

## PASSAGES ON NIBBANA AND ITS ATTAINMENT

### From The Middle Length Discourses

*The greatest of all gains is health,  
Nibbana is the greatest bliss,  
The eightfold path is the best of paths  
For it leads to safety, to the Deathless.*

MN 75.21

1. “It is for the sake of final Nibbana without clinging that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One.”  
Ven. Mantaniputta; MN 24.10
  
2. Just as the river Ganges inclines toward the sea, slopes toward the sea, flows towards the sea, and reaches the sea, so too Master Gotama’s assembly with its homeless ones and its householders inclines toward Nibbana, slopes towards Nibbana, flows toward Nibbana and reaches Nibbana.  
MN 73.14
  
3. The holy life is grounded upon Nibbana, culminates in Nibbana, ends in Nibbana.  
Bhikkhuni Dhammadinna; MN 44.29
  
4. This is the Deathless, namely, the liberation of mind through not-clinging  
(Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation. MN 106.13)  
This is deathless, namely, the liberation of mind through lack of clinging/sustenance.  
(Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s translation)
  
5. “This supreme state of sublime peace has been discovered by the Tathagata, that is, liberation through not clinging, by understanding as they actually are the origination, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of the six spheres of [sensory] contact.”  
MN 102.25
  
6. “A bhikkhu has heard that nothing is worth adhering to. When a bhikkhu has heard that nothing is worth adhering to, he directly knows everything; having directly known everything, he fully understands everything; having fully understood everything, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he abides contemplating impermanence in those feelings, contemplating fading away, contemplating cessation, contemplating relinquishment. Contemplating thus, he does not cling to anything in the world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbana.  
MN 37.3

7. “With clinging as a condition, being [comes to be]; with being as condition, birth, with birth as a condition, aging an death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of clinging.

....

“With the cessation of my clinging comes cessation of being; with the cessation of being, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. MN 75.24-25

8. “[After having the insight that the formless [meditation] states are conditioned, a bhikkhu] does not form any condition or generate any volition tending towards either being or non-being. Since he does not form any condition or generate any volition tending toward either being or non-being, he does not cling to anything in this world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbana.”

Agitated = *paritassati* = excited, worry MN 140.22

9. [After having attained the deliverance of mind through loving-kindness a bhikkhu considers and understands thus:] “This deliverance of mind through loving-kindness is conditioned and volitionally produced. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.’ If he is steady in that, he attains the destruction of the taints.” MN 52.8

10. “When ignorance is abandoned and true knowledge has arisen in a bhikkhu, then with the fading away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge, he no longer clings to sensual pleasures, no longer clings to views, no longer clings to rules and observances, no longer clings to a doctrine of self (*attavāda*). When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbana.(*parinibbāyati*).”

(*parinibbayati* [from *nibbuta*]; completely unbound/calmed/pacified) MN 11.17

11. “And what, Ananda, is the path, the way to the abandoning of the five lower fetters? Here, with seclusion from acquisitions, with the abandoning of unwholesome states, with the complete tranquilization of bodily corruptions, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhana, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion.

“Whatever exists therein of material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness, he sees those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumor, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self. He turns his mind away from those states and directs it towards the deathless element thus: ‘This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbana.”

MN 64.9

12. “A bhikkhu is practicing thus: ‘It might not be, and it might not be mine; it will not be, and it will not be mine. What exists, what has come to be, that I am abandoning.’ Thus he obtains equanimity. He does not delight in that equanimity, welcome it, or remain holding to it. Since he does not do so, his consciousness does not become dependent on it and does not cling to it. A bhikkhu without clinging attains Nibbana.”

MN 106.12

13. “Someone has the view: ‘That which is 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 Tathagata or a disciple of the Tathagata 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 Nibbana. 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 becoming distraught.”

MN 22.20

14. “In what way is a bhikkhu an arahant with taints destroyed?”

“Any kind of material form, [ feelings, perceptions, formations and consciousness] whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near – a bhikkhu has seen all material form, all feelings, all perceptions, all formations, and all consciousness] as they actually are with proper wisdom thus: ‘this is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self,’ and through not clinging he is liberated. It is in this way that a bhikkhu is an arahant with taints destroyed, one who has lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached his own goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and is completely liberated through final knowledge.”

MN 35.25

15. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder Upali sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him: “All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation.” Then the householder Upali saw the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher’s Dispensation.

MN 56.18

Of these five hundred bhikkhus, sixty bhikkhus have the three knowledges, sixty bhikkhus have the six direct knowledges, sixty bhikkhus are liberated in both ways, while the rest are liberated by wisdom.

SN I 8.7 (p 287)