master Teacher Gotama, or The Tathāgata.

Gotama Buddha rarely, if ever, referred to himself as a Buddha, why would anyone else refer to themselves as a Buddha unless there is craving and ego to put themselves on the same level as Gotama Buddha. If there is craving or ego, one cannot even be Enlightened so how could they be a Buddha?

The Chapter titled “Enlightenment: What is Enlightenment?”, shared previously in this book series, has many characteristics of what is a true and real Buddha. To be considered a Buddha, one would need to meet those criteria found in Volume 1 - Chapter 3.

Chapter 147

A Helpful Person

That is so, Ānanda, that is so! When one person, owing to another, has gone for refuge to The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage (respect) to him, rising up for him, according him respectful salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal supplies.

When one person, owing to another, has come to abstain from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from liquor, wine, and intoxicants (substances that cause heedlessness), which are the basis of heedlessness I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage (respect) to him, rising up for him, according him respectful salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal supplies.

When one person, owing to another, has come to possess unwavering confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community, and to possess the virtues praised by Noble Ones, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage (respect) to him, rising up for him, according him respectful salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal supplies.

When one person, owing to another, has become free from doubt about discontentedness, about the cause of discontentedness, about the elimination of discontentedness, and about the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage (respect) to him, rising up for him, according him respectful salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal supplies.

(Reference: MN 142)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a progression of how one can develop their life practice.

1.) Decide to go to The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community for refuge, is to seek protection of the mind through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to train the mind.

2.) Practice The Five Precepts to improve one's moral conduct significantly reducing unwholesome decisions, therefore, significantly reducing the unwholesome results one experiences in life.

3.) As one observes the improvements to the condition of the mind and their life through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings, a Practitioner can gain confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.

4.) As one observes the accumulated improvements to the condition of one's mind and life, this can help to eliminate the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as "doubt" which leads to the elimination of discontentedness.

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.)

What does it mean to take refuge in The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Sangha and is there a ceremony to do this?

Refuge: Shelter or protection from danger or distress. A place that provides shelter or protection. Something to which one can receive help in difficulty.

Buddha: A being who has attained Enlightenment on their own without the assistance of Teachers to independently discover Teachings that lead to their own Enlightenment, with the ability to share their independently discovered Teachings that lead countless others to Enlightenment during their lifetime and after their death. The last Buddha currently known to the world existed 2,500 years ago, whom I refer to as Master Teacher Gotama Buddha or Gotama Buddha. (You will see other ways people refer to him.)

Dhamma: The Teachings of Gotama Buddha based on The Natural Laws of Existence that lead to awakening of the mind, Enlightenment.

Sangha: The entire community of Practitioners to include Ordained Practitioners and anyone who has attained one (1) of The Four Stages of Enlightenment, this includes Household Practitioners. These are the Teachers who can guide others to attain Enlightenment through The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

When we say, take refuge in The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Sangha we are saying that one's mind can be protected through having confidence in The Buddha, through learning The Dhamma, and through seeking guidance from The Sangha.

One would need to take refuge in all three, not just one. This is also referred to as the Triple Gem or the Triple Jewel.

When one learns and practices these Teachings with guidance from Teachers, the mind can reside permanently peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy. The mind is unshakable because on this path you will know the “truth” and have deep wisdom. The mind will be unshakable meaning nothing and no one can ever cause the mind to be angry, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, or have even the slightest stress or discontentedness.

The mind will be protected from these and all other discontent feelings like boredom, loneliness, guilt, shame, fear, shyness, jealousy, resentment, anxiety, etc. Absolutely nothing will ever negatively affect the mind once it is experiencing Enlightenment. The Enlightened mind is fully protected.

If one seeks refuge in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community, the mind will be permanently protected through your own learning and practice to attain Enlightenment as you are guided by the Teachers of The Sangha.

The mind will be unshakable.

People throughout time have come up with rites, rituals, ceremonies, or worship that they say are an acknowledgment of taking refuge in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community. However, these were not taught by Gotama Buddha and is only something that people developed along the way. There is no benefit to a ceremony. A ceremony does not have the power to change anything about the mind. It is only through learning and practicing The Teachings that the mind can develop and improve its condition to experience Enlightenment.

One of the aspects of the mind Gotama Buddha taught to eliminate in order to attain Enlightenment is:

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.)

One needs to eliminate this fetter, or pollution, from their life practice to even attain the first Stage of Enlightenment. This is one of The Ten Fetters. All Ten Fetters need to be eliminated to attain Enlightenment. If the mind thinks that rites, rituals, ceremonies, or worship is going to improve the condition of the mind and progress a Practitioner to Enlightenment, the mind still has the pollution of “Wrong behavior and observances”. Therefore, the Practitioner’s mind is not Enlightened and will not be Enlightened until this pollution, or “wrong view”, is removed from the mind.

Taking refuge to Gotama Buddha would be to learn and practice The Teachings. In this way, the more you learn and practice the more and more protected the mind will become. A ceremony cannot do that for you. It is only through your own dedication and commitment to learning and practicing that will allow one to have protection of the mind taking refuge in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.

All human beings can take refuge in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community. All human beings should take refuge in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.

This is the only way for the entire world to experience “worldwide peace”.

Chapter 148

This Holy Life is Lived for the Abandoning of Existence

This world is burning.

Harmed by contact, it calls disease a 'self.'

By whatever means it understands (any thing), it becomes otherwise than that.

Becoming otherwise, the world is attached to becoming harmed by existence and yet has excitement in that very existence.

Where there's excitement, there is fear.

What one fears is stressful.

This holy life is lived for the abandoning of existence.

Whatever Ascetics or Brāhmans say that liberation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not released from existence, I say.

And whatever Ascetics or Brāhmans say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.

For this stress comes into play in dependence on every gain of material possessions.

With the ending of every craving/desire, there's no stress coming into play.

Look at this world: Beings, afflicted with thick ignorance (unknowing of true reality), are unreleased from passion for what has come to be.

All levels of existence, anywhere, in any way, are impermanent, stressful, subject to change.

Seeing this - as it's come to be - with Right Wisdom, one abandons craving for existence, and doesn't have excitement in non-existence.

From the total ending of craving comes fading and elimination without remainder: liberation (Enlightenment).

For the Monk who is liberated through lack of craving/desire, there's no further existence.

He has conquered Māra, won the battle, having gone beyond existences: Such.

(Reference: UD 3.10)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a Teaching after having emerged from seven (7) days of continuous meditation without a break. Having observed the extensive amount of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) that exists in the world through the third eye or inner eye, he shared this Teaching declaring that “the world is burning”.

Craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) are most commonly referred to as The Three Poisons but are also referred to as The Three Unwholesome Roots and The Three Fires. Here, The Buddha's reference to “the world is burning” relates to The Three Fires of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) which are burning throughout the mind of countless individuals in the world causing nothing but destruction in its wake. Having seen the world greatly affected by craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), The Buddha shares how eliminating craving/desire/attachment liberates the mind from all discontentedness and further existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The following content will be a line by line explanation of The Teachings of The Buddha.

“Harmed by contact, it calls disease a ‘self.’”: The mind has the fetter of “Personal Existence View” (i.e. a self) and despite the harm experienced through existence the mind wants to hold on to existing in this world thinking that is permanent. The self, known as the fetter/taint/pollution of “Personal Existence View”, is a disease of the mind that needs to be eliminated to experience liberation (i.e. Enlightenment).

“By whatever means it understands (any thing), it becomes otherwise than that.”: The mind experiences thick ignorance (unknowing of true reality) being unable to understand anything with true clarity. Whatever the unEnlightened mind thinks it understands or comprehends, it does not truly understand because it is looking through the pollution of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) forming countless misperceptions. Beings are stuck in the continuous cycle of birth and death unable to see clearly how to escape due to not being able to see or comprehend clearly.

“The world is attached to becoming harmed by existence and yet has excitement in that very existence.”: People in the world experience significant harm and displeasure due to craving/desire/attachment yet continue to hold on to existence in this world with excitement.

“Where there's excitement, there is fear.”: If one has excitement to exist in this world, then one will have fear of losing existence. The mind will hold on to existence with craving/desire/attachment fearing death.

“What one fears is stressful.”: Through the mind holding on to existence with craving/desire/attachment this produces fear and stress in the mind. The mind is discontent yet continues to hold on.

So despite the harm beings experience in this world, the heavily polluted mind defiled with craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), continues to want to hold on to what’s causing the hurt, pain, and harm. That is existence in this world rather than eliminating craving/desire/attachment to escape all hurt, pain, and harm.

“This holy life is lived for the abandoning of existence.”: Learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings is to develop your life practice and attain Enlightenment to progress towards letting go of craving/desire/attachment for existence in the world. One aspect of The Path to Enlightenment is to let go of wanting to continue to exist.

“Whatever Ascetics or Brāhmans say that liberation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not released from existence, I say.”: For any Teacher who teaches that liberation of the mind happens through existence in the world, The Buddha shares that, their mind is not yet liberated or Enlightened. Those beings are not yet released from existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

“And whatever Ascetics or Brāhmans say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.”: For any Teacher who teaches that liberation of the mind happens through non-existence in the world, The Buddha shares that, their mind is not yet liberated or Enlightened. Those beings have not yet escaped from existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

“For this stress comes into play in dependence on every gain of material possessions.”: As the mind has craving/desire/attachment for gain of material possessions, the mind creates its own stress. A mind that experiences excitement in accumulating material possessions still has craving/desire/attachment to exist in the world and will not be interested in letting go of existence. The mind will continue to experience fear, stress, and other forms of discontentedness.

“With the ending of every craving/desire, there's no stress coming into play.”: Through training of the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, the mind will not experience any stress because it has been trained to let go. When there is no more holding on with craving/desire/attachment, all stress is eliminated.

“Look at this world: Beings, afflicted with thick ignorance (unknowing of true reality), are unreleased from passion for what has come to be.”: UnEnlightened beings continue to be negatively affected by the unknowing of true reality that their own cravings/desires/attachments are keeping them trapped and unreleased from the constant cycle of pain, misery, and displeasure.

“All levels of existence, anywhere, in any way, are impermanent, stressful, subject to change.”: All beings that exist no matter which realm of existence are impermanent and are experiencing discontentedness. The unEnlightened mind craves and desires permanent existence yet all existence in The Cycle of Rebirth is impermanent.

“Seeing this - as it's come to be - with Right Wisdom, one abandons craving for existence, and doesn't have excitement in non-existence.”: When a Practitioner sees the truth and acquires the wisdom of these Teachings that conditioned objects are

impermanent and holding on to them causes discontentedness, they will train the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment for existence and will not experience excitement in non-existence. Instead, the mind will discover and reside in the middle where it can be peaceful and calm.

“From the total ending of craving comes fading and elimination without remainder: liberation (Enlightenment).”: Once a Practitioner completely eliminates craving/desire/attachment without any residual amounts along with all the other fetters/taints/pollution, the mind is liberated from discontentedness and experiences Enlightenment. The mind will be free of strong feelings residing in the middle - peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy.

“For the Monk who is liberated through lack of craving/desire, there's no further existence.”: Having experienced liberation of mind or Enlightenment through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment, a being will have no further existences in The Cycle of Rebirth. Craving is the fuel that causes rebirth and through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment the mind is liberated from discontentedness and has also escaped The Cycle of Rebirth.

“He has conquered Māra, won the battle, having gone beyond existences: Such.”: The being has overcome Māra The Evil One who only seeks to influence destruction and chaos in the world. An Enlightened being is no longer able to be influenced by Māra The Evil One and will continue to experience significant amounts of peace and calm in this life, their last life.

“Such” is used to emphasize “and that is just the way it is” or “such is the way that it is”.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 141-148)

<https://youtu.be/aLWdlQK7PHc>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 376 - (Pali Canon Study Group) - The Realms of Existence - Volume 11 - (Chapter 141-148)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--376---Pali-Canon-Study-Group---The-Realms-of-Existence---Volume-11---Chapter-141-148-e1pecbl/a-a8n87eo>

Now that you have completed reading (Volume 11) 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:

Teacher - David Roylance
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www.BuddhaDailyWisdom.com

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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Wat Na Pah Pong

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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

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