

Link: <https://youtu.be/bxRNQWlihBU>

FOREWORD

At a time when Buddhism is spreading fast across the globe, it is our intention to make the general public acquainted with the great teachings of the Lord Buddha.

Whilst listening to a sermon is the ideal way of going forward in the path of Dhamma, some may prefer to read it at their leisure and comprehend the teachings at their own pace and time. Then there may be those who are weak in their faculty of listening, so the only way they can understand it, is by reading a text or a Dhamma book.

These transliterations are available for all those who wish to have an understanding of the Lord Buddha's teachings in order to find true salvation.

This is a transcription of the sermon held in 2019-03-31. There may be the odd omission or inclusion inadvertently due to quality issues of the audio or deliberate editing to make the text more readable.

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Key Words

Exclusive	Upèkkshà thara upèkkshà / unconditional
Club	equanimity
Membership	Pleasure / ashwada
Non-believers	Pain
Blind faith	Gain
Cook	Prepare
Spoil	Meditation / bhavana
Broth	Abhisañkhāra dukkha
84000 discourses	Viparināma dukkha
Indriya pariyatta gnānaya	Dukkha dukkha
Paṭicca samuppaada	Àdīnava
Attachment / tanha	Samvattanti
RVSSV	Sambodhi
Mind	Dhal curry
Citta	Friend
Arising / udayangama	Bus
Passing away / atthagama	Guy
Raga	Travel
Dvesha	Countries
Moha	Wash
Sapa / sukkha	Dirty
Duka / dukkha	Linen
Upekshà / equanimous	Soap
	Karmasthana

2019-03-31

I was informed that a good number of you have put forward your names for the first meditation program. Well done! You might begin to resent, because when you come and start doing your meditation, you could fall into that trap, and then become disheartened. We mustn't be hasty in achieving our goal. What we must be hasty in is, doing the things that we need to do to get to our goal. Because once we have the causes lined up, there is nothing you need to do to achieve the result. The result will look after itself. So, ask yourselves,

“Are you ready?”

“Are you doing what you need to do to prepare yourself?”

So, ask yourself that question. If you're not ready just yet, that's ok because we still have time. But you have to do the things that I have been asking you to do which is go back and listen to the previous sermons. If you haven't been doing that and if you don't intend doing it then, well you have been warned. I genuinely mean this because I was quite overwhelmed by the number of responses that we received. I didn't expect so many of you to put your names forward and I don't know if there are those among you who have put your names forward, who don't generally come and listen to the sermons, I haven't gone through the list checking things off because I don't know any of you by name, so I don't know who you are. I just see some familiar faces regularly and that's about it. So, you have to check whether you are ready. And, what if you are not ready? You can either come later or you can prepare yourself. You can make yourself ready, there is still time. So, throughout the next few sermons, I will try to focus on the core of what we will be focusing on; will be concentrating and reflecting on during our meditation programs which is '*anicca*', '*dukkha*' and '*anatta*'. Because you know, this is what we need to really get a firm grip on. This is what transformed you from a '*pruthujjana*' to a '*Sōtāpanna*'. '*Anicca*', '*dukkha*' and '*anatta*' nothing else. You can be the most generous person alive, the most meritorious person ever, but that is not going to transform you into an '*ārya*'.

The most exclusive club membership

You know, there are clubs that people have in society. Some clubs are quite exclusive, only the privileged can join them. You are probably members of some of them. You have to be quite privileged to join them. There are several levels of membership, standard, silver, gold, diamond and platinum members and things like that. So, you are probably members of some of those clubs. These are called exclusive clubs because everyone can't join them.

Well, as I happened to think recently, there is one club that is very exclusive. The most exclusive club you can ever find is that of '*Shrāvaka Sangha*', the club of *Āriyas*. It is extremely exclusive that it doesn't matter how much money you have, you can't join it. It doesn't matter how powerful you are, you can't join it. It doesn't matter how educated you are, how much property you have to your name, how young or old you are, you simply can't join it. It doesn't matter how many friends you've got, you simply can't join it. You can only be included in this club by invitation and that invitation has to come from someone who is also a member. This is why it is so exclusive. You cannot become a '*Shrāvaka sangha*' unless someone who is also a '*Shrāvaka sangha*' or the Buddha Himself, who is the founding member of this club, gives you an invitation - a personal invitation and that invitation comes in the form of what? *Anicca, dukkha* and *anatta*.

“Would you like to become a member of this exclusive club?”

It's nice to be a member of an exclusive club, isn't it? Because then you feel special. You could be the *Shakra dévā* and you can't join this club if you haven't received an invitation from someone who is also a member. You could be the *Mahābrahma* but you still can't join it because membership of this club requires only one prerequisite and that is your comprehension of *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta*. You can't simply memorize it, or learn it, you have to comprehend it. Once you have comprehended it, now you are a member and there is nothing else you need to do either. You become a member automatically and guess what? Most clubs that you are a member of give you a life membership but membership for this club is for the rest of *sansāra*.

Benefits of this club membership

So, there are quite a lot of benefits. You know the biggest benefit? They take away your citizenship. To become a member of this club, you have to let go, you have to give up your citizenship of where? The four great hells! Aren't we all here on a Visa? Yes, we are and this Visa can expire any

moment, but unfortunately you don't know what expiry date is stamped on this Visa. And also, based on your behavior, sometimes they might terminate your Visa while it is still valid. Some 'karmas' are very powerful, so powerful that you could go back to where you came from in the next thought, that is all that is required. So, if you are willing to surrender your citizenship of the four great hells, then it is worth considering taking membership of this club because you can't take membership while you still hold on to that citizenship.

Obtaining & enhancing the membership

And as I said, you have to be invited by someone who is also a member, either the founding member or someone who joined this subsequently as a result of receiving an invitation from the founding member. Making sense so far? So, this is a pretty exclusive club. There is no club that is more exclusive than this. And if you count all the sentient beings out there, membership of this club is very rare, in fact probably the rarest membership of all clubs there ever was and there ever is and there ever will be. All other clubs will have more members than this club, the club of 'Àriyas', the club of *shrāvaka sangha*, not *sammuti sangha*, or 'conventional sangha'. Once you're in a robe, you are a member of the conventional Sangha. All that is required for that is to shave your head, don a robe and get hold of an alms bowl and you are member of the conventional Sangha. But it is not so easy to become a member of the *shrāvaka sangha*. Would you fancy a membership of that? Yes? Good! Let's try and get you the membership. It's quite slick isn't it, to be a member of an exclusive club. They don't check how much money you have in your bank balance either, they don't check what car you drive. In some clubs, you have to drive a posh car otherwise they don't let you in. In some clubs, you have to be fluent in English, otherwise they won't let you in. At some clubs, you have to come in black tie, otherwise they don't let you in or in your suits and in your boots but in this club, it doesn't matter how you come. You can come in rags if you like, because there is only one requisite and that is your comprehension of *anicca, dukkha and anatta*.

Once you are a member of this club, from then onwards you can start to enhance your membership. There are several grades of membership. So first, you become a standard member. What is that called? *Sōtāpanna*. Then you'll become a silver member, more privileges. As you keep enhancing your membership, there are more privileges. The greatest privilege is, there is less suffering as you keep going forward. Then you can become a gold member. So, what was silver membership? *Sakurdāgāmi* and gold membership? *Anāgāmi*. Finally, yes! You come to be a

platinum member. What is that called? 'Arahant'. Your purpose of joining this club should be to achieve that platinum membership.

Shall we check your cards, do you have your membership card with you? Well, hurry up! This should be your sole purpose of visiting this monastery. Putting it simply, that should be your sole purpose. Everything else you do, while you are here is auxiliary, additional stuff. You could bring us alms, that's all additional stuff that should not be your purpose of visiting us. Your purpose of visiting us should solely be getting membership of this club and once you become a platinum member you don't need to be here anymore. In fact, once you become a standard member, you don't really have to be here because from there, you can work on your membership yourself and you can enhance your membership one grade at a time. But once you're a platinum member, then you really don't have to be here and besides, once you become a standard member you can invite other members to join us because this happens by word of mouth, exclusively by invitation only. Do you like the sound of that? And you thought you had to give up everything? No, no, no, you actually receive membership of this club as a fantastic thing, the most exclusive club ever. So, in order to get in to this club and in order to enhance your membership as you go forward, there are certain things that we have to be careful of.

Non-believers in Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha

So, I have been speaking to a few of our visitors over the last week or so and most of them are regular listeners. After having spoken to them, there were a few things I picked up, which I thought I should probably talk to you a little bit about, because if I don't say the things I am about to say then it might block your progress and you might go astray and then you will not be able to achieve what it is you are here to achieve. Because you know, if you are anything like me when I started this journey, I started off as a non-believer. That is how I started, "Don't believe. Buddha, - don't believe. Dhamma, sangha, nope, don't believe. *Karma, vipàka*, don't believe". I was a non-believer. That is how a lot of us will have started. Generally, the more you have material wise, the more this is going to be people's mindset. Very rarely there is an odd exception where people are both materially rich as well as spiritually. But generally, what happens is when you are materially rich, then spirituality goes out of the back window. That's a shame because people then seek refuge in materialism, in wealth, knowledge and power. So, if you are anything like me, I started off as a non-believer.

There are two types of non-believers. There is one type of non-believer who doesn't believe because he just doesn't know. I don't know, so I don't believe in it. Do you believe in the Buddha? Seriously I don't know who the Buddha is so I can't help it but not believe in Him because I don't know who the Buddha is. That is one type of non-believer.

There is another type of non-believer. These non-believers are more dangerous to themselves as well as to others. Because they are self-confessed non-believers and they are proud about it. Because of their mammoth egos.

"I'm a non-believer and I am proud of it! I don't believe in *karma*, *vipàka* and I'm so proud of it!"

Some people are like that. They like a bit of a debate.

"Give me what you got, throw me whatever you got and I'll fight you off because I'm a non-believer and I am proud of it!"

Some people are like that. You have come across people like this in society,

"I don't believe in the Buddha, I don't believe in the Dhamma, what is it? We just go through life; There's no need for a philosophy; there's no need for religion; if you have money; if you have a place to stay, if you have a family; that's all you need; there's no need for spirituality in life."

You know there are people like that.

"I don't believe in *karma*, *vipàka*, no *dēvas*, brahmas, there are none of these beings, no hells; I don't believe in it and I am proud of it!"

There are some people like that. They're very dangerous, not just to themselves but also to others because they are like an epidemic, an epidemic disease that starts spreading, infectious. Because every person they touch will be infected by this disease. Because they are proud about the fact that they are non-believers and one of their motives of existence is really to spread that belief among other people so that they have a bigger clan. Very dangerous! But chances are that this is the path that a lot of us took. First, we were non-believers because we just simply didn't know. Then we started to hold on to our opinions strongly and therefore, along with ego to back it up, we became proud non-believers.

Blind faith

And then after a while, you get to listen to something, you might not want to call it the Dhamma, something that somebody says that gets you to start thinking. It breaks a lot of views that you

about the world. It changes your perspective on the world. It challenges the view that you hold about the world, it's a paradigm shift. Now, slowly you start to become a believer with convincing along the way. But sometimes this belief can come with faith in disguise. Believing in something and faith are really not one and the same I like to think, because faith comes with...there's a really sad word that usually gets thrown around with faith and that's the word 'blind' - blind faith. Be scared, hells, you're going to die, you're scared? Blind faith. I'm not saying believing in hells is blind faith, I'm saying this is how some people are transformed by talking with them about hells. Yes, people have to be informed about hells because that is something that you should know, because you have to prepare yourself for it. At least to try and avoid getting there. But I personally don't believe that's the best way.

Because first, this is a non-believer, who went on to become an adamant non-believer and proud of it, and then faith but blind faith through some kind of convincing, it shouldn't be like that. You know there are other ways to get someone to the Dhamma.

Even this morning a group of people came along, some visitors from abroad and they wanted to have a chat. Although Buddhists by birth they don't believe in a lot of the things that we talk about. No belief in hells or heavens and what I explained to them is,

"I'm not going to talk to you about heavens and hells because I don't believe in them myself", at which they sighed relief,

"Ah.... thank you."

Because now they don't have to throw up this obstacle, this wall that comes up immediately when you see a *swaminwahanse* and you think either they are going to ask you for something or they are going to start talking gibberish that you don't understand, things that you have to take by blind faith or out of fear or respect. Now this is how the Buddha transformed a non-Buddhist to a Buddhist.

Looking after myself for you

I was quite sad, I think last week, when I met this gentleman who said there are two people that he has come to fear in life. Two types of people. Because when you meet them, they're always going to ask you for something, ask you for something you don't like to give. The first type he said, are policemen and the second, unfortunately are monks. I felt sick to the core just listening to him say that with a robe around my body. I felt such shame and there's nothing wrong in what he said, it is the truth. He spoke very honestly and genuinely and that is the reality but it's a very pitiful reality,

it's a very shameful reality. You will all have experience of that, more or less. So, what should we do? Go and protest with our placards in our hands, walk around Lipton square or sign a petition and send it off to the parliament?

The more the Dhamma sinks into my heart, into my mind, the more I realize, it's not about changing the outside world, it's about changing oneself. I have to learn to be at peace with the world, not change the world to be at peace with me. That's what I used to try and do, change the world, make it a better place, heal the world, make it a better place for you and for me. Now, I've given it up! I've given up on that ambition. Now it's about healing myself, to make the world a better place. Still, you're making the world a better place, but not by healing the world, but by healing myself.

Did I tell you the other day? Two people, one guy says to the other,

"Hey, would you take care of me please? If you love me, if you have affection towards me, then take care of me, look after me."

The other guy, he's clever and wise, he says,

"I'm not going to look after you, I'm not going to take care of you but I'll take care of myself for you."

Very profound, so deep. I will look after myself for you. I will take care of myself for you. What does that mean? If there is no one around you, who harms you, who hurts you, is there anything you need to worry about? Is there anything you need to fear? No. So if everyone around you looks after themselves, this will heal the wounds inside of them, treat the wounds inside of them, extinguish the fire of *rāga*, *dvèsha*, *mōha* inside of them, then do you need to worry about or have to be fearful of being around them? No. So that is what he meant. I will look after myself for you. That's what we should all be doing, looking after ourselves for the other person.

Children, this is what you should do on behalf of your parents. Look after yourself, because then, bringing you up is going to be far less troublesome. It's going to be a lot easier on your parents if you look after yourselves. The reason that parents have to struggle so much, is because children don't look after themselves. From simple things like brushing your teeth, from a very worldly perspective to supramundane perspectives like attaining *Nibbāna*. You can start small, start brushing your teeth regularly, that's one less thing your mother has to worry about. Make sure you

wash your underwear every day, that's one less thing your dad has to worry about. Make sure you polish your shoes every day before you go to school, that's one less thing your parents have to worry about. Make sure you don't eat or snack on these sugary foods, things like that. Make sure you keep to a good diet, that is one less thing your parents will have to worry about. Again, aren't you looking after yourself for them? So, each and every one of us should just look after ourselves a little bit more. Don't think of this as being selfish, I think this is the most selfless thing to do, look after yourself so that you become less of a trouble to other people. Heal the wound inside, so that you become less of a trouble to other people. Are you not shameful if I were to go to someone you know, and ask them, "What is your bane of your life?" In other words, what is it that troubles you the most, and if you're on the list, how would that make you feel? It could be your employer, it could be your employees, it could be your husband, your wife, your parents, your children and I ask them "What is it that troubles you most and if you're on that list, how do you feel about that? You shouldn't be feeling good about that. That's one list you shouldn't be proud about having your name on. So, you can get your name off that list if you only looked after yourself. Because we now have an opportunity to look after ourselves. We are intelligent people, we have the power of thought and we have the power to put thought into action, to do good to ourselves. Doing good to ourselves is really doing good to the world around us.

Do we not all need merit to get to our final destination? Which is what? What is our final destination, Andromeda? No, *Nibbāna*. To get to *Nibbāna*, we should all earn merit. And how can you earn merit? By doing good to yourself and to others. So, you do merit to get yourself to *Nibbāna* but in doing so, what are you also doing? You're doing good to others. You're doing good to the world. There's going to be a day when you no longer need any merit. When that day comes, everything you do will be for the benefit of others. But until such time, look after yourself until your wound has been healed. Once your wound is healed then you don't have to ask me what should I do now? It'll all become obvious. Until your wound is healed, you will need instructions. Not for anything else, but to heal the wound, the wound of desire, aversion and delusion. These are the wounds that we ought to heal.

So, the non-believer went on to become an adamant non-believer, and then once they came across the Dhamma, the Dhamma touched their lives. These views that they held onto strongly, skepticism that they held onto very strongly were broken, shattered. Now they start to see the

world quite differently to how they used to. That is a really good thing, is it not? Absolutely! It's a marvelous thing, something that is very rare for someone to be able to achieve in their lives. But, that is not the end of the journey you have hardly begun. Because I'll tell you what happens next. Remember I'm not talking about a *Sōtāpanna*. I'm talking about someone who has not permanently given up on the views about the world, someone who is willing to consider, so they've gone from being an adamant skeptic to someone who is willing to consider, willing to listen to the Dhamma, willing to consider who the Buddha might be, willing to change and transform their lives.

Too many cooks spoil the broth

So now you have a motivated explorer. They want to discover themselves. They want to explore the world, they are now motivated because you have motivated them or they have listened to someone who has motivated them. And again, these motivated people are twofold. Motivation is good, but what happens if you have a motivated fool? That's very dangerous. A motivated fool is very dangerous because they have the enthusiasm to do a lot of work, to do stuff, they just want to get on with it, right? We say *Nibbāna*,

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, when, when, can I do it yesterday?”

That's the question they have. They want to have attained *Nibbāna* yesterday, that's how eagerly they want to do this. Because they don't realize that there is a path that gets you there, that this is a journey that you have to tread very carefully until you get to your destination. Ask yourself “Where am I on this journey?” Because when you become motivated, but without direction and instruction, now what is going to happen is because you've gotten the taste of it, there's something new, exciting, and interesting that you can now engage yourself in, you are going to start running like a headless chicken. Have you seen a headless chicken? Go and look in the mirror.

If you are motivated, but without direction you are like a headless chicken, very dangerous, particularly on the path, on the quest of *Nibbāna*. Because what can happen then, is now you go to several teachers, you go to several people for instruction and they're all correct. It's like, have you heard the expression,

“Too many cooks spoil the broth.”

They all have a recipe for the broth but what might happen is, you start reading the recipe of cook number one. You go a third of the way through the recipe and then now you think “Ah, I want something a little bit more exciting.” Now you go to cook number two and you continue from that

point forward. So, you continue from one third of the way forward now you start reading that recipe book. Then again, a little way through you decide, “I want something new, something interesting, something exciting”, because remember, deep seated inside our minds is the desire to know - curiosity. To know, to find out, to know more about the world and the world includes the Dhamma. Remember the Dhamma is also a part of the world. An Arahant is not even attached to the Dhamma. You might have an Arahant who does not understand the words of *paṭicca samuppāda*. They’ll have comprehended the *paṭicca samuppāda*, but not the words of it. Perhaps to you and me, when someone says the words *avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra, ’saṅkhāra paccayā viññāna*, and you go,

“What's after that, what comes after that?”

You just can't wait because it's interesting. It's really interesting so you want to know, you want to find out. But when you say those words to an Arahant, you can stop wherever you like. They’re not going to be curious to ask you what comes next. You can stop that teledrama at any episode and an Arahant is not going to vex. But if someone leaves you on a cliffhanger, that's not fun. So, the same applies on your quest in the Dhamma, on your quest for *Nibbāna*. Because now, if you’ve been listening to sermons not just here but anywhere, you will have this desire to attain *Nibbāna*. Whether you know exactly what *Nibbāna* is or not, you will want to get there because it's interesting. Not everyone is doing it, so it becomes exclusive, simply because of that. To be exclusive is a really nice thing because then it means I can put myself above others. I’m not saying you’re like this, all I'm saying is be careful, because you could fall into this pit. I’m not saying any of you are there, I’m just saying, watch out! Because then in your need to know, in your desire to want to find out, what you’re going to do, you will start going to all these cooks who have their own recipe books and you are going to start taking bits from all of these recipe books and then you are going to make your own broth.

Don’t end up in a dhal curry that even your dog can’t eat.

Just think about the last time you cooked a curry. Have you ever cooked a curry? Some of the ladies and gentlemen in the room are looking, what? How do you cook a curry? You’re privileged, that's why. So, when you cook a curry, you start off by collecting all the ingredients you need, making sure you have all of that, then you turn on the fire, put the cooking pan on top and now you follow your recipe. What if, when you start cooking your dhal curry, that half way through this experience you taste it just to check what it's like. Now it's a bit too salty. Those of you who have cooked dhal

curry, can you please tell me what you do if your dhal curry is turning out to be a little bit too salty? Add some onions, what else? Potatoes, anything else? See, exactly, you're proving my point. Some of you say, you add onions, others say, you add potatoes, someone might say "Well, I just add a little bit more water to dilute the salt".

So, you're writing down your recipe as you go along, this is how I cook my dhal curry. So, in your recipe book you are going to have this much salt, ok? But because it's too salty later down the line, you added something else to take away the excess saltiness. Now, you give this recipe to somebody else to help them start to learn to cook dhal curry. But they decide I'm only going to take the first half and not going to bother about the rest of it. For the second half, they are going to borrow the recipe from somebody else who hadn't added too much salt when making their curry. They added too much chili powder at the beginning. So, to save their curry with too much chili powder, they might have added coconut milk. Now, you take the first half of the first recipe and the second half of the second recipe and you make up your own recipe. Well, you can imagine what's going to happen? You're going to end up with a dhal curry that not even your dog can eat. Whose fault is it? Is it cook number one's fault or cook number two's fault? Neither of them, because they both have really good tasting dhal curries, if only you'd followed the instructions from top to bottom, you'd have ended up with a decent enough dhal curry in both cases. But what you did was, take one half from the first chef, and the second half from the second chef and you made up your own dhal curry. This is what can also happen when you start practicing the Dhamma.

Why 84 000 discourses?

The Buddha expounded 84 000 discourses each of which teaches Nibbāna. Each of them teaches the path to Nibbāna and depending on who it is; because why 84 000? Why do you not just give one sermon, I mean '*Dhamsak Pawathum Sutta*', that's one, you could just stop there. Because there are different mindsets, people have different mentalities. Depending on whether you are *shraddhà*, *veeriya*, *sathi*, *samàdhi*, *pragnà*, depending on what your faculty is that you're most strong in, then there's a different discourse that is right for you. And because the Buddha has what is called, the ***Indriya pariyatta gnānaya*** which is a knowledge with which he can scan you quite literally, and He knows how much *shraddhà*, *veeriya*, *sathi*, *samàdhi*, *pragnà* you have. He knows it to the tee. What He can then do is give you the prescription, "This is the discourse you need to attain Nibbāna. So, depending on that, you'll find that the lay people or monks or nuns, they'll all

have a way that makes sense to them. So, we talk about *udayangama*, *atthangama*, *àshvāda*, *ādīnava*, *nissarana*. Someone else might go along the path of *paṭicca samuppāda*, Others might follow the *abhidhamma* to get there. Ultimately, they're all one and the same. These are all paths to Nibbāna. Ultimately this is how you cook a dhal curry.

But what if you decide, to take one bit of the first, second bit of something else and the third bit of something else and now make up your own, that is wrong! That is going to take you AWOL. It's going to get you lost. Because, mainly the reason for that I think, and correct me if I'm wrong, you know you all live very busy lives. So, lot of your time is spent just trying to make ends meet, get through life, get through the day, attending to all your chores, fulfilling your duties and responsibilities, so you don't really have the time to go and investigate and explore the Dhamma. Therefore, you trust in us to do that discovery, to do the study and give you the Dhamma in a way that you find is digestible, that you can make sense of. It's ok to trust in us to do that but remember,

'Never be a follower always be a student'

Ok, I say that all the time, always be a student, not a follower. *Nibbāna* is the same for all of us, for everyone and the path to *Nibbāna*, the way that each of us follows that path can be slightly different. Therefore, if you start taking bits of each of these instructions and start to make up your own, that can be quite dangerous because what you've created for yourself is not a recipe for dhal curry, it's a recipe for disaster. So, watch out! This is not me saying you should only listen to these sermons. I would hate to say something like that, that's disgusting, quite shameful in fact. That's not saying you should only come here and listen to sermons, that's not what I am saying. You're free to make your own choices. What I am saying is, find one teacher. Listen to their instructions and see if you can see the end. "Can you see the light at the end of the tunnel"? Until you see the light at the end of the tunnel there's no point starting to walk, because this could be a dead end. Then you would have wasted ten, twenty, fifteen years of your life walking in this tunnel which has no escape, it's a dead end. So, before you start walking the path of *Nibbāna*, you must check if by using these instructions, you can see the light at the end of the tunnel. And if you have seen the light at the end of the tunnel, then I would suggest that you stick to that teacher until circumstances change. It may be that you no longer can take their instructions. It may be that they no longer give instructions. If circumstances change, then perhaps you can look for another teacher. But if not, my best advice would be, stick to one teacher and follow their instructions

because more than anything else, you all have busy lives so you don't have time to experiment, do you? No.

“How many *sūttas* do you read a day?”

“How many sermons do you listen to everyday?”

“How many hours of meditation do you do every day?”

Well, you have the answer. If you are someone who is free, who has a lot of time, then you are very privileged. You are very privileged to be in that situation but barely anyone is. So, if you are taking instructions from someone, I would suggest taking instructions from one person or one teacher and then following that instruction. If it started to sound like this teacher is talking nonsense, he is not talking *rāgakkhaya*, *dweshakkhaya* (*dōsakkhaya*) or *mōhakkhaya*, then it's time to reconsider.

I think I have said this plenty of times to you, the day that whatever I'm saying is igniting the fire of desire, aversion and delusion in your hearts and in your minds, that's the day you should stop coming here, don't come here again. I emphasize that, don't come here again! Because, if that is the case then I am not talking to you about *Nibbāna*, I'm not talking to you about the gift that the Buddha came into this world to give. Anyone can get on the internet and usually when it's on the internet you trust it. You know, websites to go along with it, these are things that buy people's trust. And if you can get some ratings from somebody, some "thumbs up" then you begin to trust immediately. A few Five -star reviews, that's enough.

How did you pick which airline to fly? You spoke to a few people, went on the website, checked some reviews from Trip advisor, travel advisor or any of these websites, and then you decided, that is the airline you're going to fly. So, you based your decision on someone else's opinion. And that's ok when it comes to worldly endeavors, but when it comes to *Nibbāna*, you have to know for yourself because it's not somewhere you can get to through blind faith, it has to come with conviction, otherwise you're wasting your human life. You're wasting human life which is probably the only chance you're going to get, to get to the other side. Which airline you are going to fly on, you can decide any day. So, watch out, be very careful!

Be careful when you talk about the Dhamma!

Just as much as you become excited, most monks and lay people, when they start to dwell a little bit in the Dhamma, they get excited, and they want to start saying what they know. They want to start to give what they know to the world. Because people like to listen less and talk more, right? A lot of people are like that; “I like to say what I have to say so you have to listen”. And as I say, thanks to technology all you need to do is get yourself a microphone, get yourself an internet connection, grab a laptop, and you are talking to the entire world.

My venerable friend, Dhammajeewa *hamuduruwo*, recently gave a really good piece of advice to all of us. He said, when you give somebody some instructions, particularly when it's about the Dhamma, be very careful that you are fully sure about what it is you're saying. Do you know fully well that what you're saying is absolutely spot on, because otherwise you are gambling with their lives.

Answer this rhetorical question, answer it in your own minds. How many of you, before you started to listen to the Dhamma, what reminded you that actually *Nibbāna* is not something that's gone out of fashion, it's still there; how many of you thought that what we are supposed to do now is earn as much merit as we can, get into the heavens and then just ride the wave until Maithri Buddha comes along? Rhetorical question, answer it for yourself in your own minds. Seriously, it's dangerous stuff. What guarantee do you have that you are going to be here when Maithri Buddha is here? If you become a *dēva* and you are born among *dēvas* who have wrong views, *mithyà dhrushtika dēvas*, then you're not going to receive the Dhamma at all. What if you become an accomplice to the *Màra*? You know, he is in the *Paranimmita Vasavattī*, that's the best heaven that you can go to, there is no better heaven than that. So, you do as much merit as you can and then you are born in the realm of *Vasavattī* with Mara. Now, you have the biggest *mithyàdrushtika* association, wrong viewed association, that you can imagine, that you could have hoped for, now you're screwed. So, you have to be very careful in talking about what you know, particularly when it comes to Dhamma. It's not like politics, you mess up one election, and you can set it right at the next one but not the path to Dhamma, not the path to *Nibbāna*. If you mess this up, you are probably not going to get a second chance for a very long time. It's not even like education, it's not even like marriage where if you mess it up you can get a second chance but not the path to *Nibbāna*. If you mess this up, to get a second chance, it's going to take a very long time because you know why?

The main reason for this is people are very adamant because of *mānaya*, ego. People are not willing to change their view. People don't like to be proven wrong, they don't like it. I have my view and I hold on to my view. I'm not willing to budge. No matter what you say, I am right, let's see if you are right or wrong? I am right, that is where we start. So, people are like that. Don't fall victim to that. Once again, I repeat. I'm not suggesting that you should always come here and listen to the Dhamma, that is not what I am suggesting, not one tiny bit. Please choose the right teacher for you, but whichever teacher you choose, you should follow their instructions until the end. Otherwise, you are just going to keep jumping around and you are not going to get anywhere. Then you'll become like *Tuchcha Potila*, or *Potila* who was called *tuchcha*. That's not something you want to be in a position to hear. So general advice, just be careful, because I think a lot of you, because you have now been listening to the Dhamma, have come to that point in your life where you progress in the Dhamma. You have now become a motivated explorer, now you're pretty motivated, you want to attain *Nibbāna*, that's really good, kudos to you, hats off. You want to attain *Nibbāna*, but to attain *Nibbāna* you've become pretty excited and because of your excitement you can't contain yourself so you want to do everything under the sun to attain *Nibbāna*. So, you go to every shop where they sell *Nibbāna*. Sometimes you can become pennywise and pound-foolish if you do that. Don't fall for short term gains. Always make sure you know exactly what *Nibbāna* is,

'Rāgakkhayò, dveshakkhayò (dōsakkhayò), mōhakkhayò Nibbānan'.

Nothing else is *Nibbāna*. Flashes of light is not *Nibbāna*. Being able to float on water or levitate is not *Nibbāna*. Whoever says that, that is *Nibbāna*, that's not *Nibbāna*. For as long as you feel the fire of *rāga, dvesha, mōha*, desire, aversion and delusion burning from your inside, that means, you are not at *Nibbāna*. So whatever instruction you receive, should be able to help you extinguish those fires.

Paṭicca samuppāda – Origination of dukkha

So, we talk about *āshvāda (assāda)*, or pleasure, vexation, attachment, this is the kind of path that we talk about. This is the approach that we use. Recently someone asked me, "The Buddha speaks of *paṭicca samuppāda* and that is the path to *Nibbāna*, so why is it you are talking about attachment, vexation, relief from vexation, pleasure, how is that even vaguely related to *paṭicca samuppāda*?"

Well, actually, it's one and the same. Because what does *paṭicca samuppāda*, Dependent origination talk about? Dependent origination of what? What is it the origination of? Dukkha. It is the origin of dukkha that he talks about. Last week we talked about *jāti*, remember? How, if you form *jāti*, then there's no turning back. From that point forward, it's all downhill, right? So, the Buddha speaks of the origin of dukkha, the origin of suffering. And He says, the origination of suffering is dependent on causes, this is why he calls it 'the dependent origination', *paṭicca samuppāda*.

'Evametassa kèvalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudhayò hòti',

that's how He ends his description of *paṭicca samuppāda*.

"Avijjā paccayā Saṅkhāra, Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāna, Viññāna paccayā Nāmarūpa, Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana, Salāyatana paccayā Phassō, Phassa paccayā Vēdanā, Vēdanā paccayā Taṇhā, Taṇhā paccayā Upādāna, Upādāna paccayā Bhavō, Bhava paccayā Jāti, Jāti paccayā Jarā, marana, soka-paridēva-dukkha-dōmanassa evamètassa kèvalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayō hòti."

"Monks, this is how suffering comes into being."

So, you can't stop it at *jāti* and say I know *paṭicca samuppāda*. That is not what He gave that instruction for.

It's kind of like the manual comes last. That's how you usually open the box, new device, new instrument. You try to figure it out for yourself. And then finally when you can't crack it, now you pick the manual up. Now you start reading it. If only you had read it, having put your ego to a side, if only you had read it when you first opened the box, you would have saved yourself a lot of time. Because the manual tells you exactly how to use that instrument, how to use that appliance. But no, you're not ready for that. Open the box, I'm going to have a go ahead myself. You did exactly the same thing with dependent origination also. It came packed up nicely in a box, you opened it up, oh, dependent origination, something exciting, something interesting! Now you start using it, except, you forgot to read the manual. The manual says, "This is to teach you how suffering comes into being". Then you realize, "Ah... That's what this is for! Until you realize what this is for, you're going to hold it this way around. Yes or no? The day you understand what this is for, now you're

going to hold it right way up. So, for that, you just have to read the manual because it shows you with a schematic diagram, this is where you hold it. Until such time, you're going to hold it like this and you are going to start hitting yourself. And you say "That hurts". Well of course that hurts, you're doing it all wrong. That's not how you hold it, hold it the other way around. Now start fanning yourself, "Ash!!! that feels much better." All because you couldn't be bothered to read the manual. The manual comes at the end

'Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayō hōti'

"Monks, this is how suffering comes into being."

So, it is for the purpose of analyzing how suffering comes into being that we have to use *paṭicca samuppāda* and nothing else. It's not to teach us anything else although you can use it to study other things, like how the universe came into being, whether there was a big bang or not. Now don't ask me how, because if that question came into mind, then the answer to that is, attachment causes vexation. Because that is not what the dependent origination is for. It's to teach you how suffering comes into being. For as long as we're all suffering, there can't be a bigger problem than that for all of us. This is why I say, until you understand the Dhamma, every problem is going to be a vexation. Once you have understood the Dhamma, vexation is going to be your biggest problem. You just have to flip it on its head. Until then, every problem is a big vexation. When you have understood the Dhamma, now vexation is the biggest problem. Then you'll treat vexation because that is what dependent origination is for, that shows you where it all started?

It started at *jāti*, but what was the cause for *jāti*? *Bhava* is the cause for *jāti*. What was the cause for *bhava*? *Upādāna* was the cause for *bhava*. What was the cause for *upādāna*? *Tanhā*, attachment.

So, we're already in the realms of *tanhā*, *āshvāda* (*assāda*), *peleema*, right? I've been talking about that, because this is what we talked about right? This is what guru *hamuduruwo* generally talks about. How it's because of *avijjā*, ignorance, you attach yourself to something, and as a result of attachment, you start to vex and then you start doing *abhisankhāra* and then as a result of *abhisankhāra* you are *relieved* from that vexation, which brings you pleasure.

Jāti is a curse not a blessing

So '*jāti*' is the pleasure. It's the pleasure that a being experiences, that has now become *jāti*. But if you don't see that this is sufferable, you're going to look at this as being quite the opposite. You're going to look at this as being a blessing. This is why a new-born child is a; what is it, you tell me? What is the new arrival? It is a blessing! Until you understand that *jāti*, whatever form it comes in, is not a blessing but a curse in disguise. This is the start of your suffering, because it's that *ashvāda* (*āssāda*) you're going to attach yourself to. It's because of pleasure, you're going to attach yourself. So, this shows you all the way back. If you tread the *paṭicca samuppāda* backwards, it's going to take you to the cause. If you tread it forward it's going to take you to the effect. So, again, its cause and effect! So, if you don't like the effect then, get rid of the causes. What are the causes? If you start going half way through you get to, attachment.

Why do we focus on ignorance & attachment?

So why do we only talk about ignorance and attachment, why don't we just spend a lot of time talking about *salāyatana*, *nāmarūpa* and *viññāna*? Why don't we spend a lot of time talking about these things? Why do we focus our talks on ignorance and attachment? Because the cause of suffering is attachment. Is that statement accurate? You cried at the death of 'mother'? No, how do you rectify that? You cried at the death of 'my mother' or 'your mother'. So, it is not that I cried at the death of 'mother', I cried at the death of 'my mother'. Mothers die all the time, none of us cry! Children die all the time, no one is crying. Houses fall down, break down all the time, no one's crying except for the person that owns it, except for the person to whom it belongs. Now it becomes yours. That's *tanhā*, attachment. So, it's quite simple really, when we look at our own lives.

Remember this, the Buddha didn't come into this world to teach *paṭicca samuppāda* as a lesson. His purpose was not to come and give you knowledge. His purpose was to come and show you, that we are all suffering, use *paṭicca samuppāda* - dependent origination to redeem ourselves from suffering. And therefore, He gives the instruction in a way that we can all relate to.

If I tell you, I'm sad because the *salāyatana* with which I took my mother, passed away, does that even make sense to anybody? No, but if I say because of 'my mother', then that'll make sense.

Because it's how we interact with the world. We use words like 'my', 'mine', 'you' and 'yours' through which we talk about possession but, all beings believe that possession is the path to happiness. The more you have, the happier you are, that's what people believe in. The more money you have, the happier you are, the more children you have, the happier you are, the more husbands you have, or is it the less husbands you have? So, people believe, the more they have, the happier they can be. So, having more, is attaching to more. So, the Buddha's purpose of coming to this world is to teach us no, it's not more that is happiness, actually it is less that is happiness. The less you have, the happier you are. The less you are attached to, the happier you are.

Attachment leads to suffering – A riddle but the truth

You know, something came to my mind recently when I was reflecting on the Dhamma. So, I'm going to ask you a question and you can answer it. This is all experiences from your own lives ok? There's a guy, and he sees a girl for the first time in his life. He's seen girls before, but this girl he really likes the look of. So, he has a crush but he hasn't expressed his affection to this young lady yet. Now, if you put yourself into that situation, so gents, you can follow the story, ladies, flip it on its head. You have a crush towards the young man, ok? If you have a crush on somebody, if you like somebody, do you like for them to suffer? No! Now, you like this girl but you haven't expressed your liking to her yet. What is the cause for suffering? Attachment, Good! Let's proceed. If you like this girl, what's the next thing you ought to do? She doesn't know about you yet. She doesn't know the first thing about you. It's just you have seen this girl and it's love at first-sight, apparently things like that happen. Now you have an attraction to this girl, you have a crush, so what's the next thing that you're inclined to do? Well you get to know her, right? You walk up to her. You express your desire, you express to this girl that you like her, in the hope of what? Getting her to like you. A moment ago, you said that if you like her, you do not want her to suffer, yes or no? Yes! Then you told me that you do know that attachment is the cause of suffering. You just walked up to her and you're saying things to her in the hope that she begins to like you. In other words, attach to you. Where is attachment going to lead her? Suffering! How dare you? And you said, you liked this person so much that you don't want them to suffer but the very first thing you do to that person is get them to suffer on your behalf. Cruel or not? Evil or not? Ruthless or not?

For someone who doesn't understand the Dhamma, they have an excuse. You don't. Sorry, should I not have said that? Now, young girls in the audience, young lads in the audience, now you know

that attachment is the cause of suffering. Now if you walk up to somebody and start trying to charm them in the hope that they attach to you, what you are doing is you're getting them to suffer, you're putting them in suffering. Do you really like that person? Do you really love that person? Because if you did, you wouldn't get them to suffer on your behalf. So, once you've understood this Dhamma, you can't really get anyone to attach even to yourself because you know that attachment leads to suffering.

We put our loved ones willingly into suffering

So, parents I would like to appeal to your intelligence, to your wisdom. If you speak to your children and say,

"*Putha*, would you like pizza tonight?"

What are you doing right now? You are causing them to attach to something. If they haven't ever had pizza in their lives, this is the first time you're talking with them about it. Now you're planting the seed of attachment in their minds and the moment you plant it, they are going to start suffering. So, who caused them that suffering? The parents. It's a riddle, but it's the truth. It's the riddle that you find yourselves in all the time. So seriously, think about it, ladies and gentlemen. If you really care about someone, you can't even come to think about getting them to attach themselves to anything including yourself. So, when someone says,

"I like her, therefore I'm going to go and talk to her, I'm going to try to charm her, I'm going to cajole her to liking me in return.",

then that's not caring about her at all. So really, if you care about someone, let them be. If you really like somebody, let them be. One day they are going to attach to somebody else and suffer anyway, true! But why should that be on your behalf? So, if you really like someone, then, let them be. Otherwise you are a world class hypocrite! Are you not? You know that attachment causes suffering and what you are doing is getting the other person to suffer on your behalf. That's a world class hypocrite. Sorry! Have I put you in a very difficult position?

Because for these young children, there's going to come a time in life when you should give their hand in marriage? So, what are parents going to do then? "*Putha*, here, look at all these pictures of young beautiful ladies out there, got it from the matrimonial section, what do you think?" No, don't worry, when they grow up to that age you won't have to do that, they'll have sorted themselves out by that time already. Think about these things because we don't think about things before we

do them. Most of the time you just don't think, you just wait to suffer the consequences without thinking of the consequences beforehand. Ultimately, we put the very people we care about, we love so dearly into suffering without even knowing about it. But like I said, now you have no excuse because I have looked at all of you in the eye and explained this to you, so you have no excuse. So *duwa*, if *amma* one day comes and says,

"*Putha*, it's time, now right?"

Then you can ask her, do you not remember what *Swamiwahanse* said that day in the sermon? Do you not care about me at all *amma*? You can ask her now. You're well within your rights to ask her. Otherwise, prove that I'm wrong. If you can prove me wrong I'll happily resign myself to my statement. I'll take it back. Otherwise, you're willingly putting your child in that position. If you are happy with that, then so be it, it's ok, it's not my child.

RVSSV

Let's talk about *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* because this is what you'll need to practice when you come along for the meditation sessions. We have been discussing this vexatious nature of *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*. Because, as living, breathing beings, sentient beings, there is no other way that we can really experience the world. Yes, we have our five senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the body, but these senses only bring the external worlds so far. It can't take it anymore beyond that. Our senses can only bring the external world as far as our brains. From that point forward, or at least as far as the outside of the body, because after that it's all electrical impulses. That is all that goes to the brain, electrical impulses. So, at that point, the mind has nothing to do with electrical impulses, it cannot interpret that. So, what the brain does is, on behalf of the mind translate these encoded messages, it re-encodes them into *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* so that the mind can understand it. So really, no matter what you see around you, whether it's people, birds, bees, stars, moons and planets etc. the way that we know that they are there in the first place is because of *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* that arise and pass away in our mind.

Recently, I was having a chat with some people and they really couldn't get this idea that the *citta* is separate, they thought that the mind or the *citta* and *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* are

one and the same. That's what they thought it was. So, I was trying to explain to them but they didn't understand until I gave them this analogy. So maybe it might help you as well.

Arising & passing away of the mind – Example 1

Imagine you're waiting for someone to arrive, so you are at the bus halt, waiting for a friend. You're waiting to pick your friend up from the bus halt, the bus approaches. You can see your friend waving from inside so you know your friend is in the bus. So, you are expecting the bus to stop and your friend to get off at the stop. But what happens is the bus drives past. So, can the friend get off if the bus drives past? No. So you ask the friend eventually, why did you not get off at the stop?

Now the friend says,

"Because the bus didn't stop."

So, if the bus didn't stop, whose fault is it? Imagine, there's no bell that the friend could ring either, but the bus is supposed to stop at every stop, but the bus didn't stop at this stop, so whose fault is it? Is it the fault of the bus or the bus driver? Whichever way you want

to put it, your friend is just a passenger in the bus, so your friend really had no choice about it if the bus didn't stop at the halt, your friend couldn't get off the bus. You can't get off a moving bus. You are going to break your neck. So, you have to wait for the bus to stop and then get off.

Rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna is like the friend in the bus. The only way this friend is able to visit you is, if he travels in the bus to get to you, then he has to get off at the halt. But to get off at the halt, the bus has to stop there. But if this bus doesn't stop and just passes you by, now your friend can't get off at that halt.

So likewise, *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*, this set of five through which you understand the world, experience the world, arise and pass away because it is travelling in the bus that is the *citta*. It's the nature of the *citta* or the mind to arise and pass away. It's because *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* are passengers in this bus that it is also subject to arising and passing away. Did you understand that?

Let me repeat. *Rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* are passengers travelling in the bus which is the *citta*. The nature of a *citta* is to arise and pass away. So, if a *citta* arose and froze then *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* will arise and freeze. But that's not how it works. The *citta* arises

and passes away and because it passes away now *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* has no choice because it is travelling in the bus that is the *citta* also has to arise with the *citta* and pass away with the *citta*. So, you see, the problem is not with the *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*. We are dealing with *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* as beings with a *citta* that arises and passes away. It's a very subtle point but if you pay attention you'll get it. We are dealing with *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*, the five aggregates, with a mind or *citta* that arises and passes away, So, when the *citta* passes away, *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* can't do anything about it, it's going to pass away with it. There's nothing you can do about it. So, it's not like the *rūpa* has anything against you, *vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* they don't have anything against you. It's not like it's their purpose to make you suffer. But the problem is you and I, we have a mind which arises and passes away and it's with a mind which has this feature, arising and passing away, we deal with *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*. Because we are dealing with a mind that arises and passes away, this arising and passing away is the only way that we can experience the five aggregates, it leaves us no choice. Otherwise, you have to find a mind which does not arise and pass away or which can arise and then freeze for as long as you want it, then pass away when you fancy it. But, none of us have a mind like that.

Arising & passing away of the mind – Example 2

Another example would be, let's say you are expecting a visitor. So, they're driving and their vehicle breaks down halfway through their journey, So, what can they do about it? Why were you late? "The car broke down". If they're saying the truth, if the car has broken down, what could your friend have done about it? There's nothing he could have done about it. So, the problem is, they're driving in a car that can potentially break down. So, if you want to be guaranteed that your friend is going to arrive at exactly 2 pm you would have to give them a vehicle that is not going to break down. Otherwise, you have to accept that when the vehicle breaks down, they are going to be late.

Yes? You have to accept that a child you bring into this world is going to be subject to illness. You have to accept that. If you don't like it then don't make one. Because they come into this world with a body that can break down, so we have to accept that.

Likewise, because we experience *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* through a mind whose nature is to arise and pass away, therefore we say *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* are

vexatious. It's not because they have anything against you. Because if you think that the problem is there, you are going to try to extinguish *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*, that is not the answer. Because the problem lies with us. It is with the mind that arises and passes away that you get to deal with it. So, what can you do?

You're cooking. There's a hot pan on the cooker. If you touch it without a glove, what's going to happen? It's going to burn your hand, then whose fault is it? Is it the pan? Is it the fire? No! You should have worn a glove to pick it up. So, the fact that you are not wearing a glove is whose fault? It's your fault, it's our fault.

Likewise, we are dealing with *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* because all what *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* are doing is just waiting for a citta to arrive and then they drop and then off you go. Another one comes, drop, off you go. So, really, the mind is like a vehicle which transports *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*. But it's vexatious. You know we say *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* arise and pass away, the reason for that is because they're travelling in this vehicle which is the mind, which is subject to arising and passing away.

The nature of the mind

The nature of the mind is to arise and pass away. Now, you have to make sense of this, otherwise meditation sessions are not going to work out. Because we have to understand that the problem is inside of us, not outside it. The problem is not with *rūpa*, not with *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra* or, *viññāna*. The reason that they're vexatious is because they're travelling in the bus which is the mind which arises and passes away. So, they have no choice about it. They have to arise with the mind and pass away with the mind.

But vexatious also because if you attach yourself to it, then you are left with no choice because when it passes away, now something you like, something you love has just passed away. So, whose fault is it? *Rūpa*? *Vēdanā*? No. You can't change the fact that it is with the mind that you have to experience *rūpa*. You can't change that either. Because you know really, if you want to fix this problem, we must only be talking about the things that we can fix. Can you fix the fact that you're dealing with *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*? Can you change that? What else is there in the outside world? There is nothing else out there. You can only experience the world through the

five aggregates, there's nothing else you can experience the world with and to experience that, you only have the mind so you have no choice there either. The nature of the mind is to arise and pass away, so you can't change that either. So, the only thing you can change is attachment. Remember, you are not attached to the mind, it's not the mind you are attached to. It's not the bus you are attached to, it's the passenger in the bus.

It's like you go to the airport to bid farewell to your son, your daughter or someone you love. What do you do? You go to the waiting lounge or perhaps where you can see the flight and then you wave goodbye. The aircraft is in the sky and you wave, goodbye. Haven't you ever done that? Those days, people used to do that. Not now, because nowadays travelling internationally is like going to the shop. But those days it was a big thing to travel abroad.

Are they really sad that the flight is passing away? What are they sad about? It's the passenger in the flight. But can they see the passenger in the flight? No, they can only wave at the flight, but they're not really sad that the flight is flying away, it's because there's a passenger that you really love in the flight who is going away. That is why it makes you feel sad.

Likewise, it's the *citta* that arises and passes away that is the vehicle in which *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* are the passengers. It's the passengers you are attached to, but because they're travelling in this vehicle which arises and passes away, you've got no choice. So, with it they arise and with it they pass away. But they are very distinct things, they're not one and the same, they are two very distinct things.

Remember, it's because of pleasure you got attached to the world. 'Beautiful flower', what's the problem? 'Beautiful'. Good, so you've been listening to the previous sermons. If you said 'flower' was the problem, then we have a big problem. But beautiful flower, the problem is not with 'flower', the problem is with 'beautiful'. Why? How do we see a 'beautiful flower'? Attachment to what? Is it the flower? Ultimately the mind can only experience what? *Rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*, right? So, this is what the mind is attached to, and then the mind starts vexing not for the mind, not for the *citta*, but for *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*. Then, when it arises, now you are relieved of that vexation and when it passes away, you're back in vexation, not

because the mind arose and passed away, it's because the passengers travelling in this vehicle are those you so dearly love.

Ultimately what *viññāna* does is, it gives you the aggregate, it's the totality, it's the sum total of *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra*. *Viññāna* is the final decision maker. Gives you the decision that this is a beautiful flower. Because until then, you've seen the flower, you've actually seen the *rūpa* of the flower. Then, you've called it a flower, you know what things you can do with a flower but ultimately to say, that this is a beautiful flower that I can smell, that I can keep at home, all of that is the job of *viññāna*, so that is the sum total. That's where ultimately the decision is made.

So, the point being, it's these five that we are attached to but they have no choice but to arise and pass away because the only way we experience them is with the mind. You can't change the way the mind works because it arises and passes away and therefore, as long as your transport service is not changed, you can't expect them to come early. You can't expect them to be reliable because your transport system is flawed. Your mind is the transport system. *Rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* simply use it as a mode of transport ultimately, it's the five that you're attached to. So, what's the problem with attaching to these five? Now you should be able to understand that because we experience them with a mind that arises and passes away, we are really helpless. It's more convincing when you see it in this way that the problem is really inside. You know we are talking about a problem with your mind. It's not a problem with *rūpa*. It's the way that you experience them and if that is through a mind which arises and passes away, now you're helpless. If you wanted *rūpa* to be with you for as long as you wanted, then the only way you could do that is remove the mind and bring a new mind, a new model of mind which stays for as long as you wanted. Then *rūpa* will also stay for that long, and *vēdanā, saññā* will also stay for as long as the mind will stay, because they're simply passengers in the vehicle that is the mind that arises and passes away, we have to understand that. So, the more you begin to contemplate this, the more you realize, every time the problem is really, really deep seated inside of me, there's nothing that I can do to fix this. The only thing that I can really do is rid myself of attachment.

So, I'm going to talk about *udayangama, attangama, aswāda* and so on, because that is what we need to contemplate on, *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta*. When you begin to see that this arising and passing away happens in the mind and it is ultimately *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*

which is arising and passing away, now you know that there is nothing you can do except for ridding yourself of attachment. Now, that should not be because I say so.

This should really make absolute sense to all of you if you want to come along to the meditation sessions. It has to make sense to you. It has to be obvious to you that the only solution to this problem is ridding yourself of attachment and there is no other solution whatsoever. That has to be laser sharp, crystal clear to you that ridding yourself of attachment is the only solution to the problem. Otherwise, you're wasting your time.

Rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna is everything we experience!

If you haven't gotten that, if the penny hasn't dropped yet, you're wasting your time. Ridding yourself of attachment is the only way you can fix this. Why? The only way we can deal with the betel leaf is how? *Rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*. Why is that so? Because my senses can only bring sights, sounds, smell, taste and touch and they can only come as far as the outside body, the extremities. And then from that point forward, it is simply electrical impulses. We're talking through the process, OK? From that point onward, it's simply electrical impulses that hits the brain and then from the brain to the mind it's simply *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*. It doesn't matter where it came from, doesn't matter what came, how it came, as ultimately, it's simply *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* that the mind is dealing with. That's it, nothing else. But these packets of *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* they've been dropped into a mind which arises and passes away. You can't change the fact that it's electrical impulses, the fact it's *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* that your mind can interpret. One day you might say I'm not at all interested in *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*, I want something else. There is nothing you can do. It's either *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* or nothing. That's it, you have no other choice.

If you want to experience the world, then *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* is the only thing that your mind can interpret and the only way you can interpret this is by taking these blocks of *rūpa*. It's like data falling into these packets. If you've ever done any networking you know this. This falls into packets that transfer data back and forth. So, bits of information falling into these packets and those packets arise and pass away. They fall into this process, this *citta* that arises and passes away is intrinsic, you can't change that nature.

Attachment is the cause of all suffering and the only thing you can change

It's the way of the mind, arising and passing away and that being the case, the only thing you can change then is attachment. That is the only thing you can really change and nothing else. It's good that, that is the only thing you need to change. Might as well be the case because what if it was the betel leaf that caused you suffering? Be my guest. There's lots of it here. What if it was *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* that caused you suffering? Then you can never become an Arahant.

Because what happens in the mind of an Arahant? It's still *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*. What about the nature of the mind of an Arahant? It arises and passes away. So, an Arahant has not stopped the mind from arising and passing away. He or she has not stopped *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* from coming in. He has not changed the outside world. The only thing that he has changed is not attaching.

Isn't that great, that's all you have to do? Just stop attachment. It's also the hardest thing to do. But it's the only thing you need to do. The only thing you need to do is the hardest thing to do, but, there's no other choice. So, if there's no other choice then you might as well get to work at it.

That's why the Buddha says, the second noble truth, the cause of suffering is what? Attachment. Nothing else. He didn't say attachment and x, y, z. No. There was no room for any doubt.

Dukkha samudaya ārya sathya is what? *Tanhā*.

There's no *tanhā* and something else or little bit of that and little bit of this, no! Very clear, so clear. Attachment is the cause of all suffering and that's the only factor that you can really change. You can't change or influence any of the other factors.

Remember the equation I once gave you for suffering? There was an equation I drew up on the white board, those of you who were here would've have seen it.

Anicca world times by attachment equals suffering (*Anicca* world * attachment = suffering).

So, there are three ways you can rid yourself of suffering.

Change *anicca* world to a *nicca* world.

Is that even feasible? Then there's no point talking about it. That's why the Buddha didn't talk about *anicca* being the cause of suffering. You know, He speaks of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* but then you ask Him, what is the cause of suffering? He could have said *anicca*, the world is not to my liking is the cause of suffering. False!

I think before the meditation program I'll give you all a test paper. True or false. Should I ask you some questions? I'm doing this now without senior monks. Because in our meditation programs those of you who came along will know. I think the first two programs you missed it, from that point forward we have started doing them. Individually we sit down with you and talk to you and we ask you to explain to us the Dhamma. So, it'll be something like, I play a role. I come to you and say,

"There's this really pretty girl, I'm so attached to her, but my mother doesn't let me keep my relationship. How do I convince my mother to let me be in that relationship?"

So, I've just thrown at you a googly. Because, is the problem with the mother? No, but most people start there.

Well, this is how you should talk to your mother. Help her to understand that you know she's not such a bad girl after all."

That is not the answer I'm looking for. But the only reason I threw it, was to trick you and you failed.

If you really understand the Dhamma you'll say, ok. So, you think your mother is the problem? But that is not really the problem. The problem is your attachment to the girl. is where you should always come back. You should come back to attachment. Because if you can do that and if you know every single time that attachment is the cause of suffering, no matter what obstacle, what challenge I throw at you, you'll always keep coming back there. "Attachment is the cause of suffering." That is how you will know you have understood the Dhamma. But you can't just say by just memorizing it. You have to be able to apply it in your own lives. Someone says something and you feel bad, you feel angry. What does your mind say instinctively? If it says,

"Beat the hell out of that guy,"

you haven't understood the Dhamma. Inside your mind instinctively should come the answer, "Attachment is the cause of suffering". Whose attachment, his? No, my attachment.

Ràga, Dvèsha & Mòha caused by attachment

Both affection and affliction are states of suffering. Both caused by attachment. One is *rāga*, the other is *dvèsha*.

Rāga is where something you want has materialized.

Dvèsha is where it hasn't materialized or there is no more potential to materialize. All opportunities are now gone and it cannot materialize.

Mòha is where you're waiting for it to materialize. It's that middle state. Waiting, waiting, waiting. It's like loading.

You know the computer says "loading". That's the state of *upēkshà, mōha*. And then load, load, 99 %, crash! That's *dvēsha*. And then 100 % loaded, now, *rāga*. *Rāga, dvēsha, mōha*. But regardless of which end result you go to, they'll all arise and pass away.

So *rāga*, something has manifested to your liking. Is that not going to pass away? Because when you say it's to your liking, what are you really saying? This *rūpa*, this *vēdanā*, this *saññā*, this *sankhāra*, this *viññāna* are to my liking. Are you saying anything else other than that? Do you mean anything else other than that? No, you say, "I like that girl", what do you really mean? I like the *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* which have arisen in my mind, that's what I really like, not you. What's inside of me is what I like. But that is going to pass away and then it's going to put you back into vexation.

And then *dvēsha*? This is a two-pronged attack.

One, what has loaded is not what you like.

And the second prong is, what you wanted has not loaded.

So, an example that guru *Swamiwahansa* regularly gives in sermons is: You're at home, you say,

"Putha, come here!"

You call your son and wait for him to come. The door is ajar and you see the dog walking in. Now, two problems, one, it's not your son. You didn't ask your son from last birth to come. Number two, the dog has walked in. So now you have to get the dog out and have to get your son to come in. So, it's a two-pronged affliction. It's a two-pronged attack.

Whereas with *rāga*, it's what you have attached to is going to pass away with your mind because again, it's ultimately *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*. Even with *dvēsha*, it's still *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna*. With *mōha*, still it's the same. Remember, the mind cannot experience anything other than the five aggregates. That's why the Buddha says,

"Rūpam bikkhavē aniccam, yaddaniccam tam dukkham"

not ***cittam bikkhavē aniccā***, He didn't say the problem, you know, what you're attached to is not the *citta* rising and passing away. You're attached to the *rūpa*, but that *rūpa* comes in the *citta*.

You keep checking flight arrivals on the arrivals board. Why? Because you are so keen on the flight arriving? No, you are waiting for the passenger in the flight, that's why. It's your friend or your loved one who's coming in the flight that you are attached to. But you don't have a board which has

all the names of everyone on the flight and what time they are arriving. What you have is the name of the airline of the flight or the flight number on display. You are checking the flight time, but really what you are checking is what time is my friend going to arrive. That's what you are really checking. Because they are going to be coming on the flight.

Passing away of RVSSV leaving behind attachment

So *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*, they are going to be coming in the flight, in the bus, in the car, where ever you want to put it, of this *citta* which arises and passes away. So vexatious because if you attach yourself to it, when it passes away, you are going to be left in a state of vexation. Because *rūpa* passes away leaving behind attachment. *Vēdanā* passes away leaving behind attachment. *Saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* passes away leaving behind attachment. Now, you are still attached but you have lost the very thing that you are attached to. How does that make you feel? If you lost the object and attachment at the same time, would there be a problem? No. Father dies and you are no longer attached to him also, no problem. But father dies leaving attachment, you still want your father to be with you. You want your mother to be with you. You want your loved one to be with you. Again, put into your life examples and this will make really good sense!

A guy with a girl, after a while he is no longer interested in the girl. Now he wants to find a way to give this girl the boot. But, he doesn't want to make her feel bad, he doesn't want to upset her, so he's just waiting for the right time where the girl comes and says, "I'm not really interested in this relationship anymore". So, when the girl says,

"You know, I think, it's not working out between us."

The guy will say,

"Ok, if you think so, oh well you know, everything that arises, passes away."

Now he has no problem, why? The girl's going away and the attachment is not there either. But if any of you have ever shed a tear when you got the boot, that was because the girl or the boy left, leaving behind attachment. That's why you cried. So, what you ought to be doing is, when they say "I'm going to break up with you, then you can ask, "Can you take my attachment with you?" Then you will be fine. But you can't do that. There, they are going to go away leaving attachment behind, why? Because attachment happens where? In your mind. Again, that's a good point to prove that, what you are attached to is really not the outside object. You're attached to *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*,

sankhāra, viññāna. They left, leaving behind the *upādāna* to *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* that's still in your mind.

Sapa, duka & upekshà – good feeling, bad feeling & equanimous feeling

The clinging aggregates, *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna* which you still yearn, because ultimately with every *citta* that arises, this is how you find happiness. You're always doing a comparison. This is what I want, this is what I'm getting, now what's the result? If it's exactly what you asked for, then you feel happy. If it's not what you asked for, then that's sadness. If you still don't know, and you're still checking, then that is *upēkshà*. *Sapa, duka, uppēkshà*.

There are two types of equanimity. One is the equanimity that is experienced by Arahants which is '*upēkshà thara upēkshà*' which is not a state of vexation. That is why the Buddha says,

"Look at *āshvāda* as a *duka, sapa dukak lesa*."

Look at *duka* as a stake or let's say a prong or a trident. You know what a trident is? *Thrishūlaya*. But imagine this is one of them.

"*Duka hulak lesa*"

It's like a *ula* and,

"*Upēkshàwa annica lesa*."

Look at *upēksha* as being *anicca*. Why *anicca*? Because it's vexatious, '***Peena natto anicchatto***'. Meaning of *anicca* is *pelenasului*, vexatious, that is the nature of *anicca*. *Sapa (sukha), duka* and *upēkkshà* ultimately leads you to suffering. This type of *sapa (sukha), duka, upēkkshà*, good feeling, bad feeling and equanimous feeling, ultimately none of these three will bring you any happiness. The only state of happiness that you can really look forward to is that of ***upēkkshà thara upēkkshà*** which is unconditional equanimity. It's not based on conditions. So that is what we should aim for. And the only way to rid ourselves of attachment then is, ridding ourselves of ignorance. So, ignorance is what?

Ignorance is ultimately seeing this world as being beautiful

'Beautiful flower'? Where is ignorance? 'Beautiful', not flower. Ignorance is in beautiful. Remember, a couple of weeks ago I explained to you, If, 'beautiful' is really out there then we should have invented an instrument by now to measure it. Is there an instrument to measure beauty? None has been invented yet. But that does not stop us all from having one for ourselves. That's why you look at a bunch of flowers and say, "That's beautiful." So, you have an instrument with you but there is no instrument in the outside world and that is why beauty lies in the mind of the beholder. They say, the 'eyes of the beholder', I say, 'mind of the beholder', rather the Buddha says, 'mind of the beholder'. So, if beauty lies in the mind of the beholder then that's the only place where beauty can be judged. There's no instrument out there which can judge beauty. It is only the mind that can judge it. So, that tells us then that beauty is not objective but subjective.

So, what does subjective mean? It's different to each of us. Each of us will have a different view, different opinion. What you find beautiful madam is not what I'm going to find beautiful. That's why I said it's subjective. So, each one of us has a different response to the question, "Do you find this beautiful?" If each of you have a different response to it, then that must tell us something about the object that I am holding. Beauty cannot be in the object but if I asked you all, "How heavy is this?" You are all going to give me the same answer. You are going to say, "Let us get ourselves a weighing scale, put it on the weighing scale", and then you'll be going to come and give me the same answer. Give or take maybe a few milligrams. But if I asked you, "Is this beautiful?" You are not going to come and say, "Yes, give or take a few milligrams." It's going to be completely opposite answers. One is going to say, "Yes!" The other is going to say, "No!" That's binary. It's not yes or point five of a yes. You are going to say yes or no. Binary. Yes but no. Yes, but...? Or no but...? So that's when you're trying to say "Yes", but you're trying to find other responses to maybe make the other person happy?

Like ladies, when you dress yourselves up, when you've done the best you can in front of the mirror and you go and ask your husband, you go and ask your partners,

" What do you think?"

If you are a married man, you will have this experience. No matter what answer you give it's always the wrong answer. So, you try and avoid those questions as much as you possibly can. So, you have to say "Yes, but..." or "No, but...". So, first you say "Yes" and then you gauge. What is the facial

expression? Or you say "No" and then you gauge the facial expression but you use the word "But" so you can then quickly recover yourself from that situation you've gotten yourself into. Why? Because ultimately the person who is asking the question has a particular five that they are interested in.

There's a particular *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna* that they want to hear from you, otherwise they won't ask you the question. If you don't want an answer would you ask the question? No! You're asking the question, because you want the answer. When you say you want the answer, you already have an answer inside. What you want to check is if the answer that's coming from the other side matches with your answer. Otherwise you won't ask the question. So, when you ask,

"Do I look pretty?"

You already have an answer to that question. Sometimes ladies are very unkind, they deliberately leave something that doesn't fit and they'll still ask the question just to check whether you are being genuine. Maybe a flock of hair that's a bit too long, compared to the others. "What do you think?" "Oh, really nice." "You're just saying that, what about that hair, you didn't mention it." So, when you just say it, there is no way out. There's no right answer to this, there's no wrong answer to this because ultimately, they already have an answer. If you are able to read their mind, now you can give the right answer. Because they already have an expectation of this is what I'm hoping to hear. Now you have to give them that answer. Works both ways. Gents! You're no different. I just used an example that I was familiar with. There's no difference. So, ultimately, what we need to understand is, it's because of ignorance that we always attach to things and ignorance is ultimately seeing this world as being beautiful.

So, the question is, when you start your meditation sessions, what will you have to think about? What will you have to reflect on, what do you have to contemplate on? This is why I always say, forget about the stuff that you find painful. That's not the thing we need to focus on, because none of us is attached to pain. None of us is attached to suffering. That's not what we need to focus on. The moment you say "beautiful flower", that's when you're attached to the flower, expecting beauty you attach to the flower. But beauty was never in the flower so therefore you are going to be disappointed. You expected beauty but attached to the flower. You expected beauty and you are attached to beauty now, you expected beauty and you brought home beauty, now that's ok, but you can't bring home beauty because it doesn't exist.

If you go to the florist, what is the only thing you can bring home? Flowers. But why did you bring them home? Beautiful. So really what did you want to bring home? Beautiful! You didn't want to bring home flowers, you wanted to bring home beautiful. But can you bring home "beautiful"? No, you can only pick and hold and touch flowers. So, you bring home flowers expecting beauty to come along with it. But beauty is not in the flower. So, you paid your hard-earned money to buy flowers, when actually what you wanted was beauty. So, you brought home the wrong thing because beauty was always in your mind, not in the flower. So, you just wasted your money frankly. Did you not just waste your money?

This is why the more ignorant you are, the harder you are going to have to work because the more you need to earn. Why? So, the more you can go and buy beautiful things. The more you can go and buy delicious food, the more you can go on luxury holidays. You are going to have to earn a lot of money for that. Because your mind is constantly spurning out these falsehoods, these fallacies, these mirages. It's throwing out all these fantasies that the mind has created within itself and it now expects you to go and find it in the outside world.

But beauty does not exist out there.

Pleasure is relief from vexation

I met one guy recently, his goal is to travel the world and he's counting how many countries he's been to. So, he likes to go on holiday. He travels to the east, far east, Singapore, Malaysia, countries like that, Thailand, so I asked him the question,

"So, you go there once a year, sir?" "Yes."

Where do you think people in that country go on holiday? Because if that country you are visiting is the number one destination for tourists, because it's the most beautiful country there is, then, where should those people be spending their holiday in that country?"

"Where do Singaporeans go on holiday?"

To Singapore? No! They go west. West goes east and east goes west. Why so? Because they don't see beauty in what they have. Because they've seen it every day and then after that they realize that it's no longer beautiful. But that's not a realization that comes through the understanding of the Dhamma. Why do you no longer see beauty if you see it always? What does that mean, what does 'getting used to it' mean? Put it in context of the Dhamma. This is proof that pleasure is relief from vexation. Solid proof! The fact that you keep seeing something; I think someone asked the question a while ago.

Why do you eat cake and then after a while you just don't like that cake anymore? You want to do something else, why? This is proof that pleasure is in relief from vexation. How so? Because when you get to experience it all the time, you're no longer vexing for it. Because you are no longer vexing for it you're not going to find pleasure in it. Is that not solid proof that pleasure is in relief from vexation?

So, if you find a girl attractive, what's the last thing you ought to do? See her every day. And how do people see the other person every day? (answer from audience) Absolutely! If you find a girl attractive, if you think she's beautiful, the last thing you should do is get married to her, take the young lass home. Because a few months into that relationship, now you are seeing her every time you want to, whenever you're vexing you're able to relieve yourself from vexation and then what happens? You stop seeing beauty. If beauty was in the lady, in the girl you'd have seen that beauty every day. Solid proof is that not? That pleasure is nothing other than relief from vexation. Isn't that the pleasure that you so yearn to bring into your lives? You work so hard and toil and labour, day and night to bring to your lives this pleasure which is nothing other than the mind itself attaching to something, then vexing for it and then relieving itself from vexation. It's completely an internal process.

Devotees bring alms to the monastery, don't they? I think the other day, guru *swaminwahanse* was talking about cashews. People love to give cashew when they give alms to monks and monasteries and things like that. Why is that? Because they like it. But they don't realize that every man and his dog who comes to the monastery feeds us cashews. Now what happens? Every lunch it's cashew. Now, what was once a delightful item becomes so distasteful, at the sight of it you start to puke. The sight of it is disgusting after a while. I'm not saying that is how it is, I'm just saying this is how our minds work. Is it cashews again...ah.! Not again! But to you who gives the alms, who gives the food, to you it's so delicious, it's a delightful meal that you've just given. Why? Because you find it so delightful, so delicious, because you don't eat it every day, that's why! So, what you give on alms are the things that you like to eat. Yes or no? Yes! Thankfully we don't have cows giving us alms. If ever they decide to give us alms, what are we going to have to eat?

This is how people's minds work. So, this is solid proof that something you find pleasurable is completely a subjective thing. It's never found in the object, it's never in the outside world and for it to be a subjective thing, it has to be something that happens in the mind. So, you attach yourself to something, now you start vexing and as soon as you receive it now you are relieved from vexation. It's not the object that brought you that pleasure. You can now stop searching for it. The search has ended.

When was Nemo's family happy? When they found Nemo. You know what I am talking about? Well, watch "Finding Nemo". Nemo is a little fish who was caught by a fisherman who was taken and put into a fish tank and then Nemo's family starts looking for Nemo. But when Nemo was always there with the rest of his family, they didn't particularly find his companionship all that pleasurable. But, when Nemo gets fished and put into a tank, everyone in the family wants to try and retrieve Nemo. So that's why it's called "Finding Nemo".

Because when you find it, you can now stop looking. Looking is such a vexatious process, very frustrating. No one likes to look for something they've lost. People don't like looking. People don't like searching. But they like finding what they're looking for. Otherwise, you won't use Google, you'd go and look for it yourself. If you found searching all that exciting, you wouldn't use Google for it, you won't use a tool for it, you would just go looking for it, you would go into the libraries. You like going into libraries and turning all the books and all the pages looking for information? No. Now, thanks to technology, you can just type it into Google and Google gives you all the answers, why? Because you don't like searching. People don't like research. Why? Because it's so vexing, so time consuming. When is time consuming ever a problem? When you are watching your favourite movies, is time consuming a problem? No. When you are with friends? When you are in a companionship that you really like, do you find it time consuming? No, you don't complain about it. So, consumption of time is never a problem when you're doing something you like to do. So why have people invented search engines? It's because they don't like searching for things. They don't like looking for things but they'd like finding the answers. Why? Because that's the only time you can relieve yourself of vexation. The vexation that was relieved because you have found what you were attached to, what you were looking for. So, contemplate on that. This is why I say, it's not the suffering we need to worry about. Put suffering to a side, anytime you find something pleasurable in your lives, it is a moment, it is a precious moment to contemplate.

Washing your dirty linen with a bar of soap – A karmasthàna

Sometimes our young monks tell me that from time to time they are reminded about home. So, it's a natural thing to expect because it's only through your practice of the Dhamma that these thoughts don't really bother you anymore. So, there are times when I'm reminded about home. Sometimes when I sit down for meditation, I'm reminded of all the things I used to do as a lay person, with my wife, with my parents, with my brother; the things I used to do. When I remember these things, I giggle, makes me laugh not because I'm vexing to experience those situations because it makes me feel what a time waster I was. All those things I used to do thinking that they were going to make me happy, what a waste of time that was.

So, when the young monks tell me,

"*Swaminwahanse* I'm thinking of these memories that come back to me, flashes of memories, girlfriends I used to have, outings I used to have with my family, trips we used to go on, holidays we used to go on, the restaurants we used to go and eat at. When these memories come to mind, what am I supposed to do?", they ask me.

They say,

"Sometimes I try to change my focus on something else, I try to focus on the meditation object and not think about those things..."

No, that's not what you should be doing. You're going about it completely the wrong way. Because the *karmasthàna* is like a bar of soap. What good is a bar of soap if you can't find dirty linen? What good is it? If you don't have dirty linen, what good is a bar of soap? No use at all. So, if you don't have dirty linen, you don't need a bar of soap. If you have dirty linen and don't have a bar of soap, then that is also not a situation you want to find yourself in. But once you have a bar of soap, now, if cleaning up your mess or getting your dirt cleaned up is your concern, now you're going to be happy that you can dig up all the dirty linen from your cupboards, because that's your objective. I want to clean all my clothes and wash them, I want to get my laundry done. If you don't have a bar of soap now it's a problem. So, you just keep piling it up until you go and get soap. You might have examples of that, sometimes you run out of washing powder, what do you do? You just keep piling it up until you go and buy washing powder. But after you found your washing powder now if

your objective is to wash all your linen, then you're happy to find all the linen that is in your cupboards, in your drawers or wherever they might be.

So, the Dhamma or the *karmasthāna* is your bar of soap. The things that you're attached to, this is your dirty linen. So, when you do meditation, *bhāvanā*, what you do is you take your dirty clothes, now you rub it, you wash it with the soap. You wash it until it's clean, until all the dirt has come off, until all the grime and the dust has come off. Then you move on to the next item of clothing, and you wash that. Put that away, then you move on to the next item of clothing. So, all these memories that come back, what are they? Dirty items of clothing, dirty items of linen that keep coming back. So, you should be glad that you're finding all this dirty linen because now you have a bar of soap so you can wash them. Which one is your objective? To use up all the soap or to wash up all your dirty linen? Wash up your dirty linen, right. So, aren't you glad that you can find all the dirty linen? You ought to be glad that you can find all of it because now you can wash it all. If you couldn't find it, if you had to struggle to find it, then you would have a problem.

The dirt in the linen, that is your attachment. So, when you wash with the bar of soap, what do you get rid of, the linen or the dirt? The dirt! You don't wash away the clothes. You keep the clothes and you wash the dirt away. So that is the purpose of using this bar of soap. Not keep the dirt and wash the linen away but keep the linen and wash the dirt away, that's what you do. So, you do it until all your linen has been washed. This is what we do when we do *karmasthāna*, when we meditate. So now, if your objective is to clean up all your laundry, to wash all your laundry, then you can only be satisfied fully once all the laundry has been washed up. Until then there's no time to rest. You know the old expression, "There's no rest for the wicked". True! Someone who is wicked is someone who has *rāga*, *dvēsha* and *mōha*. So, there can't be any rest for someone who is wicked. There can't be because they still have defilements that needs to be washed away with the bar of soap that is the Dhamma.

Meditation is contemplation

Your *karmasthāna* is going to be the Dhamma. So when we practice our meditation, I'll be giving you the *karmasthāna*, it'll be *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* or some variant of it. So, in the talk that I'm going to give you, before we start the meditation session, will be the application of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, But I'll give you some examples, those examples are going to be very personal for each of you as I don't know your lives like I do mine and I don't know your lives like you do yours. So only

you know the things that you're attached to. The easiest way to find the things you're attached to is just close your eyes, so simple. What's going to happen? Yes, everything starts coming because now there are no inputs coming from your eyes. As soon as your eyes have been shut and there's no sound coming from the background either because we try and meditate in a quiet environment and the only faculties that are now currently bringing you impulses; your tongue is used to the taste of saliva in your mouth so it's not really going to be stimulated. All that's left is your breathing, maybe which again you are used to now. Sitting down somewhere again you're used to it, so really now your mind is looking for something new, something interesting, something exciting. So, the mind is now going to start wandering.

As I said, all you have to do is to shut your eyes. If you have the soap now you just have to wait. It's like if you're hunting deer and if you have the bow and arrow you just have to wait for the deer to come in front of you, you don't have to go looking for deer. Deer will come to you, all you have to do is, be ready with your bow and arrow. As soon as you see deer, let go! Literally and metaphorically. How do you let go? You have to contemplate. I'm experiencing *āshvāda*, I'm experiencing pleasure, now it's the time to contemplate on that. How is it that I'm experiencing pleasure? We know now that pleasure is nothing other than relief from vexation. And this is why I say, it cannot be because I say so. I can't emphasize this enough! You can't be telling me that pleasure is relief from vexation because *Guru Hamuduruwo* said so or I say so or *Budu Hamuduruwo* said so, that will not work. It will not work like that. It has to make sense to you. You have to be able to explain it.

Explaining the Dhamma through real life examples

So, something that we do during the five days meditation programs is, like I said, our monks will sit down with the candidates and go through the discussion.

“Explain to me, I'm attached to a girl, now help me.”

Try this out at home particularly, if you come here as a family, then you are going to find it a lot easier since both of you have an understanding of the Dhamma, you can correct the other person if they get it wrong. But even otherwise, if you can find someone to talk to, get them to sit down in front of you and tell them to ask you to apply the Dhamma that you know into a real-life example.

For example, you might go,

"When I smell dhal curry, my mouth starts salivating and I really want to eat it. I can't walk past a dish of dhal curry without going and dipping a spoon into it or having a taste of it but my mother doesn't like me doing that."

Ok, leave that complication aside for a moment.

"Help me rid myself of this attachment that I have to the dhal curry!"

So, the other person has just asked you the question, now it's your turn to explain the Dhamma and you have to start from the very basics. The person who asked you the question must pretend that they have no understanding of the Dhamma. So, you are going to say,

"Well, let's talk about that example, so you're attached to dhal, what should we do?"

The only way that you can experience dhal curry is through, eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. These are the only five senses through which we can sense the outside world. So, we see a sight. Dhal curry is probably not going to have a sound, but you are going to have a smell, a taste and of course touch. So, through these four senses you are going to experience dhal curry. But, these four senses can only bring you sight, smell, taste and touch as far as your brain. The mind cannot perceive sight, smell, taste or touch. The mind can only perceive these things called *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāna* and at that point the other person has to go, "Rūpa what?" Because now you have to explain what *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāna* is?

How the mind perceives Rūpa, Vēdanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, Viññāna.

So, you say, "*rūpa* is like a photograph, it's not the same thing, it's not, not that either. It's like a photograph of a person, it's not the person, it's either not the person. It's a photograph, it's an impression. It's an impression of the thing that you have seen, an impression of the thing that you have smelled or tasted or felt. It's not the actual object, it's the impression.

Then *vēdanā*. Your mind knows that now it has seen something. It's like an alarm bell going off, I've just seen something. I've just smelt something, I've just tasted something." So that's *vēdanā*.

Saññā, it's the label that you give to that impression that you just received, that is the sight of dhal curry. This is the smell of dhal curry, this is the taste of dhal curry, this is how dhal curry feels either to my tongue or in my mouth or with your hands if you mix your food whatever. So, it's only through these five senses you can experience dhal curry *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*.

Then, *saṅkhāra*. So, when I say dhal curry, what's the verb that comes to mind? Take a bath? No, eat! That's the verb that comes to mind, it's the doing thing. With whatever *rūpa* that has come into your mind, it's the doing thing, it's the verb that is associated with that object, that is *saṅkhāra*. And finally, *viññāna*. So, this is a lovely dhal curry. How is it lovely? Because of attachment, because there was a comparison that happened.

So, *rūpa* being either *rūpa rūpa*, *gandha rūpa*, *rāsa rūpa* or *sparsha rūpa*.

Then *vēdanā*, *sapa (sukha)*, *duka* or *upekkshā vēdanā*.

saññā, the label that you gave it.

saṅkhāra, the verb that is associated with dhal curry and

viññāna finally, the combination of all those together and you say, this is dhal curry that I can eat.

So, when you put all of those into one sentence, this is yellow, this is round, has this smell, has this taste, has this touch and it's nice and you can eat it. When you put all of those into one sentence now you have *viññāna*.

So that is the packet of information related to dhal curry. So that is how your mind was able to understand *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāna*, or understanding dhal curry quite simply but these packets of information came into a mind that arises and passes away. Remember you have to talk about the mind arising and passing away. Otherwise this hasn't clicked yet. Because that is where we really realize that there is no hope, it is hopeless. Because we are cursed with a mind that arises and passes away and you can't control the arising or passing away of the mind. So whatever *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāna* comes from, these packets are going to drop into a mind which arise and pass away. It's like the bus, like the flight, like the car that arises and passes away, it's going to come and drive past, it's going to arrive and drive past. So, it's not going to stop when you want it to stop. It didn't come past because you wanted it to come past, it just came. And when it came, it had passengers within it, *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāna*.

So, when the mind arises and passes away, now it's vexatious. Why is it vexatious? Because if you get attached, when it passes away, you are going to be left with suffering. Because what has passed away is something that you like, something that you love therefore it's vexatious. So that is *anicca*,

udayangama, atthangama and *ashwāda*" (pleasure). This is what's really going on, arising and passing away in the example of the dhal curry.

But I found it pleasurable, how is that so? How I found it pleasurable was, when it passed away, when the mind passed away, the *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* that has to do with dhal curry also passed away. Now the mind is again left in a state of vexation because it passed away leaving attachment behind. It didn't pass away with attachment. Attachment was left behind. , *rūpa* passed away, *vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* passed away leaving behind attachment.

Imagine, you wanted the plumber to come and do some work at home. Halfway through the job, the plumber goes away. Job is left undone. Now, how do you feel? That's a state of vexation. The plumber is gone but you're still left with the attachment for the plumber because the job is still left undone. Once the job is complete, now it's ok if the plumber goes or stays, it really doesn't matter, well actually you prefer him to go anyway but for as long as the job is left undone, if the plumber goes, if the worker goes, now you have a problem.

Likewise, *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna*, had left leaving attachment behind. One has left, leaving the other behind. So now we have a problem. When you are in that state of vexation again, another packet of *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna*, comes from the outside world. At that point, this mind was in a state of vexation waiting for what it loves to come back. So, it was searching and as soon as that packet of five came along, the five aggregates came along, now you no longer have to search for it because you just received it. When that searching comes to an end, when that void has been filled, now you feel a sense of relief and that experience is the experience of pleasure. But, unfortunately at the same time you also received that packet of five. They happened at the same time, they coincided. Arrival of *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* and relief from vexation was coincidental. Because they happened at the same time what ignorance tells us is, it's *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* that brought us pleasure. But that is not what really happens.

So, you see *udayangama, atthangama, àshwāda*.

Until you see *udayangama, atthangama* which is the arising and passing away, until you really understand it, we believe that pleasure comes from the outside world. That is why this connection

you have to be able to see, *udayangama, atthangama, àshwàda, àdìnava, nissarana*. You have to see that connection. They are discreet, yes but they're also connected. *Udayangama, atthangama, àshwàda*, why did *ashwàda* come after *udayangama, atthangama*? Why is it not *àshwàda, udayangama, atthangama, ādīnava and nissarana*? It's not like that. It's *udayangama, atthangama* then *àshwàda* then *ādīnava*, then *nissarana*. Why is it so? That's what I'm explaining to you. Until you see *udayangama, atthangama* which is the arising and passing away, until you really see it, and understand it, you think that *ashwàda* comes from elsewhere, from the outside world. But once you begin to understand this *udàweema, weyaweema*, arising and passing away, *udayangama, atthangama*, you realize that *ashwàda* came from nowhere else except from the vexatious *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna*. To put it quite simply, the only reason that you can experience pleasure is because *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* are vexatious. Can you see the irony behind that?

You can only experience pleasure because it's vexatious. Why? Because it's vexatious it passes away leaving behind attachment, now you're vexing. Then, another set of five come along and now you're relieved from vexation, leaving you with pleasure. So, if they weren't vexatious in the first place, would you have experienced pleasure? No.

The experience of happiness is relief from vexation

To put it in an example, a mother can only be happy if a child is also naughty. If the child is not mischievous, now the mother cannot be happy. Why? What is happiness? Relief from vexation. When the child is mischievous, the mother is vexing and then the child starts to behave, puts aside all the mischief, now relief from vexation and therefore happy. Do you like to be a happy mother? So, you know what you need to do now. So really, the reason that you can experience pleasure is because *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* are vexatious. If they weren't vexatious you wouldn't have been able to experience pleasure, so thank heavens you're able to suffer. If you weren't able to suffer, you wouldn't have been able to experience pleasure. Aren't you glad you can suffer? Aren't you glad you're blessed with the capacity to suffer? It's madness, right? This is mind blowing, it's complete madness. This is why the Buddha comes and asks us, "Are you mad, to put yourself through this? This happiness that you called happiness is simply relief from suffering, are you mad to put yourself through that?"

Would you say, I'd rather have a rash that I can scratch and that makes me feel good? Would you rather say that when you have the choice of not having the rash in the first place? This is the question that the Buddha asks. You have a choice, either have a rash, scratch it, now it feels good, or not have a rash in the first place, which would you go for? Not have the rash in the first place of course! Now you understand the Dhamma, now this is the choice you would go for. So, it's because *rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* are vexatious, this is why you're able to experience pleasure. If they weren't vexatious, you and I wouldn't be in this room because we wouldn't be talking about pleasure. So, now you know that *āshwāda*, pleasure is nothing other than relief from vexation.

In the pursuit of pleasure, you have to be willing to accept suffering, *dukkha dukkha, viparināma dukkha and saṅkhāra dukkha*, you have to be willing to invite these guests into your home if you want to be happy. Who are the guests? *Dukkha dukkha, saṅkhāra dukkha and viparināma dukkha*. You have to be willing to embrace them if you want to be happy. How so? Take the example again, you're vexing, someone says, "cake". Now you're vexing. To relieve yourself from vexation you have to do *abhisankhāra*, which is either you have to go and bake the cake or you have to go and find cake. So now you have to kick off the *abhisankhāra* process of going and finding, seeking cake and that is not fun. No one likes to bake a cake if they don't find that pleasurable. You only like baking cake because you can eat it. If you didn't, you wouldn't make it. So why do you make it for your children? Because you like to see them happy, that's why. Not seeing them happy vexes you. So, to relieve them of their vexation you bake them a cake. So really, you are only baking them a cake for your own happiness, not for theirs. For as long as we're only interested in self, self-preservation, you're not doing anything for somebody else, we're all doing everything we do for our benefit, our well-being, not somebody else's. That's something we create to feel good about ourselves, not feel bad about the fact that we're also selfish because we don't like to think like that. We don't like to think we are selfish, but the truth is we're all very selfish, that is the truth.

So, if you're vexing for cake, then the only thing that can relieve you from that vexation is cake. You want cake, and I give you biscuit, is that good? Are you relieved of your vexation? No. You want strawberry cake, I give you Chocolate cake, are you relieved of your vexation? No. If you're vexing for something, you have to be given that in order to relieve yourself of vexation. Thankfully so far, you haven't vexed for things that are beyond your reach. What if one day you vexed for the moon?

Little children don't they look at the moon and say, "Ammi I want the moon!" Now, one day if you actually vex for the moon, then the only way that you can get the child to stop crying is by bringing them the moon. There's nothing else that can relieve them of that vexation or you have to teach them a way to get rid of that vexation. By teaching them, "Really *putha*, you can't bring the moon because the moon is not something that can be brought to you. It's a massive object that's up in the sky, so many millions of miles away, there's no way we can do that, so you're crying for nothing, there's no way we can satisfy you. You have to either explain that to them or bring them the moon, it's one of these two things. What if one day you vex for the queen?

A fabricated world

Remember last week or the week before, I said, a guy looks.....The only way you can be relieved of your vexation is by bringing you that particular object. Because again, it's not the object that you're vexing for, it's the *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*. So, this is the problem with people, young children these days getting addicted to pornography. What do they see on the internet? It's all fabricated, right? They're acting, they're actors who are talented at making you believe in what they want you to believe in. But when your image of what a person's body has to look like, is changed depending on what you see on your internet browser, now, this is what you're going to start vexing for and then what happens? This is what the demand is for. Why do you think young girls these days, they go under the knife? They make changes to their bodies. Why? Because they find that they are no longer in demand. So, to be appealing to somebody else you have to change the way you look, so that it appeals to the person whose affection you desire. And they have grown up in a world where their image of a person's body is something that is completely distorted. So, if that is what you're vexing for, now, what a disaster! You know if someone is vexing for a thin person you can't make them happy by giving them a fat person. And likewise, if someone is vexing for a fat person you can't make them happy by giving them a thin person. You know, I can't give you elaborate examples, you can think for yourselves. What are some of the things on the internet these days, that they get children to vex about? The female figure has been commoditized. All this is *drushti*, views. As soon as an image has been planted in someone's mind that this is what good looks like, in other words, this is *ashwāda*, this is what pleasure looks like, now the mind starts to vex. Because what the guy, what the child saw as being a beautiful figure is again ultimately *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*. So now until this guy is able to receive that *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*, he is going to be vexing. And now he's waiting for the first opportunity to relieve

himself of vexation. So, he starts to look, "What opportunities do I have to relieve myself of vexation?"

Arm your children with the Dhamma

The danger is there's a sister at home. There's a mother at home. There's a teacher, best friend, niece, aunt, grandmother. Now, when you're vexing, you have to relieve yourself from vexation. Either you have to relieve yourself from vexation or you have to get rid of the vexation itself. One of these two things have to happen because the intensity of your vexation keeps growing the longer you're vexing. If you draw vexation and time on a graph, the curve is going to be directly proportional. It could be small amounts but over time it's going to accrue and the vexation is going to grow and it's going to become so intense, that the slightest opportunity at hand, is going to be enough for this child to seek the opportunity to relieve himself of vexation. Because that vexation is going to be burning inside, *mōha* ultimately, waiting for their opportunity to release.

Imagine if you had a bottle of coke, you give it a good shake and then leave it. The gas was there all the time but after you've shaken it, the moment you take the lid off, all the liquid is going to pour out, effervescence. The gas was there all the time but because you have given it a catalyst by shaking it, now the gas has to escape. Because all the gas has now surfaced to the top of that bottle, now it has to escape.

Likewise, when a young child goes through that experience in life, growing up, seeing these distorted views of what the other sex looks like. It applies both ways, men-women, women-men both ways. Then this is what you are going to be vexing for and then over time, that vexation is going to grow in intensity. And it's going to grow so intense that he's not going to be able to wait at least until he gets married. He's not going to be able to wait until he even turns eighteen. Then he's going to go for the first opportunity he or she gets, and that could be a member of the family. Now happy days. This is why parents, I keep reminding you, you have to teach your children, you have to give them the gift of Dhamma. Otherwise they're not going to know any other way other than relief from vexation.

Think about your childhood. You didn't know any other way, you didn't know any better. The only thing you knew to do was to relieve yourself from vexation. Sometimes when it was not the right

thing to do for social decorum you kept yourself contained. You tried to contain yourself, you tried to discipline yourself either through fear of punishment or guilt or shame. But now lots of things children can do in secret without their parents ever finding out about it. But when we were growing up that was not so easy. Everything we did, our parents knew. But now, that's not the case. The world is so advanced, it's moving at such a rapid pace, the children are now being sent for tuition classes every day. Sometimes the tuition master is brought home. So, what if your daughter is now vexing for the male touch and you have the tuition master seated next to her, now what's going to happen? You work out the rest. If all you taught your daughter was to relieve herself from vexation and not to rid the vexation inside the mind by understanding that it is attachment that causes vexation and that attachment is caused by ignorance. What I'm looking for does not exist in the outside world. If you don't teach your child to do this, all what the child knows is "I have to relieve myself of vexation because I just can't bear this!" My teacher's next to me. Then all you have to do is look away, everything else will happen.

Back in my days, there was no opportunity for these things to happen because we hardly went to tuition classes and the elderly generation even less so. But now all of that is changing. People have clubs and associations and societies. Think about school, how many clubs and societies do they have at school. I am not complaining about any of them, but all of these are opportunities for your child to go astray. Think about all the clubs, music clubs, dance clubs, this club, that club and clubs which entertain social interactions. I used to be a member of the Interact club, Rotaract club, by the way I'm not dishonoring anyone of them, I'm just saying these are things that are out there and it's ok to get involved, it's nothing wrong with that. What I am saying is, every time you do get involved, the inevitable is coming your way, if you don't give your child the gift of Dhamma. If all you're interested in is teaching your child, "*putha* , go and experience the world, go and interact with everybody, go and get to know the world better". Remember, you haven't armed your child with the Dhamma. If you haven't armed your child with the Dhamma, all the child knows is: "when I'm vexed, all I'm ready to do is relieve myself of vexation". That's the recipe for disaster.

No pain No gain

So *abhisāṅkhāra*, when you're in vexation, there is nothing other than relieving yourself of vexation and for that you have to do *abhisāṅkhāra* and then *abhisāṅkhāra dukkha*, you have to suffer, we

have to embrace with open arms *saṅkhāra dukkha*. But, no matter what you do it's going to pass away ultimately and therefore *viparināma dukkha* you have to embrace with open arms, you have to be ready for it. You have to be willing to accept it. If you're telling me, "I don't like *saṅkhāra dukkha*., I don't like *viparināma dukkha*", well sorry you cannot experience pleasure then. Yes or no? You cannot experience pleasure if you're not willing to experience *saṅkhāra dukkha*. and *viparināma dukkha*. You can't have one and not the other two as well as *dukkha dukkha*. So, *dukkha dukkha*, am I able to create what I want? It's that constant feeling of uncertainty. Can I stop this from passing away? That constant feeling of anxiety and uncertainty, *dukkha dukkha*. So, as long as you want pleasure, you can't bid farewell to *dukkha dukkha*, *saṅkhāra dukkha* and *viparināma dukkha*. You have to let them come.

That's why *udayangama atthangama àshwāda ādīnava*, not *ādīnava* and then *àshwāda*. This is the connection that is in all of these components. You have to see the connection right from start to end. So first we talked about the *udayangama atthangama*, arising and passing away. And it is through that process you experience pleasure, *àshwāda*. Then, although it was *àshwāda* you were so interested in ultimately, you're left with *ādīnava* which are the consequences of *saṅkhāra dukkha*, *viparināma dukkha* and *dukkha dukkha*. And ultimately, when you talk about pleasure you know now that pleasure is nothing other than a fantasy. It's not something that you have really experienced, it's simply the relief from vexation, nothing else. Reduction of suffering. Not reduction of suffering and then pleasure brought in additionally as well. It's the reduction of suffering. It's like you borrowed 100,000 rupees, you're able to pay off 50,000, now you have 50,000 pleasure. Are you any richer than you were? No, your loan has just reduced to 50,000, that's all that's happened. It's reduction in suffering, not additional something else coming in as well. And the moment you go down to zero, now you cannot experience pleasure again. It's paying off this debt, that is what pleasure is, debt reducing. Not any more money coming from elsewhere to fill your pockets. Every cent that comes along, you just have to put that away, to pay off your debt. So, a man who's in debt cannot be happy about winning the lottery, because all the money he's received has to be paid towards clearing up the debt. Whatever is left over is his money to enjoy with but, that is not how it works with pleasure. When you don't have a debt, you don't have any money coming in. That is the kind of analogy to use in this context. If there's no debt you won't have money coming in. Likewise, if there's no pain there's no gain. If there's no suffering, you will not have pleasure. So, the *udayangama atthangama ashwāda ,ādīnava* now you begin to

understand that what I thought as pleasurable, what I used to think as pleasurable was simply a complete lie, it's a complete false, complete gimmick. There's nothing substantial. All I was left with was *dukkha - dukkha dukkha, saṅkhāra dukkha* and *viparināma dukkha* and mountains of it. Lorry loads of it. Truckloads of it.

That being the case, what is the point in going through in *sansāra*? And when I talk about *sansāra* we're not necessarily talking about next life. Each *citta* is a single unit of *sansāra*. This is the most basic unit of *sansāra*, a *citta* arising and passing away. So, then you begin to ask yourself the question,

"If in every *citta*, all I'm going through is *dukkha dukkha, saṅkhāra dukkha* and *viparināma dukkha* and this falsehood of *āshwāda*, what is the point of me wanting to give rise to another *citta*?"

What is the point? It's pointless, essence less. This is where anatta comes in, *asāra*, essence-less, meaningless, futile. No meaning in doing it. Then you automatically let go. Automatically, not deliberately, it just happens.

Letting go happens

If you know that something is poisonous, are you not drinking it because I'm forcing you not to drink it? I would have to force you to drink it, not to refrain from drinking it. It's only until you know it's poisonous, you are going to drink it. But the day you realize this is poison, you're not going to drink it anymore. If I forced you to, you may have to because I'm holding your arms down. I'm not leaving you any choice. Hold your mouth and start putting the stuff into your mouth, then you have no choice. But if you had a choice, you wouldn't even think about it. That is where you don't have to let go, letting go happens.

It's like when the tree sheds its leaves when autumn comes along. Is there a leprechaun that goes around every tree and starts shaking all the leaves? No, all the leaves just fall. Why? Because the tree does not need the leaves at that point in its life cycle. Because that's the time the tree needs to preserve the energy that it has within itself. Not feed the leaves because there's very little sunlight.

Science lesson aside, that is what happens. So, when the tree does not need the leaves, the leaves automatically fall. No one needs to go and pluck all the leaves.

Likewise, when you realize that *rūpa*, *vēdanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāna* are essenceless, meaningless, futile never did it bring me *àshwāda* and never did it bring any pleasure, the only things I ever got for myself was *dukkha dukkha*, *viparināma dukkha* and *saṅkhāra dukkha*, so simply there was only the pain and no gain. When you really begin to understand that then letting go happens automatically. So that is how the *udayangama*, *atthangama*, *àshwāda*, *ādinava*, *nissarana* happens, in that order. So, you have to contemplate on this now.

Preparing for the meditation program

So, when we come to the meditation program, the first half of it will really be spending on contemplating and thinking through the doctrine. So, I'll give you a shortened version of this again when we do that. But what you'll be doing is thinking it through in your mind, how does that work? *Udayangama*, *atthangama*, *àshwāda*, I didn't get that, let's start again. So, this you'd be thinking in your mind. By the way, you don't have to close your eyes for that. Keep it open if you like to. But you'd be contemplating on that. But this is something you can do at home as well so come prepared as much as you can. Because then, once you have gotten the hang of it, what we'll do next is I'll be inviting you to think of examples from your own life of the things that you're attached to. Things that bring you pleasure. And then, now you have the doctrine or the bar of soap, now start washing your dirty linen. Then you have to just keep washing until all your linen has been done. How long is that going to take? And the answer is, as long as it takes. This is why I say right at the start of the sermon, don't be hasty about your destination, don't be hasty about getting to the destination, that'll happen when it happens. Why you need to be hasty is to do what you need to do to get to the destination. Because that doesn't happen automatically.

“So, you have to practice the Dhamma. *Nibbāna* will happen when it happens. All you need to do is practice, “*bhāvitā bahulikatā. Sambodhāya nibbanaya saṃvattanti*”. Practice until you arrive at *Nibbāna*. Until you arrive at *sambodhi*. So, what is *sambodhi*? *Bodhi* is Understanding. And *sambodhi* is understanding that it is ignorance and attachment which are the factors that have kept me bound to *sansāra*. *Samvattanti* is understanding leads one on to *Nibbāna*. So *Nibbāna* is: understanding the role of ignorance and attachment in keeping one trapped in *sansāra*.

So, this is what we will do when you come to the meditation program. But like I said, try and find some time at home with your friends but you have to choose the right friend to do this with. But I think now you have associates and companionships also with people who come along to sermons, so if you can find an opportunity to do that because unfortunately, I don't have the time to do that with each and every one of you. So, you can do that among yourselves and try and explain to the other person your understanding of the Dhamma. But to do that ask them for an example, ask them for a situation to which you have to apply the Dhamma. Otherwise, it's just going to be a lot of Dhamma that I know. You are going to start from the *udayangama atthangama àshwāda ādinava niassarana*, you are just going to start saying it like a parrot. That is of no use if you can't apply it. You'll be surprised how many people know this A to Z. but have no clue as to how to apply it. It never fails to amaze me how in every meditation program that we have sometimes people come and sit in front of us, you know, "I know it all the way, I know it, ask me any question". So that's the kind of demeanor that they have when they sit in front, and then I ask you a question, "Ok, explain to me". Now they're lost. That's not because they don't know. It's like, when you make a necklace and all the beads are there, what you have to do is find the right beads and string them along in the right order. That's when you have a beautiful necklace. So, what you need to be able to do is find the right bead to go in the right place. Now here's everything I got, you decide what you have to do with it. That's not how it works. You have to be able to give the right medicine to the right patient, for the right disease. Otherwise you walk into the pharmacy, here's all the drugs I got, help yourself. That doesn't work because the patient has no idea of how drugs work. You are the pharmacist so you have to be able to prescribe or rather give the right dispenser, right drug.

Likewise, if you have the Dhamma you have to be able to do this, otherwise the problem is this: when you sit down for meditation you will not have a clue about how to apply the Dhamma. You will know a lot of Dhamma but not how to apply it. Because you haven't practiced it. So, you have to practice this. Find an opportunity at home to do this before you come. Perhaps in future we'll try and organize a way, where we can discuss with you but it's going to take a long time because we simply don't have the resources right now. So, when you explain to somebody if you get stuck somewhere, that's a good thing. Yes or no? Yes, because now you know at this point I'm going to stumble, I don't know how to get myself out of this. So therefore, now you have a question mark there and that question mark you have to address. This is why I'm telling you straight already

because we are going to be doing it at the end of the month, start practicing it. Do it a few times and then you will have several question marks. Those questions, bring along to the sermons so we can cover them during the sermon in preparation for the meditation program. Because the meditation program is not the time to answer those questions. We can do them now so that when we come along to the program, you will know exactly what to do. Is that fair enough?



- 00:01:06 Invitation to Devas, Brahmas, spirits, demons & the dead
- 00:07:52 Start
- 00:11:30 The most exclusive club membership
- 00:14:54 Benefits of this club membership
- 00:16:19 Obtaining & enhancing the membership
- 00:21:13 Non-believers in Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha
- 00:25:54 Blind faith
- 00:29:17 Looking after myself for you
- 00:38:44 Too many cooks spoil the broth
- 00:44:13 Don't end up in a dhal curry that even your dog can't eat
- 00:47:50 Why 84 000 discourses?
- 00:56:04 Be careful when you talk about the Dhamma!
- 01:02:42 Paṭicca samuppāda – Origination of dukkha
- 01:08:51 Jāti is a curse not a blessing
- 01:10:20 Why do we focus on ignorance & attachment?
- 01:15:00 Attachment leads to suffering – a riddle but the truth
- 01:19:54 We put our loved ones willingly into suffering
- 01:24:31 *Anicca, dukkha & anatta*
- 01:26:35 Arising & passing away of the mind – Example 1
- 01:31:56 Arising & passing away of the mind – Example 2

- 01:35:13 The nature of the mind is to arise and pass away
- 01:44:00 Rūpa, vēdanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññāna is everything we experience!
- 01:46:11 Attachment is the cause of all suffering and the only thing you can change
- 01:51:48 Rāga, Dvēsha & Mōha caused by attachment
- 01:56:12 Passing away of RVSSV leaving behind attachment
- 01:59:21 Sapa, duka & upekshā – good feeling, bad feeling & equanimous feeling
- 02:02:13 Ignorance is ultimately seeing this world as being beautiful
- 02:11:03 Pleasure is relief from vexation
- 02:20:29 Washing your dirty linen with a bar of soap
- 02:26:26 Meditation is contemplation
- 02:29:05 Explaining the Dhamma through real life examples
- 02:31:49 How the mind perceives Rūpa, Vēdanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, Viññāna
- 02:40:32 The experience of happiness is relief from vexation
- 02:47:29 A fabricated world
- 02:51:11 Arm your children with the Dhamma
- 02:57:29 No pain no gain
- 03:02:26 Letting go happens
- 03:04:32 Preparing for the meditation program
- 03:13:16 Recitation of Ārya Maithriya
- 03:20:48 Transfer of merit

Proof read by C.P