

MN 62
Mahā Rahulovāda Sutta
“Greater Discourse on the Advice to the Venerable Rāhula”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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I have personally heard this.

At one time, The Blessed One was living in the monastery offered by Anāthapindika at Jeta's Grove, in the City of Sāvatthi. Then, one morning, the Blessed One put on His robes and by taking His bowl and outer robe, He entered Sāvatthi for alms.

Meanwhile, the Venerable Rāhula, also by putting on his robes and taking his bowl and outer robe, followed the Blessed One, walking closely behind. Then, the Blessed One looked back and spoke to the Venerable Rāhula:

“Rāhula, whatever kind of material form you may encounter, whether related to the past, to the future, or having to do with the present, whether taking place internally or externally, be it gross or subtle, whether of an inferior or superior nature, be it far or near, all matter should be viewed by you properly, as it truly is, and with wisdom in this manner: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not myself.’

“Is it only material form, O Holy One? Should I view only material form in this manner, O Blessed One?”

“Rāhula, you should also view feelings, memories, habitual tendencies, and consciousness in this manner.”

Then, the Venerable Rāhula began considering:

“Why would anyone waste time going on alms round today, after being advised in this manner by The Blessed One Himself?”

And the Venerable Rāhula stopped and found a quiet place at the root of a tree and sat there while folding his legs together and keeping his body upright, with mindful awareness established in front of him.

Sometime later, the Venerable Sāriputta, when passing by, saw the Venerable Rāhula sitting there having folded his legs together and keeping his body upright, with mindful awareness established in front of him.

Then, the Venerable Sāriputta said:

“Rāhula, develop the awareness of the in and out breathing, because when mindfulness on the in and out breathing is continuously developed and cultivated intently, it brings with it many benefits and great results.”

Later, when it was evening, the Venerable Rāhula got up from his seclusion, and went straight to The Blessed One, and after paying his respects, he sat to one side and said:

“Bhante, how is the mindfulness on the in and out breathing developed, so that when continuously and intently cultivated, it would bring the meditator many benefits and great results?”

1. “Rāhula, all that is experienced within this body, all that is felt as hard or solid, and considered to be yours, such as head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, also the flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, the stomach (with undigested food inside), feces, and anything else that is seen as internal, belonging to oneself, and whatever that is rigid and coarse, is called the “internal earth element.” Now, whether reflecting on the internal earth element or the external earth element, all these are looked upon as the **earth element**, which must be correctly seen as it truly is, and with wisdom, in this manner: ‘This is *not* mine, this I am *not*, this is *not* my self.’

Therefore, seeing it as it truly is, the mind becomes disenchanted with the earth element, whereby the earth element loses its grip upon the heart.

2. “And what, Rāhula, is the water element?”

“There is the internal water element and the external water element. Now, Rāhula, what is the internal water element?”

“All that is experienced within this body, all that is felt as liquid or watery, and considered to be yours, such as bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, and urine, and anything else that is seen as internal, belonging to oneself, and whatever that is watery and fluid, is called the “internal water element.” Now, whether reflecting on the internal water element or the external water element, all these are looked upon as the **water element**, which must be correctly seen as it truly is and with wisdom, in this manner: ‘This is *not* mine, this I am *not*, this is *not* my self.’

“Therefore, seeing it as it truly is, the mind becomes disenchanted with the water element, whereby the water element loses its grip upon the heart.

3. “And what, Rāhula, is the fire element?”

“There is the internal fire element and the external fire element. Now, Rāhula, what is the internal fire element?”

“All that is experienced within this body, all that is felt as heat or fiery, and considered to be yours, such as the warming up, the burning and decaying of whatever is tasted, drunk, eaten, or

consumed that gets thoroughly digested, or any internal fire, and anything else that is seen as internal, belonging to oneself, and whatever that is of a burning nature, that is fiery and warm, is called the “internal fire element.” Now, whether reflecting on the internal fire element or the external fire element, all these are looked upon as the **fire element**, which must be correctly seen as it truly is and with wisdom, in this manner: ‘This is *not* mine, this I am *not*, this is *not* my self.’

“Therefore, by seeing it as it truly is, the mind becomes disenchanted with the fire element, whereby the fire element loses its grip upon the heart.

4. “And what, Rāhula, is the air element?

“There is the internal air element and the external air element. Now, Rāhula, what is the internal air element?

“All that is experienced within this body, all that is felt as wind or airy, and considered to be yours, such as the upward-moving or the downward-moving winds or gases experienced within the body, winds in the belly or the bowels, and those that course through the limbs, the in and out breathing, and anything else that is seen as internal, belonging to oneself, and whatever that is of an airy nature or windy, that is called the “internal air element.” Now, whether reflecting on the internal air element or the external air element, all these are looked upon as the **air element**, which must be correctly seen as it truly is, and with wisdom in this manner: ‘This is *not* mine, this I am *not*, this is *not* my self.’

5. “And what, Rāhula, is the space element?

“There is the internal space element and the external space element. Now, Rāhula, what is the internal space element?

“All that is experienced within this body, all that is felt as space or spacious and considered to be yours, such as openings of the ears, nostrils, mouth, and whatever that is tasted, drunk, eaten, or swallowed, passing through an opening, being collected within a space, and released or excreted downward from such an opening that is seen as internal, belonging to oneself, and whatever that is of a spacious or roomy nature, that is called the “internal space element.” Now, whether reflecting on the internal space element or the external space element, all these are looked upon as the **space element**, which must be correctly seen as it truly is and with wisdom, in this manner: ‘This is *not* mine, this I am *not*, this is *not* my self.’

“Therefore, seeing it as it truly is, the mind becomes disenchanted with the space element, whereby the space element loses its grip upon the heart.

1. “Thus, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to earth.

“Now, when you cultivate a mind that is similar to earth, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

“Remember Rāhula, much like when people toss things that are both clean and dirty into the earth, the pure and the impure, throwing things like feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood into it; the earth does not become appalled, humiliated, or disgusted by them.

“So, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to earth. For when you do cultivate a mind that is similar to earth, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

2. “Also, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to water.

“Now, when you cultivate a mind that is similar to water, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

“Remember Rāhula, much like when people wash or throw things that are both clean and dirty into water, the pure and the impure, washing things like feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood; the water does not become appalled, humiliated, or disgusted by them.

“So, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to water. For when you do cultivate a mind that is similar to water, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

3. “Also, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to fire.

“Now, when you cultivate a mind that is similar to fire, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

“Remember Rāhula, much like when people burn things that are both clean and dirty into the fire, the pure and the impure, burning things like feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood; the fire does not become appalled, humiliated, or disgusted by them.

“So, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to fire. For when you do cultivate a mind that is similar to fire, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

4. “Also, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to air.

“Now, when you cultivate a mind that is similar to air, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

“Remember Rāhula, much like when the wind blows on things that are both clean and dirty, the pure and the impure, blowing on things like feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood; the air does not become appalled, humiliated, or disgusted by them.

“So, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to air. For when you do cultivate a mind that is similar to air, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

5. “Also, Rāhula, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to space.

“Now, when you cultivate a mind that is similar to space, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

“For, Rāhula, much like space that is not established or anchored anywhere, in the same manner, you must cultivate a mind that is similar to space. For when you do cultivate a mind that is similar to space, then any contacts experienced, be they pleasurable or painful in nature, will simply no longer invade your mind, nor take hold of the heart.

6. “Also, Rāhula, cultivate a heart that radiates loving kindness, for when you do cultivate and develop a heart that radiates loving kindness, then any ill-will arising in the mind will fade away.

7. “Also, Rāhula, cultivate a heart that radiates compassion, for when you do cultivate and develop a heart that radiates compassion, then any thoughts of cruelty arising in the mind will fade away.

8. “Also, Rāhula, cultivate a heart that radiates altruistic joy, for when you do cultivate and develop a heart that radiates altruistic joy, then any discontent arising in the mind will fade away.

9. “Also, Rāhula, cultivate a heart that radiates equanimity, for when you do cultivate and develop a heart that radiates equanimity, then any aversion arising in the mind will fade away.

10. “Rāhula, meditate on the repulsive, for when you do meditate on the repulsive, then lust fades away.

11. “Rāhula, meditate on impermanence, for when you do meditate on impermanence, then the conceit “I am” fades away.

12. “Rāhula, cultivate the mindfulness on the in and out breathing continuously, for when you do develop and cultivate intently the mindfulness on the in and out breathing, continuously, it brings with it many benefits and great results.

“And how, Rāhula, is the mindfulness on the in and out breathing developed, so that when continuously and intently cultivated, it would bring the meditator many benefits and great results?

“Here, Rāhula, the Bhikkhu, by going to the forest, or sitting at the root of a tree or in an empty kuti, folds his legs together, keeping his body straight, and brings his awareness inwards and rests it upon the breath, flowing in and out. Thus, he mindfully breathes in and mindfully breathes out.

1. While breathing in long, he knows “I breathe in long.” Breathing out long, he knows, “I breathe out long.”
2. Breathing in short, he knows, “I breathe in short.” Breathing out short, he knows, “I breathe out short.”
3. By training himself with the breath further, he pays attention to the whole breath, from beginning to end, as he experiences it flowing inward. Training further, he pays attention to the whole breath, from beginning to end, as he experiences it flowing outward.
4. Further, while breathing in, he settles down the breath’s movement within the physical body. While breathing out too, he settles down the breath’s movement within the physical body.
5. Training himself further, while breathing in, he is sensitive to experiencing joy. And, while breathing out too, he remains sensitive to experiencing joy.
6. Training himself further, while breathing in, he is sensitive to experiencing gladness. And, while breathing out too, he remains sensitive to experiencing gladness.
7. Training himself further, while breathing in, he becomes sensitive to his thoughts and feelings. And while breathing out too, he becomes sensitive to his thoughts and feelings.
8. Training himself further, while breathing in, he quiets down his thoughts and feelings, bringing them to complete stillness. And while breathing out too, he continues quieting down his thoughts and feelings, bringing them to complete stillness.
9. Training himself further, while breathing in, he is sensitive to experiencing the mind. And while breathing out too, he remains sensitive to experiencing the mind.
10. Training himself further, while breathing in, he gladdens the mind. And while breathing out too, he continues gladdening the mind.
11. Training himself further, he breathes in while collecting the mind in Samādhi by steadying it. And while breathing out too, he continues collecting the mind in Samādhi and steadies it.
12. Training himself further, he breathes in while freeing the mind. And while breathing out too, he continues freeing the mind.
13. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing and watching impermanence. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing and watching impermanence.
14. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing and seeing detachment. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing and seeing detachment.
15. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing cessation. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing cessation.

16. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing relinquishment as he keeps giving up. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing relinquishment, as he keeps giving up.

Therefore, Rāhula, when mindfulness on the in and out breathing is continuously developed and cultivated intently in this manner, then it truly brings with it many benefits and great results.

In fact, Rāhula, when mindfulness on the in and out breathing is continuously developed and cultivated intently in this manner, at the moment of your death, even the very last in or out breath will take place with your full awareness and knowledge of it, and not without it.

This is what The Blessed One said, and the Venerable Rāhula was delighted and joyful in listening to The Blessed One's words.

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