

## **RIGHT VIEW**

# **Understanding Is the First Step: The Buddha's Teachings on Right View**

**Barre Center for Buddhist Studies**

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## Schedule

Friday 7:30-9pm

Introduction,  
MN 141.24, MN 117.6-8,  
Metta Sutta (last verse),  
Snp 4.3, 4.5, 4.9, 4.12 (see also 4.8 & 4.13)

Saturday 9-12am Suttas on Right View including some of the following:

MN 9, MN 74,  
SN 44.7, 44.8, 44.10, MN 72,  
AN 1.268-270, 5.25, 10.93, 10.96

Saturday 2-5pm Suttas on Wrong View including some of the following:

DN 1, DN 2 (section on the 6 teachers), DN 9,  
MN 22, MN 38, SN 22:85 - (focus for most of the afternoon will be on  
these 3),  
SN 36.21, AN 3.61, SN 42.8, MN 101

Saturday 7:30-9pm SN 12.15

Sunday 9-10:30am Suttas further delineating Right View including

Udana 1.10 (Bahiya), DN 11 (last 1/2 of Kevaddha), MN 121 (Shorter  
Sutta on Emptiness)

Sunday 10:45-12am

Nagarjuna - MMK 18, 24, 25

## MN 141

2. “At Benares, bhikkhus, in the Deer Park at Isipatana the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, set rolling the matchless Wheel of the Dhamma, which cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world—that is, the announcing, teaching, describing, establishing, revealing, expounding, and exhibiting of **the Four Noble Truths**. Of what four?

3. “The announcing, teaching, describing, establishing, revealing, expounding, and exhibiting of **the noble truth of dukkha**. The announcing, teaching, describing, establishing, revealing, expounding, and exhibiting of **the noble truth of the origin of dukkha...of the noble truth of the cessation of dukkha...of the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha**.

....

23. “And what, friends, is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, **right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration**.

24. “And what, friends, is right view? **Knowledge of dukkha, knowledge of the origin of dukkha, knowledge of the cessation of dukkha, and knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of dukkha**—this is called right view.

## MN 117

6. “And what, bhikkhus, is right view? Right view, I say, is twofold: there is right view that is affected by taints (*āsavas*), partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; (*upadhivepakka*) and there is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

7. “And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is affected by the *āsavas*, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? ‘There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are in the world good and virtuous recluses and brahmins who have realized for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.’ This is right view affected by *āsavas*, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions.

8. “And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The wisdom, the faculty of wisdom, the power of wisdom, the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor, the path factor of right view in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path:<sup>1103</sup> this is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

**1103.** This definition defines supramundane right view as the wisdom (*paññā*) found among the 37 aids to enlightenment as a faculty, power, enlightenment factor, and path factor. The definition is formulated by way of the cognitive function rather than the objective content of right view. Elsewhere (MN 141.24) the right view of the path is defined as knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. We may understand that the conceptual comprehension of the four truths falls under mundane right view, while the direct penetration of the truths by realizing *Nibbāna* with the path constitutes supramundane right view.

## Metta Sutta (Pali)

### **ditthiñ ca anupagamma**

*ditthi* = view

*ca* = whatever

*anupagamma* = to undergo, go (in) to, to begin, undertake

Amaravati:	By not holding to fixed views,
Olendzki:	Without falling into mistaken views,
Saddhatissa:	Not falling into wrong views,
Norman:	Not subscribing to wrong views,
Basham:	Avoiding all false views,
Rahula:	Not falling into wrong views,
Woodward:	by passing over wrongful view,
Gunaratana:	Not falling into erroneous views,
Aronson:	Without wrong view,
Narada:	Not falling into error,
Piyadassi:	Not falling into wrong views
Buddharakkhita:	Holding no more to wrong beliefs,
Khantipalo:	But when he lives quite free from any view,
Ñanamoli:	But he that traffics not with views
Dhammayut:	Not taken with views,
Thanissaro:	Not taken with views,

## MN 9 - Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta - The Sutta on Right View

### Majjhima Nikāya 9 Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta The Discourse on Right View

Translated from the Pali by Ñānamoli Thera edited and revised by Bhikkhu  
Bodhi

For free distribution only, by arrangement with the Buddhist Publication  
Society  
(excerpts)

1. ... The Venerable Sāriputta said this:

2. "One of right view, one of right view' is said, friends. In what way is a noble disciple one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

(The Wholesome and the Unwholesome)

3. "When, friends, a noble disciple understands the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, in that way he is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

4. "And what, friends, is the unwholesome, what is the root of the unwholesome, what is the wholesome, what is the root of the wholesome?  
**Killing living beings** is unwholesome; **taking what is not given** is unwholesome; **misconduct in sensual pleasures** is unwholesome; **false speech** is unwholesome; **malicious speech** is unwholesome; **harsh speech** is unwholesome; **gossip** is unwholesome; **covetousness** is unwholesome; **ill will** is unwholesome; **wrong view** is unwholesome. This is called the unwholesome.

5. "And what is the root of the unwholesome? **Greed** is a root of the

unwholesome; **hate** is a root of the unwholesome; **delusion** is a root of the unwholesome. This is called the root of the unwholesome.

6. "And what is the wholesome? [Not breaking the precepts] is wholesome; non-covetousness is wholesome; non-ill will is wholesome; right view is wholesome. This is called the wholesome.

7. "And what is the root of the wholesome? Non-greed is a root of the wholesome; non-hate is a root of the wholesome; non-delusion is a root of the wholesome. This is called the root of the wholesome.

8. "When a noble disciple has thus understood the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am,' and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of dukkha. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma and has arrived at this true Dhamma."

#### (Nutriment)

9. Saying, "Good, friend," the bhikkhus delighted and rejoiced in the Venerable Sāriputta's words. Then they asked him a further question: "But, friend, might there be another way in which a noble disciple is one of right view...and has arrived at this true Dhamma?" -- "There might be, friends.

10. "When, friends, a noble disciple understands **nutriment**, the **origin of nutriment**, the **cessation of nutriment**, and **the way leading to the cessation of nutriment**, in that way he is one of right view...and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

11. "And what is nutriment, what is the origin of nutriment, what is the cessation of nutriment, what is the way leading to the cessation of nutriment? There are these four kinds of nutriment for the maintenance of beings that already have come to be and for the support of those seeking a new existence. What four? They are **physical food** as nutriment, gross or subtle; **contact** as the

second; **mental volition** as the third; and **consciousness** as the fourth. With the **arising of craving** there is the **arising of nutriment**. With the **cessation of craving** there is the **cessation of nutriment**. The way leading to the cessation of nutriment is just this Noble **Eightfold Path**; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

12. "When a noble disciple has thus understood nutriment, the origin of nutriment, the cessation of nutriment, and the way leading to the cessation of nutriment, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to greed, ... to aversion, ... to the view and conceit 'I am,' and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of dukkha. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view...."

(The Four Noble Truths)

13. Saying, "Good, friend," the bhikkhus delighted and rejoiced ..., might there be another way in which a noble disciple is one of right view...and has arrived at this true Dhamma?" -- "There might be, friends.

14. "When, friends, a noble disciple understands **dukkha**, the **origin of dukkha**, the **cessation of dukkha**, and the **way leading to the cessation of dukkha**, in that way he is one of right view...and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

15. "And what is dukkha, what is the origin of dukkha, what is the cessation of dukkha, what is the way leading to the cessation of dukkha? Birth is dukkha; aging is dukkha; sickness is dukkha; death is dukkha; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are dukkha; not to obtain what one wants is dukkha; in short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are dukkha. This is called dukkha.

16. "And what is the origin of dukkha? It is craving, which brings renewal of being, is accompanied by delight and lust, and delights in this and that; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for becoming and craving for non-becoming. This is called the origin of dukkha.

17. "And what is the cessation of dukkha? It is the remainderless fading away



and ceasing, the giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting of that same craving. This is called the cessation of dukkha.

18. "And what is the way leading to the cessation of dukkha? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view...right concentration. This is called the way leading to the cessation of dukkha.

19. "When a noble disciple has thus understood dukkha, the origin of dukkha, the cessation of dukkha, and the way leading to the cessation of dukkha...he here and now makes an end of dukkha. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view...and has arrived at this true Dhamma."

[The pattern of the 4 Noble Truths is now repeated for the following]:

Aging and Death - [described]; arises and ceases dependent on

Birth - [described]; arises and ceases dependent on

Becoming - 3 kinds of becoming: sense-sphere, fine-material & immaterial; arises and ceases dependent on

Clinging - 4 kinds of clinging: sensual, views, rituals & observances, doctrine of self; arises and ceases dependent on

Craving - 6 classes of craving: [6 sense objects: forms, sounds, etc.]; arises and ceases dependent on

Feeling - 6 classes of feeling: feeling born of eye-contact, etc.; arises and ceases dependent on

Contact - 6 classes of contact: contact born of eye-contact, etc.; arises and ceases dependent on

The Sixfold Base - 6 bases: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; arises and ceases dependent on

Mentality-Materiality - feeling, perception, volition, contact & attention; 4 elements; arises and ceases dependent on

Consciousness - 6 classes of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; arises and ceases dependent on

Fabrications - 3 kinds of fabrications: bodily, verbal, mental; arises and ceases dependent on

Ignorance - not knowing the 4 Noble Truths; arises and ceases dependent on

Āsavas - sensual desire, becoming, ignorance; arises and ceases dependent on Ignorance

71. "When a noble disciple has thus understood the āsavas, the origin of the āsavas, the cessation of the āsavas, and the way leading to the cessation of the āsavas, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am,' and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of dukkha. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma and has arrived at this true Dhamma."

That is what the Venerable Sāriputta said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Venerable Sāriputta's words.

## MN 74

### Majjhima Nikāya 74 Dīghanaka Sutta To LongNails

[The story of the first time Sāriputta became fully awakened].

Aggivessana: "Master Gotama, I am of the view, of the opinion, that 'All is not pleasing to me.'"

The Buddha: "But even this view of yours, Aggivessana — 'All is not pleasing to me' — is even that not pleasing to you?"

Aggivessana: "Even if this view of mine were pleasing to me, Master Gotama, it would still be the same, it would still be the same."

“Well, Aggivessana, there are plenty in the world who say: ‘It too would be the same, it too would be the same,’ yet they do not abandon that view and they take up still some other view. Those are few in the world who say: ‘It too would be the same, it too would be the same,’ and who abandon that view and do not take up some other view.<sup>733</sup>

[The conversation eventually switches to *vedana* and their impermanance; this leads to Sāriputta's awakening.]

733. Buddha's statement might be understood to point to an unsatisfactoriness inherent in the sceptic's position: it is psychologically uncomfortable to insist on remaining in the dark. Thus most sceptics, while professing a rejection of all views, surreptitiously adopt some definite view, while a few abandon their scepticism to seek a path to personal knowledge.

## SN 44.7

### Moggallana Sutta

Vacchagotta approached the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna ... and said to him:

“How is it, Master Moggallāna, is the world eternal?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this: ‘The world is eternal.’”

“Then, Master Moggallāna, is the world not eternal?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this either: ‘The world is not eternal.’”

“How is it then, Master Moggallāna, is the world finite?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this: ‘The world is finite.’”

“Then, Master Moggallāna, is the world infinite?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this either: ‘The world is infinite.’”

“How is it then, Master Moggallāna, are the soul and the body the same?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this: ‘The soul and the body are the same.’”

“Then, Master Moggallāna, is the soul one thing, the body another?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this either: ‘The soul is one thing, the body is another.’”

“How is it, Master Moggallāna, does a Tathāgata exist after death?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this: ‘A Tathāgata exists after death.’”

“Then, Master Moggallāna, does a Tathāgata not exist after death?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this either: ‘A Tathāgata does not exist after death.’”

“How is it, then, Master Moggallāna, does a Tathāgata both exist and not exist after death?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this either: ‘A Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death.’”

“Then, Master Moggallāna, does a Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death?”

“Vaccha, the Blessed One has not declared this either: ‘A Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’”

“What is the cause and reason why, when the ascetic Gotama is asked such questions, he does not give such answers?”

“Vaccha, wanderers of other sects **regard the eye thus**: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’ They **regard the ear ... the nose ... the tongue ... the body ... the mind thus**: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’ Therefore, when the wanderers of other sects are asked such questions, they give such answers as: ‘The world is eternal’ ... or ‘A Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“But, Vaccha, a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One, regards the eye thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ He regards the ear ... the mind thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ Therefore, when a Tathāgata is asked such questions, he does not give such answers.”

## SN 44.8

### Vacchagotta Sutta

Vacchagotta approached the Buddha, asked the same 10 questions about the undeclared points, and got the same 10 non-answers.

“What is the cause and reason why, when Master Gotama is asked such questions, he does not give such answers?”

“Vaccha, wanderers of other sects regard **form as self**, or **self as possessing form**, or **form as in self**, or **self as in form**. They regard **feeling as self ... perception as self ... mental activities as self ... consciousness as self**, or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. Therefore, when the wanderers of other sects are asked such questions, they give such answers as: ‘The world is eternal’ ... or ‘A Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’ But, Vaccha, a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One, does not regard form as self ... or self as in consciousness. Therefore, when a Tathāgata is asked such questions, he does not give such answers.”

## SN 44.10

### **Samyutta Nikāya 44.10 Ananda Sutta To Ananda (on Self, No Self, and Not-self)**

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta approached the Blessed One ... and said to him:

“How is it now, Master Gotama, is there a self?”

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

“Then, Master Gotama, is there no self?”

A second time the Blessed One was silent.

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta rose from his seat and departed.

Then, not long after the wanderer Vacchagotta had left, the Venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “Why is it, venerable sir, that when the Blessed One was questioned by the wanderer Vacchagotta, he did not answer?”

“If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, ‘Is there a self?’ I had answered, ‘There is a self,’ this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are eternalists. And if, when I was asked by him, ‘Is there no self?’ I had answered, ‘There is no self,’ this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are annihilationists.

“If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, ‘Is there a self?’ I had answered, ‘There is a self,’ would this have been consistent on my part with the arising of the knowledge that ‘all phenomena are nonself’?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“And if, when I was asked by him, ‘Is there no self?’ I had answered, ‘There is no self,’ the wanderer Vacchagotta, already confused, would have fallen into even greater confusion, thinking, ‘It seems that the self I formerly had does not exist now.’” <sup>385</sup>

385. Probably this means that Vacchagotta would have interpreted the Buddha’s denial as a rejection of his empirical personality, which (on account of his inclination towards views of self) he would have been identifying as a self. We should carefully heed the two reasons the Buddha does not declare, “There is no self”: not because he recognizes a transcendent self of some kind (as some interpreters allege), or because he is concerned only with delineating “a strategy of perception” devoid of ontological implications (as others hold), but (i) because such a mode of expression was used by the annihilationists, and the Buddha wanted to avoid aligning his teaching with theirs; and (ii) because he wished to avoid causing confusion in those already attached to the idea of self. The Buddha declares that “all phenomena are nonself” (*sabbe dhammā anattā*), which means that if one seeks a self anywhere one will not find one. Since “all phenomena” includes both the fabricated and the unfabricated, this precludes an utterly transcendent, ineffable self.



**MN 72**

**Majjhima Nikāya 72**  
**Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta**  
To Vacchagotta on Fire

"Which way does the fire go when it goes out?"

## AN 1.268-270

268 (1) “It is impossible and inconceivable, bhikkhus, that a person accomplished in view could consider any fabricated phenomenon (*sankhāra*) as permanent (*nicca*); there is no such possibility. But it is possible that a worldling might consider some fabricated phenomenon as permanent; there is such a possibility.”

269 (2) “It is impossible and inconceivable, bhikkhus, that a person accomplished in view could consider any fabricated phenomenon (*sankhāra*) as pleasurable (*sukha*); there is no such possibility. But it is possible that a worldling might consider some fabricated phenomenon as pleasurable; there is such a possibility.”

270 (3) “It is impossible and inconceivable, bhikkhus, that a person accomplished in view could consider anything (*dhamma*) as a self (*atta*); there is no such possibility. But it is possible that a worldling might consider something as a self; there is such a possibility.”

1. 15. 1.

Aṭṭhānametaṃ bhikkhave anavakāso, yaṃ diṭṭhisampanno puggalo kañci **saṅkhāraṃ niccato** upagaccheyya, netam ṭhānaṃ vijjati. Ṭhānañca kho etaṃ bhikkhave vijjati, yaṃ puthujjano kañci saṅkhāraṃ niccato upagaccheyya, ṭhānametaṃ vijjati.124

1. 15. 2.

Aṭṭhānametaṃ bhikkhave anavakāso, yaṃ diṭṭhisampanno puggalo kañci **saṅkhāraṃ sukhatō** upagaccheyya, netam ṭhānaṃ vijjati. Ṭhānañca kho etaṃ bhikkhave vijjati, yaṃ puthujjano kañci saṅkhāraṃ sukhatō upagaccheyya, ṭhānametaṃ vijjati.

1. 15. 3.

Aṭṭhānametaṃ bhikkhave anavakāso, yaṃ diṭṭhisampanno puggalo kañci **dhammaṃ attato** upagaccheyya, netam ṭhānaṃ vijjati. Ṭhānañca kho etaṃ

bhikkhave vijjati, yaṃ puthujjano kañci dhammaṃ attato upagaccheyya,  
ṭhānametaṃ vijjati.

## AN 5.25

### Assisted

“Bhikkhus, when right view is assisted by five factors, it has liberation of mind as its fruit, liberation of mind as its fruit and benefit; it has liberation by wisdom as its fruit, liberation by wisdom as its fruit and benefit. What five? Here, right view is assisted by **virtuous behavior, learning, discussion, calm, and insight**. When right view is assisted by these five factors, it has liberation of mind as its fruit, liberation of mind as its fruit and benefit; it has liberation by wisdom as its fruit, liberation by wisdom as its fruit and benefit.”

## AN 10.93

### Ditthi Sutta - Views

The householder Anāthapiṇḍika went to the park of the wanderers of other sects. The wanderers then said to him:

“Tell us, householder, what is the ascetic Gotama’s view?”

“Bhante, I don’t know the Blessed One’s view in its entirety.”

“Then tell us, what is the bhikkhus’ view?”

“Bhante, I also don’t know the bhikkhus’ view in its entirety.”

“Then tell us, what is your view?”

“You tell me yours first.”

One said “‘The world is eternal; this alone is true, anything else is wrong’: such is my view, householder .”

Others proclaimed each of the other 9 undeclared points as “‘true, anything else is wrong’: such is my view, householder .”

When this was said, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said to those wanderers: “Bhante, this venerable one said thus: “‘The world is eternal; this alone is true, anything else is wrong’: such is my view, householder.’ This view of his has arisen because of his own careless attention or conditioned by someone else’s utterance. Now this view has come into being and is conditioned, a product of volition, dependently originated. But whatever has come into being and is conditioned, a product of volition, dependently originated, is impermanent. Whatever is impermanent is dukkha. It is just dukkha that he is attached to and holds to.” And the same was said by Anāthapiṇḍika for each of the other 9 views.

When this was said, those wanderers said to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika: “We have each explained our own views, householder. Now tell us your view.”

“Bhante, whatever has come into being and is conditioned, a product of volition, dependently originated, is impermanent. Whatever is impermanent is dukkha. Whatever is dukkha is not mine; I am not this; this is not my self. That is my view.”

“Householder, whatever has come into being and is conditioned, a product of volition, dependently originated, is impermanent. Whatever is impermanent is dukkha. It is just dukkha that you are attached to and hold to.”

“Bhante, whatever has come into being and is conditioned, a product of volition, dependently originated, is impermanent. Whatever is impermanent is dukkha. Having clearly seen what is dukkha as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine; I am not this; this is not my self,’ I understand as it really is the superior escape from it.”

When this was said, those wanderers sat silenced, disconcerted, hunched over, downcast, glum, and speechless. Anāthapiṇḍika, having understood that those wanderers [sat] silenced ... and speechless, rose from his seat and went to the Blessed One. After reporting the entire conversation, the Blessed One said, “Good, good, householder! It is in such a way that those hollow men should from time to time be thoroughly refuted with reasoned argument.”

## AN 10.96

### Kokanuda Sutta To Kokanuda (On Viewpoints)

The wanderer Kokanada, rose as the night was receding and went to the hot springs to bathe. He saw the Venerable Ānanda from a distance and said to him:

“How is it, sir, do you hold the view: ‘The world is eternal; this alone is true, anything else is wrong’?”

“I don’t hold such a view, friend.” [and the same for the other 9 undeclared points.]

“Could it then be that you do not know and see?”

“It isn’t the case, friend, that I do not know and see. I know and see.”

“How, friend, should the meaning of this statement be understood?”

“‘The world is eternal; this alone is true, anything else is wrong,’ friend: this is a speculative view. And all the others are also speculative views.

“To the extent, friend, that there is a speculative view, a basis for views,<sup>2131</sup> a foundation for views, obsession with views, the origination of views, and the uprooting of views, I know and see this. When I know and see this, why should I say: ‘I do not know and see.’ I know, friend, I see.”

2131. The Aṅguttara Nikāya commentary mentions eight causes/basis for views: the aggregates, ignorance, contact, perception, thought, careless attention, bad friends, and another person’s utterance (khandhā, avijjā, phasso, saññā, vitakko, ayoniso manasikāro, pāpamittā, paraghoso).

## DN 1

### Dīgha Nikāya 1

#### Brahmajāla Sutta: The Supreme Net

What the Teaching Is Not

(see summary chart in Insight Journal, Fall 2003: <http://dharma.org/ij/index.htm>)

62 Wrong Views (mostly about a Self):

18 speculative theories about the past

including

remembering past lives and making assertions based on those memories (includes some interesting mythology)

being a logician, a reasoner. Hammering it out by reason, following ones own line of thought in various way, including:

“Whatever is called eye or ear or nose or tongue or body, that is impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, liable to change. But what is called thought, or mind or consciousness, that is a self that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same for ever and ever!”

“The self and the world have arisen by chance.”

attains to such a state of concentration that he dwells perceiving

the world as finite

the world as infinite

the world as finite up-and-down, and infinite across

Eel-Wriggling out of

ignorance

fear of attachment

fear of cross-examination

being dull and stupid

44 speculative theories about the future

including

the self after death is healthy and conscious and (1) material, (2)

immaterial, (3) both material and immaterial, (4) neither material

nor immaterial, (5) finite, (6) infinite, (7) both, (8) neither, (9) of



uniform perception, (10) of varied perception, (11) of limited perception, (12) of unlimited perception, (13) wholly happy, (14) wholly miserable, (15) both, (16) neither

the self after death is healthy and unconscious and (1) material, (2) immaterial, (3) both, (4) neither, (5) finite, (6) infinite, (7) both, (8) neither.

the self after death is healthy and neither conscious nor unconscious and (1) material, (2) immaterial, (3) both, (4) neither, (5) finite, (6) infinite, (7) both, (8) neither.

Annihilationists:

“Since this self is material, composed of the four great elements, the product of mother and father, at the breaking-up of the body it is annihilated and perishes, and does not exist after death. This is the way in which this self is annihilated.”

divine, material, belonging to the sense-sphere - at death is annihilated and perishes

divine, material, mind-made, complete with all its parts, not defective in any sense-organ...

4 Immaterial States (higher jhanas) as self

Nibbāna Here and Now:

“In as far as this self, being furnished and endowed with the fivefold sense-pleasures, indulges in them, then that is when the self realizes the highest Nibbāna here and now.”

4 Jhanas as self

## DN 2

### Dīgha Nikāya 2.16-33 Sāmaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

King Ajatasattu asked a half dozen ascetics and Brahmins, “Can you point to a reward visible here and now as a fruit of the spiritual life?” Their answers provide details of 6 Wrong Views that were prevalent at the time of the Buddha:

Pūraṇa Kassapa:

**An Amoralist - No Karmic Results:** “By the doer or instigator of a thing, by one who cuts or causes to be cut, by one who burns or causes to be burnt, by one who causes grief and weariness, by one who agitates or causes agitation, who causes life to be taken or that which is not given to be taken, commits burglary, carries off booty, commits robbery, lies in ambush, commits adultery and tells lies, no evil is done. If with a razor-sharp wheel one were to make of this earth one single mass and heap of flesh, there would be no evil as a result of that, no evil would accrue. If one were to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing, slaying, cutting or causing to be cut, burning or causing to be burnt, there would be no evil as a result of that, no evil would accrue. Or if one were to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving and causing to be given, sacrificing and causing to be sacrificed, there would be no merit as a result of that, no merit would accrue. In giving, self-control, abstinence and telling the truth, there is no merit, and no merit accrues.”

## DN 2

### Dīgha Nikāya 2.16-33 Sāmaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

Makkhali Gosāla = the founder of the Ajivakas, a religion that last in India until the middle ages:

**A Fatalist - Purification by Wandering in Samsara:** “There is no cause or condition for the defilement of beings, they are defiled without cause or condition. There is no cause or condition for the purification of beings, they are purified without cause or condition. There is no self-power or other-power, there is no power in humans, no strength or force, no vigour or exertion. All beings, all living things, all creatures, all that lives is without control, without power or strength, they experience the fixed course of pleasure and pain through the 6 kinds of rebirth. There are 1,400,000 principal sorts of birth, and 6000 others and again 600. There are 500 kinds of kamma, or 5 kinds, and 3 kinds, and half-kamma, 62 paths, 62 intermediary aeons, 6 classes of humankind, 8 stages of human progress, 4900 occupations, 4900 wanderers, 4900 abodes of nagas, 2000 sentient existences, 3000 hells, 36 places of dust, 7 classes of rebirth as conscious beings, 7 as unconscious beings, and 7 as beings ‘freed from bonds’, 7 grades of devas, men, goblins, 7 lakes, 7 great and 7 small protuberances, 7 great and seven 7 abysses, 7 great and 7 small dreams, 8,400,000 aeons during which fools and wise run on and circle round till they make an end of suffering.

“Therefore there is no such thing as saying: ‘By this discipline or practice or austerity or holy life I will bring my un-ripened kamma to fruition, or I will gradually make this ripened kamma go away.’ Neither of these things is possible, because pleasure and pain have been measured out with a measure limited by the round of birth-and-death, and there is neither increase nor decrease, neither excellence nor inferiority. Just as a ball of string when thrown runs till it is all unravelled, so fools and wise run on and circle round till they make an end of suffering.”

## DN 2

### Dīgha Nikāya 2.16-33 Sāmaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

Ajita Kesakambali - ‘Ajita of the Hairy Garment’ (he wore a cloak of human hair):

**A Materialist:** “There is nothing given, bestowed, offered in sacrifice, there is no fruit or result of good or bad deeds, there is not this world or the next, there is no mother or father, there are no spontaneously arisen beings, there are in the world no ascetics or Brahmins who have attained, who have perfectly practiced, who proclaim this world and the next, having realized them by their own super-knowledge. This human being is composed of the four great elements, and when one dies the earth part reverts to earth, the water part to water, the fire part to fire, the air part to air, and the faculties pass away into space. They accompany the dead man with four bearers and the bier as fifth, their footsteps are heard as far as the cremation-ground. There the bones whiten, the sacrifice ends in ashes. It is the idea of a fool to give this gift: the talk of those who preach a doctrine of survival is vain and false. Fools and wise, at the breaking-up of the body, are destroyed and perish, they do not exist after death.”

## DN 2

### Digha Nikāya 2.16-33 Sāmaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

Pakudha Kaccāyana:

**Atomic Theory:** “These seven things are not made or of a kind to be made, uncreated, unproductive, barren, false, stable as a column. They do not shake, do not change, obstruct one another, nor are they able to cause one another pleasure, pain, or both. What are the seven? The earth-body, the water-body, the fire-body, the air-body, pleasure and pain and the life-principle. These seven are not made...Thus there is neither slain nor slayer, neither hearer nor proclaimer, neither knower nor causer of knowing. And whoever cuts off a man’s head with a sharp sword does not deprive anyone of life, he just inserts the blade in the intervening space between these seven bodies.”

## DN 2

### Digha Nikāya 2.16-33 Sāmaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

Nigantha Nātaputta = Vardhamana Mahāvīra (ca. 540 - 568 B.C.), the leader of the Jains:

**Fourfold Restraint:** “A Nigantha is bound by a fourfold restraint. What four? He is curbed by all curbs, enclosed by all curbs, cleared by all curbs, and claimed by all curbs. And as far as a Nigantha is bound by this fourfold restraint, thus the Nigantha is called self-perfected, self-controlled, self-established.” [These do not represent the genuine Jain teaching but seem to parody it in punning form.]

## DN 2

### Digha Nikāya 2.16-33 Sāmaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

Sañjaya Belatthaputta:

**An Eel-Wiggler:** “If you ask me: ‘Is there another world?’ if I thought so, I would say so. But I don’t think so. I don’t say it is so, and I don’t say otherwise. I don’t say it is not, and I don’t not say it is not. ... ‘Is there fruit and result of good and bad deeds?’ ... ‘Does a Tathagata exist after death?’ ... I don’t say it is so, and I don’t say otherwise. I don’t say it is not, and I don’t not say it is not.” [King Ajatasattu comments, “Of all these ascetics and Brahmins, Sañjaya Belatthaputta is the most stupid and confused.”]

## DN 9

### Digha Nikāya 9.6 Poṭṭhapāda Sutta: About Poṭṭhapāda States of Consciousness

[It is important to remember that in this sutta, *saññā* is translated as "consciousness" rather than "perception."]

#### **Poṭṭhapāda:**

‘Some said: “One’s states of consciousness arise and cease without cause or condition. When they arise, one is conscious, when they cease, then one is unconscious.” That is how they explained it.

‘But somebody else said: “No, that is not how it is. Consciousness is a person’s self, which comes and goes. When it comes, one is conscious, when it goes, one is unconscious.”

‘Another said: “That is not how it is. There are ascetics and Brahmins of great powers, of great influence. They draw down consciousness into a man and withdraw it. When they draw it down into him, he is conscious, when they withdraw it, he is unconscious.”

‘And another said: “No, that is not how it is. There are deities of great powers, of great influence. They draw down consciousness into a man and withdraw it. When they draw it down into him, he is conscious, when they withdraw it, he is unconscious.”

#### **The Buddha:**

‘In this matter, Poṭṭhapāda, those ascetics and Brahmins who say one’s state of consciousness arise and cease without cause or condition are totally wrong. Why is that? One’s states of consciousness arise and cease owing to a cause and conditions. Some states of consciousness arise through training, and some pass away through training.’ [ The Training is the Gradual Training see - <http://leighb.com/gtchart.htm> ]



## DN 9

### **Digha Nikāya 9.21-24** **Poṭṭhapāda Sutta: About Poṭṭhapāda** States of Consciousness

[It is important to remember that in this sutta, *saññā* is translated as "consciousness" rather than "perception."]

‘Lord, is consciousness a person’s self, or is consciousness one thing, and self another?’

‘Well, Poṭṭhapāda, do you postulate a self?’

‘Lord, I postulate a gross self, material, composed of the four elements, and feeding on solid food.’

...

‘Lord, I postulate a mind-made self complete with all its parts, not defective in any sense-organ.’

...

‘Lord, I assume a formless self, made up of consciousness.’

...

‘But Lord, is it possible for me to know whether consciousness is a person’s self, or whether consciousness is one thing, and self another?’

‘Poṭṭhāpada, it is difficult for one of different views, a different faith, under different influences, with different pursuits and a different training to know whether these are two different things or not.’

## DN 9

### Digha Nikāya 9.25-30 Poṭṭhapāda Sutta: About Poṭṭhapāda States of Consciousness

Poṭṭhapāda asks about the 10 undeclared points. The Buddha replies for each one of them, ‘Poṭṭhapāda, I have not declared that [view] and that the opposite view is false.’

28. ‘But, Lord, why has the Lord not declared these things?’

‘Poṭṭhapāda, that is not conducive to the purpose, not conducive to Dhamma, not the way to embark on the holy life; it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to higher knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have not declared it.’

29. ‘But, Lord, what has the Lord declared?’ ‘Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared: “This is dukkha, this is the origin of dukkha, this is the cessation of dukkha, and this is the path leading to the cessation of dukkha.”’

30. ‘But, Lord, why has the Lord declared this?’ ‘Because, Poṭṭhapāda, this is conducive to the purpose, conducive to Dhamma, the way to embark on the holy life; it leads to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to higher knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have declared it.’

[See Ayya Khema's book **Who Is My Self?** for an excellent detailed commentary on this sutta.]

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **Ariṭṭha**

A pernicious view arose in a bhikkhu named Ariṭṭha, formerly of the vulture killers, thus: “As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things called obstructions by the Blessed One are not able to obstruct one who engages in them.” It seems he did not want to be celibate.

Other bhikkhus tried to detach him from that pernicious view, but failed. They reported this to the Buddha, he called Ariṭṭha to come, questioned him, and chewed him out for his wrong grasp of the Dhamma, for having misrepresented the Buddha, injured himself, and stored up much demerit. A dozen similes are given by both the other bhikkhus and the Buddha to show “that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more.”

“Bhikkhus, that one can engage in sensual pleasures without sensual desires, without perceptions of sensual desire, without thoughts of sensual desire—that is impossible.”

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **The Simile of the Snake**

Someone learns the Dhamma—discourses, stanzas, expositions, verses, exclamations, sayings, birth stories, marvels, and answers to questions—but having learned the Dhamma, they do not examine the meaning of those teachings with wisdom. Not examining the meaning of those teachings with wisdom, they do not gain a reflective acceptance of them. Instead they learn the Dhamma only for the sake of criticizing others and for winning in debates. This is like someone grasping a snake by the tail and getting bitten. Others do learn the Dhamma and grasp it correctly. This is like someone grasping a snake with a cleft stick at the neck and then grasping it rightly by the neck.

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **The Simile of the Raft**

There is this great expanse of water, whose near shore is dangerous and fearful and whose further shore is safe and free from fear, but there is no ferryboat or bridge for going to the far shore. Suppose a man wishing to cross over collects grass, twigs, branches, and leaves and binds them together into a raft, and supported by the raft and making an effort with his hands and feet, gets safely across to the far shore. After having done so and arrived at the far shore, should he then carry this very helpful raft around on his head? No, he should let it go. “Bhikkhus, when you know the Dhamma to be similar to a raft, you should abandon even the teachings, how much more so things contrary to the teachings.”

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **6 Standpoints For Views**

1. one regards material form thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’
- 2 - 4. one regards feelings, perceptions, mental activities thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’
5. one regards what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought, mentally pondered thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’
6. ‘That which is the self is the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’—this too he regards thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’

“A well-taught noble disciple regards each of the aggregates thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ also ‘That which is the self is the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’—this too he regards thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

“Since he regards them thus, he is not agitated about what is non-existent.”

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **Agitation**

“Venerable sir, can there be agitation about what is non-existent externally?”

“Here, someone thinks thus: ‘Alas, I had it! Alas, I have it no longer! Alas, may I have it! Alas, I do not get it!’ Then he sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught.”

“Venerable sir, can there be no agitation about what is non-existent externally?”

Yes, don't react as above. Then there is no sorrow, etc.

“Venerable sir, can there be agitation about what is non-existent internally?”

“Here, someone has the view: ‘That which is the self is the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity.’ He hears the teaching the Dhamma for the elimination of all standpoints, decisions, obsessions, adherences, and underlying tendencies, for the stilling of all formations, for the relinquishing of all attachments, for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, for cessation, for Nibbāna. He thinks thus: ‘So I shall be annihilated! So I shall perish! So I shall be no more!’ Then he sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught.”

“Venerable sir, can there be no agitation about what is non-existent internally?”

“Here, someone has the view: ‘That which is the self is the world; after death I shall be permanent, etc.’” He hears the Dhamma and does not react that way.

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **Impermanence and Not Self**

Is there any possession that is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and that might endure as long as eternity. No.

Is there any doctrine of self that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who clings to it. No.

Is there any view that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who takes it as a support. No.

“Bhikkhus, there being a self, would there be for me what belongs to a self?”—“Yes, venerable sir.”—“Or, there being what belongs to a self, would there be for me a self?”—“Yes, venerable sir.”—“Bhikkhus, since a self and what belongs to a self are not apprehended as true and established, then this standpoint for views, namely, ‘That which is the self is the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’—would it not be an utterly and completely foolish teaching?”—“What else could it be, venerable sir.”

Are each of the aggregates permanent or impermanent?”—“Impermanent, venerable sir.”—“Is what is impermanent dukkha or sukha?”—“dukkha, venerable sir.”—“Is what is impermanent, dukkha, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?”—“No, venerable sir.” [Same questions as in the "2nd Discourse" - the Anatta-lakkhana Sutta - The Discourse on the Not-self Characteristic at SN 22.59.]

“Therefore, bhikkhus, any kind of aggregate whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all aggregate should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is



not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

“Seeing thus, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with each of the aggregates. Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated.”

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **The Arahant**

An Arahant has abandoned ignorance, has abandoned the round of births that brings renewed being, has abandoned craving, has abandoned the five lower fetters, has abandoned the conceit ‘I am.’ “Bhikkhus, when the gods with Indra, with Brahmā and with Pajāpati seek a bhikkhu who is thus liberated in mind, they do not find [anything of which they could say]: ‘The consciousness of one thus gone is supported by this.’ Why is that? One thus gone, I say, is untraceable here and now.”

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **Misrepresentation of The Tathāgata**

“So saying, bhikkhus, so proclaiming, I have been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some recluses and brahmins thus: ‘The recluse Gotama is one who leads astray; he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being.’ As I am not, as I do not proclaim, so have I been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented. Both formerly and now what I teach is dukkha and the cessation of dukkha.

## MN 22

### **Majjhima Nikāya 22** **Alagaddūpama Sutta** The Simile of the Snake

#### **Not Yours**

“Therefore, bhikkhus, whatever is not yours, abandon it; when you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. What is it that is not yours? The aggregates are not yours. Abandon them. When you have abandoned them, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.

“Bhikkhus, what do you think? If people carried off the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in this Jeta Grove, or burned them, or did what they liked with them, would you think: ‘People are carrying us off or burning us or doing what they like with us’?”—“No, venerable sir. Why not? Because that is neither our self nor what belongs to our self.”—“So too, bhikkhus, whatever is not yours, abandon it; when you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.”

## MN 38

### Majjhima Nikāya 38

#### Mahātaṇhā-saṅkhaya Sutta

#### The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving

##### **Sati**

A pernicious view arose in a bhikkhu Sati: “As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, it is this same consciousness that runs and wanders through the round of rebirths, not another.”

Other bhikkhus tried to detach him from that pernicious view, but failed. They reported this to the Buddha, he called Sati to come. After confirming that this was Sati's view, he asked “What is that consciousness, Sāti?”

“Venerable sir, it is that which speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and bad actions.”

“Misguided man, to whom have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma in that way? Misguided man, have I not stated in many ways consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness? But you, misguided man, have misrepresented us by your wrong grasp and injured yourself and stored up much demerit; for this will lead to your harm and suffering for a long time.”

## MN 38

### **Majjhima Nikāya 38**

### **Mahātaṇhā-saṅkhaya Sutta**

The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving

#### **Conditionality of Consciousness**

“Bhikkhus, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness; etc. Just as fire is reckoned by the particular condition dependent on which it burns—when fire burns dependent on logs, it is reckoned as a log fire; etc.

#### **Catechism on Dependent Origination**

[Most likely a few relevant questions were expanded into multipage Q&A session, most of which has nothing to do with the current story.]

## MN 38

### **Majjhima Nikāya 38 Mahātaṇhā-saṅkhaya Sutta**

The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving

#### **Personal Knowledge**

“Bhikkhus, knowing and seeing in this way [in terms of dependent origination], would you run back to the past thus: ‘Were we in the past? Were we not in the past? What were we in the past? How were we in the past? Having been what, what did we become in the past?’?”—“No, venerable sir.”—“Knowing and seeing in this way, would you run forward to the future thus: ‘Shall we be in the future? Shall we not be in the future? What shall we be in the future? How shall we be in the future? Having been what, what shall we become in the future?’?”—“No, venerable sir.”—“Knowing and seeing in this way, would you now be inwardly perplexed about the present thus: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where will it go?’?”—“No, venerable sir.”

Do you say this out of respect for the Teacher? No. Or from your own personal knowledge? Yes.

[The Buddha is saying that if you really understand Dependent Origination, you won't crave for a future existence because you won't be conceiving of an existent self.]

#### **Second Discourse in this Sutta**

The sutta to this point has been about Bhava-Taṇhā (craving for becoming); the rest of the sutta, which seems to be a wholly separate discourse, is about Kāma-Taṇhā (craving for sense pleasure). Verses 26 & 27 seem to be a bridge that tries to tie the two discourses together - but winds up contradicting what has come before.

## SN 22.85

### Samyutta Nikāya 22.85

#### Yamaka Sutta

#### To Yamaka

A pernicious view arose in a bhikkhu named Yamaka: “As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose āsavas are destroyed is annihilated and perishes with the breakup of the body and does not exist after death.”

Other bhikkhus tried to detach him from that pernicious view, but failed. They reported this to the Sāriputta who approached Yamaka that evening and confirmed that this was Yamaka's view.

“What do you think, friend Yamaka, is form permanent or impermanent?” - “Impermanent, friend.”... - “Therefore ... Seeing thus ... He understands: ‘... there is no more for this state of being.’”

“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard form as the Tathagata?” - “No, friend.” - “Do you regard feeling ... perception ... volitional formations ... consciousness as the Tathagata?” - “No, friend.”

“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard the Tathagata as in form?” - “No, friend.” - “Do you regard the Tathagata as apart from form?” - “No, friend.” - “Do you regard the Tathagata as in feeling? As apart from feeling? As in perception? As apart from perception? As in volitional formations? As apart from volitional formations? As in consciousness? As apart from consciousness?” - “No, friend.”

“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness taken together as the Tathagata?” - “No, friend.”

“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard the Tathagata as one who



is without form, without feeling, without perception, without volitional formations, without consciousness?” - “No, friend.”

“But, friend, when the Tathagata is not apprehended by you as real and actual here in this very life, is it fitting for you to declare: ‘As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose āsavas are destroyed is annihilated and perishes with the breakup of the body and does not exist after death’?”

“Formerly, friend Sāriputta, when I was ignorant, I did hold that pernicious view, but now that I have heard this Dhamma teaching of the Venerable Sāriputta I have abandoned that pernicious view and have made the breakthrough to the Dhamma.”

## SN 36.21

### Samyutta Nikāya 36.21

Sīvaka

The ascetic Moliya-Sīvaka said to the Buddha, “Master Gotama, there are some ascetics and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever a person experiences, whether it be pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, all that is caused by what was done in the past.’<sup>1</sup> What does Master Gotama say about this?”

“Some feelings, Sīvaka, arise here originating from **bile disorders**: that some feelings arise here originating from bile disorders one can know for oneself, and that is considered to be true in the world. Now when those ascetics and brahmins hold such a doctrine and view as this, ‘Whatever a person experiences, whether it be pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, all that is caused by what was done in the past,’ they overshoot what one knows by oneself and they overshoot what is considered to be true in the world. Therefore I say that this is wrong on the part of those ascetics and brahmins.

“Some feelings, Sīvaka, arise here originating from **phlegm disorders** ... originating from **wind disorders** ... originating from an **imbalance** [of the three] ... produced by **change of climate** ... produced by **careless behavior** ... caused by **assault** ... produced as **the result of kamma** ....”

Bile, phlegm, and also wind,  
Imbalance and climate too,  
Carelessness and assault,  
With kamma result as the eighth.

1. This is the doctrine of the Jains.

## AN 3.61

### **Āṅguttara Nikāya 3.16** Sectarian

“Bhikkhus, there are these three sectarian tenets which, when questioned, interrogated, and cross-examined by the wise, and taken to their conclusion, will eventuate in non-doing. What are the three?

- (1) “There are, bhikkhus, some ascetics and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever this person experiences— whether pleasure, pain, or neither-pain-nor-pleasure— all that is caused by what was done in the past.’
- (2) There are other ascetics and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever this person experiences— whether pleasure, pain, or neither-pain-nor-pleasure— all that is caused by God’s creative activity.’
- (3) And there are still other ascetics and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever this person experiences— whether pleasure, pain, or neither-pain-nor-pleasure— all that occurs without a cause or condition.’

[These are respectively the doctrines of the Jains, the theists, and non-causality (Makkhali Gosāla & the Ajivakas).]

“‘Is it true that you venerable ones hold such a doctrine and view?’ When I ask them this, they affirm it. Then I say to them: ‘In such a case, it is due to past deeds/God/without a cause that you might destroy life, take what is not given, indulge in sexual activity, speak falsehood, utter divisive speech, speak harshly, indulge in idle chatter; that you might be full of longing, have a mind of ill will, and hold wrong view.’

“Those who fall back on past deeds/God/without a cause as the essential truth have no desire [to do] what should be done and [to avoid doing] what should not be done, nor do they make an effort in this respect. Since they do not apprehend as true and valid anything that should be done or should not be

done, they are muddle-minded, they do not guard themselves, and even the personal designation ‘ascetic’ could not be legitimately applied to them.”

“But, bhikkhus, this Dhamma taught by me is unrefuted, undefiled, irreproachable, and uncensured by wise ascetics and brahmins:

“‘These are the six elements’: this, bhikkhus, is the Dhamma taught by me that is unrefuted ... uncensured by wise ascetics and brahmins.

earth element, water element, fire element, air element, space element, & consciousness element.

‘These are the six bases for contact’ ...

the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, & the mind

‘These are the eighteen mental examinations’ ...

Having seen a form with the eye, one examines a form that is a basis for joy; one examines a form that is a basis for dejection; one examines a form that is a basis for equanimity. Having heard a sound with the ear, etc.

‘These are the four noble truths’:

In dependence on the **6 elements** the descent of a embryo occurs. When the descent takes place, there is name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, there are the **6 sense bases**; with the 6 sense bases as condition, there is contact; with contact as condition, there is **feeling**. Now it is for one who feels that I proclaim: ‘This is dukkha,’ and ‘This is the origin of dukkha,’ and ‘This is the cessation of dukkha,’ and ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of dukkha.’

this, bhikkhus, is the Dhamma taught by me that is unrefuted, undefiled, irreproachable, and uncensured by wise ascetics and brahmins.

## SN 42.8

### **Samyutta Nikāya 42.8** The Conch Blower

A headman approaches the Buddha and says, “Venerable sir, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples thus: ‘Anyone at all who destroys life is bound for a state of misery, bound for hell. Anyone at all who takes what is not given ... engages in sexual misconduct ... speaks falsehood is bound for a state of misery, bound for hell. One is led on by the manner in which one **usually dwells.**’ It is in such a way, venerable sir, that Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples.”

“If, headman, it were the case that one is led on by the manner in which one usually dwells, then according to Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta’s word, no one at all would be bound for a state of misery, bound for hell. What do you think, headman? In the case of a person who destroys life, if one compares one occasion with another, whether by day or by night, which is more frequent: the occasions when he is destroying life or those when he is not doing so?”

“In the case of a person who destroys life, venerable sir, if one compares one occasion with another, whether by day or by night, the occasions when he is destroying life are infrequent while those when he is not doing so are frequent.”

[And repeated for one who takes what is not given ... engages in sexual misconduct ... speaks falsehood.]

“Here, headman, some teacher holds such a doctrine and view.... Then a disciple has full confidence in that teacher. It occurs to him: ‘My teacher holds such a doctrine and view as this: “Anyone at all who destroys life is bound for a state of misery, bound for hell.” Now I have destroyed life, so I too am bound for a state of misery, bound for hell.’ Thus he acquires such a view. If he does not abandon that assertion and that state of mind, and if he does not relinquish that view, then according to his deserts he will be, as it were,

dropped off in hell.

[And repeated for one who takes what is not given ... engages in sexual misconduct ... speaks falsehood.]

“A Tathāgata arises. In many ways he criticizes and censures the destruction of life, and he says: ‘Abstain from the destruction of life.’ He criticizes and censures the taking of what is not given, and he says: ‘Abstain from taking what is not given.’ He criticizes and censures sexual misconduct, and he says: ‘Abstain from sexual misconduct.’ He criticizes and censures false speech, and he says: ‘Abstain from false speech.’

“Then a disciple has full confidence in that teacher. He reflects thus: ‘In many ways the Blessed One criticizes and censures the destruction of life, and he says: “Abstain from the destruction of life.” Now I have destroyed life to such and such an extent. That wasn’t proper; that wasn’t good. But though I feel regret over this, that evil deed of mine cannot be undone.’ Having reflected thus, he abandons the destruction of life and he abstains from the destruction of life in the future. Thus there comes about the abandoning of that evil deed; thus there comes about the transcending of that evil deed.

[And repeated for one who takes what is not given ... engages in sexual misconduct ... speaks falsehood.]

“Having abandoned the destruction of life, he abstains from the destruction of life. Having abandoned the taking of what is not given ... sexual misconduct... false speech ... divisive speech ... harsh speech ... idle chatter. Having abandoned covetousness, he is uncovetous. Having abandoned ill will and hatred, he has a mind without ill will. Having abandoned wrong view, he is one of right view.

“Then, headman, that noble disciple—who is thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful—dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with lovingkindness/compassion/appreciative joy/equanimity, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire world with a mind imbued with

lovingkindness, vast, exalted, measureless, without hostility, without ill will. Just as a strong conch blower can easily send his signal to the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by lovingkindness is developed and cultivated in this way, any limited kamma that was done does not remain there, does not persist there.”

## MN 101

### Majjhima Nikāya 101 Devadaha Sutta At Devadaha

“Bhikkhus, there are some recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine view as this: ‘Whatever this person feels, whether pleasure or pain or neither-pain-nor-pleasure, all that is caused by what was done in the past. So by annihilating with asceticism past actions and by doing no fresh actions, there will be no consequence in the future. With no consequence in the future, there is the destruction of karma. With the destruction of karma, there is the destruction of dukkha. With the destruction of dukkha, there is the destruction of vedana. With the destruction of vedana, all dukkha will be exhausted.’ So speak the Nigaṇṭhas (Jains).

“I go to the Nigaṇṭhas who speak thus and I say: ‘But, friends, do you know that you existed in the past, and that it is not the case that you did not exist?’—‘No, friend.’—‘But, friends, do you know that you did evil actions in the past and did not abstain from them?’—‘No, friend.’—‘But, friends, do you know that you did such and such evil actions?’—‘No, friend.’—‘But, friends, do you know that so much suffering has already been exhausted, or that so much suffering has still to be exhausted, or that when so much suffering has been exhausted all suffering will have been exhausted?’—‘No, friend.’—‘But, friends, do you know what the abandoning of unwholesome states is and what the cultivation of wholesome states is here and now?’—‘No, friend.’

“‘It is not fitting that you declare this. If you knew, it would be fitting.’

“When this was said, the Nigaṇṭhas told me: ‘Friend, the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta is omniscient and all-seeing and claims to have complete knowledge and vision thus: “Whether I am walking or standing or asleep or awake, knowledge and vision are continuously and uninterruptedly present to me.” He says thus: “Nigaṇṭhas, you have done evil actions in the past; ....” We approve



of and accept this, and so we are satisfied.’

“When this was said, I told the Nigaṇṭhas: ‘There are five things, friend Nigaṇṭhas, that may turn out in two different ways here and now. What five? They are: **faith, approval, oral tradition, reasoned cogitation, and reflective acceptance of a view.** These five things may turn out in two different ways here and now. Herein, what kind of faith do the venerable Nigaṇṭhas have in a teacher who speaks about the past? What kind of approval, what kind of oral tradition, what kind of reasoned cogitation, what kind of reflective acceptance of a view?’ Speaking thus, bhikkhus, I did not see any legitimate defense of their position by the Nigaṇṭhas. [The "two different ways" are True and False.]

...

“Because the Nigaṇṭhas speak thus, there are ten legitimate deductions from their assertions that provide ground for censuring them:

- (1) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by what was done in the past, then the Nigaṇṭhas surely must have done bad deeds in the past, since they now feel such painful, racking, piercing feelings.
- (2) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by the creative act of a Supreme God, then the Nigaṇṭhas surely must have been created by an evil Supreme God, since they now feel such painful, racking, piercing feelings.
- (3) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by circumstance and nature, then the Nigaṇṭhas surely must have bad luck, since they now feel such painful, racking, piercing feelings.
- (4) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by class [among the six classes of birth], then the Nigaṇṭhas surely must belong to a bad class, since they now feel such painful, racking, piercing feelings.
- (5) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by exertion here and now, then the Nigaṇṭhas surely must strive badly here and now, since they now feel such painful, racking, piercing feelings.

(6) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by what was done in the past, then the Nigaṇṭhas are to be censured; if not, then the Nigaṇṭhas are still to be censured.

(7) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by the creative act of a Supreme God, then the Nigaṇṭhas are to be censured; if not, they are still to be censured.

(8) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by chance, then the Nigaṇṭhas are to be censured; if not, they are still to be censured.

(9) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by class, then the Nigaṇṭhas are to be censured; if not, they are still to be censured.

(10) “If the pleasure and pain that beings feel are caused by exertion here and now, then the Nigaṇṭhas are to be censured; if not, they are still to be censured.

“And how is exertion fruitful, bhikkhus, how is striving fruitful? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is not overwhelmed with suffering does not overwhelm himself with suffering; and he does not give up the pleasure that accords with Dhamma, yet he is not infatuated with that pleasure. He knows thus: ‘When I strive with determination, this particular source of suffering fades away in me because of that determined striving; and when I look on with equanimity, this particular source of suffering fades away in me while I develop equanimity.’”

[The Gradual Training is given - see <http://leighb.com/gtchart.htm>.] After each of the jhānas, remembering past lives, seeing being passing away & rearing according to their karma, and the ending of the āsavas, this phrase appears: “Thus too, bhikkhus, the exertion is fruitful, the striving is fruitful.”

## SN 12.15

### **Samyutta Nikāya 12.15** **Kaccāyanagotto Sutta** To Kaccanagotta

[http://leighb.com/sn12\\_15.htm](http://leighb.com/sn12_15.htm)

Don't view the world in terms of the concept of existence and the concept of nonexistence.

View the world in terms of Dependent Origination:

Dependent on This, That arises;  
when This does not arise, That does not arise.

## Udana 1.10

### Udana 1.10 Bahiya Sutta About Bahiya

[http://leighb.com/ud1\\_10.htm](http://leighb.com/ud1_10.htm)

"Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: 'In seeing, let there be only seeing; in hearing, let there be only hearing; in sensing, let there be only sensing; in cognizing, let there be only cognizing.' In this way you should train yourself, Bahiya.

"When, Bahiya, [you do this] then, Bahiya, you will not be 'with that.' When, Bahiya, you are not 'with that, ' then, Bahiya, you will not be 'in that.' When, Bahiya, you are not 'in that, ' then, Bahiya, you will be neither here nor beyond nor in between the two. Just this is the end of dukkha."

...

Where neither water nor yet earth  
Nor fire nor air gain a foothold,  
There gleam no stars, no sun sheds light,  
There shines no moon, yet there no darkness reigns.

When a sage, a brahman, has come to know this  
For himself through his own wisdom,  
Then he is freed from form and formless.  
Freed from pleasure and from pain.

## DN 11

### **Dīgha Nikāya 11** **Kevaddha Sutta** To Kevaddha

[http://leighb.com/dn11\\_85.htm](http://leighb.com/dn11_85.htm)

‘Where do earth, water, fire and air no footing find?  
Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul -  
Where are “name-and-form” wholly come to and end?’

‘Consciousness that is signless, limitless, all-illuminating,  
Then water, earth, fire, & wind find no footing,  
Then long & short, small & large, pleasant & unpleasant -  
Then “name-&-form” are all brought to an end.

With the cessation of viññāṇa [divided-knowing] all this is brought to an end.’

## MN 121

### Majjhima Nikāya 121 Cula-Suññata Sutta

#### The Shorter Discourse on Emptiness

“Ānanda, just as this Palace of Migāra’s Mother is void of elephants, cattle, horses, and mares, void of gold and silver, void of the assembly of men and women, and there is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the Sangha of bhikkhus; so too, a bhikkhu—not attending to the **perception of village**, not attending to the **perception of people**—attends to the singleness dependent on the **perception of forest**.

“Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of village, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of people, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.

“... not attending to the perception of forest ... one attends to the singleness dependent on the **perception of earth**.

“... attends to the singleness dependent on the **perception of the base of infinite space**.

“... attends to the singleness dependent on the **perception of the base of infinite consciousness**.

“... attends to the singleness dependent on the **perception of the base of nothingness**.

“... attends to the singleness dependent on the **perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.

“... attends to the singleness dependent on the **signless concentration of mind**.

His mind enters into that signless concentration of mind and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understand thus: ‘Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of nothingness, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-

perception, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, that connected with **the six bases that are dependent on this body and conditioned by life.**'

## MN 121

### **Majjhima Nikāya 121** **Cula-Suññata Sutta**

#### The Shorter Discourse on Emptiness

“He understands thus: ‘This signless concentration of mind is conditioned and volitionally produced. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.’ When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the āsava of sensual desire, from the āsava of becoming, and from the āsava of ignorance. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’ He understands: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further here.’

“There is present only this non-voidness, namely, that connected with the six bases that are dependent on this body and conditioned by life.’ Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus, Ānanda, this is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness, supreme and unsurpassed.”



## **MMK 18**

### **Mulamadhyamakakarika Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way by Nagarjuna - Chapter 18**

You are not the same as or different from  
Conditions on which you depend;  
You are neither severed from  
Nor forever fused with them --

This is the deathless teaching  
Of buddhas who care for the world.

## MMK 24

### **Mulamadhyamakakarika** **Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way** by Nagarjuna - Chapter 24

The dharma taught by buddhas  
Hinges on two truths:  
Partial truths of the world  
And truths which are sublime.  
Without knowing how they differ,  
You cannot know the deep;  
Without relying on conventions,  
You cannot disclose the sublime;  
Without intuiting the sublime,  
You cannot experience freedom.

Misperceiving emptiness  
Injures the unintelligent  
Like mishandling a snake  
Or miscasting a spell.

## MMK 24

### **Mulamadhyamakakarika** **Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way** by Nagarjuna - Chapter 24

Dependent origination is emptiness  
That is explained to be emptiness.  
Which, contingently configured,  
designation,  
Is the middle way.  
Everything is Dependent originated;  
arisen, Such a thing does not exist.  
Everything is empty.  
not exist.

Whatever is dependently co-arisen  
That, being a dependent  
Is itself the middle way.  
Something that is not dependently  
Therefore a nonempty thing Does

## MMK 25

### **Mulamadhyamakakarika** **Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way** by Nagarjuna - Chapter 25

19. There is not the slightest difference  
Between saṃsāra and nirvāna.  
There is not the slightest difference  
Between nirvāna and saṃsāra.

20. Whatever is the limit of nirvāna,  
That is the limit of saṃsāra.  
There is not even the slightest difference between them,  
Or even the subtlest thing.

21. Views that after cessation there is a limit, etc.,  
And that it is permanent, etc.,  
Depend upon nirvāna, the final limit,  
And the prior limit.

22. Since all existents are empty,  
What is finite or infinite?  
What is finite and infinite?  
What is neither finite nor infinite?

23. What is identical and what is different?  
What is permanent and what is impermanent?  
What is both permanent and impermanent?  
What is neither?

24. The pacification of all objectification  
And the pacification of illusion:  
No Dharma was taught by the Buddha  
At any time, in any place, to any person.

**Kitaro Nishida**

from **The Nothingness Beyond God**  
by Kitaro Nishida

Pure experience is the beginning of Zen. It is awareness stripped of all thought, all conceptualization, all categorization, and all distinctions between subject-as-having-an-experience and as experience-as-having-been-had-by-a-subject. It is prior to all judgment. Pure experience is without all distinction; it is pure no-thingness, pure no-this-or-that. It is empty of any and all distinctions. It is absolutely no-thing at all. Yet its emptiness and nothingness is a chock-a-block fullness, for it is all experience-to-come. It is rose, child, river, anger, death, pain, rocks, and cicada sounds. We carve these discrete events and entities out of a richer-yet-non-distinct manifold of pure experience.