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Anuggahita Sutta

The Discourse on the Supported | A 5.25

Theme: Conditions for the arising of right view

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1 Meaning of key terms

1.1 KEY PHRASES

1.1.1 The Anuggahita Sutta (A 5.25) is a very short discourse on how right view is brought about by proper support or right conditions in 5 ways, that is, through moral virtue, learning, discussion, calm and insight. The Papañca,sūdanī, the commentary to the Aṅguttara Nikāya, explains the key terms of the Sutta as follows:

Right view	<i>sammā,diṭṭhi</i>	the right view of insight.
The fruit of mental freedom and so on	<i>ceto.vimutti,phala</i>	mental freedom that is the samadhi [mental-stillness] of the path and its fruit.
The freedom by wisdom	<i>paññā,vimutti</i>	the knowledge that is the fruit (of the path).
Supported by moral virtue	<i>sīlānuggaha</i>	helped and guarded by moral virtue.
Supported by learning	<i>sutānuggaha</i>	helped by great learning [much listening].
Supported by discussion	<i>sākacchā'nuggaha</i>	helped by Dharma discussion.
Supported by calm	<i>samathānuggaha</i>	helped by the oneness of the mind. (AA 3:229)

1.1.2 The main sutta conext of this set of teachings is found in **the Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43), where Sāriputta tells Mahā Koṭṭhita that right view, assisted (*anuggahita*) by these 5 factors,
“has freedom of mind for its fruit, and the benefit of the fruit of the freedom of mind; and has freedom by wisdom for its fruit, and the benefit of the fruit of the freedom by wisdom.”¹

1.2 RIGHT VIEW

1.2.1 Theoretically, right view (*sammā,diṭṭhi*) here refers to fully walking on the eightfold path, whose factors are all pervaded with right view.² The path, as we know, is the 4th noble truth. Right view, then, also means a full understanding of the 4 noble truths, that is, in theory, practice and realization.³ One who fully understands these truths and is so liberated is called an arhat, a fully awakened person, who does not need to become a Buddha.⁴

1.2.2 Such an awakened person fully and truly understands the **meaning** of life, as embodied in the first two truths. The first noble truth is a statement of the true nature of life: everything in this world is *conditioned* and *impermanent*, and as such *unsatisfactory*, and ultimately *nonself*, without any abiding entity.

¹ M 43,14 (SD 30.2).

² See **Mahā Cattārīsaka S** (M 117,4/3:71), SD 6.10.

³ See **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11/5:420-424) @ SD 1.1.

⁴ In essence, all awakenings, whether of the Buddha or the pratyeka-buddha, or the arhat are the same. They are the final goal of awakening. Neither the pratyeka-buddha nor the arhat needs to become a Buddha, as falsely claimed by some later Buddhist teachers and preachers.

The second noble truth explains why life is such: we suffer as long as we are controlled or conditioned by craving, that is, a sense of lack arising from our measuring things and comparing ourselves with others.

1.2.3 Once the meaning of life is clearly understood, we go on to understand the **purpose** of life, which is defined by the last two noble truths. The third noble truth defines the ideal condition of non-suffering, beyond all conditionality, that is, nirvana. And the 4th noble truth is the way to this ideal state of full awakening, that is, the noble eightfold path.⁵

1.2.4 Understanding the 4 noble truths means that we have walked the eightfold path and reached the journey's goal, or the destination is within clear sight. Hence, for the arhat, right view is *no* view at all: his whole life is morally pure and his mind upright and wise: he *is* right view. In this sense, we say that such a noble disciple is "one who has practised well" (*supaṭipanna*). Ultimately, right view is the freedom from all views: to be of right view then is to be "accomplished in conduct and wisdom" (*vijjā, caraṇa, sampanna*).⁶

1.3 FREEDOM OF MIND

1.3.1 The meaning of "freedom" here. The Sutta mentions two important terms related to awakening, that is, "the fruit of mental freedom" (*ceto.vimutti, phala*) and "the fruit of freedom by wisdom" (*paññā, vimutti, phala*), and their "benefit" (*ānisaṃsa*). This benefit is that of the fruit of arhathood, that is, full-fledged arhathood.

The commentary to **the Ākaṅkheyya Sutta** (M 6), commenting on "mental freedom" (*ceto.vimutti*) and "freedom by wisdom" (*paññā, vimutti*)⁷, defines the former as the concentration (*samādhi*) pertaining to fruit of arhathood, and the latter as the wisdom (*paññā*) pertaining to the fruit of arhathood.

1.3.2 "Mental freedom." *Ceto.vimutti* or "mental freedom" or "freedom of mind" is sometimes translated as "freedom by concentration" (A 1:60), that is, the mind is freed through the destruction of the mental hindrances,⁸ meaning, through attaining dhyana.⁹ Generally, mental freedom can apply to a temporary mental freedom, such as the attainment of the fourth dhyana or the development of any of the divine abodes.¹⁰

While "freedom by wisdom" [1.3.3] refers to arhathood or the attaining of nirvana, "mental freedom" does not imply this, unless it is specified to be the "unconditional unshakable freedom of mind" (*asāmāyikā akuppā ceto.vimutti*).¹¹ This is the freedom from the defilements and that has nothing to do with the temporal, that is, unconditioned by time.¹² As such, it is freedom that is immovable and supra-mundane. It consists of "the 4 noble paths and the 4 fruits of recluseship" (that is, the paths and fruits) (MA 4:159), which quoting **the Paṭisambhidā, magga** (Pm 2:40), adds nirvana.¹³ Such a liberated person, who has destroyed all the mental hindrances, is able to attain dhyana at will.

⁵ The first 2 truths—on suffering and the arising of suffering—are encompassed in the dependent arising teaching, while the second 2 truths—on the ending of suffering and the path—are encompassed in dependent ending teaching: see **Upanisā S** (S 12.23), SD 6.12 & **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (18+19.3.2)..

⁶ See **The notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1.

⁷ M 6,19/1:35,36-36 (SD 59.1).

⁸ See **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

⁹ See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

¹⁰ See eg M 43,25/1:296 @ SD 30.2; also Lily de Silva 1978:120.

¹¹ **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,4.1/3:110) & SD 11.4 (3).

¹² See SD 17.8c (7.4.3.2).

¹³ See M:ÑB 1224 n348.

1.3.3 “Freedom by wisdom.” One who is *freed by wisdom* “may not have gained the 8 freedoms (*aṭṭha vimokkha*)¹⁴ in his own body (that is, personally), but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly freed in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. that is, attaining the more subtle aspects of dhyana.¹⁵

Those who can attain the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha vimokkha*),¹⁶ which include the 4 formless attainments (*samāpatti*), and the attainment of cessation (*nirodha,samāpatti*), are called freed both ways (*ubhato,-bhāga,vimutta*), that is, freed from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood. Arhats like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are “**freed both ways.**” The differences between the two types of freedom are given in **the Mahā,nidāna Sutta** (D 2:70 f) and **the Kīṭāgiri Sutta** (M 1:477 f).

As such, the two terms—mental freedom [1.3.2] and freedom of mind—do not refer to two different approaches to awakening, but two aspects of the meditative path, one which is sufficient by itself (freedom by wisdom), one which is not (mental freedom).¹⁷

2 The Sutta training

2.1 MORAL VIRTUE. Although we basically comprise body and mind, our *body* is the more apparent of the two. Spiritual training thus begins with understanding, respecting and disciplining our *body*, which includes the physical actions, speech and our breath. Basically, this means that physical health (signified by *how* we breathe) is a vital condition for the spiritual life. The “breath” here also includes meditation.

Our body not only defines our presence amongst others—a presence or close proximity—but we interact and communicate with them, thus socially and emotionally affecting one another. Our interaction and communication with others should be wholesome, that is, not harm anyone in anyway, physical or mentally. This is the most basic reality of a functional society and healthy community.

The true purpose of moral virtue, however, is to be “bodily cultivated” (*bhāvita,kaya*), that is, to be physically prepared for mental cultivation (*citta,bhāvanā*). This can be explained as setting all our physical senses to “silent” mode, so to speak. This is, in fact, the first step in sitting meditation: we calm our whole body down so that, undistracted by the senses, we can fully focus on the mind.

2.2 LEARNING. To properly cultivate moral virtue as the basis of mental cultivation is neither a ritual nor a chance affair. We need to know what moral virtue is and how to cultivate it; we need to know what mental cultivation is and how to cultivate it. This is best done by studying relevant suttas and related passages. The suttas, after all, have been preserved for posterity for just this purpose, as an elaborate manual and systematic programmes for moral and mental cultivation, the development of body and mind.

It helps here to understand how the suttas¹⁸ are arranged and how to study them. Basically, there are **two vital ways of appreciating the suttas**. The first is that they are **instructive**, and we need to under-

¹⁴ For full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15,35/2:70 f), SD 5.17. See also D 3:262, 228; **Vimokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120,37/3:103 = SD 3.4.37.

¹⁵ See **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15,35/2:70 f), SD 5.17.

¹⁶ On the 8 liberations, see SD 49.5b (1).

¹⁷ Further see Analayo 2003:90 n102.

¹⁸ Although technically *sutta* is only one of the “9 limbs of the Teacher’s teachings” (*navāṅga satthu,sāsana*), it can also refer to the whole ninefold set. Sometimes the term *suttanta* is used for this purpose, although it is sometimes used only in the titles of longer discourses, esp those of the Dīgha Nikāya. In the term *dharmma,vinaya*,

stand what they are trying to teach us about human behaviour and the human mind. Sometimes these teachings are straightforward (*nīṭ'attha*), and sometimes we need to draw out the meaning (*neyy'attha*).¹⁹

Often the suttas seem repetitive, and there is an important purpose behind this, than merely as a mechanism for an effective oral tradition. These repetitive passages serve as reflections for vital teachings that are meant to touch and tap out hearts, and to bliss us out with a taste of, say, impermanence or unsatisfactoriness, or non-self. Even a cursory glimpse of such a reality is often enough to empower us to still our minds, and even to move on to deeper meditation, the result of which is spiritual joy.

2.3 Discussion. Sutta learning is not always easy when done by oneself. It is greatly facilitated by **spiritual friendship**,²⁰ traditionally defined as the relationship between a meditation teacher and his pupil, or between a Dharma teacher and his student. There are numerous helpful books and materials on the suttas, but these are only as useful as we understand them—and they are, as a rule, limited by their pages. They can never replace a living discussion between an experienced teacher and an attentive student. This is the second way—the experiential—of appreciating suttas.

Dharma discussion not only clarifies difficulties in the suttas and our doubts, but also helps us see new angles and dimensions of the Dharma or connect various teachings we have learned to form more coherent wholes, so that we are inspired with a better understanding and the joy to cultivate and deepen our inner stillness.

An important benefit of Dharma discussion is that it initiates and deepens **Dharma fellowship**. We wholesomely network with like-minded people, those who love the Dharma and live the Dharma-spiritual life. Wholesome Dharma fellowship is one of the pillars of Buddhist missiology, sharing the Dharma with others so that they, too, have a taste of the freedom (*vimutti,rasa*) of the Dharma.

2.4 CALM. Proper sutta study and spiritual friendship have a healthy calming effect upon us. It helps us attain some level of inner calm, even to the level of dhyana, or a glimpse of it. Even without dhyana, we will be able to healthily function as individuals, serving as an inspiration for others to touch the Dharma and change their own lives.

The cultivation of **calm** is a gradual yet deepening process. First, we should learn some basic steps in staple meditations, such as the mindfulness of the breath and the lovingkindness meditation. It is not how long we are able to sit that helps us to better ourselves, but how well we integrate such mindfulness in our daily lives, whether we are standing, walking, sitting or lying down.²¹ The idea is to train ourselves to readily and joyfully clear our minds of negative states, and sustain an inner core of stillness: a still eye in life's storm.

2.5 INSIGHT. Calm and insight are like the two sides of our hand or a coin: they naturally go together. A calm mind becomes clear; a clear mind further enhances our calm, and so on, *pari passu*. **Calm** means learning to focus our minds on a wholesome mental object, and keeping that focus with joy. **Insight** is of two kinds: seeing how and seeing what.

The “seeing *how*” insight is the total effect of our mindfulness and meditation, and how we live our daily lives applying them with moral virtue. Further, we make every effort to keep up learning the suttas and discussing Dharma so that we better our mental cultivation and lives as a whole.

dhamma refers to the suttas, but can sometimes incl the Abhidhamma. See eg **Dhamma, vihāri S** (A 5.74,2/3:88), SD 44.5; also SD 30.10 (4); SD 26.11 (3.2.1.5).

¹⁹ See **Neyy'attha Nīṭ'attha S** (A 2.3.5-6/1:60), SD 2.6b.

²⁰ See **Spiritual friendship: Stories of kindness**, SD 8.1.

²¹ (**Karaṇīya Metta S** (Sn 151 = Khp 9/9), SD 38.3.

The fruit of such meditations—“seeing *what*”—is that of enhancing our wisdom, that is, the understanding of ourselves, of our own minds. As this inner understanding grows, we better understand how outer reality works, how other people think and act. We are empowered to unconditionally accept them as they are, and to inspire them to grow in the Dharma and head for spiritual awakening.

3 Parable of the well-cared mango tree

The commentary to the Sutta explains its teaching by way of a parable—that of a **well-cared mango tree**, thus:

A person wishing to grow mangoes would do as follows:

Plants the seed of a sweet mango	Support
Sets up a boundary all around it	the right view of insight
Waters it at the proper time	keeping to the precepts
Cleans the foot of the tree at the proper time	learning
Removes bugs from the tree at the proper time	discussion
	clearing away any threat to dhyana and
	insight as a support for calm ²²
Clears away cobwebs from time to time ²³	strong insight [vipassana]

As a tree, thus well cared for, will grow quickly and bear fruit, so will right view, supported by moral virtue and so on, grow quickly on account of the way, and bear the fruit of mental freedom and freedom by wisdom. (AA 3:230)

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Anuggahita Sutta

The Discourse on the Supported

A 5.25

- 1 Bhilshus, when right view is supported by 5 factors, there are the fruit of mental freedom and the benefit of the fruit of mental freedom,²⁴ and the fruit of freedom by wisdom and the benefit of the fruit of freedom by wisdom.²⁵ What are the five? [21]
- 2 Here, bhikshus, right view is

²² *Pāṇaka, haraṇaṃ viya jhāna, vipassanā, pāripanthika, sodhana, vasena samathānuggaṇhanam. Jhāna, vipassanā* is taken as a dvandva.

²³ We would expect “weeding” to be included here, but it is not so because monastics are not allowed to damage any kind of plant life (Pac 10 & Bhī Pac 107; V4:34,34) or to dig the ground (Pac 11 & Bhī Pac 106; V 4:33,4 f).

²⁴ *Ceto, vimutti, phalā ca hoti ceto, vimutti, phal’ānisamsā ca*, fully tr “There are the fruit of mental freedom and the benefit of the fruit of mental freedom.” So too below [§3].

²⁵ *Paññā, vimutti, phalā ca hoti paññā, vimutti, phal’ānisamsā ca*, fully tr “and the fruit of freedom by wisdom and its benefit.” So too below [§3].

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| (1) supported by | moral virtue, | <i>sīla</i> |
| (2) supported by | learning [listening], | <i>suta</i> |
| (3) supported by | discussion, | <i>sākacchā</i> |
| (4) supported by | calm [samatha], | <i>samatha</i> |
| (5) supported by | insight [vipassana]. | <i>Vipassana</i> |

3 Bhikshus, when right view is supported by these 5 factors,
 there are the fruit of mental freedom and the benefit of the fruit of mental freedom,
 and the fruit of freedom by wisdom and the benefit of the fruit of freedom by wisdom.

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