Maha Rahulovada Sutta: Big Advice to Rahula

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[published in Flowers and Worms and also in The Thread of Practice]

EVAM ME SUTAM.

Thus have I heard.

Once, the Generous One was staying at Anathapindika's grove in the Jetavana forest. One morning the Generous One, having dressed and taken up his robe and bowl, went to Savatthi for alms. That same morning the venerable Rahula, having dressed and taken up his robe and bowl, also went to Savatthi for alms, following close behind the Generous One. The Generous One, without turning around, addressed the venerable Rahula:

"All form, Rahula, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, low or high, far or near, is to be seen as it is with complete and perfect knowing. Thus: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' "

"Form only, Generous One? Form alone, Well-Gone One?"

"As with form, so it is with basic reactivity, symbolization, habitual patterning, and consciousness."

Then the venerable Rahula thought, "How can I go into town for alms after receiving, face to face, teachings from the Generous One?" Turning back, he sat at the root of a tree, crossed his legs and set the body erect, and kept mindfulness present.

The venerable Sariputta saw Rahula sitting cross-legged at the root of a tree with the body erect, keeping mindfulness present. He addressed Rahula, "You should practice being mindful of the in-breath and out-breath, Rahula. If mindfulness of breath is cultivated with continuous practice, then there is a vast harvest, there is great richness."

At evening time the venerable Rahula arose from solitude and approached the Generous One, sitting down to one side. Seated, Rahula asked the Generous One, "How is mindfulness of breath to be practiced? How is it that continuous practice will bring a vast harvest and great richness?"

"Whatever is internal to the individual which is solid, has become solid, or which is derived from solidity such as the hair on the head, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, stomach, feces and whatever else is internal to an individual and experienced as hard or solid is said to be the internal earth element. Rahula, the internal earth element together with the external earth element are the earth element. Becoming wearied of identifying with the earth element, one sees it as it is with complete and perfect knowing knowing and the mind is freed from the earth element. Thus: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this not my self.'

"And what is the element of water, Rahula? The water element may be internal and it may be external. What is the water element internally? Whatever is internal to the individual and is liquid, has become liquid, or is derived from liquid such as bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucous, synovial fluid,

urine and anything else internal to an individual which is liquid is the internal water element. The internal water element together with the external water element are the water element. Becoming wearied of identifying with the water element, one sees it as it is with complete and perfect knowing knowing and the mind is freed from the water element. Thus: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this not my self.'

"And what, Rahula, is the fire element? The fire element may be internal and it may be external. What is the fire element internally? Whatever is internal to the individual and is fiery, has become fiery or is derived from fire such as whatever consumes or burns up, whatever causes digestion of what is eaten and drunk, chewed and tasted, and anything else which is internal to an individual which is fiery is the internal fire element. The internal fire element together with the external fire element are the fire element. Becoming wearied of identifying with the fire element, one sees it as it is with complete and perfect knowing knowing and the mind is freed from the fire element. Thus: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this not my self.'

"And what, Rahula, is the air element? The air element may be internal and it may be external. What is the air element internally? Whatever is internal to the individual and is windy, has become windy or is derived from wind such as the upward moving wind, the downward moving wind, the wind in the bowels and outside the bowels, and the winds which move throughout the body, the in-breath and out-breath, and anything else which is internal to an individual which is windy is the internal air element. The internal air element together with the external air element are the air element. Becoming wearied of identifying with the air element, one sees it as it is with complete and perfect knowing knowing and the mind is freed from the air element. Thus: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this not my self.'

"And what, Rahula, is the space element? The space element may be internal and it may be external. What is the space element internally? Whatever is internal to the individual and is spacious, has become spacious or is derived from space such as openings of the ears, the nose, the mouth, the space in which is swallowed the food we have eaten, the space where the food is held, and the space it passes through to be excreted through the lower part of the body, and anything else which is internal to an individual which is spacious is the internal space element. The internal space element together with the external space element are the space element. Becoming wearied of identifying with the space element, one sees it as it is with complete and perfect knowing knowing and the mind is freed from the space element. Thus: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this not my self.'

"Practise like the earth, Rahula. If you become like the earth then the sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, do not take hold of the mind, nor do they establish themselves. People may pour clean things onto the earth, or dirty things such as faeces, urine, saliva, pus, blood, but the earth is not hurt, nor is it angered or moved to disgust. So too, if you practice like the earth, Rahula, then sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, cannot take hold of the mind, nor will they establish themselves.

"Practice like water, Rahula. If you become like water then the sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, do not take hold of the mind, nor do they establish themselves. People may wash clean things with water or dirty things such as pus and so on, but the water is not hurt, nor is it angered or moved to disgust. So too, if you practice like water, Rahula, then sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, cannot take hold of the mind, nor will they establish themselves.

"Practice like fire, Rahula. If you become like fire then the sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, do not take hold of the mind, nor do they establish themselves. People may burn clean things

with fire or dirty things such as faeces and so on, but the fire is not hurt, nor is it angered or moved to disgust. So too, if you practice like fire, Rahula, then sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, cannot take hold of the mind, nor will they establish themselves.

“Practice like air, Rahula. If you become like air then the sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, do not take hold of the mind, nor do they establish themselves.Just as the air moves over clean things or dirty things such as faeces and so on, but the air is not hurt, nor is it angered or moved to disgust. So too, if you practice like air, Rahula, then sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, cannot take hold of the mind, nor will they establish themselves.

“Practice like space, Rahula. If you become like space then the sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, do not take hold of the mind, nor do they establish themselves. Just as space abides nowhere so too, if you practice like space, Rahula, then sensations which arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, cannot take hold of the mind, nor will they establish themselves.

“Practice friendliness, Rahula. Becoming kind, malevolence is released.

“Practice compassion, Rahula. Becoming compassionate, violence is released.

“Practice benevolence, Rahula. Becoming benevolent, aversion is released.

“Practice equanimity, Rahula. Becoming balanced, anger is released.

“Practice the contemplation of impurity, Rahula. Contemplating impurity, obsession is released.

“Practice the recognition of impermanence, Rahula. Practicing the recognition of impermanence, asserting a self is released.

“Practice being mindful of the breath, Rahula. Practising continuous mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out leads to a vast harvest and great riches. And how, Rahula, is mindfulness of breath practiced and how does its sincere practice lead to a great harvest of richness?

“Here, Rahula, one goes into the forest, to the roots of a tree, or to an empty room, sits down cross-legged and holds the body upright, keeping mindfulness present.

“Breathing in, one is mindful; breathing out, one is mindful. Breathing out a long breath, one understands, ‘I breathe out a long breath.’ Breathing in a long breath, one understands, ‘I breathe in a long breath.’

Breathing out a short breath, one understands, ‘I breathe out a short breath.’ Breathing in a short breath, one understands, ‘I breathe in a short breath.’

One practices, ‘I breathe out with full experience of the whole body.’ One practices, ‘I breathe in with full experience of the whole body.’

One practices, ‘I breathe out, calming the tendencies of the body.’ One practices, ‘I breathe in, calming the tendencies of the body.’

“One practices, ‘I breathe in, experiencing joy.’ One practices, ‘I breathe out, experiencing joy.’

One practices, ‘I breathe in, experiencing happiness.’ One practices, ‘I breathe out, experiencing happiness.’

“One practices, ‘I breathe in, experiencing habitual patterns of mind.’ One practices, ‘I breathe out, experiencing habitual states of mind.’

One practices, ‘I breathe in, calming habitual patterns of mind.’ One practices, ‘I breathe out, calming habitual states of mind.’

“One practices, ‘I breathe in, experiencing mind.’ One practices, ‘I breathe out, experiencing mind.’

“One practices, ‘With contentment of mind I breathe in.’ One practices, ‘With contentment of mind I breathe out.’

“One practices, ‘With a harmonious mind, I breathe in.’ One practices, ‘With a harmonious mind I breathe out.’

“One practices, ‘With a freed mind I breathe in.’ One practices, ‘With a freed mind I breathe out.’

“One practices, ‘Realizing dispassion, I breathe in.’ One practices, ‘Realizing dispassion, I breathe out.’

“One practices, ‘Realizing cessation, I breathe in.’ One practices, ‘Realizing cessation, I breathe out.’

“One practices, ‘Realizing renunciation, I breathe in.’ One practices, ‘Realizing renunciation, I breathe out.’

“This is the practice of mindfulness of breath, Rahula. This is how the sincere practice of mindfulness of breath leads to a vast harvest and great richness. If mindfulness of breath is practiced continuously, then your last breath will be in knowing, not in unknowing.”

Thus spoke the Generous One. His heart gladdened, the venerable Rahula enjoyed the speech of the Generous One.