

# Saṅkhadhama Sutta

SN IV 42.8 The Conch Blower

Translation by Ānanda

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The Bhagavā was living in Nālandā  
In Pāvārika's Mango grove.

Then Asibandhaka's son, the chief,  
A follower of the Jains, went to the Awakened One,  
Sat down to the side.

The bhagavā asked him:

“Chief, how do the Nigaṇṭha Nāṭhaputta teach the Dhamma to his followers?

**[Asibandhaka's son]**

In this way Bhante, he says:

- (1) “Whoever hurts living beings;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.<sup>1</sup>
- (2) Whoever steals;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.
- (3) Whoever has unskillful sexual relations;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.
- (4) Whoever speaks lies;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.”

‘How one lives constantly, that is where one is led.’<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘yo koci pāṇaṃ atipāteti, sabbo so āpāyiko nerayiko

<sup>2</sup> Yaṇḍbahulaṃ yaṇḍbahulaṃ viharati, tena tena nīyatī’ti.

*This is how the Nigaṅṭha Nātaputta teaches the Dhamma to his followers."*

**[The Buddha]**

*"If it was true that:*

*'How one lives constantly, that is where one is led.'*

*In this case,*

*None would be bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*

*That is, following Nātaputta's speech."*

### **[1. Harming living Beings]**

*What do you think chief?*

*That person who hurts living beings,  
Whether by night or by day,  
If we were to compare  
The time when one hurts  
Or the time one does not,*

*Which would be more?<sup>3</sup>*

*Surely, if we take a person who harms living beings,  
The times when someone actually harms living beings is rare,  
There is much more time when that person is not hurting.*

*"Then if it was true that:*

*'How one lives constantly, that is where one is led.'*

*In this case,*

*None would be bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*

*That is, following Nātaputta's speech."*

### **[2. Taking What is not Given]**

*What do you think chief?*

*That person who steals,  
Whether by night or by day,*

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<sup>3</sup> *yo so puriso pāṇātipātī rattiyā vā divasassa vā samayāsamayaṃ upādāya, katamo bahutaro samayo, yaṃ vā so pāṇamatipātetī, yaṃ vā so pāṇaṃ nātipātetī"ti?*

*If we were to compare  
The time when one steals  
Or the time one does not,*

*Which would more?*

*“Surely, if we take a person who steals,  
The times when someone actually steals are rare,  
There is much more time when that person is not stealing.”*

*“Then if it was true that:*

*‘How one lives constantly, that is where one is led.’*

*In this case,  
None would be bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.  
That is, following Nātaputta’s speech.”*

### *[3. Unrestrained in Senses]*

*What do you think chief?*

*That person who has unskillful sexual relations,  
Whether by night or by day,  
If we were to compare  
The time when one steals  
Or the time one does not,*

*Which would be more?*

*“Surely, if we take a person who has unskillful in sexual relations,  
The times when someone is actually taking action is rare,  
There is much more time when that person is not taking action.”*

*“Then if it was true that:*

*‘How one lives constantly, that is where one is led.’*

*In this case,  
None would be bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.  
That is, following Nātaputta’s speech.”*

## [4. Speaking Lies]

What do you think chief?

*That person who speaks lies,,  
Whether by night or by day,  
If we were to compare  
The time when one steals  
Or the time one does not,*

Which would be more?

*“Surely, if we take a person who lies,  
The times when someone actually lies is rare,  
There is much more time when that person is not lying.”*

“Then if it was true that:

*‘How one lives constantly, that is where one is led.’*

*In this case,*

*None would be bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*

*That is, following Nātaputta’s speech.”*

## [Blind Faith in a Destination]

*Here chief, some teachers speak and think in this way:*

- (1) Whoever hurts living beings;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*
- (2) Whoever steals;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*
- (3) Whoever has unskillful sexual relations;  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*
- (4) Whoever speaks lies;*

*All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*

*Then, followers might place great faith in this teacher.*

### *[1. Hurting]*

*Then they think:*

*“My teacher thinks and says that:*

*‘Whoever injures living beings  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.’*

*Surely, there are times when I have hurt living beings!”*

*Then, they take on the belief that they are bound to awful realms.*

### *[Unwise Perspective]*

*If that speech remains unabandoned,  
If that mind remains unabandoned,  
If one does not break out of that belief,  
That person will be brought in these very realms, as if carried there.<sup>4</sup>*

### *[2. Stealing]*

*“My teacher thinks and says that:*

*Whoever injures living beings  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.*

*Surely, there are times when I have stolen!”*

*Then, they take on the belief that they are bound to awful realms.*

### *[Unwise Perspective]*

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<sup>4</sup> *Taṇṇi, gāmaṇi, vācaṇi appahāya taṇṇi cittaṇṇi appahāya taṇṇi diṭṭhiṇi appaṭinissajjitvā yathābhataṇṇi nikkhitto evaṇi niraye.*

*If that speech remains unabandoned  
If that mind remains unabandoned,  
If one does not break out of that belief,  
That person will be brought in these very realms, as if carried there.*

### *[3. Adultery]*

*“My teacher thinks and says that:*

*‘Whoever is uncontrolled in their senses  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.’*

*Surely, there are times when I have had unskillful sexual relations!”*

*Then, they take on the belief that they are bound to awful realms.*

### *[Unwise Perspective]*

*If that speech remains unabandoned  
If that mind remains unabandoned,  
If one does not break out of that belief,  
That person will be brought in these very realms, as if carried there.*

### *[4. Speaking Lies]*

*“My teacher thinks and says that:*

*‘Whoever speaks lies  
All of them are bound to the realms of the fallen, the nether worlds.’*

*Surely, there are times when I have told lies!”*

*Then, they take on the belief that they are bound to awful realms.*

### *[Unwise Perspective]*

*If that speech remains unabandoned  
If that mind remains unabandoned,  
If one does not break out of that belief,*

*That person will be brought in these very realms, as if carried there.*

## *[Faith in Discernment]*

## *[The Arising of a Buddha]*

*But then chief,  
A Truth-Finder awakes in the world:*

*Worthy, perfectly all-awakened  
One who knows and practices what he teaches,  
Blissful, knower of the worlds,  
Unrivaled teacher of people who seek self-mastery,  
Teacher of Devas and humans  
Awakened and Gone Beyond.*

- (1) In countless ways  
He prevents and wards [people] from harming living beings  
And says: 'Stay away from hurting living beings.'<sup>5</sup>*
- (2) In countless ways  
He prevents and wards [people] from stealing  
And says: 'Stay away from stealing.'*
- (3) In countless ways  
He prevents and wards [people] from unskillful sexual relations  
And says: 'Stay away from unskillful sexual relations.'*
- (4) In countless ways  
He prevents and wards [people] from speaking lies  
And says: 'Stay away from speaking lies.'*

*Then, followers might place great faith in this teacher.*

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<sup>5</sup> So *anekapariyāyena pāṇātipātāṃ garahati vigarahati, 'pāṇātipātā vīramathā'ti cāha.*

## [1. Hurting]

One reflects:

*'In countless ways  
Bhagavā prevents and wards [people] from harming living beings  
And says: 'Stay away from hurting living beings.'*

### [Wise Perspective]

*"There have been times when  
I have hurt living beings, to this or that extent:<sup>6</sup>  
That was not right,  
That was not good.<sup>7</sup>  
Because of this I feel remorseful.  
But I cannot undo the bad actions I have already committed."<sup>8</sup>*

*Reflecting in this way, one abandons harming living beings.  
And they avoid violence towards living beings in the future,<sup>9</sup>*

*This is how these unskillful actions get to be given up.  
This is how these unskillful actions are transcended.<sup>10</sup>*

## [2. Stealing]

*In countless ways,  
Bhagavā prevents and wards [people] from stealing and says:  
'Stay away from stealing.'*

### [Wise Perspective]

*There have been times when  
I have stolen, to this or that extent:  
That was not right,  
That was not good.*

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<sup>6</sup> *Atthi kho pana mayā pāṇo atipātito yāvatako vā tāvatako vā.*

<sup>7</sup> *taṃ na suṭṭhu, taṃ na sādhu.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ahañceva kho pana tappaccayā vipphaṇṇāssāṃ. Na metaṃ pāpaṃ kammaṃ akataṃ bhavissatī'ti.*

<sup>9</sup> *So iti paṭisaṅkhāya tañceva pāṇātipātāṃ pajahati. Āyatiñca pāṇātipātā paṭivirato hoti.*

<sup>10</sup> *Evametassa pāpassa kammaṃ pahānaṃ hoti. Evametassa pāpassa kammaṃ samatikkamo hoti.*

*Because of this I feel remorseful.  
But I cannot undo the bad actions I have already committed.*

*Reflecting in this way, one abandons stealing.  
And they avoid stealing in the future,*

*This is how these unskillful actions get to be given up.  
This is how these unskillful actions are transcended.*

### *[3. Adultery]*

*“In countless ways,  
Bhagavā prevents and wards [people] from unskillful sexual relations and says:  
‘Stay away from unskillful sexual relations.’*

#### *[Wise Perspective]*

*There have been times when  
I have had unskillful sexual relations, to this or that extent:  
That was not right,  
That was not good.  
Because of this I feel remorseful.  
But I cannot undo the bad actions I have already committed.*

*Reflecting in this way, one abandons unskillful sexual relations.  
And they avoid unskillful sexual relations in the future,*

*This is how these unskillful actions get to be given up.  
This is how these unskillful actions are transcended.*

### *[4. Speaking Lies]*

*In countless ways,  
Bhagavā prevents and wards [people] from speaking lies and says:  
‘Stay away from speaking lies.’*

#### *[Wise Perspective]*

*There have been times when  
I have spoken lies, to this or that extent:  
That was not right,*

*That was not good.  
Because of this I feel remorseful.  
But I cannot undo the bad actions I have already committed.*

*Reflecting in this way, one abandons harming living beings.  
And they avoid violence towards living beings in the future,*

*This is how these unskillful actions get to be given up.  
This is how these unskillful actions are transcended.*

### *[Undertaking the Training Virtues]*

*Then,  
One abandons harming the living; one holds back from it.<sup>11</sup>  
One abandons stealing; one holds back from it.  
One abandons unskillful sexual relations; one holds back from it.  
One abandons speaking lies; one holds back from it.  
One abandons talking in others back;<sup>12</sup> one holds back from it.  
One abandons coarse language; one holds back from it.  
One abandons meaningless talk; one holds back from it.  
One abandons jealousy; one holds back from it.<sup>13</sup>  
One abandons delusive aversion;<sup>14</sup> one holds back from it.  
One abandons unwise opinions;<sup>15</sup> one holds back from it.*

### *[Wholesome Mental Development]<sup>16</sup>*

#### *[1. Boundless Love]*

*Then, chief, this virtuous seeker,  
Void of longing,  
Void of impatience,  
Uninfatuated,*

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<sup>11</sup> So *pāṇātipātamaṃ pahāya pāṇātipātā paṭivirato hoti.*

<sup>12</sup> *Pisuṇa* (adj.) [Vedic *piṣuṇa*, see etym. under *piśāca*] backbiting, calumnious, malicious

<sup>13</sup> *Abhijjhaṃ pahāya anabhijjhālu hoti.*

<sup>14</sup> *Byāpādappadosaṃ*

<sup>15</sup> *Micchādīṭṭhiṃ*

<sup>16</sup> *Bhāvanā*

Fully conscious and continually present,<sup>17</sup>  
Meditates with a heart filled with Love,  
Suffusing one direction,  
    a second,  
    a third,  
    a fourth.<sup>18</sup>

Thus above, below and everywhere across  
To all living beings  
in this boundless universe.<sup>19</sup>

One meditates with a heart filled with boundless love,  
    Vast, expansive, measureless,  
    Free from anger and impatience.<sup>20</sup>

Chief, imagine mighty conch blower  
Who could effortlessly let his sound be known to the four directions<sup>21</sup>

In the same way chief,  
When the release of mind  
By Radiant Love is developed and cultivated  
Any previous selfish actions  
    Cannot remain,  
    It cannot stay.<sup>22</sup>

## [2. Radiant Compassion]

Then, chief, a virtuous seeker,  
Void of longing,  
Void of impatience,  
Uninfatuated,  
Fully conscious and continually present,  
Meditates with a heart filled with compassion,  
Suffusing one direction,  
    a second,

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<sup>17</sup> *evaṃ viḡatābhijjho viḡatabyāpādo asammūlho sampajāno paṭissato*

<sup>18</sup> *mettāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitoṃ viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ.*

<sup>19</sup> *Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ*

<sup>20</sup> *mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjena pharitoṃ viharati.*

<sup>21</sup> *Seyyathāpi, gāmaṇi, balavā saṅkhadhamo appakasireneva catuddisā viññāpeyya;*

<sup>22</sup> *yaṃ pamāṇakataṃ kammaṃ, na taṃ tatrāvasissati, na taṃ tatrāvatiṭṭhati.*

*a third,  
a fourth.*

*Thus above, below and everywhere across  
To all living beings  
in this boundless universe.*

*One meditates with a heart filled with boundless compassion,  
Vast, expansive, measureless,  
Free from anger and impatience.*

*Chief, imagine mighty conch blower  
Who could effortlessly let his sound be known to the four directions*

*In the same way chief,  
When the release of mind  
By Radiant compassion is developed and cultivated  
Any previous selfish actions  
Cannot remain,  
It cannot stay.*

### *[3. Radiant Joy]*

*Then, chief, a virtuous seeker,  
Void of longing,  
Void of impatience,  
Uninfatuated,  
Fully conscious and continually present,  
Meditates with a heart filled with Joy,  
Suffusing one direction,  
a second,  
a third,  
a fourth.*

*Thus above, below and everywhere across  
To all living beings  
in this boundless universe.*

*One meditates with a heart filled with boundless Joy,  
Vast, expansive, measureless,  
Free from anger and impatience.*

*Chief, imagine mighty conch blower  
Who could effortlessly let his sound be known to the four directions*

*In the same way chief,  
When the release of mind  
By Radiant Joy is developed and cultivated  
Any previous selfish actions  
    Cannot remain,  
    It cannot stay.*

#### *[4. Radiant Calm]*

*Then, chief, a virtuous seeker,  
Void of longing,  
Void of impatience,  
Uninfatuated,  
Fully conscious and continually present,  
Meditates with a heart filled with calm,  
Suffusing one direction,  
    a second,  
    a third,  
    a fourth.*

*Thus above, below and everywhere across  
    To all living beings  
    in this boundless universe.*

*One meditates with a heart filled with boundless calm,  
    Vast, expansive, measureless,  
    Free from anger and impatience.*

*Chief, imagine mighty conch blower  
Who could effortlessly let his sound be known to the four directions*

*In the same way chief,  
When the release of mind  
By Radiant calm is developed and cultivated  
Any previous selfish actions  
Cannot remain,  
It cannot stay.*

*Once this was said, Asibandhaka's son said to bhagavan:*

*"Wonderful Bhante, Wonderful!"*

*Just as if what had fallen over had been set upright,  
or as what had been hidden was uncovered,  
or as if the way was shown to someone who was lost,  
or as if a light was shone in the darkness, thinking:*

*"Let those with vision see!"*

*In the same way Bhante,  
The Awakened One Has brought forth  
And elucidated the Dhamma in countless ways.*

*Bhante,  
I go to the Awakened One as a refuge  
to the Dhamma  
and to the bhikkhu saṅgha.*

*Let the Awakened one see me as a lay follower,  
From today on, who has gone for refuge for life."*



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