

## ***THE TEN PERFECTIONS***

### ***A little history:***

In the early centuries after the Buddha's passing away, as Buddhism became a popular religion, the idea was formalized that there were three paths to awakening to choose from: the path to awakening as a disciple of a Buddha (*savaka*); the path to awakening as a private Buddha (*pacceka-buddha*), i.e., one who attained awakening on his own but was not able to teach the path of practice to others; and the path to awakening as a Rightly Self-awakened Buddha (*samma sambuddha*). Each path was defined as consisting of perfections (*parami*) of character, but there was a question as to what those perfections were and how the paths differed from one another. The Theravadins, for instance, specified ten perfections, and organized their Jataka collection so that it culminated in ten tales, each illustrating one of the perfections. The Sarvastivadins, on the other hand, specified six perfections, and organized their Jataka collection accordingly.

All Buddhists agreed that the third path took by far the longest to follow, but disagreements arose as to whether the perfections developed along the different paths were quantitatively or qualitatively different. In other words, did a Buddha develop more of the same sort of perfections that an arahant developed, or did he develop perfections of a radically different sort? Those who believed that the perfections differed only quantitatively were able to take the early Buddhist canons as their guide to the path to Buddhahood, for they could simply extrapolate from the path of the arahant as described in those canons. Those seeking Buddhahood who believed that the perfections differed qualitatively, however, had to look outside the canons. People in this latter group often practiced a form of meditation aimed at inducing visions of bodhisattvas treading the path to full Buddhahood, along with Buddhas in other world-systems. These Buddhas and bodhisattvas—it was hoped—would provide an insider's knowledge of the full Buddha's path. The teachings that resulted from these visions were very diverse; not until the 3rd century C.E., with the development of the Yogacara school, was a concerted effort made to collate these various teachings into a single body—what we now know as the Mahayana movement—but the differences among these teachings were so great that the Mahayana never achieved true unity.

Thus, historically, there have been two major ways of following the path to full Buddhahood: following guidelines gleaned from the early canons, and following the traditions set in motion by the experiences of visionaries from the beginning of the common era. The materials in this study guide take the first course.

There's a common misunderstanding that the Theravada school teaches only the *savaka* path, but a glance at Theravada history will show that many Theravadins have vowed to become bodhisattvas and have undertaken the practice of the ten perfections as set forth in the Theravadin Jatakas. Because these perfections differ only quantitatively for arahants, Theravadins who aspire to arahantship cite the perfections as qualities that they are developing

as part of their practice outside of formal meditation. For example, they make donations to develop the perfection of generosity, undertake building projects to develop the perfection of endurance, and so forth.

For people in the modern world who are wrestling with the issue of how to practice the Dhamma in daily life, the perfections provide a useful framework for developing a fruitful attitude toward daily activities so that any activity or relationship undertaken wisely with the primary purpose of developing the perfections in a balanced way becomes part of the practice.

The perfections also provide one of the few reliable ways of measuring the accomplishments of one's life. "Accomplishments" in the realm of work and relationships have a way of turning into dust, but perfections of the character, once developed, are dependable and lasting, carrying one over and beyond the vicissitudes of daily living. Thus they deserve to take high priority in the way we plan our lives. These two facts are reflected in the two etymologies offered for the word perfection (*parami*): They carry one across to the further shore (*param*); and they are of foremost (*parama*) importance in formulating the purpose of one's life.

The material in these readings is organized under the heading of the eighth perfection—determination—for several reasons. The first reason is that determination is needed for undertaking the path of perfections to begin with, in that it gives focus, motivation, and direction to the practice. The second reason is that the four aspects of skilled determination—discernment, truth, relinquishment, and calm—when studied carefully, cover all ten of the perfections: generosity, virtue, renunciation, discernment, persistence, endurance, truth, determination, good will, and equanimity. In this way, the material gathered here illustrates the general principle that each of the perfections, when properly practiced, includes all ten. The third reason is that the four aspects of skilled determination highlight the importance of establishing wise priorities and sticking to them regardless of the temptation to sacrifice them for lesser aims. In this way, they help guard against a common problem in approaching practice in daily life: a tendency to indulge in the self-delusion that can justify any activity, as long as it's done mindfully, as part of the path.

The fourth, and perhaps most important, reason for organizing the material in this way is that skilled determination begins with discernment, the ability to make wise distinctions that help keep each of the perfections on path to the goal of ending suffering. If they are not informed by these distinctions, the perfections are simply generic virtues, common to all cultures, leading to pleasant results but not necessarily to the transcendent. Thus the readings here have been chosen—from the Pali Canon and from the teachings of Ajaan Lee—to highlight the need for using discernment in making important distinctions in developing the perfections in a wise and effective way.

## FIRST WEEK:

The four determinations:  
 One should not be negligent of discernment,  
 should guard the truth,  
 be devoted to relinquishment,  
 and train only for calm. — MN 140

### I. *Discernment*

*Good will*

### II. *Truth*

*Persistence*

*Virtue*

### III. *Relinquishment*

*Giving*

*Renunciation*

### IV. *Calm*

*Endurance*

*Equanimity*

## I. DISCERNMENT

§ 1. “This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a contemplative or brahman, to ask: ‘What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, having been done by me, will be for my long-term harm & suffering? Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare & happiness?’” — MN 135

§ 2. “As for the course of action that is unpleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is profitable, it is in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of mature stamina, mature persistence, mature effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn’t reflect, ‘Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is profitable.’ So he doesn’t do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, ‘Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is profitable.’ So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him.

“As for the course of action that is pleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable, it is in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of mature stamina, mature persistence, mature effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn’t reflect, ‘Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is unprofitable.’ So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, ‘Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is unprofitable.’

So he doesn't do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him." — *AN 4:115*

§ 3. What does discernment come from? You might compare it with learning to become a potter, a tailor, or a basket weaver. The teacher will start out by telling you how to make a pot, sew a shirt or a pair of pants, or weave different patterns, but the proportions and beauty of the object you make will have to depend on your own powers of observation. Suppose you weave a basket and then take a good look at its proportions, to see if it's too short or too tall. If it's too short, weave another one, a little taller, and then take a good look at it to see if there's anything that still needs improving, to see if it's too thin or too fat. Then weave another one, better looking than the last. Keep this up until you have one that's as beautiful and well-proportioned as possible, one with nothing to criticize from any angle. This last basket you can take as your standard. You can now set yourself up in business.

What you've done is to learn from your own actions. As for your previous efforts, you needn't concern yourself with them any longer. Throw them out. This is a sense of discernment that arises of its own accord, an ingenuity and sense of judgment that come not from anything your teachers have taught you, but from observing and evaluating on your own the object that you yourself have made.

The same holds true in practicing meditation. For discernment to arise, you have to be observant as you keep track of the breath and to gain a sense of how to adjust and improve it so that it's well-proportioned throughout the body—to the point where it flows evenly without faltering, so that it's comfortable in slow and out slow, in fast and out fast, long, short, heavy, or refined. Get so that both the in-breath and the out-breath are comfortable no matter what way you breathe, so that—no matter when—you immediately feel a sense of ease the moment you focus on the breath. When you can do this, physical results will appear: a sense of ease and lightness, open and spacious. The body will be strong, the breath and blood will flow unobstructed and won't form an opening for disease to step in. The body will be healthy and awake.

As for the mind, when mindfulness and alertness are the causes, a still mind is the result. When negligence is the cause, a mind distracted and restless is the result. So we must try to make the causes good, in order to give rise to the good results we've referred to. If we use our powers of observation and evaluation in caring for the breath, and are constantly correcting and improving it, we'll develop awareness on our own, the fruit of having developed our concentration higher step by step. — *Ajaan Lee: Inner Strength*

## Good Will

§ 4. "Devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unbewildered, alert, mindful, one keeps pervading the first direction [the east] with an awareness imbued with good will, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, one

keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with good will—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will, just as a strong conch-trumpet blower—without any difficulty—can notify the four directions.” — *SN 42:8*

§ 5. “May these beings—free from animosity, free from oppression, and free from trouble—look after themselves with ease.” — *AN 10:176*

§ 6. Think: Happy, at rest,  
may all beings be happy at heart.  
Whatever beings there may be,  
weak or strong, without exception,  
long, large,  
middling, short,  
subtle, blatant,  
seen & unseen,  
near & far,  
born & seeking birth:  
May all beings be happy at heart.

Let no one deceive another  
or despise anyone anywhere,  
or through anger or resistance  
wish for another to suffer. — *Sn 1:8*

§ 7. I have good will for footless beings,  
good will for two-footed beings,  
good will for four-footed beings,  
good will for many-footed beings.  
May footless beings do me no harm.  
May two-footed beings do me no harm.  
May four-footed beings do me no harm.  
May many-footed beings do me no harm.  
May all creatures,  
all breathing things,  
all beings  
—each & every one—  
meet with good fortune.  
May none of them come to any evil.  
Limitless is the Buddha,  
limitless the Dhamma,  
limitless the Sangha.  
There is a limit to creeping things:  
snakes, scorpions, centipedes,  
spiders, lizards, & rats.  
I have made this safeguard,

I have made this protection.  
May the beings depart. — AN 4:67

§ 8. Not consorting with fools,  
consorting with the wise,  
paying homage to those worthy of homage:  
This is the highest protection. — Sn 2:4

§ 9. “And what is meant by admirable friendship? There is the case where a layperson, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders’ sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.” — AN 8:54

§ 10. “Once upon a time, a bamboo acrobat, having erected a bamboo pole, addressed his assistant, Frying Pan: ‘Come, my dear Frying Pan. Climb up the bamboo pole and stand on my shoulders.’

“‘As you say, Master,’ Frying Pan answered the bamboo acrobat and, climbing the bamboo pole, stood on his shoulders.

“So then the bamboo acrobat said to his assistant, ‘Now you watch after me, my dear Frying Pan, and I’ll watch after you. Thus, protecting one another, watching after one another, we’ll show off our skill, receive our reward, and come down safely from the bamboo pole.’

“When he had said this, Frying Pan said to him, ‘But that won’t do at all, Master. You watch after yourself, and I’ll watch after myself, and thus with each of us protecting ourselves, watching after ourselves, we’ll show off our skill, receive our reward, and come down safely from the bamboo pole.’

“What Frying Pan, the assistant, said to her Master was the right way in that case.

“The establishing of mindfulness is to be practiced with the thought, ‘I’ll watch after myself.’ The establishing of mindfulness is to be practiced with the thought, ‘I’ll watch after others.’ When watching after oneself, one watches after others. When watching after others, one watches after oneself.” — SN 47:19

*Extra Readings: Head & Heart Together*

## SECOND WEEK:

### II. TRUTH

§ 11. “Let an observant person come—one who is not fraudulent, not deceitful, one of a straightforward nature. I instruct him. I teach him the Dhamma. Practicing as instructed, he in no long time knows for himself, sees for himself: ‘So this is how there is the right liberation from bondage, i.e., the bondage of ignorance.’” — *MN 80*

§ 12. At that time Ven. Rahula (who was seven at the time) was staying at the Mango Stone. Then the Blessed One, arising from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to where Ven. Rahula was staying at the Mango Stone. Ven. Rahula saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, set out a seat & water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat set out and, having sat down, washed his feet. Ven. Rahula, bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side.

Then the Blessed One, having left a little bit of the remaining water in the water dipper, said to Ven. Rahula, “Rahula, do you see this little bit of remaining water left in the water dipper?”

“Yes sir.”

“That’s how little of a contemplative there is in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie.”

Having tossed away the little bit of remaining water, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rahula, “Rahula, do you see how this little bit of remaining water is tossed away?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rahula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is tossed away just like that.”

Having turned the water dipper upside down, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rahula, “Rahula, do you see how this water dipper is turned upside down?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rahula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is turned upside down just like that.”

Having turned the water dipper right-side up, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rahula, “Rahula, do you see how empty & hollow this water dipper is?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rahula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is empty & hollow just like that.”

“Rahula, it’s like a royal elephant: immense, pedigreed, accustomed to battles, its tusks like chariot poles. Having gone into battle, it uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail, but will simply hold back its trunk. The elephant trainer notices that and thinks, ‘This royal elephant has not given up its life to the king.’ But when the royal elephant... having gone into battle, uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail & his trunk, the

trainer notices that and thinks, ‘This royal elephant has given up its life to the king. There is nothing it will not do.’

“In the same way, Rahula, when anyone feels no shame in telling a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I tell you, he will not do. Thus, Rahula, you should train yourself, ‘I will not tell a deliberate lie even in jest.’” — *MN 61*

§ 13. “I don’t say that everything that has been seen should be spoken about. Nor do I say that everything that has been seen should not be spoken about. I don’t say that everything that has been heard... everything that has been sensed... everything that has been cognized should be spoken about. Nor do I say that everything that has been cognized should not be spoken about.

“When, for one who speaks of what has been seen, unskillful mental qualities increase and skillful mental qualities decrease, then that sort of thing should not be spoken about. But when, for one who speaks of what has been seen, unskillful mental qualities decrease and skillful mental qualities increase, then that sort of thing should be spoken about.

“When, for one who speaks of what has been heard... what has been sensed... what has been cognized, unskillful mental qualities increase and skillful mental qualities decrease, then that sort of thing should not be spoken about. But when, for one who speaks of what has been cognized, unskillful mental qualities decrease and skillful mental qualities increase, then that sort of thing should be spoken about.” — *AN 4:183*

## Virtue

§ 14. “Now, there are these five gifts, five great gifts—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—that are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans. Which five?

“There is the case where a noble disciple, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from taking life. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the first gift, the first great gift—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—that is not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and is unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans.”

[Similarly with the four remaining precepts: abandoning taking what is not given (stealing), abandoning illicit sex, abandoning lying, abandoning the use of intoxicants.] — *AN 8:39*

§ 15. “And how is one made pure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from



the taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not take, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. Abandoning sensual misconduct, he abstains from sensual misconduct. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. This is how one is made pure in three ways by bodily action.

“And how is one made pure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty, if he is asked as a witness, ‘Come & tell, good man, what you know’: If he doesn’t know, he says, ‘I don’t know.’ If he does know, he says, ‘I know.’ If he hasn’t seen, he says, ‘I haven’t seen.’ If he has seen, he says, ‘I have seen.’ Thus he doesn’t consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of any reward. Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. Abandoning divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing & pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal. This is how one is made pure in four ways by verbal action.

“And how is one made pure in three ways by mental action? There is the case where a certain person is not covetous. He does not covet the belongings of others, thinking, ‘O, that what belongs to others would be mine!’ He bears no ill will and is not corrupt in the resolves of his heart. [He thinks,] ‘May these beings be free from animosity, free from oppression, free from trouble, and may they look after themselves with ease!’ He has right view and is not warped in the way he sees things: ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are brahmins & contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is how one is made pure in three ways by mental action.” — AN 10:176

## Persistence

§ 16. “And what is right effort? There is the case where one generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds, & exerts one’s intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen: This is called right effort.” — SN 45:8

§ 17. “And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk, when not loaded down, does not load himself down with pain, nor does he reject pleasure that accords with the Dhamma, although he is not infatuated with that pleasure. He discerns that ‘When I exert a [bodily, verbal, or mental] fabrication against this cause of stress, then from the fabrication of *exertion* there is dispassion [fading away]. When I look on with equanimity at that cause of stress, then from the development of *equanimity* there is dispassion.’ So he exerts a fabrication against the (first) cause of stress... and develops equanimity with regard to the (second) cause of stress... Thus the stress [coming from any cause of the first sort] is abolished... & the stress [coming from any cause of the second sort] is abolished.” — MN 101

§ 18. On that occasion Ven. Sona was staying near Rajagaha in the Cool Wood. Then, as Ven. Sona was meditating in seclusion [after doing walking meditation until the skin of his soles was split & bleeding], this train of thought arose in his awareness: “Of the Blessed One’s disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from fermentations through lack of clinging/sustenance. Now, my family has enough wealth that it would be possible to enjoy wealth & make merit. What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?”

Then the Blessed One, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Ven. Sona’s awareness disappeared from Vulture Peak Mountain—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—appeared in the Cool Wood right in front of Ven. Sona, and sat down on a prepared seat. Ven. Sona, after bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Just now, as you were meditating in seclusion, didn’t this train of thought appear to your awareness: ‘Of the Blessed One’s disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from fermentations ....What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?’”

“Yes, lord.”

“Now what do you think, Sona. Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the lute?”

“Yes, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your lute were too taut, was your lute in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your lute were too loose, was your lute in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your lute were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned [lit: ‘established’] to be right on pitch, was your lute in tune & playable?”

“Yes, lord.”

“In the same way, Sona, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there pick up your theme.” [The five faculties are: conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment.]

“Yes, lord,” Ven. Sona answered the Blessed One. Then, having given this exhortation to Ven. Sona, the Blessed One—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from the Cool Wood and appeared on Vulture Peak Mountain.

So after that, Ven. Sona determined the right pitch for his persistence, attuned the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there picked up his theme. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: “Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.” And thus Ven. Sona became another one of the arahants. — AN 6:55

*Extra Reading:*

*The Joy of Effort*

*Pushing the Envelope*

*The Healing Power of the Precepts*

### THIRD WEEK:

#### III. RELINQUISHMENT

§ 19. If, by forsaking  
a limited ease,  
he would see  
an abundance of ease,  
the enlightened man  
would forsake  
the limited ease  
for the sake  
of the abundant. — *Dhp* 290

§ 20. *Ven. Suppiya*:  
I'll make a trade:  
aging for the Ageless,  
burning for the Unbound:  
the highest peace,  
the unexcelled rest  
from the yoke. — *Thag* 1:32

#### Giving

§ 21. As he was sitting to one side, King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One: "Where, lord, should a gift be given?"  
"Wherever the mind feels confidence, great king."  
"But a gift given where, lord, bears great fruit?"  
"This [question] is one thing, great king—'Where should a gift be given?'—while this—'A gift given where bears great fruit?'—is something else entirely. What is given to a virtuous person—rather than to an unvirtuous one—bears great fruit." — *SN* 3:24

§ 22. "A person of integrity gives a gift with a sense of conviction. A person of integrity gives a gift attentively. A person of integrity gives a gift in season. A person of integrity gives a gift with an empathetic heart. A person of integrity gives a gift without adversely affecting himself or others.

"Having given a gift with a sense of conviction, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And he is well-built, handsome, extremely inspiring, endowed with a lotus-like complexion.

"Having given a gift attentively, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And his children, wives, slaves, servants, and workers listen carefully to him, lend him their ears, and serve him with understanding hearts.

“Having given a gift in season, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And his goals are fulfilled in season.

“Having given a gift with an empathetic heart, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And his mind inclines to the enjoyment of the five strings of lavish sensuality.

“Having given a gift without adversely affecting himself or others, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And not from anywhere does destruction come to his property—whether from fire, from water, from kings, from thieves, or from hateful heirs.

“These five are a person of integrity’s gifts.” — *AN 5:148*

§ 23. “And how is a donation endowed with six factors? There is the case where there are the three factors of the donor, the three factors of the recipients.

“And which are the three factors of the donor? There is the case where the donor, before giving, is glad; while giving, his/her mind is bright & clear; and after giving is gratified. These are the three factors of the donor.

“And which are the three factors of the recipients? There is the case where the recipients are free of passion or are practicing for the subduing of passion; free of aversion or practicing for the subduing of aversion; and free of delusion or practicing for the subduing of delusion. These are the three factors of the recipients....

“Just as it is not easy to take the measure of the great ocean as ‘just this many buckets of water, just this many hundreds of buckets of water, just this many thousands of buckets of water, or just this many hundreds of thousands of buckets of water.’ It is simply reckoned as a great mass of water, incalculable, immeasurable. In the same way, it is not easy to take the measure of the merit of a donation thus endowed with six factors as ‘just this much a bonanza of merit, a bonanza of what is skillful—a nutriment of bliss, heavenly, resulting in bliss, leading to heaven—that leads to what is desirable, pleasing, charming, beneficial, pleasant.’ It is simply reckoned as a great mass of merit, incalculable, immeasurable.” — *AN 6:37*

## Renunciation

§ 24. “There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. But these are not sensuality. They are called strings of sensuality in the discipline of the noble ones.

The passion for one’s resolves is a person’s sensuality,  
not the beautiful sensual pleasures  
found in the world.

The passion for one's intentions is a person's sensuality.  
 The beauties remain as they are in the world,  
 while the wise, in this regard,  
 subdue their desire. — *AN 6:63*

§ 25. "Even though a disciple of the noble ones has clearly seen as it has come to be with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, still—if he has not attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that—he can be tempted by sensuality. But when he has clearly seen with right discernment as it has come to be that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, and he has attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that, he cannot be tempted by sensuality." — *MN 14*

§ 26. Now at that time, Ven. Bhaddiya Kaligodha, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, would repeatedly exclaim, "What bliss! What bliss!" A large number of monks heard Ven. Bhaddiya Kaligodha, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, repeatedly exclaim, "What bliss! What bliss!" and on hearing him, the thought occurred to them, "There's no doubt but that Ven. Bhaddiya Kaligodha doesn't enjoy leading the holy life, for when he was a householder he knew the bliss of kingship, so that now, on recollecting that, he is repeatedly exclaiming, 'What bliss! What bliss!'" They went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they told him: "Ven. Bhaddiya Kaligodha, lord, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, repeatedly exclaims, 'What bliss! What bliss!' There's no doubt but that Ven. Bhaddiya Kaligodha doesn't enjoy leading the holy life, for when he was a householder he knew the bliss of kingship, so that now, on recollecting that, he is repeatedly exclaiming, 'What bliss! What bliss!'"

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, "Come, monk. In my name, call Bhaddiya, saying, 'The Teacher calls you, my friend.'"

"As you say, lord," the monk answered and, having gone to Ven. Bhaddiya, on arrival he said, "The Teacher calls you, my friend."

"As you say, my friend," Ven. Bhaddiya replied. Then he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Is it true, Bhaddiya that, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, you repeatedly exclaim, 'What bliss! What bliss!'"

"Yes, lord."

"What meaning do you have in mind that you repeatedly exclaim, 'What bliss! What bliss!'"

"Before, when I was a householder, maintaining the bliss of kingship, I had guards posted within and without the royal apartments, within and without the city, within and without the countryside. But even though I was thus guarded, thus protected, I dwelled in fear—agitated, distrustful, and afraid.

But now, on going alone to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, I dwell without fear, unagitated, confident, and unafraid—unconcerned, unruffled, my wants satisfied, with my mind like a wild deer. This is the meaning I have in mind that I repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’” — *Ud 2:10*

§ 27. “There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, uses the robe simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for the purpose of covering the parts of the body that cause shame.

“Reflecting appropriately, he uses alms food, not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification; but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, ‘Thus will I destroy old feelings [of hunger] and not create new feelings [from overeating]. I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.’

“Reflecting appropriately, he uses lodging simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for protection from the inclemencies of weather and for the enjoyment of seclusion.

“Reflecting appropriately, he uses medicinal requisites that are used for curing the sick simply to counteract any pains of illness that have arisen and for maximum freedom from disease.” — *MN 2*

§ 28. “And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk ... notices this: ‘When I live according to my pleasure, unskillful mental qualities increase in me & skillful qualities decline. When I exert myself with stress & pain, though, unskillful qualities decline in me & skillful qualities increase. Why don’t I exert myself with stress & pain?’ So he exerts himself with stress & pain, and while he is exerting himself with stress & pain, unskillful qualities decline in him, & skillful qualities increase. Then at a later time he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain ....

“Suppose that a fletcher were to heat & warm an arrow shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Then at a later time he would no longer heat & warm the shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was heating & warming the shaft .... In the same way, the monk...no longer exerts himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain.” — *MN 101*

*Extra Reading:     Trading Candy for Gold  
                              A Guided Meditation*

## FOURTH WEEK:

## IV. CALM

§ 29. How inconstant are fabricated things!  
 Their nature: to arise & pass away.  
 They disband            as they are arising.  
 Their total stilling is bliss. — DN 16

## Endurance / Patience

§ 30. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rajagaha at the Maddakucchi Deer Reserve. Now at that time his foot had been pierced by a stone sliver [after Devadatta had tried to kill him by rolling a boulder down a hillside]. Excruciating were the bodily feelings that developed within him—painful, fierce, sharp, wracking, repellent, disagreeable—but he endured them mindful, alert, & unperturbed. Having had his outer robe folded in four and laid out, he lay down on his right side in the lion's posture—with one foot placed on top of the other—mindful & alert.

Then Mara the Evil One went to the Blessed One and recited this verse in his presence:

“Are you lying there in a stupor,  
 or drunk on poetry?  
 Are your goals so very few?  
 All alone in a secluded lodging,  
 what is this dreamer, this sleepy-face?”

*The Buddha:*

“I lie here,  
     not in a stupor,  
     nor drunk on poetry.  
 My goal attained,  
     I am sorrow-free.  
 All alone in a secluded lodging,  
 I lie down with sympathy  
     for all beings.  
 Even those pierced in the chest  
 with an arrow,  
 their hearts rapidly,  
     rapidly  
     beating:  
 even they with their arrows  
 are able to sleep.  
     So why shouldn't I,  
     with my arrow        removed?  
 I'm not awake with worry,



nor afraid to sleep.  
 Days & nights  
 don't oppress me.  
 I see no threat of decline  
 in any world at all.  
 That's why I sleep  
 with sympathy  
 for all beings."

Then Mara the Evil One—sad & dejected at realizing, "The Blessed One knows me; the One Well-Gone knows me"—vanished right there. — SN 4:13

§ 31. "Once, monks, in this same Savatthi, there was a lady of a household named Vedehika. This good report about Lady Vedehika had circulated: 'Lady Vedehika is gentle. Lady Vedehika is even-tempered. Lady Vedehika is calm.' Now, Lady Vedehika had a slave named Kali who was diligent, deft, & neat in her work. The thought occurred to Kali the slave: 'This good report about my Lady Vedehika has circulated: "Lady Vedehika is even-tempered. Lady Vedehika is gentle. Lady Vedehika is calm." Now, is anger present in my lady without showing, or is it absent? Or is it just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show? Why don't I test her?'

"So Kali the slave got up after daybreak. Then Lady Vedehika said to her: 'Hey, Kali!'

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up after daybreak?"

"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up after daybreak?" Angered & displeased, she scowled.

Then the thought occurred to Kali the slave: 'Anger *is* present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it's just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show. Why don't I test her some more?'

"So Kali the slave got up later in the day. Then Lady Vedehika said to her: 'Hey, Kali!'

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up later in the day?"

"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up later in the day?" Angered & displeased, she grumbled.

Then the thought occurred to Kali the slave: 'Anger *is* present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it's just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show. Why don't I test her some more?'

"So Kali the slave got up even later in the day. Then Lady Vedehika said to her: 'Hey, Kali!'

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up even later in the day?"

"No reason, madam."

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up even later in the day?’ Angered & displeased, she grabbed hold of a rolling pin and gave her a whack over the head, cutting it open.

Then Kali the slave, with blood streaming from her cut-open head, went and denounced her mistress to the neighbors: ‘See, ladies, the gentle one’s handiwork? See the even-tempered one’s handiwork? See the calm one’s handiwork? How could she, angered & displeased with her only slave for getting up after daybreak, grab hold of a rolling pin and give her a whack over the head, cutting it open?’

After that this evil report about Lady Vedehika circulated: ‘Lady Vedehika is vicious. Lady Vedehika is foul-tempered. Lady Vedehika is violent.’

“In the same way, monks, a monk may be ever so gentle, ever so even-tempered, ever so calm, as long as he is not touched by disagreeable aspects of speech. But it is only when disagreeable aspects of speech touch him that he can truly be known as gentle, even-tempered, & calm. I don’t call a monk easy to admonish if he is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish only by reason of robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick. Why is that? Because if he doesn’t get robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick, then he isn’t easy to admonish and doesn’t make himself easy to admonish. But if a monk is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma, then I call him easy to admonish. Thus, monks, you should train yourselves: ‘We will be easy to admonish and make ourselves easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with good will—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Suppose that a man were to come along carrying a hoe & a basket, saying, ‘I will make this great earth be without earth.’ He would dig here & there, scatter soil here & there, spit here & there, urinate here & there, saying, ‘Be without earth. Be without earth.’ Now, what do you think—would he make this great earth be without earth?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because this great earth is deep & enormous. It can’t easily be made to be without earth. The man would reap only a share of weariness & disappointment.”

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with goodwill and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with goodwill equal to the great earth—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves....

“Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of goodwill, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with goodwill and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with goodwill—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Monks, if you attend constantly to this admonition on the simile of the saw, do you see any aspects of speech, slight or gross, that you could not endure?”

“No, lord.”

“Then attend constantly to this admonition on the simile of the saw. That will be for your long-term welfare & happiness.” — MN 21

§ 32. “Now if other people insult, malign, exasperate, & harass a monk, he discerns that ‘A painful feeling, born of ear-contact, has arisen within me. And that is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.’ And he sees that contact is inconstant, feeling is inconstant, perception is inconstant, consciousness is inconstant. His mind, with the [physical properties of the body] as its object/support, leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & released.

“And if other people attack the monk in ways that are undesirable, displeasing, & disagreeable—through contact with fists, contact with stones, contact with sticks, or contact with knives—the monk discerns that ‘This body is of such a nature contacts with fists come, contacts with stones come, contacts with sticks come, & contacts with knives come. Now the Blessed One has said, in his exhortation of the simile of the saw [MN 21], “Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding.” So my persistence will be aroused & untiring, my mindfulness established & unconfused, my body calm & unaroused, my

mind centered & unified. And now let contact with fists come to this body, let contact with stones, with sticks, with knives come to this body, for this is how the Buddha's bidding is done.'" — MN 28

§ 33. "And what are the fermentations to be abandoned by tolerating? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, endures. He tolerates cold, heat, hunger, & thirst; the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; ill-spoken, unwelcome words & bodily feelings that, when they arise, are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, displeasing, & menacing to life. The fermentations, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to tolerate these things do not arise for him when he tolerates them. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by tolerating.

"And what are the fermentations to be abandoned by avoiding? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, avoids a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspool, an open sewer. Reflecting appropriately, he avoids sitting in the sorts of unsuitable seats, wandering to the sorts of unsuitable habitats, and associating with the sorts of bad friends that would make his knowledgeable friends in the holy life suspect him of evil conduct. The fermentations, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to avoid these things do not arise for him when he avoids them. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by avoiding.

"And what are the fermentations to be abandoned by destroying? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, doesn't tolerate an arisen thought of sensuality. He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, & wipes it out of existence.

"Reflecting appropriately, he doesn't tolerate an arisen thought of ill will... an arisen thought of cruelty...

"Reflecting appropriately, he doesn't tolerate arisen evil, unskillful mental qualities. He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, & wipes them out of existence. The fermentations, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to destroy these things do not arise for him when he destroys them. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by destroying." — MN 2

## Equanimity

§ 34. "Now what is worldly equanimity? There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Any equanimity arising in connection with these five strings of sensuality is called worldly equanimity.

"And what is unworldly equanimity? There is the case where, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—one enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called unworldly equanimity."

“And what is an even more unworldly unworldly equanimity? Any equanimity that arises in one free from mental fermentation while he/she is reflecting on his/her mind that is released from greed, released from aversion, released from delusion: this is called an even more unworldly unworldly equanimity.” — SN 36:31

§ 35. *“By depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation distress, abandon & transcend the six kinds of household distress. Such is their abandoning, such is their transcending....”*

“And what are the six kinds of household distress? The distress that arises when one regards as a loss the loss of forms cognizable by the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, connected with worldly baits—or when one recalls the previous loss of such forms after they have passed, ceased, & changed: That is called household distress. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

“And what are the six kinds of renunciation distress? The distress coming from the longing that arises in one who is filled with longing for the unexcelled liberations when—experiencing the inconstancy of those very forms, their change, fading, & cessation—he sees with right discernment as it actually is that all forms, past or present, are inconstant, stressful, subject to change and he is filled with this longing: ‘O when will I enter & remain in the sphere that the noble ones now enter & remain in?’ This is called renunciation distress. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]...

*“By depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation happiness, abandon & transcend the six kinds of renunciation distress. Such is their abandoning, such is their transcending. By depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation equanimity, abandon & transcend the six kinds of renunciation happiness. Such is their abandoning, such their transcending....”*

“And what are the six kinds of renunciation happiness? The happiness that arises when—experiencing the inconstancy of those very forms, their change, fading, & cessation—one sees with right discernment as it actually is that all forms, past or present, are inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is called renunciation happiness. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]...

“There is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity; and there is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness.

“And what is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity? There is equanimity with regard to forms, equanimity with regard to sounds...smells...tastes...tactile sensations. This is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity.

“And what is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness? There is equanimity dependent on the sphere of the infinitude of space, equanimity dependent on the sphere of the infinitude of consciousness... dependent on the sphere of nothingness... dependent on the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. This is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness.

“By depending & relying on equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, abandon & transcend equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity. Such is its abandoning, such its transcending.

“By depending & relying on non-fashioning, abandon & transcend the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness. Such is its abandoning, such its transcending.” — *MN 137*

§ 36. To purify the heart, we have to disentangle our attachments to self, to the body, to mental phenomena, and to all the objects that come passing in through the senses. Keep the mind intent on concentration. Keep it one at all times. Don’t let it become two, three, four, five, etc., because once you’ve made the mind one, it’s easy to make it zero. Simply cut off the little ‘head’ and pull the two ends together. But if you let the mind become many, it’s a long, difficult job to make it zero.

And another thing: If you put the zero after other numbers, they become ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, hundreds, thousands, on to infinity. But if you put the zero’s first, even if you have ten thousand of them, they don’t count. So it is with the heart: Once we’ve turned it from one to zero and put the zero first, then other people can praise or criticize us as they like but it won’t count. Good doesn’t count, bad doesn’t count. This is something that can’t be written, can’t be read, that we can understand only for ourselves.

— *Ajaan Lee: Inner Strength*

*Extra Reading:    Endurance Made Easier  
                          Intelligent Equanimity*