

MN021 The Simile of the Saw - Kakacūpama Sutta
***Including the Harmonious Noble Eightfold Path

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 12th March 2010
At Dhamma Dena Vipassanā Center, Joshua Tree, California

BV: Here is the "Simile of the Saw".

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1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.
2. Now on that occasion the venerable Moliya Phagguna was associating overmuch with bhikkhunis. He was associating so much with bhikkhunis that if any monk spoke dispraise of those bhikkhunis in his presence, he would become angry and displeased and would rebuke him; and if any monk spoke dispraise of the venerable Moliya Phagguna in those bhikkhunis' presence, they would become angry and displeased and would rebuke him. So much was the venerable Moliya Phagguna associating with bhikkhunis.
3. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and told the Blessed One what was taking place.
4. Then the Blessed One addressed a certain monk thus: "Come, monk, tell the monk Moliya Phagguna in my name that the Teacher calls him."—"Yes, venerable sir," he replied, and he went to the venerable Moliya Phagguna and told him: "The Teacher calls you, friend Phagguna."—"Yes, friend," he replied, and he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, sat down at one side. The Blessed One asked him:
5. "Phagguna, is it true that you are associating overmuch with bhikkhunis, that you are associating so much with bhikkhunis that if any monk speaks dispraise of those bhikkhunis in your presence, you become angry and displeased and rebuke him; and if any monk speaks dispraise of you in those bhikkhunis' presence, they become angry and displeased and rebuke him? Are you associating so much with bhikkhunis, as it seems?"—"Yes, venerable sir."—"Phagguna, are you not a clansman who has gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness?"—"Yes, venerable sir."

6. "Phagguna, it is not proper for you, a clansman gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness, to associate overmuch with bhikkhunis. Therefore, if anyone speaks dispraise of those bhikkhunis in your presence, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus: 'My mind will be unaffected, and I shall utter no evil words; I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate.' That is how you should train, Phagguna.

"If anyone gives those bhikkhunis a blow with his hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife in your presence, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus: 'My mind will be unaffected...' If anyone speaks dispraise in your presence, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life.

BV: Now, what we're talking about is showing anger. That doesn't mean that if somebody is coming after a bhikkhuni, that you would, as a monk, allow that to happen and go and step in front of them. It means that you won't start talking to the offenders with harsh language, with anger, or with hatred. One of the jobs of the monks is to see someone who is breaking a precept and stand in front of them so they'll stop. Ok? It doesn't mean you resort to violence, it just means you get in the way, so that they can change their mind, and you always try to get in the way with a mind of loving kindness.

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you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus: 'My mind will be unaffected, and I shall utter no evil words; I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate.' That is how you should train, Phagguna.

7. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus: "Monks, there was an occasion when the monks satisfied my mind. Here I addressed the monks thus: 'monks, I eat at a single session. By so doing, I am free from illness

and affliction, and I enjoy health, strength, and a comfortable abiding. Come, monks, eat at a single session.

BV: A single session here means from sunup until high noon. Now, you'll notice when you take the precepts and I give you the precept not to eat after the noonday meal, that if you're still eating after twelve o'clock, you can continue eating, or if you're meditating and you don't start eating 'til after twelve o'clock you can still take your meal. I'm doing this for you so that you can, if your meditation is good and you don't want to stop, you can still get something to eat. We, on the other hand...

Now, an interesting thing, I had a real adventure when I went to Australia, and when I went to Australia I went on the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere, to the shortest day of the year in the southern hemisphere, and it was winter, and I came from Malaysia where it's eighty-five and beautiful all the time. I was so unprepared that I didn't even have a pair of socks. So I'm walking around and it's cold and it's raining and my feet are frozen to the bone, and I started thinking you know "My kingdom for a pair of socks" it was so cold. So I just kind of let that go and I went to a monastery and I sat in there for a little while, and the monk looks at my feet which were blue at the time, and he said, "Do you need a pair of socks?" I said "It would be wonderful." So he gave me a pair of socks, and two days later somebody gave me two pair of socks, and a week later somebody gave me six pair of socks, and I can't turn the socks off to this day! I get socks like you can't believe. The last time we travelled somebody gave me twenty-four pair of socks! What in the world am I going to do with twenty-four pair of socks? And they were big enough to fit me. I have big feet, so I can't give them to somebody that's small. So they come up over here.

Anyway, the reason I went to Australia was because I wanted to practice meditation with a certain Thai monk that was travelling in Australia. And I developed a habit of only eating one meal a day. Now, we went through some real cold weather where the frost would be on the ground until about ten-thirty or eleven o'clock in the morning, and I never caught a cold. I was healthy the whole time. And then it got to be springtime, I spent three months in a forest in Australia, it got be springtime and I started coming out and hanging out with monks they were eating breakfast, and I started taking a little bit here and a little bit there and before long I was eating breakfast. Immediately caught a cold. So I cut out the breakfast and the cold went away, and that's why I eat one meal a day because if you fill your stomach up too much you... every time you eat a meal, it winds up

taking about three hours. Preparing the food, eating the food, cleaning up after the food, digesting the food.

So by not eating three times a day, and not eating even two times a day, I have a lot more time to do the things that I want to do. So that's one of the reasons that the Buddha, he said "You know you're walking around sometimes at night, you go to these people's house for a meal, and you come home." But they didn't have flashlights then, so they walked without any light and sometimes they were falling in cesspools, and sometimes they'd run into a cow that was sleeping on the ground, that's a dangerous thing. And sometimes they would walk by somebody that had walked outside and it would scare them, they think you were some kind of ghost or something, so the Buddha said, "Don't eat in the evening." And the monks kind of grumbled at that. And then the Monk said "Don't eat in the afternoon, only eat in the morning". So what the Buddha is talking about here when he was very pleased or satisfied with his mind was when he told the monks...

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{repeats ... I eat at a single session. By so doing, I am free from illness and affliction, and I enjoy lightness, strength, and a comfortable abiding. Come, monks, eat at a single session.} By so doing, you will be free from illness and affliction, and you will enjoy lightness, strength, and a comfortable abiding.' And I had no need to keep on instructing those monks; I had only to arouse mindfulness in them. Suppose there were a chariot on even ground at the crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, waiting with goad lying ready, so that a skilled trainer, a charioteer of horses to be tamed, might mount it, and taking the reins in his left hand and the goad in his right hand, might drive out and back by any road whenever he likes. So too, I had no need to keep on instructing those monks; I had only to arouse mindfulness in them.

8. "Therefore, monks, abandon what is unwholesome and devote yourselves to wholesome states,

BV: What have I been talking about this whole retreat? Ok. Carry this with you. It's not just for being here, and then forget about it. Practicing meditation is an active way of life. You practice your generosity.

S: Bhante, I'll just take a moment and tell you. I did the retreat last June, you said "take it with you", so I did. So first thing I did, I realized that I was talking to drivers on the road, and they weren't good things I was saying! So I said I shall talk to drivers just to start, but then that was like,

you know, Recognize. And so then I decided "Oh, I'm going to wish them well on their journey", so I did. And my driving is a pleasure and I don't speed as much. And I'm a speeder, so that kind of time, and I don't talk to other drivers, and it's been the greatest practice of the 6R's. I think Los Angeles would completely change everywhere. And I let people go, and people signal "thank you"; you see it in the rear-view mirror. It's gratifying. So that's generosity there you go!

B: Yes, it is.

B: Being in Germany, you think of Germans as being hard, super-organized, and rather harsh, and they are the politest drivers. I mean, they're driving down the road, and it's kind of a narrow road, they pull off the road even if they get stuck, they'll put off the road and let this other person pass. It's wonderful to watch the way they drive... until they get on the autobahn... Then things change a little bit.

So you practice your generosity with your speech, you practice generosity with your action. You letting other drivers in, is one way of doing that. You practice generosity with your inner mind. You think of people in kindly ways, wishing them well. Now, this particular sutta, the reason that I'm thinking that to do this whole sutta tonight is because this sutta is the way you practice life. Doesn't matter what somebody else says, it doesn't matter what somebody else does, you radiate loving kindness to them, be gentle, you be kind, be helpful in whatever way you can be. Saying things to the clerks that are running the cash register in busy stores, saying things that are kind to them, that help them to smile gives them a brief moment of relief. And then they're kind to the next person.

One time I went to... I was travelling all over the country when I first got back, I was going all over by bus, which everybody here goes "Bus, oh, how can you do that?", but it was high luxury to me. I was used to buses in Asia where everybody rides on the side that the door's on, so that the bus is going like this . .

S: Why did they do that?

BV:

Because there's so many people on the bus, they want to be able to get off when the bus stops. They're hanging on all over the place.

Being kind to people, letting them have your seat if they look like they're having problems, whatever, is really a nice thing. But I travelled all around

the United States. I went the northeast, I went all the way down to Florida, I came all the way back, and I had to do my laundry one day. And I hate those little boxes that cost a buck, you know. So I went to a store and I bought a fairly big box of soap, but I didn't need a box. So I used the soap I wanted and a lady came in and she had just piles of clothes. And I said "I bought this because it's cheaper than buying three little things, but there's a lot left over. How about if I give that to you?" ... (Lady) "Well, you can't do that." ... (BV) "Yeah, I can. Go ahead and use it, please." So she used it and there was still some left. Another lady came in with a load of clothes; this lady gave the soap to that other lady. Yeah! It was wonderful to see how people can be kind if you practice a kind act to them first. That's what this practice is for.

Why do I want you to smile all the time? So you can give it away. And what are you doing when you do that? You're letting go of unwholesome states and developing wholesome states. You're practicing the 6R's. So you carry this with you as much as you can remember, but you can't criticize yourself when you forget. Ok? That's an unwholesome state too. So you forgive yourself for making a mistake and then start over again. That's what this practice attempts to show you.

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... For that is how you will come to growth, increase, and fulfilment in this Dhamma and Discipline.

BV: So the whole of the Buddha's practice is practicing universal law of your generosity, your kindness, and your practice of keeping your precepts. Then when you sit in meditation, your meditation is good. You break your precepts, you can look forward to having not-so-good meditation.

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Suppose there were a big sāla-tree grove near a village or town, and it was choked with castor-oil weeds, and some man would appear desiring its good, welfare, and protection. He would cut down and throw out the crooked saplings that robbed the sap, and he would clean up the interior of the grove and tend the straight well-formed saplings, so that the sāla-tree grove later on would come to growth, increase, and fulfilment. So too, monks, abandon what is unwholesome and devote yourselves to wholesome states, for that is how you will come to growth, increase, and fulfilment in this Dhamma and Discipline.

Harmonious Noble Eightfold Path

BV: So the more you dwell on wholesome things, the more you practice wholesome speech, the more you practice wholesome actions, the more successful you become. We'll get back to this in just a moment. Even I told you at the start of the retreat I was going to tell you about the Eightfold Path, and I never did it. So now's the time.

Everybody know the Eightfold Path? Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. But I don't like those interpretations of those words. So for Right View; I changed that a little bit. I don't like that word "right". You use the word, 'right' because if something is 'right', then something is 'wrong', and that turns the world into black and white, and it doesn't give you any room to adjust. Either it's 'right' or it's 'wrong'. So instead of using the word 'Right', I use the word '**Harmonious**'.

Harmonious Perspective

So View is good, Understanding is good, but I like the word 'Perspective'. So when you practice Harmonious Perspective, you're practicing how to see everything that arises as part of an impersonal process. Your perspective is, when it's in harmony, your perspective is always seeing things as they actually are. Right? Seeing things as they actually are means being able to change your view on what arises in your mind at the time. By that I mean anger, dissatisfaction, fear, anxiety, sadness, boredom. Whatever arises, when you take it personally, your mind is not in harmony at that time. Your mind is fighting with what's arising in the present moment, and you get caught up in trying to think your feelings. The more you try to think a feeling away, the bigger and more intense that feeling becomes. So Harmonious Perspective means being able to change that view from the personal perspective to the impersonal perspective. Now, you've been hearing me talk for a week. How is the fastest way to change your perspective?

BV: Laughter!

Now, it's weird. It's a weird thing, and when I first realized that, I was a layman. I was living in Hawaii and I decided this guy that was building the house that I was going to help him. I wasn't getting paid to do it, I just wanted to help, and hang out with this guy a little while. And before long he started thinking that he was my boss. And one day he said something

and it really got me angry, and I walked away, and I'm walking and the heels of my feet are driving into the ground, and thinking that "you dumb...". "He thinks he's my boss" and as soon as I said that to myself, I started laughing. I got "he thinks he's my boss" and as soon as I did that the anger went from "I'm mad and I don't like it to "Well, there's this anger. Now, I can keep this anger if I want, but who wants to walk around angry? Let it go."

Every time you laugh with yourself about how crazy your mind is: "Welcome to the human race, we're all crazy." Every time you laugh with yourself, it changes your view, it changes your perspective of the world. And I chuckled for a little while and I saw how clear my mind was, how uplifted it was. And then I started doing it with all kinds of mental states that arose, and it happened every time.

When you laugh with yourself about how crazy you are and people say "Oh, that's really hard to do." And when they say that it makes me laugh, and they get mad at me for laughing, but I keep laughing and before long they're laughing too. And then no problem; I've been told on more than one occasion "this is serious". Isn't that funny? So how does your mind feel when you laugh? You're alert, you're bright, you're not attached to anything. That's Harmonious Perspective. That's taking that unwholesome "I am that, and I'm going to make it the way I want it to be" to "Well, it's only that". Now, I can hold onto this and I can play around with it a little bit I suppose, but who wants to be mad? Let it go. And as soon as that happens, what happens in your mind? Your mind is all of sudden back in the present moment, your mind is uplifted, and you're ready for whatever else arises. But if you get caught by an emotional state, and you don't laugh, you make yourself more and more miserable, you make yourself suffer. You're in control, you must remember that.

One of the things about Buddhism that I particularly admire is it makes everybody be responsible for themselves. I've been at meditation centres where everybody blames: "Oh, it's their fault" it's "Oh, I couldn't do it because of this". And I started calling that monastery 'Blame Central'. So you're not taking responsibility for your own actions and your own mind here. Come on! You can't blame your suffering on anyone else. Your suffering is yours, and I can't take your suffering away, but you can certainly take your own away. Right? By letting go of the unwholesome. Why is it unwholesome? Because "I am that". It's the false belief in a self: "I have this opinion, I have this concept, I have this idea, and boy I'm going to bend it to the end". That's how wars start isn't it? You want to affect the world around you in a positive way? Smile, laugh, be happy.

Don't blame anything else or anyone else for your problem. "It's his fault, he didn't do what he was going to say". Oops, who has their own anger, who's making themselves suffer? Who's causing problems for themselves that spreads out and makes it problems for other people because they're putting up with you negative mental state.

One time, and I was a layman again, it did happen, I was a layman for a lot of years afterward. Munindra-ji was a little Indian man that came to visit us in San Jose. And he used to talk about loving kindness and how you can change the world, change everybody's view of the world by practicing loving kindness. I didn't believe it. So I decided I was going to test this. So I went into a huge shopping mall.

There must have been thousands of people there. And I sat down on a bench and I had a sour face, and I kept it like that, looking really sad and dejected, miserable. And I looked at people around me and they had sour faces. They weren't smiling and happy, they were catching what I was doing. So I thought "Ok, we know that negative thoughts don't work, change the world in a positive way, so let's try smiling". So as I was sitting on the bench, I decided to close my eyes, just started smiling and happy feeling and I started feeling "eyes" on me. You know when somebody looks at the back of your head, you feel them looking at you. So I thought, "I wonder what's happening". So I opened up my eyes, there were ten or twelve people standing around me looking at me smiling. And I thought "Oh, that worked"! I got up and left.

The more you smile the more you take the effort to wish people love, and happiness, and wellbeing, and clear mind. The more you affect the world around you in a positive way, the more you're practicing Harmonious Perspective.

Harmonious Imaging

The next part of the Eightfold Path, they call it Right Thought, and I really don't like that definition, those words very much because it doesn't really describe what the next fold of the Eightfold Path is. So I call it Harmonious Imaging. And that sounds like, almost like imagination, but it's not. What kind of image do you hold in your mind? Do you hold an image of being happy? Do you hold an image of being prosperous? I know a lot of people talk about 'wanting to be rich', but what kind of image do they hold in their mind? Being poor! Image yourself as being prosperous. Use that image and the universe will come running to you.

Now, a lot of people right now are out of work, twenty percent in some places in California. Well, you can get into that image of depression, or not. It's your choice. You hold an image of kindness. You hold an image of sending loving and kind thoughts to other people. And what did this sutta just say? It said when you let go of the unwholesome, and you stay with the wholesome, you become prosperous! The outside circumstances don't have anything to do with your prosperity. You have to do with your own prosperity.

The thing with loving kindness meditation that's really amazing; in the sutta in the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha talked about making merit. And he said, "You make an immeasurable amount of merit if you offer food to the Sangha. You make a huge amount of merit by doing that. And you have to offer in the right way. It's not just throw it down on the table, like people that come and offer food for me. I tell them they have to use two hands and it has to be done with respect. Why? Because I'm helping you so that you make more merit. What kind of an image are you holding? When you offer food to Sangha members, are you holding an image of happiness, then you're doing it right.

The next part is you make even more merit when you take the refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha; more merit than feeding the monks. Isn't that amazing? You make more merit still when you take and keep the five precepts, without breaking them. Now, that's pretty impressive. When you take and keep the five precepts, what does that do if you're in business? People know you're not going to lie to them, you're not going to try take advantage from them, you're not going to steal from them. What kind of reputation do you have? Do you have a reputation of picking up the phone and somebody says something you don't like so you curse them out. Or do you have a little mirror on your desk that you can look and see whether you're smiling or not before the phone rings and be smiling and wishing them happiness while you're talking with them. What kind of an image are you holding? Uplifting, happy. You make more merit still by one thought moment of loving kindness. How much merit have you made while you're here? Huh? Yeah?

S: How do you explain merit?

BV:

It has to do with karma. The merit you gain by doing good, uplifting, wholesome things, you gain merit by doing that. And when you gain merit, you're letting go of the unwholesome and you're developing the wholesome, and that's how you become more and more prosperous. Not

only in this lifetime, but whenever. It always comes back to you. If you do things with an unwholesome mind, then you get demerit. That's the way karma works; it's action. Some people say that karma is intention; intention is part of it. You have to have good intentions to do good action, but if you only have the good intention and you don't have the action behind it, you don't get such good results from it. And you make the most merit by seeing and recognizing how Dependent Origination actually does work. This all comes back. The more you have this uplifted mind, what kind of images are you holding? Happy, uplifted images.

There's one lady around Ironton (Missouri) that is continually saying "I can't afford it, I don't have any money", and all they talk about is getting money, and they hold an image of poverty. They can do that if they want, but it's not as much fun as it is being around people that hold the idea of prosperity. When people hold an idea of prosperity, or an image of prosperity about themselves, they also do it for other people around them. So this just leads to more good, uplifting imaging.

The newspapers right now are trying to make everyone afraid, and they're being somewhat successful with it. So what do I suggest? Don't read the newspapers. Don't look at the news on TV, "Well I gotta find out what's happening". I'll tell you a secret, you don't. "Well, I have to be educated". Well anything that is major, that happened, you'll hear about it from somebody else. You don't have to read it in the newspaper. And most of the stuff you read in the newspaper, you have this idea that it's really important to know, and actually it isn't. The Queen Mum died. "Ok, how does that change my life"? Not at all. Russia fell, "How does that change my life"? How did I find out about it? Somebody told me... two years after it happened. And how did that affect my life, my personal life? It didn't. "Well all this news is important to know". No, not really. How much more time would you have if you didn't read the newspapers, except for the funnies; let's not get over-carried away with it. Heh. The only thing that's really interesting in the newspapers, to be honest, is the weather and the funnies.

BV: And people ask me about television, I tell them "Note, there's a real good thing, it's called a brick". Put it through the TV and look at how much more time you have to do things that are really worth doing. Especially now, since they went to digital. I mean, this is really amazing, the mind control things that are happening on the television. We have a TV at our center, we don't have any TV reception. And we have a radio at our Centre, and we don't have any radio reception. Ha.

When I go into town with somebody, when they're going into Wal-Mart, I get my news from the Enquiring Mind. All of the important stuff is there. I look at the front page, that's all I do! Ha Ha! But you get to see who's sick right now and who's suffering, whatever. But how much more time would you have if you didn't indulge in all of these things? It doesn't really affect your prosperity. Your prosperity is affected by your own mind, and your own image. The more you become in harmony with a positive image of yourself and other people around you, the more prosperous everyone becomes. It's a universal law. That's the way it works.

Harmonious Communication

The next part of the Eightfold Path is called Right Speech and I don't like that so much, so I call it Harmonious Communication. Who do you communicate with more than anybody else in the world? Yourself. How kind are you to yourself? Or how critical are you of yourself? If you're critical of yourself, who is developing an un-harmonious image? Who is developing a mind that is unwholesome by being critical?

Now, you heard me say a couple days ago you go through the day and you do fifty things that are absolutely brilliant. Everybody is happy around you, you're happy yourself, and you do one thing that might not be so good, at least in your own mind. It might not be bad to anybody else, but in your own mind. What do you wind up thinking about, over and over again? Are you practicing Harmonious Perspective at that time? Are you practicing Harmonious Imaging at that time? Are you practicing Harmonious Communication with yourself at that time? The more you can be kind to yourself, not critical, and forgive yourself for not being perfect... I haven't met too many people that are yet, perfect, so. And your mindfulness improves. Your observation power of what you're doing with yourself, and to yourself, becomes easier to recognize. But this all takes practice. Ok? It takes practice. It's not an easy thing, we got a lot of old habits and we like to think about how we screwed up this or that. We didn't do it right, and how we should criticize ourselves for it. But when you see you're doing that, forgive yourself for not being perfect. Welcome to the real world. And make a determination not to do that again.

Harmonious Movement

The next part of the Harmonious Practice... now, all of this Harmonious Practice has to do directly with your own life and practice of meditation. It's not philosophy. This is practical stuff that I'm giving you. The next part

is called Right Action, I admit that I do change stuff around, and I call it Harmonious Movement.

Now, what is Harmonious Movement, especially when you're sitting? It's doing things at the right speed. It's doing it with the right amount of energy. You're not jerking your mind around, trying to make things better than they are, putting too much energy into things, causing yourself to get restless. Harmonious Movement in daily life means watching what you're doing while you're doing.

Harmonious Lifestyle

Now, the next part of the Eightfold Path I've really come to enjoy, and that's Right Livelihood. And the definition of Right Livelihood is: don't kill anything, don't sell any poisons, don't sell any guns, don't take slaves, things like that. Now, think about the Eightfold Path, the first time anybody heard it in this Buddha era, was in the first discourse that the Buddha gave. And he gave this discourse to five ascetics that were practicing purifying themselves. How much sense does that make? Not to sell poisons; they wouldn't do that. Not to sell weapons; they wouldn't do that. Not to take on slaves; well that doesn't make sense. I call it Harmonious Lifestyle. What kind of lifestyle are you leading? Is it a lifestyle that leads to happiness for you and others around you, or pain for you and others around you?

Now, there was a lady in Malaysia, she was absolutely great. She came to me one day and she said, "I'm having these terrible dreams. They're nightmares!" And I said "Oh, why?" She said, "I don't know. It always happens right after I go to a horror movie show." So I said "Well, don't do that anymore." And she said "But I like it." And I said "Then don't bother me about your nightmares!" Leave me alone.

In the suttas, in one sutta in particular, in the Middle Length Sayings, it says that Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, are part of morality. So when you're meditating you're practicing your morality, so you don't need to pay attention to these three things. So they're effectively saying that the Eightfold Path is actually a lie, it's a Fivefold Path. And then you have people practicing straight vipassana and they'll tell you that the last one, the Right Concentration, where the definition is absolutely: the first jhāna, second jhāna, third jhāna, fourth jhāna. It doesn't really mean that and it can mean 'momentary concentration'. So they're effectively picking that one away, so now they have a Fourfold Path.

But when the Buddha gave the discourse, the first time on the Eightfold Path, he was talking to monks about their practice, and how they can practice this. So there's no taking out, and I found out later that ever since the Buddha died, the scholars have divided the Eightfold Path into the Fivefold Path, and the three you don't need, and the practitioners are saying "No, no, no, no, no, no, you can't do that." And monks have been fighting about this for over two thousand years. And it will probably go on until the end of the Buddha Sasana. But because I'm a practicing monk, I like to give you the whole Eightfold Path.

Practice Right Lifestyle, what does that mean? Keeping your mind uplifted, and doing things that help other people to have an uplifted mind. Saying things that are uplifting, saying things to other people that are uplifting. With your actions during the day, doing things that don't harm anybody else, or any other animal. In other words, live a very clear, aware life.

Some people like to read books that aren't necessarily good, and they can cause all kinds of confusion and that sort of thing. Sometimes some people like to get on the internet and look at things that aren't necessarily good to look at. What are they doing with their mind at that time? Is that Right Livelihood, spending your time looking at things that aren't necessarily good for you to be getting involved in?

Harmonious Practice

So the next part of the Eightfold Path, they call it Right Effort, and I can go along with Right Effort, but I still change it, and I call it Harmonious Practice, or four parts. Recognizing the unwholesome, letting go of the unwholesome and relaxing, bringing up the wholesome, smile, and come back to your object of meditation, and stay with that wholesome state. It's Right Effort, also the 6R's.

Harmonious Attention

The next part of the Eightfold Path, they call it Right Mindfulness, and mindfulness itself is a word that has a lot of confusion around it. Sister showed me an article in the newspaper where there was four or five different teachers discussing what the definition of mindfulness was, and one person came out and said "Mindfulness is remembering, to remember, to remember!" What in the world are they talking about? So the sharper your observation power is in how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, the more clear dependent origination becomes, and so seeing it.

Now, a lot of people question me about whether I'm really teaching anything about insight, and the answer is "absolutely". While you're in the jhāna, I'm showing you what insight is all the time. I'm not showing you, you're showing yourself. The insights you get are, recognizing how mind's attention moves, and you see these little links sometimes that are there, and you go "Oh, wow!" I actually wanted to call this meditation "Oh Wow", but I got vetoed on that one. So I want to make a magazine called "Oh, Wow", and have people write in and say "You know, I saw this in my meditation. I really had an "Oh, wow!"

The function of mindfulness is to remember, to remember what? To remember to observe how mind's attention moves. And what does it do when your mindfulness becomes good? It makes you look more and more closely to all of these little tiny things that arise and pass away, and how they do it. There's one student here that almost every time I see them I ask them if they'd "Have you 6R'd that?", "Oh, there you go again". Ok, look more closely. That's the whole point of the 6R's, so you can look more closely. The clear mind, the bright mind, with an alert mind, with an uplifted mind with a very clear Harmonious Perspective of how everything works.

Harmonious Collectedness

The last part of the Eightfold Path is Right Concentration, and 'concentration' is a four-letter word, almost. So I call it Harmonious Collectedness. What's the definition of collectedness? Collectedness is a mind that's calm, very composed, very alert, and still. And that's what happens when you get into the jhānas, you go to different degrees of these things. So that's the Eightfold Path.

End of Harmonious Noble Eightfold Path

When you're practicing the 6R's, you're practicing the entire Eightfold Path at that time. When you smile, you're practicing the entire Eightfold Path at that time. When you laugh, you're practicing the entire Eightfold Path at that time. See how simple it is?

Now, the whole point of talking about the Eightfold Path is to realize that the Buddha's path, the Middle Path, the way that he teaches is to learn how to let go of the unwholesome identification with whatever arises and bring up the harmonious perspective, the impersonal observation of all thoughts, all feeling, all sensation. Everything that happens in the world to you is an impersonal process. Doesn't have any concepts in it, doesn't

have any opinions in it. Do you see things in an impersonal way; you're seeing things very clearly as being a process. Now, what good is that? When you see things as being part of a process, you've let go of suffering; you've let go of craving. And your mind becomes very content, at ease, and life starts to become fun.

Any time you're serious, guess who's there; "I am". Guess who's causing themselves suffering; "I am". Guess who tries to control; "I do". Because you're taking all of your thoughts and your feelings personally, and you're grabbing onto them with that craving, and the clinging is your opinions and your ideas and your concepts, and that big identification with all of those things. So when you start to see things in an impersonal way, your mind doesn't have any hindrances in it, and when it doesn't have any hindrances in it then guess who's not identifying with thoughts and feelings. Any time you have repeat thoughts, guess who's there; "I am". Who needs to 6R all this stuff, "I do".

9. "Formerly, monks, in this same Sāvatthi there was a housewife named Vedehikā. And a good report about Mistress Vedehikā had spread thus: 'Mistress Vedehikā is gentle, Mistress Vedehikā is meek, Mistress Vedehikā is peaceful.' Now Mistress Vedehikā had a maid named Kāli, who was clever, nimble, and neat in her work. The maid Kāli thought: 'A good report about my lady has spread thus: "Mistress Vedehikā is gentle, Mistress Vedehikā is meek, Mistress Vedehikā is peaceful." How is it now, while she does not show anger, is it nevertheless actually present in her or is it absent? Or else is it just because my work is neat that my lady shows no anger though it is actually present in her? Suppose I test my lady.'

"So the maid Kāli got up late. Then Mistress Vedehikā said: 'Hey, Kāli!—'What is it, madam?'— 'What is the matter that you get up so late?'—'Nothing is the matter, madam.'—'Nothing is the matter, you wicked girl, yet you get up so late!' and she was angry and displeased, and she scowled. Then the maid Kāli thought: 'The fact is that while my lady does not show anger, it is actually present in her, not absent; and it is just because my work is neat that my lady shows no anger though it is actually present in her, not absent. Suppose I test my lady a little more.'

"So the maid Kāli got up later in the day. Then Mistress Vedehikā said: 'Hey, Kāli!—'What is it, madam?'— 'What is the matter that you get up later in the day?'—'Nothing is the matter, madam.'— 'Nothing is the matter, you wicked girl, yet you get up later in the day!' and she was angry and displeased, and she spoke words of displeasure. Then the maid Kāli thought: The fact is that while my lady does not show anger, it is

actually present in her, not absent; and it is just because my work is neat that my lady shows no anger though it is actually present in her, not absent. Suppose I test my lady a little more.'

"So the maid Kāli got up still later in the day. Then Mistress Vedehikā said: 'Hey, Kāli!'—'What is it, madam?'—'What is the matter that you get up still later in the day?'—'Nothing is the matter, madam.'—'Nothing is the matter, you wicked girl, yet you get up still later in the day!' and she was angry and displeased, and she took a rolling-pin, gave her a blow on the head, and cut her head.

"Then the maid Kāli, with blood running from her cut head, denounced her mistress to the neighbours: 'See, ladies, the gentle lady's work! See, ladies, the meek lady's work! See, ladies, the peaceful lady's work! How can she become angry and displeased with her only maid for getting up late? How can she take a rolling-pin, give her a blow on the head, and cut her head?' Then later on a bad report about Mistress Vedehikā spread thus: 'Mistress Vedehikā is rough, Mistress Vedehikā is violent, Mistress Vedehikā is merciless.'

10. "So too, monks, some monk is extremely gentle, extremely meek, extremely peaceful, so long as disagreeable courses of speech do not touch him. But it is when disagreeable courses of speech touch him that it can be understood whether that monk is really kind, gentle, and peaceful. I do not call a monk easy to admonish who is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish only for the sake of getting robes, almsfood, a resting place, and medicinal requisites.

BV: These are the four requisites. So a monk is not supposed to be kind and gentle just to try to get these things, with that kind of mind.

MN21:

Why is that? Because that monk is not easy to admonish nor makes himself easy to admonish when he gets no robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal requisites. But when a monk is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish because he honours, respects, and reveres the Dhamma, him I call easy to admonish. Therefore, monks, you should train thus: 'We shall be easy to admonish and make ourselves easy to admonish because we honour, respect, and revere the Dhamma.'

BV: Do you understand the word "admonish"?

BV: Discipline.

MN21:

That is how you should train, monks.

11. "Monks, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

BV: Ok, that's what you're learning now. It doesn't matter what somebody else's opinion is. It doesn't matter if they give it to you, they give you information in a timely or untimely way. It doesn't matter if they give you hatred. It doesn't matter if they give you criticism. You radiate loving kindness to that person. And remember that that's just the first part of the practice. Then you start radiating loving kindness to all beings around you and the whole world.

Now, because of the nature of the way that I teach there is a lot of criticism that comes my way because I'm not teaching in the normal way. Yeah, that's what I do. Somebody in Germany, they took one part of one thing that I said and they blew it up into some kind of major thing, and they were very critical of what I said. And somebody in Germany read it and they sent it to me and they said, "Oh, you gotta repeat, you gotta come back and you have to tell this person what's really true, and what's not true. You should rebuke what he said". And I said, "No, I don't care. I don't care what they say at all".

And there was another article that was written and it criticized me for saying that there's two different kinds of Nibbāna; mundane and supramundane, and they criticize me for it. I felt like writing back to them

and say, "Criticize me some more". So many people came to our website it was unbelievable; Germany. There's no need to respond to that sort of thing, there's no need to respond to negative criticisms. Love the person and use that as the reminder to practice your loving kindness meditation to all beings. Keep your mind on loving-kindness as often as you possibly can during the day.

You will be well thought of, you will be prosperous. Now, prosperous doesn't necessarily mean have anything to do with material wealth. But other people say to you because you're kind, because you're helpful, because you can do things that will make life easier for other people; that's being prosperous. Worry about not having material things? No thanks. This year, I'm not really travelling all that much. I'm only going to be travelling twelve thousand miles to Vietnam, and it was about six thousand miles to Germany. So that's twenty-four thousand and twelve thousand, so that's... I'm only travelling thirty-six thousand miles and I don't have a dime. I don't have any money. Any money I get goes in the kitty to help build the monastery. I don't need any money, and I travel all around the world. How do I do that? By helping other people. By showing other people that I really appreciate them, and I wish them well by teaching Dhamma.

S: Right. It's warm. It's more than warm.

BV: It's a lot warmer than where I live obviously, outside no. I have a wood burning stove in my kuti. We call it a kuti, it's actually a fairly big hut. And I don't like cold weather. I'm sorry, I just don't like it. I spent twelve years in Asia, I was in heaven because it was warm. So I build up the stove in the morning, get it up to about eighty degrees, and I'm fine. You know, I'm sitting around with a light robe on and, no problem. Everybody that comes in, they come in then "Oh, it's warm in here". And they keep their jackets on and they stood, before long they say "You know, it's really hot in here".

BV: But I also, I have a loft. Now, it got cold, I mean it got down to three degrees, it was really cold. I go up to my loft, the fire goes out in the stove, but it stayed so nice and toasty up there, I had to kick blankets off. And then I'd come in, in the morning and say "You know, this is really nice and warm up there". It's too warm, I had to take some of the blankets off and everybody is giving me a very dirty look because they're all freezing. You know, they're wearing full-on clothes, four or five shirts, and a coat, and gloves, and they're cold.

So I get cold but I am prosperous because I hold positive thoughts. I don't get cold often. It's usually pretty warm when I need it to be.

MN21:

12. "Monks, suppose a man came with a hoe and a basket and said: 'I shall make this great earth to be without earth.' He would dig here and there, strew the soil here and there, spit here and there, and urinate here and there, saying: 'Be without earth, be without earth!' What do you think, monks? Could that man make this great earth to be without earth?" —

MN21:

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because this great earth is deep and immeasurable; it is not easy to make it be without earth. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment."

13. "So too, monks, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected, with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate.

Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to the earth, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

14. "Monks, suppose a man came with crimson, turmeric, indigo, or carmine and said: I shall draw pictures and make pictures appear on empty space.' What do you think, monks? Could that man draw pictures and make pictures appear on empty space?"—"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because empty space is formless and non-manifestive; it is not easy to draw pictures there or make pictures appear there. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment."

15. "So too, monks, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true

or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected, with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. Herein, monks, you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to empty space, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

16. "Monks, suppose a man came with a blazing grass-torch and said: 'I shall heat up and burn away the river Ganges with this blazing grass-torch.' What do you think, monks? Could that man heat up and burn away the river Ganges with that blazing grass-torch?"—"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because the river Ganges is deep and immense; it is not easy to heat it up or burn it away with a blazing grass-torch. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment."

17. "So too, monks, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, ...

BV: As you notice there's a lot of repeating in this one. He wanted it to sink in really deeply. Hold the mind that is attentive and let it sink in and you'll gain benefit from this. If you judge it, "I've already heard this, I don't need to hear it more than once". What kind of an uplifted mind are you holding at that time? What kind of a wholesome mind are you holding at that time? Be attentive.

MN21:

{repeats their speech may be timely or untimely,} true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected, with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. Herein, monks, you should train

thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to the river Ganges, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, monks.

18. "Monks, suppose there were a catskin bag that was rubbed, well rubbed, thoroughly well rubbed, soft, silky, rid of rustling, rid of crackling, and a man came with a stick or a potsherd and said: 'There is this catskin bag that is rubbed, well rubbed, thoroughly well rubbed, soft, silky, rid of rustling, rid of crackling. I shall make it rustle and crackle.' What do you think, monks? Could that man make it rustle or crackle with the stick or the potsherd?"— "No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because that catskin bag being rubbed, well rubbed, thoroughly well rubbed, soft, silky, rid of rustling, rid of crackling, it is not easy to make it rustle or crackle with the stick or the potsherd. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment."

19. "So too, bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving kindness or with inner hate. Herein, monks, you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness; and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to a catskin bag, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train.

20. "Monks, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. Herein, monks, you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued

with loving kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

21. "Bhikkhus, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?"— "No, venerable sir."— "Therefore, monks, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time."

That is what the Blessed One said. The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

BV: Great advice! Absolutely brilliant because it keeps your mind focused on loving kindness all the time. Now, what do you think about when you go from your house to your car? Ho hum, think about this, think about that. Why don't you 6R those thoughts and radiate some loving kindness? When you have to wait in line at the grocery store, what are you doing with your mind? Looking at your watch, "I gotta get going, this is taking so long." Well, you know what everybody's else's mind is doing, so why don't you take the time to radiate loving kindness at that time?

There's a lot of little keys, a lot of little things that you do in the day that if you make the determination that every time "I'm going to do this action, every time I open up this drawer, every time I open up a door, that that's going to be the reminder for me to practice loving kindness to all beings, and radiate that happy feeling". What do you wind up doing with your mind most of the day?

Remember that the Buddha said, "What you think and ponder on, that's the inclination of your mind". The more you think smiling happy thoughts, the more your mind will tend to have smiling happy thoughts. So what to do? When you get out of here, the retreat's not done. This is the only the first part of the retreat. The real retreat's out there. The one that's going to test you in all kinds of ways. Remember this simile.

THE SHARING OF MERIT

May suffering ones, be suffering free
And the fear struck, fearless be
May the grieving shed all grief

And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth
Devas and nagas of mighty power
Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu

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