

## 60.10 (Chakka) Arati Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Discontent | A 6.113/4:448  
 Theme: Discontent is when we know not what is truly good  
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2023

### 1 Sutta summary and significance

#### 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

The **(Chakka) Arati Sutta** (A 6.113) is a brief teaching by the Buddha to motivate and guide the laity based on right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*). In other words, we are reminded of how our right attitudes will help strengthen our commitment (faith) and diligence (effort) in personal development for true happiness and spiritual health, especially as we mature and age.

#### 1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE

##### 1.2.1 The social emotions

A “normal” socially healthy and mentally wholesome person is one who is able to accept others as they are, to joyfully reach out to others appropriately, to happily interact with them and to remain calm and clear-minded, even stoic, in the face of any difficulty he faces. Essentially, this is the practice of the 4 social emotions, otherwise called the “divine abodes” (*brahma, vihāra*): love, ruth [compassion], joy and peace.

##### 1.2.2 The 6 elements of escape

On a deeper Dharma level, there is the spiritual cultivation of the “6 elements of escape” (*nissaraṇīya dhātu*), that is, ways of fully freeing ourselves from any negative emotions, from being obsessed with “things” (objects or “signs”), even to reach the path of awakening. **The (Chakka) Nissaraṇīya Sutta** (A 6.13), for example, teaches us about these “elements of escape” through meditation, to the point of reaching the path as streamwinners.<sup>1</sup>

### 2 The 3 unwholesome attitudes, the 3 wholesome states

#### 2.1 RIGHT THOUGHT AS THE BASIS FOR RIGHT PRACTICE

**2.1.0** The 3 negative states beginning with discontent can be collated with the 3 components of **right thought**, as defined in **the Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta** (M 117), thus:

<u>the 3 unwholesome attitudes</u>		<u>right thought</u> <sup>2</sup>	
(1) <b>discontent</b>	<i>arati</i> ;	renunciation	<i>nekkhamma</i> ;
(2) <b>harmfulness</b>	<i>vihimsā</i> or <i>vihesā</i> ;	non-violence	<i>avihimsā</i> ;
(3) <b>undharma conduct</b>	<i>adhamma, cariyā</i> ;	non-ill will	<i>mettā</i> .

**2.1.1 (1) Discontent** (*arati*) is the lack of interest or boredom in teachings and truths that help us become a better person. We are caught up with and distracted by immediate pleasures of the physical senses. In other words, we live a habitually animal-like existence prodded and guided by sense-objects

<sup>1</sup> A 6.13/3:290-292 (SD 55.18).

<sup>2</sup> M 117,15/3:73 (SD 6.10).

(sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches) but lacking joyful humanity. We are likely to feel self-centred in the sense of satisfying *our* needs and even feel a sense of entitlement to such pleasures (as in the case of narcissists).

We lack or reject the idea of “letting go” or **renunciation**, that is, the quality that opposes discontent. This is often because we are drawn to people and the crowd, not so much in the sense of a healthy “belonging” (like a family or community), but as the desire and delight in being approved and applauded by others. Hence, we are unlikely to like mindfulness or meditation, especially in a quiet and solitary environment.

**The Vibhaṅga** defines discontent (*arati*) as follows:

“Discontent, not being contented, non-delight, non-delighting, dissatisfaction, dread of remote dwellings or this and that higher wholesome state.”<sup>3</sup> (Vbh §856)

**2.1.2 (2) Harmfulness** (*vihimsā* or *vihesā*) is the thought of cruelty and violence. The Vibhaṅga calls this “the element of harmfulness” (*vihimsā dhātu*), and defines it as follows:

“The thought, thinking, intending, focus, focusing, mental fixation, wrong intention associated with harmfulness. This is called the element of harmfulness. Herein, someone harms (other) beings, with the hand, or with a clod, or with a stick, or with a sword, or with a rope, or with one thing or another; that which is of the nature of harassing, hurting, annoying, injuring, provoking, enraging, harming (others). This is called *the element of harmfulness*.”<sup>4</sup>

**2.1.3 (3) Undharma conduct** (*adhamma, cariyā*)

**2.1.3.1 The Sāleyyaka Sutta** (M 41) defines “undharma conduct,” that is, living against the true teaching, as committing any of the 10 unwholesome courses of action (*akusala kamma, patha*), that is:

(1) killing	(destroying living beings)	}	bodily acts ( <i>kāya, kamma</i> )
(2) stealing	(taking the not-given)		
(3) sexual misconduct	(violating another’s person) <sup>5</sup>		
(4) false communication		}	verbal acts ( <i>vacī, kamma</i> )
(5) divisive speech			
(6) harsh language			
(7) frivolous chatter		}	mental acts ( <i>mano, kamma</i> )
(8) covetousness			
(9) a malevolent mind			
(10) wrong view			

<sup>3</sup> *Pantesu vā senāsanesu aññatar’aññataresu vā adhikusalessu dhammesu arati aratitā anabhirati anabhiramaṇā ukkaṇṭhitā paritassitā—ayaṃ vuccati arati* (Vbh 352,4-6).

<sup>4</sup> *Vihimsa, paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā micchā, saṅkappo: ayaṃ vuccati vihimśa, dhātu. Idh’ekacco pāṇinā vā leḍḍunā vā daṇḍanena vā satthena vā rajjuyā vā aññatar’aññatarena satte viheṭheti yā eva, rūpā heṭhanā viheṭhanā himśanā vihimśanā rosanā virosanā parūpaghāto: ayaṃ vuccati vihimśa, dhātu.* (Vbh 86,25-30)

<sup>5</sup> The suttas, as a rule, quote the Vinaya conventional def of the precept against sexual misconduct as violating any of the 10 prohibited women, viz, (1) one under the care of their mother, (2) under the care of their father, (3) under the care of their parents, (4) under the care of their brother, (5) under the care of their sister, (6) under the care of a relative,<sup>5</sup> (7) one protected by dharma,<sup>5</sup> (8) one with a husband, (9) one protected by law,<sup>5</sup> (10) even with one adorned with a string of garlands (in betrothal to another). (Sangh 5.4.1 @ V3:139). These categories need to be updated to accommodate both sexes and reflect our contemporary conditions.

The **Sāleyyaka Sutta** gives a full list of the 10 unwholesome karmic acts (§§7-10) and the 10 wholesome karmic acts (§§11-14).<sup>6</sup> This is not just a personal practice but is meant to be a common social conduct, and it is our task to inspire and encourage others to maintain this moral conduct and these moral codes so that we have a good society that is wholesomely progressive, creative and sustainable.

**2.1.3.2** In this connection, the **Veḷu,dvāreyya Sutta** (S 55.7) upholds the “3 points of purity” (*ti,koṭi parisuddhi*) of moral conduct, that is: *keep the precepts oneself, encourage others to do the same, and “speak in praise” of the precepts.*<sup>7</sup> These points, in fact, define the practical aspects of **the golden rule**.<sup>8</sup> In other words, moral virtue is not merely about *living and letting live*, but also about living *well* and promoting a wholesome society and sustainable environment. This view is in keeping with the understanding that we do not exist alone but live as a network of “extended minds.”<sup>9</sup>

Living in this manner, then, we are each said to be living in Dharma. The Dharmafarer lives happily (*dhamma,cārī sukhaṃ seti*) (Dh 169). Wherever such a person is born, that family thrives happily (Dh 193). And wherever one goes, one brings happiness; in their company, one is ever happy (Dh 206).

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<sup>6</sup> M 41/1:285-290 (SD 5.7). On the constituents of each precept, see SD 5.7 (2).

<sup>7</sup> S 55.7,6-12 + SD 1.5 (3).

<sup>8</sup> On the golden rule—one should neither harm *oneself* nor *others* nor *both* oneself and others (the environment)—see **Veḷu,dvāreyya S** (S 55.7,6-12), SD 1.5; Dh 129 f.

<sup>9</sup> On reciprocally responsible social relationships, see **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31,27-34), SD 4.1. On living for one’s own good and for the good of other, see **Atta,hita S** (A 4.96), SD 64.6; **Sikkhā S** (A 4.99), SD 64.9. On “extended minds,” see SD 60.1e (12.7).

## (Chakka) Arati Sutta

### The (Sixes) Discourse on Discontent

A 6.113

Originating in Sāvattihī.

1 “Bhikshus, there are these 3 things [states]. What are the three?

2 They are

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| (1) <b>discontent</b> ,       | <i>arati</i> ,                    | [renunciation] |
| (2) <b>harmfulness</b> , and  | <i>vihimsā</i> or <i>vihesā</i> , | [nonviolence]  |
| (3) <b>undharma conduct</b> . | <i>adhamma, cariyā</i> .          | [non-ill will] |

These, bhikshus, are the 3 things.

3 Three (other) things are to be cultivated for the abandoning of these 3 things.

4 What are the three?

- |   |                     |                                     |                       |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (4) For the abandoning of <u>discontent</u> ,       | <b>gladness</b>     | should be cultivated. <sup>10</sup> | <i>muditā</i>         |
| (5) For the abandoning of <u>harmfulness</u> ,      | <b>non-violence</b> | should be cultivated.               | <i>avihimsā</i>       |
| (6) For the abandoning of <u>undhamma conduct</u> , | <b>dharmafaring</b> | should be cultivated.               | <i>dhamma, cariyā</i> |

5 These are the 3 things that are to be cultivated for the abandoning of the (previous) 3 things.”

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<sup>10</sup> On joy being the opposite of *discontent*, see (Chakka) Nissaraṇīya S (A 6.13,3), SD 55.8.