

SN 46.51
Samyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Mahāvagga Samyutta
The Connected Discourses on The Great Section
Magga Samyutta
Connected Discourses on the Path
Sākaccha Vagga
The Section on Discussing the Dhamma

Āhāra Sutta
“That Which Nourishes”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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Once, while staying in Sāvattihī, The Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus and said:

“Bhikkhus, I will instruct you on what it is, that nourishes and feeds the five hindrances, and that which starves them.

“In addition, Bhikkhus, I will teach you on what it is, that nourishes and feeds the Seven Factors of Awakening, allowing each of them to develop into maturity, as well as caution you as to what depletes and inhibits their growth; starving them from ever reaching healthy maturity, and thus their fullest potential.

“Now, listen carefully to what I shall say.”

“Yes, Bhante,” the Bhikkhus replied.

The Blessed One then continued by instructing,

A. That which Nourishes the Hindering Obstructions (Nīvaraṇa)

AI. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of sensual desire that had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen sensual desire?

“When, Bhikkhus, one witnesses a sign that is reckoned as pleasurable or beautiful to experience, then, while allowing his mindfulness to drift away and be thus pulled into that sign, he frequently goes back to it and gives it his constant unwise radical attention. Now, this itself will instigate and keep fueling that sense desire into existence; nourishing and helping unarisen sensual desire to arise in his mind, while also increasing and further perpetuating the growth of any sensual desire that is already present.

A2. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of ill will or the sense of loathing and hatred that had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen ill will or the sense of loathing and hatred?

“When, Bhikkhus, one witnesses a sign that is reckoned as repulsive, generating resistance in oneself towards the experience, then, while allowing his mindfulness to drift away and be thus pulled into that sign, he frequently goes back to it and gives it his constant unwise radical attention. Now, this itself will instigate and keep fueling that ill will or sense of loathing and hatred into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen ill will or sense of loathing and hatred to arise in his mind, while also increasing and further perpetuating the growth of any ill will or sense of loathing and hatred that is already present.

A3. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of drowsiness and sloth or procrastination that had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen drowsiness and sloth or procrastination?

“When, Bhikkhus, one experiences boredom, tiredness of the body or mind, sluggishness, irritability, becomes drowsy after a heavy meal, or feels lethargic, then, while allowing his mindfulness to drift away and be thus pulled into such states of being, he frequently goes back to them and gives them his constant unwise radical attention. Now, this itself will instigate and keep fueling those states of drowsiness and sloth or procrastination into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen drowsiness and sloth or procrastination to arise in his mind, while also increasing and further perpetuating the growth of any drowsiness and sloth or procrastination that are already present.

A4. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of restlessness and remorse or worry that had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen restlessness and remorse or worry?

“When, Bhikkhus, one experiences the heart being unsettled, lacking calm and tranquility, while allowing his mindfulness to drift away and be thus pulled into thoughts and worries that unsettled his sense of peace, then, he frequently goes back to them and gives them his constant unwise radical attention. Now, this itself will instigate and keep fueling those states of restlessness and remorse or worry into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen restlessness and remorse or worry to arise in his mind, while also increasing and further perpetuating the growth of any restlessness and remorse or worry that are already present.

A5. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of skeptical doubts, uncertainty, or perplexity that had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen skeptical doubts, uncertainty, or perplexity?

“When, Bhikkhus, one experiences mind objects (*dhammā*) that cause states of anxiety and uncertainty, then, while allowing his mindfulness to drift away and be thus pulled into thoughts or states of uncertainty, he frequently goes back to them and gives them his constant unwise radical attention. Now, this itself will instigate and keep fueling those states of skeptical doubts, uncertainty, or perplexity into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen skeptical doubts, uncertainty, or perplexity to arise in his mind, while also increasing and further perpetuating the growth of any skeptical doubts, uncertainty, or perplexity that are already present.

B. That which Nourishes the Seven Factors of Awakening (Sambojjhaṅga)

B1. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **mindfulness awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen mindfulness awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one brings himself to live life with mindfulness and full awareness through the means of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, in order to activate the mindfulness awakening factor, and thus, while further encouraging his attention to stay with those states, he frequently goes back to them and gives them his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the mindfulness awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen mindfulness awakening factor to arise in his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen mindfulness awakening factor.

B2. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **investigation of states awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen investigation of states awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one intentionally and carefully probes those mind objects, qualities and states of mind that are either skillful or unskillful, that are either blameless or blamable, discerning those that are bright and pure from those that are dark and impure, while further encouraging his attention to stay with that spirit of healthy inquiry, he thus frequently goes back to that investigative awakening factor and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the investigation of states awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen investigation of states awakening factor to arise in his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen investigation of states awakening factor.

B3. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **energy awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen energy awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one intentionally and persistently takes initiative, without procrastinating, delaying, while exerting himself and encouraging his attention to stay with that energy to push through his inertia, he thus frequently goes back to it and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the energy awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen energy awakening factor to arise in his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen energy awakening factor.

B4. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **spiritual joy awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen spiritual joy awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one places his focus upon any or all those qualities that inspire him to be on this Path, such as reflecting on his development and transformation through this training, which brings up joy in his heart, along with reflecting on the especially refreshing qualities of The Triple Gem, as he continuously encourages his attention to stay with that invigorating spiritual joy, he thus frequently goes back to it and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the spiritual joy awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen spiritual joy awakening factor to arise in his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen spiritual joy awakening factor.

B5. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **tranquility of mind awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen tranquility of mind awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one observes the body becoming tranquil, along with the heart that is becoming tranquil and open, then, he frequently goes back to this state of tranquility and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the tranquility of mind awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen tranquility of mind awakening factor to arise in his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen tranquility of mind awakening factor.

B6. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **collectedness of mind awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen collectedness of mind awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one brings the mind to rest upon the sign of that, which establishes the heart in deep serenity *and* maintains it there without dispersing it, while the mind becomes more stable and firmly settled, he thus frequently goes back to this state, giving it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the collectedness of mind awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen collectedness of mind awakening factor to arise in

his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen collectedness of mind awakening factor.

B7. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which nourishes the arising of the **equanimity awakening factor** which had not yet arisen, and leads to the increase and further growth of the already arisen equanimity awakening factor?

“When, Bhikkhus, one induces in himself a balanced attitude towards everything, whether internal or external, encouraging the heart to feel the quiet safety that equanimity brings to everything, while he supports it further by encouraging situations and choices for himself that help bring about this equanimous state of wellbeing, he thus frequently goes back to this state, giving it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will keep fueling the equanimity awakening factor, instigating it into existence; nourishing and helping the unarisen equanimity awakening factor to arise in his mind, while further increasing and expanding the growth of the already arisen equanimity awakening factor.

C. That which Deprives the Obstructions from their Nourishment to Persist

C1. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the yet unarisen sensual desire from its nourishment, thereby ending it right there on the spot, not letting it sprout, while also not letting the already arisen sensual desire to either become strong, or dominate the heart?

“When, Bhikkhus, one brings up the sign, impression, or image of that which is repulsive, rousing a sense of unmistakable and immediate disgust towards the object, while compelling his mindfulness to stay with that aspect, instead of the seemingly pleasurable traits and features being experienced at that moment, this in itself then, obliterates the very pull the sensual desire was to have upon him. In this manner, he frequently goes back to this awareness of the repulsive and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen sensual desire from its nourishment, thereby starving and ending it right there on the spot, in addition to greatly weakening and eliminating the growth of any sensual desire that is already present.

C2. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the yet unarisen ill will or sense of loathing or hatred from its nourishment, thereby ending it right there on the spot, not letting it sprout, while also not letting the already arisen ill will, sense of loathing or hatred to either become strong, or dominate the heart?

“When, Bhikkhus, one infuses within himself the powerfully freeing presence of loving kindness which permeates the heart, while compelling his mindfulness to stay with that liberating feeling of the heart’s release through loving kindness, instead of the seemingly painful or unpleasant traits or features being experienced at that moment, this then leads to obliterating the very

resistance, which ill will or hatred were to have generated within him. Thus, he frequently goes back to this awareness of the heart's release through loving kindness, and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen ill will or sense of loathing or hatred from its nourishment, thereby starving and ending it right there on the spot, in addition to greatly weakening and eliminating the growth of any ill will or sense of loathing or hatred that is already present.

C3. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the yet unarisen drowsiness and sloth or procrastination from their nourishment, thereby ending them right there on the spot, not letting them sprout, while also not letting the already arisen drowsiness and sloth or procrastination to either become strong or dominate the heart?

“When, Bhikkhus, one intentionally and persistently takes initiative, without procrastinating or delaying to take action, while exerting himself and encouraging his attention to stay with that energy to push through his inertia, he thus frequently goes back to it and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen drowsiness and sloth or procrastination from their nourishment, thereby starving and ending them right there on the spot, in addition to greatly weakening and eliminating the growth of any drowsiness and sloth or procrastination that are already present.

C4. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the yet unarisen restlessness and remorse or worry from their nourishment, thereby ending them right there on the spot, not letting them sprout, while also not letting the already arisen restlessness and remorse or worry to either become strong or dominate the heart?

“When, Bhikkhus, one permeates his heart with a sense of peace and tranquility, instead of allowing himself to be taken by the seemingly agitating traits or features being experienced at that moment, this leads to obliterating the effects that restlessness and remorse or worry were to have upon him. Thus, he frequently goes back to this awareness of peace and tranquility spreading throughout his heart, and gives it his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen restlessness and remorse or worry from their nourishment, thereby starving and ending them right there on the spot, in addition to greatly weakening and eliminating the growth of any restlessness and remorse or worry, that are already present.

C5. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the yet unarisen skeptical doubt, uncertainty, or perplexity from its nourishment, thereby ending it right there on the spot, not letting it sprout, while also not letting the already arisen skeptical doubt, uncertainty, or perplexity to either become strong or dominate the heart?

“When, Bhikkhus, one intentionally and carefully probes those mind objects, qualities and states of mind that are either skillful or unskillful, either blameless or blamable, discerning those that

are bright and pure from those that are dark and impure, while further encouraging his attention to stay with that spirit of healthy inquiry, he thus frequently goes back to honestly looking at these factors and gives them his constant wise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen skeptical doubt, uncertainty, or perplexity from its nourishment, thereby starving and ending it right there on the spot, in addition to greatly weakening and eliminating the growth of any skeptical doubt, uncertainty, or perplexity that is already present.

D. That which Deprives the Awakening Factors from their Nourishment

D1. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **mindfulness awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen mindfulness awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one does not bring himself to live life with mindfulness and full awareness, through the means of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, in order to activate the mindfulness awakening factor, nor does he encourage his attention to stay on them, and thus he constantly goes back to living with unwise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen mindfulness awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen mindfulness awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.

D2. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **investigation of states awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen investigation of states awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one neither intentionally nor carefully probes those mind objects or states of mind that are either skillful or unskillful, when he does not investigate and discern those qualities that are blamable from those that are blameless, those that are bright and pure from those that are dark and impure, thus he does not encourage himself to keep his attention with that spirit of healthy inquiry, and instead constantly goes back to living with unwise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen investigation of states awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen investigation of states awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.

D3. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **energy awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not

letting the already arisen energy awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one neither intentionally nor persistently takes initiative, and lives with procrastination, always delaying to take action, and not exerting himself, he constantly encourages his attention to stay complacent without pushing himself out of his inertia. Thus, he continuously keeps falling back to living with unwise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen energy awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen energy awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.

D4. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **spiritual joy awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen spiritual joy awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one does not place his focus upon any of those qualities that inspire him to be on this Path, such as reflecting on his development and transformation through this training, the states of mind that bring up joy in the heart, nor appreciating the especially refreshing qualities of The Triple Gem, he thus foregoes all that, which invigorate the heart, as he misses out, due to his unwise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen spiritual joy awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen spiritual joy awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.

D5. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **tranquility of mind awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen tranquility of mind awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one observes neither the body nor the heart becoming tranquil, and moreover, does not seek to go back to this state of tranquility with sufficient frequency, and instead constantly goes back to living with unwise radical attention, he thus lets the body and heart live with agitation.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen tranquility of mind awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen tranquility of mind awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.

D6. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **collectedness of mind awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout,

while also not letting the already arisen collectedness of mind awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one does not bring the mind to rest upon the sign of that, which establishes the heart in deep serenity, nor maintains it there without dispersing it, and by not putting enough focus on it to make the heart become more stable and firmly settled, he thus misses out, due to his unwise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen collectedness of mind awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen collectedness of mind awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.

D7. “And what, Bhikkhus, is that which deprives the not yet arisen **equanimity awakening factor** from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen equanimity awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential?

“When, Bhikkhus, one does not induce in himself a balanced attitude towards everything, whether internal or external, neither encouraging the heart to feel the quiet safety that equanimity brings to everything, nor does he support it by further heartening himself, through greeting situations with a deep sense of balanced safety; and thus by not putting enough focus on the mind to make it become more balanced and equanimous, he misses out, due to his unwise radical attention.

“Now, this itself will deprive the not yet arisen equanimity awakening factor from its necessary nourishment, thereby starving and not allowing it to sprout, while also not letting the already arisen equanimity awakening factor to grow and reach healthy maturity, and thus its fullest potential.”

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