

# Eightfold Path-Right Release

December 4, 2020

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

radical, liberation, conflict, trust, delusion, simplicity, genuine, authentic, *sammā*, nobility

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A warm hello as we come to the final talk in this series on the Eightfold Path, the eight-factored path.

The eight-factored path comes to maturity with the topic of yesterday's talk – right knowledge. The final talk today is right release or right liberation. The word right, or *sammā*, can also be translated as genuine. So, the right release could also be genuine release or genuine liberation.

This emphasis on release is different than letting go. Letting go can be seen as something we do. It can be a choice to let go of something. Release is not something we do. Liberation is not something that we make happen. We don't attain it. We are not given liberation. It isn't like we sit and wait for someone to give it to us, rather release is experienced.

We might see it as a gift, but it's not a gift that comes from anywhere except maybe just from life. There is this very radical experience of releasing or loosening that is not exactly letting go. Letting go might imply that we're letting something go. Release is a radical movement where the heart, the mind, or the deepest places inside loosens, lightens, and frees themselves. The fullness of that release is what makes a person fully liberated.

The Eightfold Path leading to Right Knowledge and Right Release is not a mystical path. It is not a path where we must believe in something supernatural or believe in anything. It is a movement through our lived experience. In understanding our lived experience in deeper and deeper ways, we start to live genuinely. It is a genuine view of things.

For the purpose of liberation, it is the genuine view of things. It is a genuine way of thinking, speaking, and acting in the world. It is genuine action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. Perhaps using the word genuine, instead of right, might imply less that we have to do it, but more that we come to fulfillment in it.

The Eightfold Path has both sides. We engage in the practice of the Eightfold steps, but we are supposed to graduate or mature out of being the doer of them. The Eightfold Path becomes who we are. In the ancient texts, the Buddha talked about how when the Eightfold Path matures in a person, they become the Eightfold Path. The word right doesn't seem to work anymore. We become genuine or authentic in this way.

This emphasis on release that Buddhism has, is not unique to Buddhism. Almost every religion in some way or other – in the contemplative side or other – emphasizes release or letting go. There is a recognition that release is not something we do. We prepare the soil or the ground for release. Then we are available for something to drop away. If we just sit and wait, the apple will fall from the tree in its own time. It is a tremendous relief.

One of the things that we are released from is the preoccupation with self and self-concern. There is something very wonderful about being fully present and alive in this life, and not always referring things back to me, myself, and mine. We are not always trying to navigate and negotiate this world with what is in it for us. How do we take care of ourselves? How do we protect ourselves, and get our pleasures met? How do we avoid discomfort? How do we get people to like us and avoid people disliking us?

There is all this self-concern. It is reasonable enough to have self-concern in the complicated social world we live in. Being alive is enough when we experience self-concern evaporating, dissolving, and dropping away. We are just here and present – free in a radical simplicity.

In the Buddhist tradition, this idea of radical release culminates the whole path. It is a way of realizing, being bestowed, or fulfilling personal integrity and dignity. Sometimes they use the word nobility. There is a nobility of

spirit and being in the release. Rather than release being a diminishment, it is a fulfillment. We are releasing all the things that limit, contract, and diminish us. We experience this kind of openness, that is so open and so free. It is not limited by self-concept and self-concern. We are just here fully and openly.

Where does having that kind of radical release leave us? I think it leaves us available and open to the world. It is a way of no longer being in conflict with the world or in conflict with anything. A person who has this deep release will no longer create conflict in the world. This is a great gift to the world. This is a great, fantastic way of being in this life. We are no longer the ones who create conflict. Of course, we may have to navigate conflicts and difficulties that might somehow approach or find us.

Imagine being someone who does not create conflict. Rather, we navigate and walk through the world responding and taking care of things. We move with openness, simplicity, and taking care of the next thing. If the next thing is something that needs to be changed, just take care of the next thing without a sense of conflict, hostility, and sparks between people.

We are available to this world with this radical simplicity, without greed, hatred, and delusion. It's a great gift to the world. Imagine experiencing someone who is fully free of greed, hatred, and delusion. They are present, open, available, and friendly to us. It's fantastic. It feels like this is a safe person to be with – an inspiring person to be with.

Become that person who provides the world with safety, and inspiration. Model this way of being, this gift of radical release and freedom. Of course, many of us would like to have a little bit more. We always want more. We are not really content with radical release in the absence of greed, hate, and delusion. Isn't there something more? The common thing that is offered as more is, "Oh yes. You'll have lots of love for the world. You'll have compassion for the world. You'll live for the welfare and benefit of the world." Maybe.

At this point when the release is radical and full, I would rather not add that to the mix. It is so easy then for it to be a should and somehow complicates the simplicity. Rather, why don't we experience the release ourselves? Don't put conditions on it. Don't require it to be something. Don't only trust it if you think, "Well, then I'll be compassionate. Then I'll take care of people."

Trust the radical release from greed, hate, and delusion. Trust the radical release from suffering. Trust it deeply. Trust the Eightfold Path. Trust the tremendous richness of it. All of Buddhism is contained within the Eightfold Path. Trust how it is a path of freedom. Find it, express it, and let it manifest. Manifest it more and more in our lives. Trust it.

Then find out for yourself how to live your life. At the risk of complicating your life, I am confident that if you do this in your own genuine way, you will live for the welfare and happiness of all beings. It will be a natural thing to do.

So, thank you very much for this series and for being here. I certainly appreciate this opportunity. We will continue next week with a new theme.

For those of you who may be a bit discouraged or bewildered that I didn't want to leave you with love and compassion at the end of release ... not quite. That may be the theme for next week. So, thank you so much.