

"Then, student, listen and attend closely to what I shall say."

"Yes, sir," he replied. The Blessed One said this:

24. "What, student, is the path to the company of Brahmā? Here a monk dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will. When the liberation of mind by loving-kindness is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there. Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by loving-kindness is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.²¹ This is the path to the company of Brahmā.

25–27. "Again, a monk dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with compassion ... with a mind imbued with altruistic joy ... with a mind imbued with equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with equanimity, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will. When the liberation of mind by equanimity is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there. Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the liberation of mind by equanimity is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there. This too is the path to the company of Brahmā."

(from MN 99: *Subha Sutta*; II 206–8)

(3) *Insight Surpasses All*

[The Buddha said to Anāthapiṇḍika:] "In the past, householder, there was a brahmin named Velāma. He gave such a great alms offering as this: eighty-four thousand bowls of gold filled with silver; eighty-four thousand bowls of silver filled with gold; eighty-four thousand bronze bowls filled with bullion; eighty-four thousand elephants, chariots, milch cows, maidens, and couches, many millions

of fine cloths, and indescribable amounts of food, drink, ointment, and bedding.

“As great as was the alms offering that the brahmin Velāma gave, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single person possessed of right view.²² As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred persons possessed of right view, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single once-returner. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred once-returners, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single nonreturner. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred nonreturners, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single arahant. As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred arahants, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single paccekabuddha.²³ As great as the brahmin Velāma’s alms offering was, and though one would feed a hundred paccekabuddhas, it would be even more fruitful if one would feed a single Perfectly Enlightened Buddha ... it would be even more fruitful if one would feed the Saṅgha of monks headed by the Buddha and build a monastery for the sake of the Saṅgha of the four quarters ... it would be even more fruitful if, with a trusting mind, one would go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, and would undertake the five precepts: abstaining from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from the use of intoxicants. As great as all this might be, it would be even more fruitful if one would develop a mind of loving-kindness even for the time it takes to pull a cow’s udder. And as great as all this might be, it would be even more fruitful still if one would develop the perception of impermanence just for the time it takes to snap one’s fingers.”

(AN 9:20, abridged; IV 393–96)