

Discourse on the Great Forty

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This is what I have heard. At one time the Lord was staying near Savatthi in the Jeta Grove in Anathapindika's Park. At that time the World-Honored One addressed the bhikkhus, saying, "O bhikkhus."

"O Teacher," the bhikkhus respectfully replied.

The World-Honored One said, "Bhikkhus, I am going to teach you about the Noble Right Concentration, what are its causes and what are its accompanying factors. Please listen carefully and give all your attention as I speak."

"Yes, Lord," the bhikkhus respectfully replied.

The World-Honored One spoke, "What, bhikkhus, are the causes and accompanying factors that adorn Right Concentration? They are Right View, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Diligence, and Right Mindfulness. When one-pointedness of mind is accompanied by these seven factors, it is called the Noble Right Concentration adorned with its causes and accompanying factors.

In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? When there is wrong view and one knows it is wrong view, it is already Right View. When there is Right View and one knows it is Right View, that is also Right View. What is wrong view? It is the view that there is no point in giving alms, offering alms, or ceremonial offerings. That there is no ripening of the fruit of wholesome or unwholesome actions. That this world does not exist and neither does the other world. That there is no birth from parents, and no beings are born spontaneously. That no monks or brahmins have perfected the Path, are going in the right direction, have experienced for themselves the special understandings, or are able to illuminate our understanding of this world or the other world.

What, bhikkhus, is Right View? Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of Right View. There is Right View in which not all the leaks have been stopped. It gives rise to merit but still results in attachment. Then there is Right View that is noble in which the leaks have been stopped. It is supramundane and an element of the Path. What is Right View in which not all the leaks have been stopped? It is the view that there is a point in giving alms, offering alms, and ceremonial offerings. That there is ripening of the fruit of wholesome and unwholesome actions. That this world exists and so does the other world. That there is birth from parents, and there are beings who are born spontaneously. That monks and brahmins have perfected the Path, are going in the right direction, have experienced for themselves the special understandings, and are able to illuminate our understanding of this world or the other world.

What is Right View in which the leaks have been stopped? It is understanding, understanding as one of the Five Faculties, understanding as one of the Five Powers, understanding as the enlightenment factor called investigation of phenomena in someone whose mind is noble, whose mind has no leaks, who has been provided with the Noble Path, and who is practicing the Noble Path. That, bhikkhus, is Right View that is noble, without leaks, supramundane, and a limb of the Path.

He who makes an effort to give up wrong view and take upon himself Right View has Right Diligence. He who by means of mindfulness gives up wrong view and dwells taking Right View upon himself has Right Mindfulness. These three phenomena revolve around Right View. They are Right View, Right Diligence, and Right Mindfulness.

In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? When there is wrong thinking and one knows it is wrong thinking, it is already Right View. When there is Right Thinking and one knows it is Right Thinking, it is also Right View. What is wrong thinking? It is thinking that leads to desire, hatred, and harming.

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What is Right Thinking? Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of Right Thinking. There is Right Thinking in which not all the leaks have been stopped. It gives rise to merit but still results in attachment. Then there is Right Thinking that is noble in which the leaks have been stopped. It is supramundane and an element of the Path. What is Right Thinking in which not all the leaks have been stopped? It is the thinking that leads to giving up desire, hatred, and harming. That is Right Thinking in which not all the leaks have been stopped, that gives rise to merit but still results in attachment.

What is Right Thinking that is noble, in which the leaks have been stopped, that is supra mundane and an element of the Path? It is logical reasoning, initial reflection, thinking, application of mind, implanting in mind, and formation of speech in someone whose mind is noble, whose mind has no leaks, who has been provided with the Noble Path and is practicing the Noble Path. That, bhikkhus, is Right Thinking that is noble, without leaks, supramundane, and an element of the Path.

He who makes an effort to give up wrong thinking and take upon himself Right Thinking has Right Diligence. He who by means of mindfulness gives up wrong thinking and dwells taking Right Thinking upon himself has Right Mindfulness. These three phenomena revolve around Right Thinking. They are Right View, Right Diligence, and Right Mindfulness.

In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? When there is wrong speech and one knows it is wrong speech, it is already Right View. When there is Right Speech and one knows it is Right Speech, that is also Right View. What is wrong speech? It is lying, slandering, harsh words, and frivolous conversation.

What is Right Speech? Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of Right Speech. There is Right Speech in which not all the leaks have been stopped. Then there is Right Speech that is noble in which the leaks have been stopped. What is Right Speech in which not all the leaks have been stopped? It is abstention from lying, slandering, harsh words, and frivolous conversation.

What is Right Speech in which the leaks have been stopped? It is holding back from, desisting, resisting, and abstaining from the four kinds of wrong speech in someone whose mind is noble, whose mind has no leaks, who has been provided with the Noble Path, and who is practicing the Noble Path.

In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? When there is wrong action and one knows it is wrong action, it is already Right View. When there is Right Action and one knows it is Right Action, it is also Right View. What is wrong action? It is the destruction of life, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct." What is Right Action? Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of Right Action. There is Right Action in which not all the leaks have been stopped. Then there is Right Action that is noble in which the leaks have been stopped. What is Right Action in which not all the leaks have been stopped? It is abstention from destroying life, from taking what is not given, and from sexual misconduct.

What is Right Action in which the leaks have been stopped? It is holding back from, desisting, resisting, and abstaining from the three wrong bodily actions in someone whose mind is noble, whose mind has no leaks, who has been provided with the Noble Path, and who is practicing the Noble Path.

He who makes an effort to give up wrong action and take upon himself Right Action has Right Diligence. He who by means of mindfulness gives up wrong action and dwells taking Right Action upon himself has Right Mindfulness. These three phenomena revolve around Right Action. They are Right View, Right Diligence, and Right Mindfulness.

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In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? When there is wrong livelihood and one knows it is wrong livelihood, it is already Right View. When there is Right Livelihood and one knows it is Right Livelihood, that is also Right View. What is wrong livelihood? It is hypocritical and indistinct speaking, fortunetelling, trickery and covetousness, and wanting to make profit out of profit.

What is Right Livelihood? Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of Right Livelihood. There is Right Livelihood in which not all the leaks have been stopped. Then there is Right Livelihood that is noble in which the leaks have been stopped. What is the Right Livelihood in which not all the leaks have been stopped? It is when the noble disciple gives up wrong livelihood and makes his living by Right Livelihood.

What is the Right Livelihood in which the leaks have been stopped? It is holding back from, desisting, resisting, and abstaining from wrong livelihood in someone whose mind is noble, whose mind has no leaks, who has been provided with the Noble Path, and who is practicing the Noble Path.

He who makes an effort to give up wrong livelihood and take upon himself Right Livelihood has Right Diligence. He who by means of mindfulness gives up wrong livelihood and dwells taking Right Livelihood upon himself has Right Mindfulness. These three phenomena revolve around Right Livelihood. They are Right View, Right Diligence, and Right Mindfulness.

In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? Right Thinking arises in someone who has Right View. Right Speech arises in someone who has Right Thinking. Right Action arises in someone who has Right Speech. Right Livelihood arises in someone who has Right Action. Right Diligence arises in someone who has Right Livelihood. Right Mindfulness arises in someone who has Right Diligence. Right Concentration arises in someone who has Right Mindfulness. Right Understanding arises in someone who has Right Concentration. And Right Liberation arises in someone who has Right Understanding. Therefore, bhikkhus, the Path of the practitioner in training has eight factors, and the Path of the practitioner who is an arhat has ten factors.

In the following example, Right View comes first. Why does Right View come first? Wrong view is overcome in someone who has Right View. All the other unwholesome, wrong states that arise dependent upon wrong view are also overcome. All the other wholesome states that arise dependent upon Right View are practiced to fulfillment.

Wrong thinking is overcome in someone who has Right Thinking, etc.

Wrong speech is overcome in someone who has Right Speech, etc.

Wrong action is overcome in someone who has Right Action, etc.

Wrong livelihood is overcome in someone who has Right Livelihood, etc.

Wrong diligence is overcome in someone who has Right Diligence, etc.

Wrong mindfulness is overcome in someone who has Right Mindfulness, etc.

Wrong concentration is overcome in someone who has Right Concentration, etc.

Wrong understanding is overcome in someone who has Right Understanding, etc.

Wrong liberation is overcome in someone who has Right Liberation, etc.

Thus, bhikkhus, there are twenty factors supporting the wholesome and twenty factors supporting the unwholesome. This Dharma teaching on the Great Forty has been set in motion and cannot be turned back by any monk, brahman, god, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the world."