

Right Livelihood

What, now, is Right Livelihood?

When the noble disciple, avoiding a wrong way of living, gets his livelihood by a right way of living, this is called Right Livelihood.

In the Majjhima-Nikaya, No. 117, it is said: 'To practise deceit, treachery, soothsaying, trickery, usury: this is wrong livelihood.'

And in the Anguttara-Nikaya, V. 1 77, it is said: 'Five trades should be avoided by a disciple: trading in arms, in living beings, in flesh, in intoxicating drinks, and in poison'.

Included are the professions of a soldier, a fisherman, a hunter, etc. (Dîgha Nikaya, 22)

Now, Right Livelihood, I tell you, is of two kinds:

Mundane and Supermundane Right Livelihood

1. When the noble disciple, avoiding wrong living, gets his livelihood by a right way of living: this is called 'Mundane Right Livelihood' (*lokiya-samma-ajiva*), which yields worldly fruits and brings good results.

2. But the avoidance of wrong livelihood, the abstaining, desisting, refraining therefrom—the mind being holy, being turned away from the world, and conjoined with the path, the holy path being pursued—this is called the 'Supermundane Right Livelihood' (*lokuttara-samma-ajiva*), which is not of the world but is supermundane, and conjoined with the path.

Conjoined with other Factors

Now, in understanding wrong livelihood as wrong, and right livelihood as right, one practises *Right Understanding* (1st factor); and in making efforts to overcome wrong livelihood, to establish right livelihood, one practises *Right Effort* (6th factor); and in overcoming wrong livelihood with attentive mind, and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right livelihood, one practises *Right Mindfulness* (7th factor). Hence, there are three things that accompany and follow upon Right Livelihood, namely: Right Understanding, Right Effort, and Right Mindfulness. (*Majjhima-Nikaya*, 117)

Source: Nyanatiloka (compiler, translator). *The Word of the Buddha: An Outline of the Teaching of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon*. 14th edition. Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1967. (Pages 53-54.)
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