

Tranquillity and Insight in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

lecture 11

MĀ 83 – Discourse on the Drowsy Elder

(Parallel to AN 7.58/ AN IV 85)

Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, who was practicing meditation in a secluded and quiet place, was dozing off. The Blessed One realized from afar that the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, who was practicing meditation in a secluded and quiet place, was dozing off. Having realized this, the Blessed One entered a type of concentration such that, by means of it, just as a strong man might bend or stretch his arm, he disappeared from the Deer Park at Bhesakaḷā Grove on Crocodile Hill among the Bhaggas and appeared before the venerable Mahāmoggallāna at the village of Kallavāḷamutta in the country of Magadha.

Then, the Blessed One emerged from that concentrated state and said: "Mahāmoggallāna, you are stuck in sleepiness. Mahāmoggallāna, you are stuck in sleepiness."

The venerable Mahāmoggallāna said to the Blessed One: "Yes, indeed, Blessed One."

The Buddha said further: "Mahāmoggallāna, whatever sign (*nimitta*) makes you become stuck in sleepiness, do not develop that sign, do not make much of it. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should recite in full the teachings as you have earlier heard them and as you have memorized them. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should explain in full to others the teachings as you have earlier heard them and as you have memorized them. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If your former sleepiness has not been overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should ponder and reflect in your mind on the teachings as you have earlier heard them and as you have memorized them. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If your former sleepiness has not been overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should pull your ears with both hands. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should bathe your face and eyes with cold water and sprinkle your body with it. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should go out of the dwelling, look to the four directions and gaze up at the constellations. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should go out of the dwelling, go in front of it, and practice walking meditation out in the open, with your sense faculties guarded and the mind quietly established within, being perceptive of what is in front and behind. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should leave off walking meditation, go to the end of the meditation path, spread your sitting mat, and sit down cross-legged. In this way the sleepiness may be overcome.

If for some reason your sleepiness is not overcome, Mahāmoggallāna, you should go back into the dwelling, fold your outer robe in four

and spread it on the bed, fold the inner robe to use as a pillow, and lie down on your right side, one foot on the other, arousing the perception of light in the mind, establishing right mindfulness and right comprehension, constantly with the thought of rising again.

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AN 7.58 has eight recommendations:

- 1) avoid the perception that has led to sleepiness,
- 2) reflect on the teachings,
- 3) recite the teachings,
- 4) pull the ears and rub limbs,
- 5) clean the eyes with water and look at the constellation,
- 6) develop perception of light,
- 7) practice walking meditation
- 8) lie down

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Mahāmoggallāna, do not indulge in reclining peacefully in bed. Do not desire gain. Do not be attached to fame. Why not? I shall tell you all the conditions that one should not associate with and I shall tell you [those that one] should associate with. Mahāmoggallāna, which are the conditions that I say one should not associate with?

Mahāmoggallāna, close association with conditions of the common worldly way: such conditions, I say, one should not associate with.

Mahāmoggallāna, by close association with conditions of the common worldly way there will be much talk. If there is much talk, there is agitation. If there is agitation, the mind is not at ease.

Mahāmoggallāna, if the mind is not at ease, then the mind is bereft of concentration. For this reason, Mahāmoggallāna, I say that one should not associate with these.

Mahāmoggallāna, what conditions do I say that one should associate with? Mahāmoggallāna, secluded places: with these conditions, I say, one should associate. Beneath trees in mountain forests, empty and peaceful places, high crags and rock caves without noise, far-away places free of evil, free of people, places conducive to meditation: Mahāmoggallāna, with these conditions I say that one should associate.

Mahāmoggallāna, if you enter the village to beg for almsfood, you should do so disenchanted with gain, disenchanted with offerings, disenchanted with worship. Only when your mind has become disenchanted with gain, offerings, and worship should you enter the village to beg almsfood.

Mahāmoggallāna, do not enter the village to beg almsfood with a proud state of mind. Why not? Householder families are busy with household affairs, such that when a monk comes begging almsfood, a householder may not pay attention to him. Then the monk thinks: 'Who has spoiled my [relationship] with the householder in this house? Why? When I enter the householder's house, the householder does not pay attention [to me]'. Because of this sadness arises; because of sadness there is agitation; because of agitation the mind is not at ease; and because the mind is not at ease, the mind is bereft of concentration.

Mahāmoggallāna, when you teach the Dharma, do not speak in a criticizing way. If there is criticism, there will be much talk. Because of much talk, agitation arises; because of agitation, the mind is not at ease; and because the mind is not at ease, the mind is bereft of concentration.

Mahāmoggallāna, when you teach the Dharma, do not speak trying to better [others], but teach the Dharma [unruffled] like a lion.

Mahāmoggallāna, when you teach the Dharma, teach it humbly; abandon force, extinguish force, destroy force. Teach the Dharma

without trying to better others, teach the Dharma [unruffled] like a lion. Mahāmoggallāna, you should train like this.

At that time the venerable Mahāmoggallāna rose from his seat, arranged his robes so as to bare one shoulder, placed his palms together [in respect] towards the Buddha, and said: "Blessed One, how does a monk attain the ultimate, the ultimate purity, the ultimate holy life, the ultimate completion of the holy life?"

The Blessed One said: "Mahāmoggallāna, whether there are pleasant feelings, painful feelings, or neutral feelings, a monk contemplates such pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and neutral feelings as impermanent, he contemplates their rise and fall, their eradication, their fading away, their cessation, and their abandonment. Having contemplated feelings as impermanent, having contemplated their rise and fall, their eradication, their fading away, their cessation, and their abandonment, he does not cling to this world; because of not clinging to the world, he is not wearied; because of not being wearied, he attains final Nirvana and he knows as it really is: 'Birth is ended, the holy life has been established, what was to be done has been done. There will not be another existence'.

Mahāmoggallāna, in this way a monk attains the ultimate, the ultimate purity, the ultimate holy life, the ultimate completion of the holy life."

This is what the Buddha said. Having heard the Buddha's words, the venerable Mahāmoggallāna was delighted and remembered it well.

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main points:

overcome drowsiness
 be humble, not over critical, dwell secluded
 contemplate impermanence of feelings to be free from clinging

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MĀ 84 – Discourse on Being Without Thorns
(Parallel to AN 10.72/ AN V 133)

Then the well-known virtuous senior elders, the great disciples, heard that the Licchavis of Vesālī, with their great power and royal might, and with loud singing, were coming out of Vesālī to approach the Buddha and pay their respects. They thought: 'Noise is a thorn to meditative absorption. The Blessed One has declared that noise is a thorn to meditative absorption. Let us rather go to the Gosiṅga Grove. Staying there we will be without disturbance, staying secluded and alone, to sit and meditate.' Then the well-known virtuous senior elders, the great disciples, went to the Gosiṅga Grove. There, without disturbance, they stayed secluded and alone, to sit and meditate.

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the Buddha teaches the Dharma to the Licchavis

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Soon after the Licchavis from Vesālī had left, the Blessed One asked the monks: "Where have the senior elders, the great disciples, gone?"

The monks replied: "Blessed One, the senior elders, the great disciples, heard that the Licchavis of Vesālī, with their great power and royal might, and with loud singing, were coming out of Vesālī to approach the Buddha and pay their respects. They thought: 'Noise is a thorn to absorption. The Blessed One has declared that noise is a thorn to absorption. Let us rather go to the Gosiṅga Grove. Staying there we will be without disturbance, staying secluded and alone, to sit and meditate.' Blessed One, the senior elders, the great disciples, all went there together."

On hearing this, the Blessed One praised them, saying: "It is well. It is well that the senior elders, the great disciples, should speak like this: 'Noise is a thorn to absorption. The Blessed One has declared that noise is a thorn to absorption.' Why? I do indeed speak like this. To absorption this is [indeed] a thorn.

To one who is maintaining morality, breaches of morality are a thorn; to one guarding the senses, bodily adornments are a thorn; to one cultivating [the perception] of foulness, an appearance of purity is a thorn; to one cultivating loving-kindness, anger is a thorn; to one abstaining from liquor, the drinking of liquor is a thorn; to a [monk] leading the celibate life looking at the female form is a thorn;

to one entering the first absorption, noise is a thorn; to one entering the second absorption, [directed] awareness and [sustained] contemplation are a thorn; to one entering the third absorption, rapture (*pīti*) is a thorn; to one entering the fourth absorption, the in-breaths and out-breaths are a thorn;

to one entering the sphere of [boundless] space, perception of form is a thorn; to one entering the sphere of [boundless] consciousness, perception of the sphere of [boundless] space is a thorn; to one entering the sphere of nothingness, perception of the sphere of [boundless] consciousness is a thorn; to one entering the sphere of [neither-perception-nor-]non-perception, perception of the sphere of nothingness is a thorn; to one entering the concentration by the cessation of perception and knowing, perception and knowing are a thorn.

Again, there are three thorns: the thorn of desire, the thorn of anger, the thorn of delusion. An arahant, who has eradicated the influxes, has already cut off these three thorns, knowing that they have been pulled out by the root and destroyed so that they will not arise again. That is, an arahant is without thorns; an arahant is separated from thorns; an arahant is without thorns, separated from thorns."

Thus spoke the Buddha. The monks, having heard what the Buddha said, delighted in it and remembered it well.

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AN 10.72 mentions:

- 1) socializing – seclusion
- 2) beauty – contemplation of absence of beauty
- 3) entertainments – sense restraint
- 4) company with women – [male] living celibate life
- 5) sound – 1st jhāna
- 6) *vitakka* & *vicāra* – 2nd jhāna
- 7) rapture – 3rd jhāna
- 8) breath – 4th jhāna
- 9) perception & feeling – cessation attainment
- 10) desire, anger, delusion: these thorns an arahant has overcome

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main points:

gradual procedure to become free from 'thorns'
which leads from seclusion and restraint via *jhāna* to full liberation

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MĀ 85 – Discourse on the True Person (Parallel to MN 113/ MN III 37)

At that time, the Blessed One said to the monks: "I will now teach you the nature of a true person and the nature of an untrue person. Listen closely, listen closely and pay careful attention!" Then the monks listened to receive instruction.

The Buddha said: "What is the nature of an untrue person? Suppose that a certain man who has gone forth to practice the path is from an aristocratic family while others are not. Because of being from an

aristocratic family, he praises himself and looks down on the others. This is the nature of an untrue person.

One who has the nature of a true person reflects like this: 'It is not because of being from an aristocratic family that I eradicate desire, anger, and delusion.' Suppose that a man who has gone forth to practice the path is not from an aristocratic family, [but] he practices the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, follows the Dharma, keeps the direction of the Dharma, and progresses in step with the Dharma. Because of this, he [should] receive support and respect. If, advancing in this way, he attains the true Dharma, without praising himself or looking down on others, then this is the nature of a true person.

Again, suppose that a certain man is handsome and likeable while others are not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man is eloquent and competent in talking, while others are not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man is of long standing, known to the king, recognized by the people, and of great merit, while others are not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man is one who recites the discourses, has memorized the Vinaya, and is learned in the Abhidharma, one who is versed in the Āgamas, very learned in the collection of discourses, while others are not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man wears rag robes, limits [himself to] three robes, and possesses unpretentious robes, while others do not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man always observes the practice of begging for almsfood, consistently accepts just five measures of rice, begs food at no more than seven houses, eats only once [per day], and abstains from thick drinks after noon, while others do not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man dwells in secluded places: beneath a tree in a mountain forest, or on a high crag, or out in the open, or in a cemetery, and that he is capable of knowing the [proper] time [for staying in such places], while others are not ...

Again, suppose that a certain man attains the first absorption, while others do not. Because of attaining the first absorption, he praises himself and looks down on others. This is the nature of an untrue person.

One who has the nature of a true person reflects like this: 'The Blessed One has said that the first absorption is of an immeasurable type. If someone measures it, then that is clinging.' Because of this [attainment], he [should] receive support and respect. If, advancing in this way, he attains the true Dharma, without praising himself or looking down on others, then this is the nature of a true person.

Again, suppose that a certain man attains the second ... the third ... the fourth absorption ... attains the sphere of [boundless] space ... the sphere of [boundless] consciousness ... the sphere of nothingness ... the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, while others do not. Because of attaining the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he praises himself and looks down on others. This is the nature of an untrue person.

One who has the nature of a true person reflects like this: 'The Blessed One has said that the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is of an immeasurable type. If someone measures it, then that is clinging.' Because of this [attainment], he [should] receive support and respect. If, advancing in this way, he attains the true Dharma, without praising himself or looking down on others, then this is the nature of a true person.

Monks, this is what is meant by the nature of a true person and the nature of an untrue person. You should know the nature of a true person and the nature of an untrue person. Having known the nature

of a true person and the nature of an untrue person, discard and become separated from the nature of an untrue person and train in the nature of a true person. You should train like this."

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MN 113:

comes from high family (1)
 comes from great family (2)
 comes from vastly wealthy family (3)
 comes from highly wealthy family (4)
 is famous (5)
 gains requisites (6)
 is learned (7)
 knows Vinaya (8)
 preaches Dharma (9)
 dwells in forest (10)
 wears rag robes (11)
 begs for food (12)
 dwells at tree root (13)
 dwells in cemetery (14)
 dwells out in the open (15)
 never lies down (16)
 uses any bed (17)
 takes single meal (18)
 attains 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th *jhāna* (19, 20, 21, 22)
 attains 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th immaterial attainment (23, 24, 25, 26)
 attains cessation (27)

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main point:

avoid conceit
 give priority to Dharma

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MĀ 83 – Discourse Explaining the Spheres (no parallel)

At that time the venerable Ānanda rose from sitting in meditation in the afternoon and led a company of young monks to the Buddha. He paid homage at the Buddha's feet stepped back, and stood to one side, and the young monks also paid homage at the Buddha's feet, stepped back, and sat to one side. The venerable Ānanda said: "Blessed One, how should I teach these young monks? How should I instruct them? How should I explain the Dharma to them?" ...

The Blessed One said: "Ānanda, I have earlier explained to you the five aggregates of clinging: The aggregate of clinging of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, and the aggregate of clinging of consciousness. Ānanda, you should explain and teach these five aggregates of clinging to the young monks. If you explain and teach these five aggregates of clinging to the young monks, they will obtain ease, they will obtain strength and happiness, they will be untroubled in body and mind, and they will practice the holy life for as long as they live. "

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- the six senses (2),
- the six corresponding sense-objects (3),
- the six corresponding types of consciousness (4),
- the six corresponding types of contact (5),
- the six corresponding types of feeling (6),
- the six corresponding types of perception (7),
- the six corresponding types of intention (8),
- the six corresponding types of craving (9),
- the six elements (10),
- dependent arising (11),
- the four establishments of mindfulness (12),

- the four right efforts (13),
- the four bases for supernormal ability (14),
- the four absorptions (15),
- the four noble truths (16),
- four perceptions (17),
- the four boundless states (*appamāṇa*) (18),
- the four immaterial attainments (19),
- the four noble traditions (*ariyavaṃsa*) (20),
- the four fruits of recluse-ship (21).
- five perceptions (22)
- five spheres of liberation (23)
- five faculties (24)
- five powers (25)
- five elements of release (26).
- seven types of [spiritual] wealth (27),
- seven powers (28),
- seven awakening factors (29),
- the noble eightfold path (30),
- the summit of the Dharma (31).

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