

Sutta Passages

# On Goodness



## Contents

### When You Know For Yourself

1. AN 3.65 Kesaputtiya

### Humility and Truthfulness

2. MN 95 Cankī Sutta - With Cankī

### Reflecting on Harm and Benefit of our Actions

3. MN 61 Ambalaṭṭhikārāhulovāda Sutta - Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhikā (abbreviated)

### The Wholesome and the Unwholesome

4. MN 9, The Discourse on Right View, Sammādiṭṭhisutta
5. MN 41, Sāleyyaka Sutta - The Brahmins of Sālā
6. AN 8:36 Three Bases of Merit
7. It 22; 14–15 Meritorious Deeds
8. It 27; 19–21 The Development of kindness
9. AN 9.20 Velāmasutta

*The texts in this collection contain copyrighted material and are based on translations by Bhikkhu Bodhi and Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu (occasionally edited and abbreviated). They are intended for the private use of the participants of this retreat only. Please do not share or distribute!*

# On Goodness

## WHEN YOU KNOW FOR YOURSELF

### 1. AN 3.65 Kesaputtiya

On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering on tour among the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of monks when he reached the town of the Kālāmas named Kesaputta. The Kālāmas of Kesaputta heard: “It is said that the ascetic Gotama, the son of the Sakyans who went forth from a Sakyan family, has arrived at Kesaputta. Now a good report about that Master Gotama has circulated thus: ‘That Blessed One is an arahant, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One. Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans, he makes it known to others. He teaches a Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing; he reveals a spiritual life that is perfectly complete and pure.’ Now it is good to see such arahants.”

Then the Kālāmas of Kesaputta approached the Blessed One. Some paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down to one side; some exchanged greetings with him and, when they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, sat down to one side; some reverentially saluted him and sat down to one side; some pronounced their name and clan and sat down to one side; some kept silent and sat down to one side. Sitting to one side, the Kālāmas said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, there are some ascetics and brahmins who come to Kesaputta. They explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, denigrate, deride, and denounce the doctrines of others. But then some other ascetics and brahmins come to Kesaputta, and they too explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, denigrate, deride, and denounce the doctrines of others. We are perplexed and in doubt, Bhante, as to which of these good ascetics speak truth and which speak falsehood.”

“It is fitting for you to be perplexed, Kālāmas, fitting for you to be in doubt. Doubt has arisen in you about a perplexing matter. Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence [of a speaker], or because you think: ‘The ascetic is our guru.’ But when, Kālāmas, you know for yourselves: ‘These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to harm and suffering,’ then you should abandon them.

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

“For his harm, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a greedy person, overcome by greed, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life, takes what is not given, transgresses with another’s wife, and speaks falsehood; and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

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

“For his harm, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is full of hate, overcome by hatred, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life, takes what is not given, transgresses with another’s wife, and speaks falsehood; and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(3) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When delusion arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his harm, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is deluded, overcome by delusion, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life, takes what is not given, transgresses with another’s wife, and speaks falsehood; and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?” – “Unwholesome, Bhante.” – “Blameworthy or blameless?” – “Blameworthy, Bhante.” – “Censured or praised by the wise?” – “Censured by the wise, Bhante.” – “Accepted and undertaken, do they lead to harm and suffering or not, or how do you take it?” – “Accepted and undertaken, these things lead to harm and suffering. So we take it.”

“Thus, Kālāmas, when we said: ‘Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence [of a speaker], or because you think: ‘The ascetic is our guru.’ But when you know for yourselves: “These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering,” then you should abandon them,’ it is because of this that this was said.

“Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence [of a speaker], or because you think: ‘The ascetic is our guru.’ But when you know for yourselves: ‘These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and happiness,’ then you should live in accordance with them.

(1) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-greed arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his welfare, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person without greed, not overcome by greed, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life, take what is not given, transgress with another’s wife, or speak falsehood; nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(2) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-hatred arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his welfare, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is without hate, not overcome by hatred, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life, take what is not given, transgress with another’s wife, or speak falsehood; nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(3) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-delusion arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his welfare, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is undeluded, not overcome by delusion, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life, take what is not given, transgress with another’s wife, or speak falsehood; nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?” – “Wholesome, Bhante.” – “Blameworthy or blameless?” – “Blameless, Bhante.” – “Censured or praised by the wise?” – “Praised by the wise, Bhante.” – “Accepted and undertaken, do they lead to welfare and happiness or not, or how do you take it?” – “Accepted and undertaken, these things lead to welfare and happiness. So we take it.”

“Thus, Kālāmas, when we said: ‘Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition ... But when you know for yourselves: “These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and happiness,” then you should live in accordance with them,’ it is because of this that this was said.”

Then, Kālāmas, that noble disciple, who is thus devoid of longing, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful, dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with kindness ... with a mind imbued with compassion ... with a mind imbued with altruistic joy ... with a mind imbued with equanimity, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire world with a mind imbued with equanimity, vast, exalted, measureless, without enmity, without ill will.

“This noble disciple, Kālāmas, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won four assurances in this very life.

“The first assurance he has won is this: ‘If there is another world, and if there is the fruit and result of good and bad deeds, it is possible that with the breakup of the body, after death, I will be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.’

“The second assurance he has won is this: ‘If there is no other world, and there is no fruit and result of good and bad deeds, still right here, in this very life, I maintain myself in happiness, without enmity and ill will, free of trouble.

“The third assurance he has won is this: ‘Suppose evil comes to one who does evil. Then, when I have no evil intentions toward anyone, how can suffering afflict me, since I do no evil deed?’

“The fourth assurance he has won is this: ‘Suppose evil does not come to one who does evil. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.’

“This noble disciple, Kālāmas, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won these four assurances in this very life.”

“So it is, Blessed One! So it is, Fortunate One! This noble disciple whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won four assurances in this very life.

“The first assurance he has won ... [as above, down to:] ... The fourth assurance he has won is this: ‘Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.’

“This noble disciple, Bhante, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won these four assurances in this very life.

“Excellent, Bhante! Excellent, Bhante! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the darkness so those with good eyesight can see forms. We go for refuge to the Blessed One, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of bhikkhus. Let the Blessed One consider us lay followers who from today have gone for refuge for life.”

## HUMILITY AND TRUTHFULNESS

### *2. MN 95 Cankī Sutta - With Cankī*

Then the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika thought: “The recluse Gotama has turned towards me. Suppose I ask him a question.” Then he said to the Blessed One: “Master Gotama, in regard to the ancient brahmanic hymns that have come down through oral transmission, preserved in the collections, the brahmins come to the definite conclusion: ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ What does Master Gotama say about this?”

13. “How then, Bhāradvāja, among the brahmins is there even a single brahmin who says thus: ‘I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong?’” — “No, Master Gotama.

“So, Bhāradvāja, it seems that among the brahmins there is not even a single brahmin who says thus: ‘I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ And among the brahmins there is not even a single teacher or a single teacher’s teacher back to the seventh generation of teachers, who says thus: ‘I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ And the ancient brahmin seers, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns... even these ancient brahmin seers did not say thus: ‘We know this, we see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ Suppose there were a file of blind men each in

touch with the next: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. So too, Bhāradvāja, in regard to their statement the brahmins seem to be like a file of blind men: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. What do you think, Bhāradvāja, that being so, does not the faith of the brahmins turn out to be groundless?"

14. "The brahmins honour this not only out of faith, Master Gotama. They also honour it as oral tradition."

"Bhāradvāja, first you took your stand on faith, now you speak of oral tradition. There are five things, Bhāradvāja, that may turn out in two different ways here and now. What five? Faith, approval, oral tradition, reasoned cogitation, and reflective acceptance of a view. These five things may turn out in two different ways here and now. Now something may be fully accepted out of faith, yet it may be empty, hollow, and false; but something else may not be fully accepted out of faith, yet it may be factual, true, and unmistakable. Again, something may be fully approved of... well transmitted... well cogitated... well reflected upon, yet it may be empty, hollow, and false; but something else may not be well reflected upon, yet it may be factual, true, and unmistakable. [Under these conditions] it is not proper for a wise man who preserves truth to come to the definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'"

15. "But, Master Gotama, in what way is there the preservation of truth? How does one preserve truth? We ask Master Gotama about the preservation of truth."

"If a person has faith, Bhāradvāja, he preserves truth when he says: 'My faith is thus'; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.' In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the preservation of truth; in this way he preserves truth; in this way we describe the preservation of truth. But as yet there is no discovery of truth.

"If a person approves of something... if he receives an oral tradition... if he [reaches a conclusion based on] reasoned cogitation... if he gains a reflective acceptance of a view, he preserves truth when he says: 'My reflective acceptance of a view is thus'; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.' In this way too, Bhāradvāja, there is the preservation of truth; in this way he preserves truth; in this way we describe the preservation of truth. But as yet there is no discovery of truth."

16. "In that way, Master Gotama, there is the preservation of truth; in that way one preserves truth; in that way we recognise the preservation of truth. But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the discovery of truth? In what way does one discover truth? We ask Master Gotama about the discovery of truth."

17, 18, 19. "Here, Bhāradvāja, a bhikkhu may be living in dependence on some village or town. Then a householder or a householder's son goes to him and investigates him in regard to three kinds of states: in regard to states based on greed, in regard to states based on hate, and in regard to states based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any states based on greed [hatred or delusion] such that, with his mind obsessed by those states, while not knowing he might say, "I know," or while not seeing he might say, "I see," or he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and suffering for a long time?' As he investigates him he comes to know: 'There are no such states based on greed [hatred or delusion] in this venerable one. The bodily behaviour and the verbal behaviour of this venerable one are not those of one affected by greed [hatred or delusion]. And the Dhamma that this venerable one teaches is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be



experienced by the wise. This Dhamma cannot easily be taught by one affected by greed [hatred or delusion].’

20. “When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on [greed, hatred or] delusion, then he places faith in him; filled with faith he visits him and pays respect to him; having paid respect to him, he gives ear; when he gives ear, he hears the Dhamma; having heard the Dhamma, he memorises it and examines the meaning of the teachings he has memorised; when he examines their meaning, he gains a reflective acceptance of those teachings; when he has gained a reflective acceptance of those teachings, enthusiasm springs up; when enthusiasm has sprung up, he applies his will; having applied his will, he scrutinises; having scrutinised, he strives; resolutely striving, he realises with the body the supreme truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom. In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the discovery of truth; in this way one discovers truth; in this way we describe the discovery of truth. But as yet there is no final arrival at truth.”

21. “In that way, Master Gotama, there is the discovery of truth; in that way one discovers truth; in that way we recognise the discovery of truth. But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the final arrival at truth? In what way does one finally arrive at truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final arrival at truth.”

“The final arrival at truth, Bhāradvāja, lies in the repetition, development, and cultivation of those same things. In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the final arrival at truth; in this way one finally arrives at truth; in this way we describe the final arrival at truth.”

22. “In that way, Master Gotama, there is the final arrival at truth; in that way one finally arrives at truth; in that way we recognise the final arrival at truth. But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for the final arrival at truth? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for the final arrival at truth.”

“Striving is most helpful for the final arrival at truth, Bhāradvāja. If one does not strive, one will not finally arrive at truth; but because one strives, one does finally arrive at truth. That is why striving is most helpful for the final arrival at truth.”

23-33. “But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for striving? ....”

“Scrutiny is most helpful for striving... Application of the will is most helpful for scrutiny... Enthusiasm is most helpful for application of the will... A reflective acceptance of the teachings is most helpful for enthusiasm... Examination of the meaning is most helpful for a reflective acceptance of the teachings... Memorising the teachings is most helpful for examining the meaning... Hearing the Dhamma is most helpful for memorising the teachings... Giving ear is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma... Paying respect is most helpful for giving ear... Visiting is most helpful for paying respect... Faith is most helpful for visiting, Bhāradvāja. If faith [in a teacher] does not arise, one will not visit him; but because faith [in a teacher] arises, one visits him. That is why faith is most helpful for visiting.”

34. ...“Whatever we asked Master Gotama about, that he has answered us; we approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied. Formerly, Master Gotama, we used to think: ‘Who are these bald-pated recluses, these swarthy menial offspring of the Kinsman’s feet, that they would understand the Dhamma?’ But Master Gotama has indeed inspired in me love for recluses, confidence in recluses, reverence for recluses.

35. “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge



and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life.”

## REFLECTING ON HARM AND BENEFIT OF OUR ACTIONS

### ***3. MN 61 Ambalaṭṭhikārāhulovāda Sutta - Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhikā (abbreviated)***

8. “What do you think, Rāhula? What is the purpose of a mirror?”

“For the purpose of reflection, venerable sir.”

“So too, Rāhula, an action with the body, should be done after repeated reflection; an action by speech should be done after repeated reflection; an action by mind should be done after repeated reflection.

9. “Rāhula, when you wish to do an action with the body, speech, or mind, you should reflect upon that same bodily, verbal, or mental action thus: ‘Would this action that I wish to do with the body, speech, or mind lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both? Is it an unwholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with painful consequences, with painful results?’ When you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I wish to do with the body, speech, or mind would lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is an unwholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with painful consequences, with painful results,’ then you definitely should not do such an action with the body, speech, or mind. But when you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I wish to do with the body, speech, or mind would not lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is a wholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with pleasant consequences, with pleasant results,’ then you may do such an action with the body, speech, or mind.

10. “Also, Rāhula, while you are doing an action with the body, speech, or mind, you should reflect upon that same bodily, verbal, or mental action thus: ‘Does this action that I am doing with the body, speech, or mind lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both? Is it an unwholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with painful consequences, with painful results?’ When you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I am doing with the body, speech, or mind leads to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is an unwholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with painful consequences, with painful results,’ then you should suspend such a bodily, verbal, or mental action. But when you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I am doing with the body, speech, or mind does not lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it is a wholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with pleasant consequences, with pleasant results,’ then you may continue in such a bodily, verbal, or mental action.

11. “Also, Rāhula, after you have done an action with the body, speech, or mind, you should reflect upon that same bodily, verbal, or mental action thus: ‘Did this action that I did with the body, speech, or mind lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others,

or to the affliction of both? Was it an unwholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with painful consequences, with painful results?’ When you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I did with the body or speech led to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it was an unwholesome bodily or verbal action with painful consequences, with painful results,’ then you should confess such a bodily or verbal action, reveal it, and lay it open to the Teacher or to your wise companions in the holy life. Having confessed it, revealed it, and laid it open, you should undertake restraint for the future. When you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I did with the mind led to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it was an unwholesome mental action with painful consequences, with painful results,’ then you should be repelled, humiliated, and disgusted by that mental action. Having become repelled, humiliated, and disgusted by that mental action you should undertake restraint for the future.” But when you reflect, if you know: ‘This action that I did with the body, speech, or mind did not lead to my own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both; it was a wholesome bodily, verbal, or mental action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results,’ you can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states.

## THE WHOLESOME AND THE UNWHOLESOME

### ***4. MN 9, The Discourse on Right View, Sammādiṭṭhisutta***

3. “When, friends, a noble disciple understands the unwholesome and the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome and the root of the wholesome, in that way he is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has unwavering confidence in the Dhamma and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

4. “And what, friends, is the unwholesome, what is the root of the unwholesome, what is the wholesome, what is the root of the wholesome? Killing living beings is unwholesome; taking what is not given is unwholesome; misconduct in sensual pleasures is unwholesome; false speech is unwholesome; malicious speech is unwholesome; harsh speech is unwholesome; gossip is unwholesome; covetousness is unwholesome; ill will is unwholesome; wrong view is unwholesome. This is called the unwholesome.

5. “And what is the root of the unwholesome? Greed is a root of the unwholesome; hate is a root of the unwholesome; delusion is a root of the unwholesome. This is called the root of the unwholesome.

6. “And what is the wholesome? Abstention from killing living beings is wholesome; abstention from taking what is not given is wholesome; abstention from misconduct in sensual pleasures is wholesome; abstention from false speech is wholesome; abstention from malicious speech is wholesome; abstention from harsh speech is wholesome; abstention from gossip is wholesome; uncovetousness is wholesome; non-ill will is wholesome; right view is wholesome. This is called the wholesome.

7. “And what is the root of the wholesome? Non-greed is a root of the wholesome; non-hate is a root of the wholesome; non-delusion is a root of the wholesome. This is called the root of the wholesome.

8. “When a noble disciple has thus understood the unwholesome and the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome and the root of the wholesome, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit ‘I am,’ and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of suffering. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma.”

### ***5. MN 41, Sāleyyaka Sutta - The Brahmins of Sālā***

11. “Householders, there are three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct. There are four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct. There are three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

12. “And how, householders, are there three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct? Here someone, abandoning the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he abides compassionate to all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; he does not take by way of theft the wealth and property of others in the village or in the forest. Abandoning misconduct in sensual pleasures, he abstains from misconduct in sensual pleasures; he does not have intercourse with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by law, or with those who are garlanded in token of betrothal. That is how there are three kinds of bodily conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

13. “And how, householders, are there four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct? Here someone, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech; when summoned to a court, or to a meeting, or to his relatives’ presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family’s presence, and questioned as a witness thus: ‘So, good man, tell what you know,’ not knowing, he says, ‘I do not know,’ or knowing, he says, ‘I know’; not seeing, he says, ‘I do not see,’ or seeing, he says, ‘I see’; he does not in full awareness speak falsehood for his own ends, or for another’s ends, or for some trifling worldly end. Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech; he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord. Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech; he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many. Abandoning gossip, he abstains from gossip; he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is good, speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the right time he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate, and beneficial. That is how there are four kinds of verbal conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct.

14. “And how, householders, are there three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct? Here someone is not covetous; he does not covet the wealth and property of others thus: ‘Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!’ His mind is without ill will and he has intentions free from hate thus: ‘May these beings be free from enmity, affliction, and anxiety! May they live happily!’ He has right view, undistorted vision, thus: ‘There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are good and virtuous recluses and brahmins in the world who have themselves realised by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.’ That is how there are three kinds of mental conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, righteous conduct. So, householders, it is by reason of such conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of such righteous conduct that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

### ***6. AN 8:36 Three Bases of Merit***

“There are, monks, three ways of making merit. What three? There are ways of making merit by giving, by moral discipline, and by the development of meditation.

“There is a person who has practiced the making of merit by giving only to a limited degree; and, likewise to a limited degree, he has practiced the making of merit by moral discipline; but he has not undertaken the making of merit by meditation. With the breakup of the body, after death, he will be reborn among humans in an unfavorable condition.

“Another person has practiced the making of merit by giving as well as by moral discipline to a high degree; but he has not undertaken the making of merit by meditation. With the breakup of the body, after death, he will be reborn among humans in a favorable condition.

“Or he will be reborn in the company of the devas of the Four Great Kings. And there, the Four Great Kings, who had practiced to a very high degree the making of merit by giving and by moral discipline, surpass the devas of their realm in ten respects: in divine lifespan, divine beauty, divine happiness, divine fame, divine power; and in divine sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches.

“Or he will be reborn in the company of the Tāvātimsa devas. And there, Sakka, ruler of the devas, who had practiced the making of merit by giving and by moral discipline to a very high degree, surpasses the devas of their realm in ten respects: in divine lifespan, divine beauty, divine happiness, divine fame, divine power; and in divine sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches.

[Similar statements are made for rebirth among the Yāma devas, Tusita devas, the devas who delight in creating, the devas who wield power over others’ creations, and for the respective rulers of these realms.]

“These, monks, are the three ways of making merit.”

### ***7. It 22; 14–15 Meritorious Deeds***

“Monks, do not fear meritorious deeds. This is an expression denoting happiness, what is desirable, wished for, dear, and agreeable, that is, meritorious deeds. For I know full well,

monks, that for a long time I experienced desirable, wished for, dear, and agreeable results from often performing meritorious deeds.

“Having cultivated for seven years a mind of loving-kindness, for seven eons of contraction and expansion I did not return to this world. Whenever the eon contracted I reached the plane of streaming radiance, and when the eon expanded I arose in an empty divine mansion. And there I was Brahmā, the great Brahmā, the unvanquished victor, the all-seeing, the all-powerful. Thirty-six times I was Sakka, ruler of the devas. And many hundreds of times I was a wheel-turning monarch, righteous, a king of righteousness, conqueror of the four regions of the earth, maintaining stability in the land, in possession of the seven treasures. What need is there to speak of mere local kingship?

“It occurred to me, monks, to wonder: ‘Of what kind of deed of mine is this the fruit? Of what deed’s ripening am I now of such great accomplishment and power?’ And then it occurred to me: ‘It is the fruit of three kinds of deeds of mine, the ripening of three kinds of deeds that I am now of such great accomplishment and power: deeds of giving, of self-mastery, and of refraining.’”

### ***8. It 27; 19–21 The Development of kindness***

“Monks, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the liberation of mind by kindness. The liberation of mind by loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant.

“Just as the radiance of all the stars does not equal a sixteenth part of the moon’s radiance, but the moon’s radiance surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the liberation of mind by loving-kindness. The liberation of mind by loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant.

“Just as in the last month of the rainy season, in the autumn, when the sky is clear and free of clouds, the sun, on ascending, dispels the darkness of space and shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the liberation of mind by loving-kindness. The liberation of mind by loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant.

“And just as in the night, at the moment of dawn, the morning star shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the liberation of mind by loving-kindness. The liberation of mind by loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant.”

### ***9. AN 9.20 Velāmasutta***

[The Buddha said to Anāthapiṇḍika:] “In the past, householder, there was a brahmin named Velāma. He gave such a great alms offering as this: eighty-four thousand bowls of gold filled with silver; eighty-four thousand bowls of silver filled with gold; eighty-four thousand bronze bowls filled with bullion; eighty-four thousand elephants, chariots, milk cows, maidens, and couches, many millions of fine cloths, and indescribable amounts of food, drink, ointment, and bedding.

“As great as was the alms offering that the brahmin Velāma gave, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single person possessed of right view. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred persons possessed of right view, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single once-returner. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred once-returners, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single nonreturner. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred nonreturners, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single arahant. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred arahants, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single paccekabuddha. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred paccekabuddhas, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single Perfectly Enlightened Buddha ... it would be even more fruitful if one would feed the Sangha of monks headed by the Buddha and build a monastery for the sake of the Sangha of the four quarters ...

... it would be even more fruitful if, with a trusting mind, one would go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.

... it would be even more fruitful to undertake the five precepts: abstaining from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from the use of intoxicants.

... it would be even more fruitful if one would develop a mind of loving-kindness even for the time it takes to pull a cow’s udder.

And as great as all this might be, it would be even more fruitful still if one would develop the perception of impermanence just for the time it takes to snap one’s fingers.”