

## 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 work is a transcription of the sermon held in 2018-12-16. 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

Ven ananda

Assuthawà pruthajjanò

Antharà parinibbàyi

Invention

Toodle-doo

Papadam

God

Worship

Samàdhi

Samàpatthi

Outsource

Happiness

Humble

Foot stool

Patavi

Thèjo

Vàyo

Àrya maithri

Event

Jethavanarama monastery

Dolos pirikara pooja

merits

Niròdha samàpatthiya

Nèwa sannà

Nà sannà

Rope

Standing

Living

Bodhisattva

Distortion

Dhamma

Sensuality

Fire

Earth

Fire

Water

Wind

Ràhulòvada sùtta

Ven rahula

Fulfil

Perfections / pàramithà

Transfer

**“If you can hear, why not listen?”**

Can you all hear me? Hear me! If you can hear me, why won't you listen? Have you ever found yourself asking that question either from your children or perhaps parents, your co-workers “Can you hear me?” If you can, why won't you listen to what I'm saying? Never heard that? Teachers saying to students in class, “Children, why won't you listen?” “If you can hear me, why won't you listen?” This is a huge problem that a lot of people find themselves in. They can hear, but they're not prepared to listen. That's a real shame. If you have been endowed with ears and your auditory system is working in tip-top shape, then you can all hear alright, no problem. Whether you choose to listen or not is a completely personal thing. You can choose to listen, you can't choose to hear, but you can choose to listen. You can then decide what you do with what you have listened to, but for that you have to have listened. A lot of the time, even I find that when I either give talks or sermons or perhaps have conversations, discussions with others, both lay and clergy, a lot of the time, people are very keen on wanting to say what they have to say. But very rarely are they prepared to listen. They can hear, but listening is a whole new ballgame, and is an entirely different skill to have. What are some of the things that we do to ourselves because we are not prepared to listen? We may hear but we're not prepared to listen, important messages get lost and you know this is as true in the worldly sense as much as it is in the supramundane sense. Think about your workplaces, think about school, think about home. How many times have you asked your child to wash the dishes, but when you get home, you find that nothing has been done, no homework has been done, the dishes haven't been washed, the bed hasn't been made. They heard you, but they weren't listening, because we're all in such a state of vexation.

**Man's greatest invention**

Actually, I want to give you a question to think about and I'll give you the answer later on. But I want you to think about this. What do you think is man's greatest invention? Think about it, it's time to think. Would you like me to give you a hint? No, I'll let you think for a moment. I'll come

back and give you a hint later on. So now I've got you thinking, I'll come back to what I was saying earlier.

When we fail to listen and all we're doing is just opening our ears and letting sound come and hit our eardrums and that's all that's required for hearing. But when we fail to listen, we lose out on very important key messages. We end up making the same mistakes that our forefathers, people before us, have made. Sometimes we jump too high because we fail to listen. Do you listen? Sometimes we jump too late, sometimes too early, sometimes too far, sometimes not far enough, because we have failed to listen. We have failed to take instruction.

What happens is, most of the time and particularly for people who, you know the old saying, *"Knowing a little is pretty dangerous"*, it's very dangerous to know a little. If you know a little, that's very dangerous. Then you become a jack; not a master *"Jack of all trades, but a master of none"*. That's very dangerous. You can be a danger to yourself as well as to others, when you know little but not enough. But the thing is, when you know little, particularly in the Dhamma; you know, this is why I bring up this matter because I'm not just talking to you about listening. I mean people might think that's just a social skill, why you are talking about that in a sermon. Because if you haven't listened, then perhaps that is why you still haven't been able to become a *Sotápanna*. Perhaps you've been hearing all your life, perhaps you've been listening to sermons. You see, when people don't listen carefully, they tend to point the finger outside and they say,

*"The Dhamma is wrong or the teacher is wrong. I wasn't taught properly, the instruction I received was flawed, that was the problem. Not with me, it's just the outside world that's problematic. I'm all right, it's them."*

Because hearing obviously requires sound to come from the outside world, it needs your ear to function but listening is an entirely internal function. Someone else can't listen for you, can they? They can hear on your behalf but they can't listen for you. You got to listen for yourself. Listening is an entirely internal function that involves your mind. Of course, it requires the support of your ears and the sounds that come from the outside world but this is a wholly internal process. When you don't listen, what tends to happen is particularly for those of you who are keen to follow and

progress on the path of Dhamma, when you have been listening to sermons or rather maybe perhaps hearing sermons over time, you have come to know something, you have come to know a little. I'm not saying you need to know a lot, but sometimes what you know is not enough. It hasn't clicked yet. The penny hasn't dropped yet and if that hasn't been the case yet, then what you know is not enough to get to where you need to be. So, what can happen is when you fail to listen when someone is actually delivering a sermon, giving you a speech, trying to explain something to you, immediately what you're trying to do inside your mind is trying to compare, what you know with what is being said.

### **Do you know what I know?**

And then the purpose of why you sat down to listen while you prepared yourself to listen has changed, because now the purpose is,

*“Do you know what I know?”*

That's pretty dangerous. “Do you know what I know? I already know it, do you know what I know? I shall listen or I should pay attention to you, just to check if you know what it is that I know”. Do you find yourselves in such situations? If so, I want you to think about it because that could be pretty dangerous. A lot of times I found myself and I've seen other Swaminwahanses, when particularly, other lay or as I said even clergy, both parties they come and have conversations, discussions with us. Sometimes they might ask you a question, they'll ask us a question “Swaminwahansa, what is *aniccha*?” and then you start to explain and then after only one or two sentences they've taken over. Now I have to listen and they continue to say what it is that they know. So why was the question asked? Well, clearly the question was asked to check if I know what it is that they know. So, you've come to check my homework. Have I done my homework, that's why you've come to check? I don't mean you, particularly I'm just speaking in general and I hope you can understand that. I just want you to think, do you find yourself in that situation? It doesn't matter who it is you're speaking with. What if it's a young monk, a novice monk? If you find yourself in the situation where you get an opportunity to go and ask the question, just because you're older, just because you've got more experience, just because you've been

listening to sermons for longer, does it mean necessarily that you know better. Because when that happens what might happen is, you go “Ah.... I know it, let's check if you know it”.

So, I'll ask you a question just to get the water flowing and then I'll check if you know without even knowing, without even realizing you're just simply feeding your ego. What a pity. You've come all that way to feed your ego. You've taken all the trouble to come here to feed your ego, what a shame? You needn't have come all the way for that, that's a shame, that's a real pity.

And some people are simply voice recorders, but the thing is you know you don't need to be a living breathing person to do that, you know this thing is here, it's pretty capable of doing that, voice recording. It will remember every word I say, it will remember every word it hears; but can it listen? Can a voice recorder listen? No, a voice recorder can't listen. It can hear because it's got all the apparatus inside it to enable it to hear but not to listen, because listening is a very active process. It requires a sense of humility, it requires a sense of humbleness, to listen to, sometimes things that you already know, “Ah, there's an interesting one”. Is that an uncomfortable feeling when you have to listen to somebody saying something ‘you already know’ and in your mind you're an expert.

## **Ego**

Let's imagine you're an engineer and your six-year-old has been given some science homework. He's come and sat down in front of you, he is trying to explain to you how a pulley or a lever works. You're a certified engineer. Do you find it really uncomfortable to just sit down, close your mouth and listen to what is being said? Or perhaps you're in a seminar, someone's giving a lecture on how to be rich. You're a rich person. Do you find it really difficult to listen to them speak? Because in your mind, internally, you're already spurting out responses, “No, that's not why you should have said, this is what you should have said because I know. You don't, I know”. That's ego. Ego getting the better of you.

Watch out; be careful. “*Assuthawà pruthajjanà*”, the Buddha says. One who hasn't listened, no one who hasn't heard. When the Buddha gives sermons at *Jèthavanà* or at *Benàres*, when he delivered his first sermon, wasn't that a deer park? Now, it's a deer park right, where he delivered

his first sermon. How many deer were there in the park? Lots. How many of them attained *sotápanna*? None, why? Did they not hear the Buddha's teaching? They did, but what were they not able to do? They weren't able to listen. Because they didn't have the intelligence, they didn't have the wisdom to listen; but they heard it. Do you find yourself in that situation sometimes?

Someone gives a sermon,

*"Oh, I've heard this before."*

Because you know, I think the reason I bring up at this point in our journey is because if you've been listening particularly to Guru Swàminwahanse's sermons, you know over the last few weeks and months he's been talking about the same logic in terms of '*peleema, àshwàda and tanhà*', he's been talking about the same things. Attachment leads to vexation and relief from vexation gives you pleasure. You can get into the pitfall where you come and sit down and go,

*"I know that, just give me something new, yeah we've been over this several times, just give me something new. This does not interest me anymore, give me something new."*

Be careful; you might miss it. There might be just one word that you need to get yourself on that step. We don't know which word that is.

You know, if I were the Buddha, I would sit down here and scan the room. I would scan the room and check which ones of you have the potential to attain a *màrga pala* and then I'll know which ones of you don't have the potential to do that today and then what would I do? I would exclude you. I wouldn't even think about you from that point forward, in terms of my sermon to help you attain *Nibbàna*. But perhaps there are those among you, who although don't have the potential to attain *Nibbàna* today, perhaps might need a push to live a good life, to abstain from the unmeritorious, unwholesome deeds, just to become a good person before you become a great person. Perhaps you still engage yourself in bad things, do bad things. Maybe that's what you need a push for you to get yourself on the right track before you start to make steps on the way to greatness. This is what the Buddha would do. So, you're not tier 1, you're tier 2 and then there's a tier 3 as well, completely ignore because they cannot make any use of the sermon today; but perhaps they may be able to give someone a glass of water, do some merit or perhaps turn the fans on, maybe usher you to a seat. That's all merit.

The Buddha might help them out in other ways. But in terms of delivering the sermon, He'll pick his tier one, He'll pick his tier two and He'll also check which words you need in order to attain that stage. He'll go by word; which word do you need. Is it *'anicca'*, is it *'dukkha'*, is it *'anatta'*, which word do you need and then having scanned the entire room, He'll then pick all those words, tie them up in a beautiful string and then from start to end He'll deliver the sermon and then it like fireworks going off. He'd be able to witness fireworks, pop over there – pop over there – pop; *Sotápanna, Sakrudàgàmi, Sotápanna, Anàgàmi, Arahath, Sotápanna*. The Buddha can do that. But, alas! I can't.

So, if you had the potential to attain a *màrga pala*, at the point you came into this room if it were the Buddha delivering this sermon, I guarantee you wouldn't leave having attained that. But we don't have that privilege today. So, this is why listening is all the more important. I don't know which words you need. I don't know what it is you need to hear me say in order to become a *sotápanna*, that I don't know. I can make a guess but it's only going to be an educated guess, it's not going to be a perfect science. It's going to be a bit of an art. You know I'll be reading your facial signs, your body language. Sometimes you might say,

*"What?"*

and then I say,

*"Yeah! Okay you didn't get it. So, let me try something else; maybe a different example."*

Others you know, they might have glittering eyes, glistening eyes, I think,

*"Ah.... they are getting it. So right, let's continue on that example, let's continue on that part."*

Some of you might start nodding because you understand and others might start nodding because you've fallen asleep. Then it's time to perhaps either continue or pick another topic to speak on. So, I don't have that ability whereby I don't have the *'Indriya parò pariyatta gnànaya'* which is a knowledge that is required to know which ones of you have the potential and what is it you need to hear in order for you to achieve those noble attainments before you leave.

Therefore, you have an even bigger responsibility, for me? Is it to me or to yourselves? It's to yourselves, to listen. So, it doesn't matter if you hear me saying the same thing for the hundredth

time. When you come along to Guru Swaminwahanse's sermons, you're hearing the same things, 'anicca, anicca, anicca,

*"Come on, give me something new - it's the same track over. You sound like a broken record now; give me something new."*

Don't fall into that trap. Just because you know something, doesn't mean you can't learn something new today. Who here is an expert on *anicca*? Put your hand up. Who here is an expert on *dukka* and *anatta*? Who here is an expert on *paticca samuppàda*?

You know once Venerable Ananda said,

*"Swàmini Bhagyawathun wahansa, Venerable sir, you know having listened to your discourse on the **paticca samuppàda, the dependent origination**, I'm beginning to understand it and I feel, you know it's ok, I'm getting it, I'm understanding it. You know this is perfectly understandable, it's intelligible stuff."*

and what was the Buddha's response?

*"Ananda, never say that again. You have spoken out of turn. The law of dependent origination is like the vast ocean. The further you walk into the ocean, the deeper it gets. You do not have the ability, you are not a Supreme Buddha."*

This is the Buddha speaking to Venerable Ananda. He's the treasurer of the Dhamma, The Buddha's chief attendant who was by the Buddha, listened to every sermon He gave. Think about that, every sermon the Buddha gave, Venerable Ananda was there and even if he wasn't there in his presence, he had vowed the Buddha to regurgitate that sermon, to redeliver that sermon in Venerable Ananda's presence. So that one day he would be able to pass on the gift of Dhamma to all of us. So, imagine how Venerable Ananda must have felt.

You know the Buddha, wherever He went, He spoke of *aniccha*, *dukka*, *anatta*. So, every sermon he got to hear it was *aniccha*, *dukka*, *anatta*. "Oh! here again, Buddha, can you not speak of something else for a change!" So, don't be like that.

Because you come along with your families, is it not possible, parents, I ask you, that your children have attained higher attainments than you have by now. Who knows? You don't know that. So,

when it's your son, when it's your daughter at home talking to you about *anicca*, *dukka* and *anatta*, talking to you about the Dhamma that they have understood, do you find it unsettling to listen to them? Do you think,

*“What do you know? I've been listening to sermons longer than you have. So, I know better than you. You shut up and listen and I will speak.”*

Do you find yourself in that situation? That would be pretty foolish. Why do you think you've got two ears and one mouth and not one ear and two mouths, to do more of what? Listening and less of what? Talking. Talk less, listen more. Be prepared to listen no matter what it is. If a dog had attained *sotápanna* and he came here and started barking. Are you prepared to listen? You better be, if you haven't attained the state of *sotápanna* yet. Because that is what's going to help us become a *sotápanna*. That's not a possibility, I'm just using a simile, something to think about. Look at where your ego is.

When someone points out a fault in you, inside your mind are you already formulating or preparing excuses? You haven't even heard what he's going to say. All you hear is “Oh, you shouldn't have done” or already started excuses inside. You're just waiting for that turn to speak up, excuses. Now you're going to miss what you should have been able to hear. You're going to miss everything he's going to say. Perhaps they've only started to talk to you about a flaw that they spotted about you. But perhaps they were going to go on to talk about something greater, but because you thought you were clever, because you wanted to argue your stance, because you wanted to debate why you did that, now you start to speak. Now they've got to listen and then after you said your piece, they've forgotten what they wanted to say, that could be possible. Or they realized there's no point in talking to this guy, he doesn't want to listen, he just wants to prove that he's right, so, why do I bother. You know you're going to find more of this when you particularly speak with and associate with people who are walking on the path of Dhamma. Because remember, the more they progress on the path of Dhamma, the less they're inclined to come into friction with you, into conflict with you. So be careful. Did you understand what I just said there? The more someone walks in the path of Dhamma, the less they're going to be inclined to argue with you, to debate with you. Because they don't have the time for that. With the compassion that they have in their minds, they might provide you, extend you some support,

give you some advice, give you some guidance but they're only doing that for your good not for their good. In worldly existence, that might be different.

Perhaps it's your employer and he's going to make you listen, whether you like it or not. Because I pay you to listen to what I say. So, he's going to make you listen. But on the path in Dhamma for someone who's progressing in the Dhamma, for someone who's going through the stages of *Sotápanna*, *Sakrudàgàmi*, particularly someone who's an *Anàgàmi*, you say once, he might try again. You debate a second time and argue a second time, he might try just one more time. You argue a third time, whatever, do as you wish. How many times have you seen or read in the scriptures where the Buddha gives advice to his monks,

*"Monk, do not do that."*

*"But Buddha, you know, I've done this before, so surely this should be okay."*

*"Monk, I say because I know it, do not do it."*

*"Oh! but sir, there's nothing wrong with this surely, it should be okay for me to do this."*

See for yourself.

*"Okay, off you go. Do what you like."*

### **Listen more, talk less**

There was once a monk who was going on *pindapàtha* with the Buddha and he stopped by a mango grove. He asked the Buddha for permission to: because when he was in this mango grove he looked around and he thought

*"Wow, this is a perfect place for me to sit down and meditate. It's so calm, it's so serene. This is the perfect environment; I've been looking for something like this for a long time. So, let me go and seek permission from the Buddha."*

He approaches the Buddha,

*"Venerable Sir, this mango grove, I think is perfect for my meditation purposes. Would you please allow me to spend some time here?"*

*"Monk, this is not the right place for you."*

*“But Venerable Sir, look at it, it's so peaceful, it's so calm and serene. Surely this is the place for me. There are no disturbances, there are no people, no noises, surely this should be the right place for me.”*

*“Monk, I say because I know you should not be trying to meditate here, this place is not suitable for you.”*

*“Oh! but, please Venerable Sir, this should be the perfect place for me. I can say, I know it. I can say, I can tell that this is the right place for me.”*

So, what is it that Buddha said,

*“Off you go then.”*

Because He has no interest in conflict. He'll say once, he says twice, the third time off, well whatever. So, what did that monk do? Against the Buddha's instructions, he went and sat down, he tried to meditate. He kept trying, that's all he did. He kept trying. Because every time he sat down for meditation, all those thoughts of **desire, rāga** came rushing into his mind, the moment he sat down for meditation. So, he tried to, despite all that, he tried many times and then he came back and he's now confessing with the Buddha,

*“Venerable Sir, you know that place that really didn't work out for me.”*

*“Well, what did I tell you?”*

*“But why is that?”*

*“Well, because I looked into your past and you were once a king and that is the exact point where you wanted to sit down and meditate, was where you had your palace and where you had all your courtesans and you spent time with them.”*

I'll leave it at that.

*“So, I knew that this is not the right place for you. This is why I advised you against going there but did you listen? No”.*

Did he hear the Buddha? Of course, he did. But was he prepared to listen? No. People miss out even in the presence of the Buddha.

Even in the presence of the Buddha if you are not prepared to listen, you're going to miss out. What a shame? What a loss? I don't know of any bigger calamity than that. I don't know a bigger loss than that. So, listen. Every word can be useful, every word. I often tell some of our novice

monks, this. You know because it's easy for particularly monks like myself to become egoistic, to begin to think you know,

*"I deliver sermons, I have a large, I won't call them fan base, but groups of listeners come and listen to my sermons and then there are lots of people around the world that listen to sermons. And when I deliver a sermon then lots of people come and worship at my feet, so surely, you know I'm an important person and I know it, I've got it. I know it."*

So, people can fall into this trap, particularly monks, be very careful.

### **Becoming a Sòtápanna is a reconciliation of sansàric debts**

But the thing is, for one to become a *Sotápanna*, you have to hear it from the right person as well. Because this is also reconciliation of **sansàric debts**, '**sansàra naya ganudenu piyaweeema**'. I don't know this, but it could be that you, sir, will only become a *sotápanna* if you listen to a sermon by this child sitting down right here. I don't know, but it could be the case. Because that's how that *sansàric* debt is supposed to be reconciled. I could be sitting here talking to you for hours and days and months and years, but it's not going to cut it for you. Because that *sansàric* debt has to be reconciled and that's how it's going to happen. So, for that, he has to become a *sotápanna* first. Now you are going to have to wait. That being the case, whose sermons should you not be interested in listening to? Can you name them? You know these guys, you don't need to listen to their sermons. How do you know? This is why I say if a *sotápanna* dog comes and starts barking, pay attention, listen, that could be a *sansàric* debt. True, they have to be speaking of *rágakkhaya*, *dvéshakkhaya*, *mòhakkhaya*, dhamma that enables you to do that. They have to, the Dhamma that they speak of has to contain the paticcha samuppàda within it. '**Yè dhammà hethuppabawà thèsang hèthung thathàgathò àha**' it contains all four noble truths within it. It contained the dependent origination process within it. At least in its essence, it was there. It's all contained within, self-sufficient. Those four lines are enough for anybody to become a *sotápanna*. But will everyone become a *sotápanna*, listening to it? No. For that, there are other factors that need to line up.

It could have been that Upatissa who later on, went on to become the great elder Sàriputtha, may not have become a *sotápanna* had he not listened to Venerable Assaji. Perhaps, if his first encounter was with the Buddha that would not have done it for him. Because it had to come from Venerable Assaji. Now thinking about that if that is the case, think about how many times in our *Sansára*, might we have been actually able to listen to the dhamma from someone who was an *àrya* but yet that was not the right person to do it for you, to unlock it for you. So, it just didn't happen.

This is why I say, listen, it doesn't matter who is speaking, listen very carefully to every word. You don't know which word is going to do it for you. Sometimes you're listening and then you feel that the sound comes from somewhere and now you turn your head, your attention breaks for that moment. At that moment, in the sermon there was one word that was going to do it for you. That was the word that was going to move you from a *pruthajjana* to *Sotápanna* but you missed it. Perhaps in your entire lifetime that series of events is not going to repeat. Good heavens! another opportunity lost. Now can you afford not to listen? This is a game of chance, it really is. You know those chance cards on Monopoly? You don't know what's going to come next. This is a game of chance. If you're wise, you will make use of every chance that comes along. You will listen carefully.

Now what was the question I asked you a few moments ago? Do you remember? What was it? Absolutely, what was man's greatest invention? I'll give you a hint, I'm not going to answer it straight away. I'll give you a hint. I'm going to help you along, but you can think, you know, you all are intelligent people. What was man's greatest invention? Part of the answer is already in the question. What was man's greatest invention? The hint I'm going to give you, the clue I'm going to give you is, part of the answer is already in the question, continue thinking. Do you feel a sense of vexation? That's okay, think. Don't worry, before you leave, I'll give you the answer; if I feel like it. So, if this is something man came up with, it wasn't there beforehand, but he came up with it. You're on the right lines, okay, think. I'm going to continue. We'll come back to it. Okay, so he's held that out as well, this young man has helped us out as well, to ask questions he says. Okay so continue thinking along those lines.

## Assuthawà pruthajjanò

Use what we're going to be talking about from this point forward, in trying to answer that question. It will help you. What was man's greatest invention? See, the importance of listening, you have to listen to become a *sotápanna*. If you don't, you're never going to become one. **'Assuthawà pruthajjanò', someone who hasn't listened is a pruthajjana. 'Sabbè pruthajjanà unmatthakà'. 'Unmatha', 'ugè matha', whatever your opinion is then you hold on to that opinion, you're not willing to change, you're not willing to consider. That is 'unmatthaka'. 'Sabbè pruthajjanà unmatthakà'** the Buddha says. Every *'pruthajjana'* is an *'unmatthaka'*. "I'm not willing to listen, I'm not willing to consider" and those who are in that state of mind, in that frame of mind, "I'm not willing to listen; I'm not willing to consider" will forever be *pruthajjanas*. Never will they be able to break that, jump that gap. So, don't be like that, be willing to listen, be willing to consider. If you consider the journey that we've come along in *Sansára*, at the most primitive, the most basic, at the most rudimentary level, there's a vexation that we need to understand.

## Antharà parinibbàyi

This vexation 'to know', "*I want to know what's going on*" because even in the **'arùpàwachara'** worlds, the formless form or even **'antaràya parinibbàyi'** which is a being that has eradicated all of the **'sanyòjanas'** that are required for them to be born in one of the realms of existence, so it does not create a new *'bhava'* for them. But whatever *'bhava'* they were in before they became *'antaràya parinibbàyi'*, they will continue to be in that *'bhava'* like a *'gandhabba'*, for instance, if there was a human being that enters into *'antaràya parinibbàyi'* that *'bhava'* will not change. So, they will forever be a human being but they will once at the point of death, they're not going to be reborn with attachment to the human realm, with attachment to the *'kàma'* worlds. But they'll be like a *'gandhabba'*. They'll still want to survive, they'll want to continue but to them it wouldn't matter what comes in, what enables them to survive, what the fuel of survival is irrelevant to them.

They just want to live. It's like pulling up in front of a gas station, into a petrol shed and imagine you just need to pump fuel into your car, you couldn't care less what fuel goes in. If it was petrol,

petrol. Diesel whatever. Electric...whatever. I just need some fuel to continue on my journey. That's like what '*antaràya parinibbàyi*' is. It doesn't matter what comes in, but something has to come in. There has to be some fuel that keeps them going, But, then if you move along from an '*antheràya parinibbàyi*' the next step forward is an '*arahant*'. For them, they don't care, even if something came or not. They're no longer interested in the fuel that keeps the fire of existence going. No longer interested in that, that's an *arahant*.

But, if you move taking your steps back, you have an *arahant* and then previous to that '*antheràya parinibbàyi*'. This is not to say that everyone's going to become '*antheràya parinibbàyi*' on the path to attain *arahanthood*. It's quite possible that you become a *sotàpanna* in this birth and a *sakrudàgami*, an *anàgami* and an *arahant* in this birth and then at the point of death that's it, '*Anupàdisèsa Nibbàna dàthuwa*'. But it's also possible that there are others who become a *sotàpanna*, then go into the *dèva* worlds and then continue on their path *sakurdàgami*, *anàgami* and *arahanth*. But if you go into the *dèva* worlds and become an *anàgami* from that point you're going to disappear from the *dèva* worlds and be born in the '*arùpa*' worlds. Because no longer is their attachment to '*kàma*' or sensuality and you have gone too far.

## Need to know

I was taking a detour there. Let's tread our steps back a moment. At the most primitive, at the most basic, at the most rudimentary level there's this urge within all of us 'to know', we need to know. Do you not want to know? We all want to know. Can you hear a noise? We want to know. If you hear a sound or if you hear a noise from somewhere, if you see something, if you smell something you want to know, what it is. This is '*vèdanà, sannà*'. '**Vèdanà**' is being able to perceive that something has happened. This is a sensation, something has happened. Something has entered your world and then **sannà** is being able to give it a label. "Ah, now I know what it is." Do you see the difference?

It's like the postman knocks on your door or rather you know the postman rings the bell, you walk up to your post box, you open the post box and now you have a post. That post is in your

post box. Now you know that there's a post in your post box, you know that there is, but you want to give it a label. Who is this from? You want to be able to identify or let's see another example.

Someone knocks on the door, you're busy doing your chores at home. Now you know that something has happened, someone's outside; it could be something, perhaps something's banged into your door. Maybe it's your pet dog. You hear a noise from the outside, now you know something's going on but it's time to find out what's going on. So, this is all wanting to know, needing to know; not just wanting to know, there's a need to know. It's like a vacuum inside always wanting, always needing to know something. I always want to know something. Because through the wanting to know, through the needing to know what we are doing here is really creating the self; this is, **self-procreation 'àshwàda', pleasure.**

### **Need to know – Example 'Toodle-doo'**

If I were to throw out the name of something that you've never seen before - I'm just going to give a name right. I'm going to say 'toodle-doo'. Who knows what 'toodle-doo' is? Do you not want to know what 'toodle-doo' is though? What's 'toodle-doo'? Now you might say 'no' because this is an artificial experiment. But if you heard it on the radio, if you heard it on TV as you're going about doing your household chores, you know someone says "introducing the new 'toodle-doo'". How are you going to feel at that point? Television - on what, 'toodle' what? And then you go running to the TV "What, what was that Amma, what was that on TV before?" They've brought this new 'toodle-doo'. What's a 'toodle-doo'? Now you want to know. When you want to know, there's this sense of vexation already, there is a *peleema* already right. I want to know what it is; I've heard something, now I want to know. I want to be able to give it a label. What is it? Is it a food? Is it a toy? Is it a car? Is it a person? Is it something else? Is it a scenery? Is it a place that you can go to? Is it an object? What is toodle-doo? Now you're in a state of vexation. In order to relieve yourself from that state of vexation, thank heavens, you've been endowed with five senses. Just imagine for a moment if you didn't have your five senses. Imagine this for a moment right; you've come into this world, you're all starting on a fresh clean sheet of paper.

You know nothing about the world, you've just come into this world and I've said the word 'toodle-doo'. You've heard me say the word and at that point I switch off all your five senses. How are you going to feel? Now you can't see because your eyes have gone blind, you can't hear, your ears have gone deaf, you can't sense, you can't feel anything with your body, your body has gone numb, you can't taste anything and your tongue is no longer functioning, you can't smell anything and I've just said 'toodle-doo'. Your mind is working; how would you feel? Can you imagine that state of vexation? That's suffering at that point in time. How would you be able to relieve yourself from that? Now apply that into real-life situations.

### **Vexation or wanting to know**

You know someone says, *"Hey Machan, look at that girl, she's really pretty."* *"Did you see that girl? She's so good-looking; she's so gorgeous."* Now everybody wants to look. *"Who, who, who, which one? Where? Which one? Who?"* Have you been to that new restaurant, already in your minds, you're asking *"Which one?"* You want to know, don't you? You know, something really interesting happened lately. Now you want to know what, right? Vexation, wanting to know; always wanting to know. We're not okay with just the world being how it is, we want to know what's going on in the world. Why is that though, what are we always looking for? **Pleasure**, *'àshwàda'* and where does pleasure come from? I'm not talking in terms of your understanding of the Dhamma, but for someone who is thriving with ignorance, what would the answer be? Where does pleasure come from? The outside world. So, if pleasure comes from the outside world and I've just informed you that something's happening in the outside world, well what should we all do? Find out. You've got to find out what's going on.

Have you not been at home sometimes when you hear a three-wheeler, with a speaker that's tied to it, a virtual three-wheeler and they go around town making announcements. Usually there's a bit of music and then they make the announcement. You know if it's quite far from where you are and you can just about hear a faint voice, do you not feel curious as to what they might be saying? Is it something that I need to be aware of? Is it something I need to know? What kind of announcement might that be? I want to know. Sit in front of the TV and turn down the volume so that it's so faint that you can just about hear that there's a noise coming from the TV,

but you can't hear what it is they're saying, how long can you listen, how long can you watch TV? You can't hear what they're saying but you know they're saying something because there is noise coming from the TV, but you can't make out what it is they're saying. You can't figure out what they're saying. How long can you continue to watch that? Not very long, because you want to know.

Someone rings you. The telephone is ringing. It rang once, you ran to the phone and by the time you picked up, the call had dropped. It rings again, you go to the phone, the call has dropped. The third time you go, the call has dropped. How are you going to begin to feel by that point? The fourth time you go again, and again when you to pick up the phone, the call has dropped. Now you want to know who's ringing me, why are they ringing me like this? Have they not got anything better to do? Vexation. Are you okay with the fact that the world can vex you out? Tell me. Are you okay with that? Because if you do, you don't need to really come here again, I can give you an early retirement. Some of you are thinking "Oh, I wish I could get that". If you're okay with outsourcing your happiness, you don't have to come here. If you are okay with the world vexing you out, you don't have to be here. This is a school where we teach you how to insource your happiness; not outsource. How to be the master of your own happiness, how to not let the world vex you, how to not let the world frustrate you and annoy you. But for as long as your expectations are on the outside world, on the *rùpa, shabda, gandha, rasa, sparsha* and the *dhamma* that comes from the outside world well, you're asking for it. There is that Sinhala saying that '*illagena kanawà*', you're asking for it. But this is an entirely internal problem, not external.

### **Man's greatest invention**

So, you didn't tell me man's biggest invention. Man's greatest invention. What is it? There was a clue in the question when I asked you "What is man's greatest invention?". It's six bottoms on a rugby post, six bottoms on a rugby post. 'What', 'why', 'when', 'where', 'who', 'which', 'how'. How's your rugby post, at the big edge and you've got six bottoms on the top. Why? Relieve from vexation.

Do I say that this is man's greatest invention? Why were these questions invented? Imagine, the word 'what' did not exist in your language. You could see something from afar, but you didn't have a way to ask what it was. How would you feel?

### **The Purpose of the man's greatest invention?**

I'm showing you something you've never seen before. You are not permitted to take it from my hand. The only way you are going to find out is by asking me what it is; but the word 'what' does not exist. How would you feel? I'm telling you, "He's going to be coming in a moment", but the word 'who' does not exist in the language. How is it going to make you feel? I tell you "We're going to be going", you can't ask me 'when', you can't ask me 'where' because those words don't exist in the language. How would you feel? Just imagine that. If you weren't able to ask those questions what, when, who, why, where, which, how would you be able to relieve yourself from vexation? How would you relieve yourself from vexation if those questions did not exist, if those words didn't exist? Because you wouldn't be able to ask a question from somebody. You'd have to go and touch it for yourself, you'd have to go and smell it for yourself. But thankfully man came out with this invention. I am so vexed, I need to know what you've got in your hand, so I have to find a way to ask you what it is. So, I'm going to come up with a question. I'm going to come up with a tool, a mechanism to find out what that is. Therefore, let's invent this word; what is it? 'what'. For what purpose? To relieve myself from vexation. There's someone approaching from afar. Now you're nervous. Is nervousness a positive feeling or is that a very vexing sensation? Nervousness is a very vexing sensation. You're seeing someone from afar, but you don't know who it is. Now you're going to ask a question "Who is it?". But the word does not exist in your language, how would you feel? Do you not think that's man's greatest invention? I think it is. Everything that's been invented from the moment that man started inventing, wasn't everything invented to relieve himself from vexation? Fire, what was that for? The wheel, what was that for? Vehicles, what was that for? This *watàpatha*, winnowing fan, what was that for? This microphone, what was that for? Paper, telephone, mobile, fan, air conditioner, curtains, carpets, what for? To relieve from vexation.

## The most primitive state of vexation

So, if all these things we've invented to relieve ourselves from vexation, at the most primitive level, you know we're looking for *vèdanà*, *sannà* even in the *Arùpàwachara* brahma worlds, even in the *Nèwa sannà*, *Nà sannà* Brahma worlds which is one step away, I mean that's how far you can get as a *non-àrya*. Because beyond that, you step into ***niròdha samàpatthiya*, where the mind has been stopped**. But at *Nèwa sannà*, *Nà sannà* where *sannà* arises and passes away, arises and passes away, it's neither the presence nor the absence of *sannà*. I mean it's difficult for me to even imagine what that might be, to even offer you a metaphor for what that might be like.

I think I would, imagine it would be something like, imagine standing on a rope, on a taut cable. You're standing on top of it and now you're trying not to fall. You're going to fall and then you try to fight back, so you're not going to fall. And then again, you know gravity is pulling you towards the ground but you're trying to balance yourself on this rope. I imagine, *Nèwa sannà and nà sannà* is something like that. *Sannà* is there but it's also not there. I don't know, I find it difficult to even imagine that. You know standing on a rope, how that makes you feel. It's a tight rope and you're just standing on your own two feet, there's no balance, there's no support from either side. You have to balance yourself using your arms. One wrong slip and you're going to fall. That is the most primitive state of vexation. From that onwards, other types of vexation continue to develop all the way up until you come to the *kàma* worlds. Because in the *Arùpàwachara Brahma* world is just the mind, there's no matter and, the mind is vexing looking for dhamma to create the self, *àshwàda* - trying to create the self. But the question keeps getting asked, what, why, how and when, all these questions are still there. But this vexation moves on, it continues to go to another level. It deepens to another level and now it's not enough for the mind to contemplate on *dhammas*, now the mind wants to take in *rùpa* from the outside world. Again, it all comes from **'drushti', distorted view** that comes from ***asathpurusha sèwanaya*, ignoble association**. Sights have pleasure within them, so open your eyes and look. Well I don't have eyes because I'm in the *arùpàwachara brahma* world, so what should you do? Descend into the *rùpàwachara brahma* world and there you will be able to use your eyes, you'll be able to use your ears, to listen to the

outside world, to look at the outside world and you will be able to enjoy pleasure. Because pleasure lies where? In the outside world. So now you need eyes and you need ears.

### **Would you eat a soggy papadam?**

Remember once I talked to you about how *papadams* came into the world. Do you remember why *papadams* came into this world? Why does a *papadam* has to make that noise. Would you eat a soggy *papadam*? It wouldn't make the cracking noise, no interest in soggy papadam. But why do you eat food? Because you're hungry. So, what does sounds have to do with hunger? Absolutely nothing. What about smell, what does smells have to do with hunger? Absolutely nothing. What does the look of it have to do with hunger? Absolutely nothing. What does smell have to do with hunger? What about taste, what does taste have to do with hunger? Absolutely nothing. So, neither the sight nor the *rùpa*, the *shabda*, the *gandha*, the *rasa*, have anything to do with hunger. There's only one thing that has anything to do with hunger, that's ***sparsha*, touch**. Because something has to touch the insides of your stomach and then you'll be relieved of hunger. But it just has to be something; doesn't have to be anything in particular, just has to be something. That something does not have to have a particular color, particular sound, a particular smell, does it? or a particular taste? No. As long as it's able to give you the sensation of touch when it's in your stomach, it's going to relieve you from hunger. But then if that is the case, why do we have papadams that come in all types of shapes and colors? We have multicolored papadams now, don't we? Crackers. Why did prawn crackers come into this world? I mean seriously you can't tell me, because you are hungry. That's not why prawn crackers came into this world. Well, hungry yes, but you're not talking about your tummy then; we are talking about the hunger to know, what, why, when, how, which, who.

### **Vexation**

This is a really interesting point, pay attention. I think you can get a lot from what I'm about to say. Imagine, I show you toodle-do. Let's say this is toodle-do, okay. Now I've shown you what toodle-do looks like. Before I showed you this, I just said toodle-do and now you're all vexing. The question is what is it? What's toodle-do. Now I've shown you. "Oh, this is toodle-do". Now you know what toodle-do looks like. Have you now not been relieved of that question? The vexation

that came with what does toodle-do look like, have you not been relieved of it? Have you or haven't you? You have, right? Because now you know what it looks like. If pleasure is in the sight, will you be vexing again now to be asking the question "What does it smell like?" If the sight itself of any object was able to give you pleasure, well you're looking at it right now, I'm going to keep holding it like this until you go blind, right. So now you can see it all you like – look, there's toodle-do. For those listeners on line I'm just holding a beetle leaf in my hand but I'm just using an example here, I'm saying this is toodle-do; now you know what it looks like. Before I showed this to you, you had a question: what is it? That is the most primitive question. At the most basic, at the most rudimentary, fundamental level 'what' you need to know is *vèdanà* and *sannà*. I have to know something's going on. You just said toodle-do, so something's going on but I want to be able to give it a label. And to be able to give it a label I need to open my five senses; bring it in, so I can give it a label. Is it good or bad? I have to label it. So, to use my five senses I have now kept them open, I'm waiting for the world to bring me pleasure. So now I bring this up and show you here's what toodle-do looks like. Have you or have you not been relieved from the vexation of what it looks like? You have, right. But are you not vexing again to know what it smells like?

### **Pleasure is simply relief from vexation**

Okay I pass this around. All you are allowed to do is smell it and nothing else. Have I or have I not relieved you of the vexation of wanting to know what it smells like? I have. Now you are no longer vexing to know what it looks like, you're no longer wanting to know or you're no longer vexing about what it smells like. But what's your next vexation? What does it taste like? Absolutely. You're vexing again, what does it taste like. Let's say I'm not prepared to let you know what it tastes like, but I am prepared to let you touch it. I tell you "Go on, I'll let you all touch it" and I just pass it to this young man over here and I say pass it along and the lady at the back is going to be the last to receive it. Who's going to be vexing the longest? But I've already relieved you of vexation, twice over. If you're thinking sight relieves you from vexation, if you're telling me, if you're thinking that it's, you know smell relieves you from vexation, is that true? Because if that is the case, I have already relieved you from vexation because I've shown you what it looks like. So, you know what this looks like and I've allowed you to smell it; have I not? - I have, but are you not vexing already again? So then is it sight that brings you pleasure? The moment I showed this

to you, did you not feel a sensation of pleasure? Did you or did you not? You did. Why? Relief from vexation. And then I pass this around only or rather instead of giving it to your hand, I ask my glamorous assistant Venerable Dassa h̄amuduruwò to come around and hold this to your nose but you're not allowed to touch it. So, you could smell it. Did I or did I not relieve you of vexation? Why should I do it twice when I've already done it once? I already relieved your vexation by showing you what this looks like; then why should I do it again by allowing you to smell it? Where does pleasure exist then? Is it in the sight? No, it's in the smell, right? Where does it exist then? What is pleasure? What is this gratification that we seek? Relief from vexation. Now I pass it around. Here, taste it or rather touch it, but you're not allowed to do anything more than touch it. And each and every one of you will touch it "Ah, ok, now I know what it feels like" and then you pass it around and then once it's gone around the room and it comes back to me now you all know what it feels like. So, have I not relieved your vexation three times over now? I gave you pleasure three times over. This is a hat-trick by now. I've given you pleasure through sight. I've given you pleasure through smell and I've given you pleasure through touch. Surely, pleasure exists in sight, smell and touch, right? No? Aren't you vexing still? You're still vexing. If all I have to say is, "This has a nice taste to it". That's all I have to say. Now you're all back to square one. All vexing again. Why? Now what do you want to do? Taste it. Tell me then, you tried looking at it seeking pleasure. You tried smelling it seeking pleasure. You tried touching it seeking pleasure. You tried it three times over and each time did you find pleasure? Was pleasure in the sight? Was pleasure in the smell or was pleasure in the touch? In neither of these. Isn't that why you're still looking for pleasure? What makes you think then, that by tasting this you're going to find pleasure? Do you get my point puthà? See, even he understands it. This is practical Buddhism ladies and gentlemen. This is practical Buddhist philosophy. Is there anything I'm talking to you right now that you have to take by faith? Anything? Am I talking about the afterlife? Am I talking about the life before? Am I talking about heavens and hells? No, nothing you need to take through faith, this is practical application. You're still vexing. The moment I say this has a lovely taste to it, now you're vexing again. Because you want to know what it tastes like. Thank heavens you've only got five organs. You've only got five faculties. What if you had ten? What if you had **ten faculties, ten indriyas**? For every object I tell you about, every word I say, would you not be vexing about it ten times over? Fortunately, you have only got five. So, once you have smelt it,

once you've tasted it, once you've touched it, once you've seen it, you're still vexing. There's no question about that. But you're not vexing about that particular object anymore.

### **Why is TV time usually after meal time?**

You see this is the interesting thing here. Once I've allowed you to smell, taste, touch, see, through your five senses, now you're no longer vexing about this toodle-do. You're no longer vexing, right. However, you have a mind that is rife with ignorance and attachment, looking for pleasure. You can no longer seek pleasure by associating this toodle-doo. So, you have to move on to other things. This is why, if you remember some time ago, I spoke to you about why most people after they've had a hearty meal, go and sit down in front of the TV. Why is it TV time usually after meal time? I'll tell you why. When it's meal time, you're hungry. So now you have a vexation that can be relieved. A vexation that we all feel very prominently, so we start to eat. If you have a hunger of a hundred units for instance and every mouthful can relieve you of 10 units of hunger. By the time you've eaten 10 mouthfuls you are no longer hungry. The vexation of hunger has gone away, but you are looking for pleasure. No longer can your stomach bring you pleasure, no longer can food bring you pleasure, so what do you have to do then? You have to go to another shop. You have to go elsewhere. So, what do you do? Go and sit down in front of the TV. You've been watching TV for a few hours, now you're no longer interested in watching TV. It's the same story over again. It's like watching news. How many times can you watch news, the same news brief, usually once if it's the same new story because now you know it. There is no longer vexation. How many times can you watch the same episode, so whatever teledrama you are interested in, how many times can you watch the same cartoon? Do you know what story is coming? You know what's going to happen next? So, there's no vexation to relieve you from. Therefore, you're not going to be able to enjoy the same amount of pleasure, why? What is pleasure? Relief from vexation. It's not the cartoon that brings you pleasure, it's not the teledrama that you watch that brings you pleasure, its relief from vexation. If you're no longer vexing about something ladies and gentlemen, you can no longer seek pleasure from that object or that person or that event, you do not find it. That's not because, pleasure existed in the object before and now pleasure does not exist in it, that's not the reason. The reason is you're no longer vexing about it. You're no longer in the state of vexation about it. That is why.

You know it's a bit like a detective. Actually, it's a lot like a detective. What does the detective do? They detect, that's why they're called a detective. So, a police detective or a police inspector, take Sherlock Holmes for instance, Sherlock Holmes never got any remuneration, he never got paid for whatever he did. He did it for the kicks. That was why he did it. All the investigations that Sherlock did was for the kick of it, for fun. Now put yourself in Sherlock's shoes. Don't ask me what size shoe it is but if you put yourself in the shoes of Sherlock Holmes you are now a detective, a world-class detective right. So, I want you to think about this. You know all these examples ladies and gentleman, is to help you understand that pleasure does not exist in the outside world. It's simply, purely, completely, entirely and categorically relief from vexation and nothing else. Vexation that you create within yourself. This is why I say you are the master of your happiness but you're unfortunate that you're also the master of your own suffering. Well thankfully, otherwise you have to go running after the world to find happiness. Thankfully, you don't have to go anywhere, you can be where you are right where you are, and either be happy or sad. You can decide right now, whether you want to be happy or sad.

So, let's go back to Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes has just been advised by the Police that a criminal is out on the run. Now, is a criminal going to do any good to Sherlock? Is the criminal going to do any good to Sherlock or to society? Is he going to do any good? No. He's a criminal right. So, finding the criminal or the criminal itself is not something that's going to do us any good. In fact, he's not going to do us harm or damage. Sherlock is not going to get paid for finding the criminal. He's doing it for kicks, he's doing it for fun. How does Sherlock enjoy finding a criminal, catching a criminal if a criminal is not someone who's a good person? Where's the fun in it, in catching the bad guy? It's the bad guy you're trying to catch. If you aren't trying to catch the good guy, I mean that's good because catching the good guy, he's going to do you good. But catch the bad guy, he's not going to do you any good. He's going to do you harm, he is going to do you damage. But why are we still looking for the bad guy? where do you get the kick out of it? Well ,at the point that the detective starts looking now he's seeking, looking, searching, finding; vexation or not? Vexation. When you find the criminal, relief from vexation. Is the criminal going to bring us any good? No. Is the sight of the criminal a good sight? No, you don't like it, you scream and you run away from criminals. No one likes to look at a criminal. Is a criminal going to

give us a good sound, smell, taste, touch? No. All these things we don't like from the criminal, that's why we label them a criminal. We don't like a criminal; we don't like their association. But when you hear on the news that this criminal has just been found, now you've been relieved from vexation. Would you like to look at the criminal? No. I don't want to look at him, but I've just been relieved from vexation. The vexation of, well, he's out and about? Dangerous, might cause us harm. He's been found, so now no longer vexation. Was it the sight then that brought us the pleasure? Was it the sound, the smell, the taste or the touch? None of these. Its relief from vexation. When you're looking for something ladies and gentlemen, that's a state of vexation.

You now think about your car keys. You're about to leave home and you need to get into your car, you're looking for your car keys. How many times have you seen your car keys when you didn't need it? Yeah, you walk into your bedroom, the car keys are in your drawer, you see them, so what? But now you're looking for your car keys because you're late, you need to get somewhere. Now you see your car keys. Does the sight of the car keys not bring you pleasure? Well, you saw the car keys yesterday as well, but you didn't feel the same sense of pleasure then. Was it the car keys then that brought you pleasure? No. What was it then? Relief from vexation. Every single time, it is relief from vexation.

### **If pleasure exists in the outside world, can we attain Nibbàna?**

You know I was thinking the other day if pleasure existed in this betel leaf, in this toodle-doo, we would never have seen a Buddha. The Buddha would never have come into this world, if pleasure existed in this object. Given that it's pleasure that we attach to, yes, *vedanà paccaya tanhà*, that we are attached to, if pleasure existed in the outside world, the Buddha would never have come into this world. It would have been pointless. The Buddha's advent would have been pointless. Because if pleasure exists in the outside world and it's that pleasure that we are attached to, tell me how does one attain *Nibbàna*? Let's imagine, pleasure exists in the outside world and attachment to pleasure is what causes suffering. Now, tell me how do we attain *Nibbàna*? What is the only way you're going to be able to do it? Pleasure exist in the outside world, now you're going to go to another planet? Well, pleasure exist there as well because it's still in the outside world.

Pleasure exists in a chocolate cake. Now tell me how you're going to attain *Nibbàna*. For some of you that is the problem, right? 'No matter how much you say Swaminwahansa, I will eat this chocolate', oh my god. You're talking about *Nibbàna*. There's so much pleasure in this chocolate cake and it's peace for you right. If pleasure really existed in the outside world ladies and gentleman would we ever be able to attain *Nibbàna*? What is *Nibbàna*? It's putting a stop to all suffering. Let's not talk about next birth, last birth, previous birth, put all that to a side. It's putting an end to all mental suffering, all mental frustrations, agony, putting a stop to all that full stop.

If pleasure exists in the outside world, and it's attachment that leads to suffering, we will stick with that, let's accept that. But it's attachment to pleasure, and pleasure exists in the outside world. Now, how do we attain *Nibbàna*? How do we put a stop to all mental suffering? That can never be done. Because you take away something that belongs to me madam. You've just taken away something that brings me pleasure. You've just taken something that brings me pleasure and pleasure exists in the outside world. Now the only way that I can find pleasure is by going looking for it. This is my personal opinion okay. Because I haven't found this in any books or anything like that. This is my personal opinion. I just want you to think about it and see how this makes sense to you, if it does.

### **Why did people come up with the concept of a God?**

I was recently wondering why people came up with the concept of a God. Just think, this is my personal opinion ok. This is why I use this word, 'came up with the concept of a God'. Because I'm sure there will be others who don't think of it as being an artificial entity, right. This God is what people might say an all-powerful, omnipotent God that can do everything, a created God. Again, this is only my personal opinion. So, I was thinking one day to myself, why did people come up with the concept of a God? In my personal opinion if people came up with this concept, man came up with this concept of an all-powerful God, this is my personal opinion and nobody else's, I reiterate that and emphasize and I can't emphasize that enough, my personal opinion. The reason that people came up with a super powerful all omnipotent, all-powerful God was because; remember the other day we discussed a formula for **suffering, *duka*** . '*Aniccha* times attachment equals *dukkha*' ( $aniccha \times attachment = dukkha$ ).

## **“What if, I never accepted that attachment led me to suffering?”**

For someone who doesn't realize that it's attachment that leads to suffering, are they going to fix the problem of attachment? For someone who doesn't realize that, attachment is the cause for suffering, are they going to tackle attachment to cure the problem of suffering? Are they? No, because if you don't accept that attachment leads you to suffering. I mean, really think about it right. All this time before we came across the teaching of the Buddha, we never thought that attachment lead us to suffering. Did we? No. Because attachment lay within us. So, we never looked within. We looked at the outside world. I'm talking about what I used to think like. This is how I used to think about the world. I never accepted that attachment led me to suffering. Because I didn't know about it. I didn't get to hear the Buddha's teaching. So, for as long as people or any sentient being is unaware, ignorant about the fact that attachment is what leads to suffering, where are they going to try and tackle? The *aniccha world*, the world not being to my liking. So, if the world is not to my liking and I don't want to change that I'm attached to the world, what should I try to do to be happy? Go on answer. Let me repeat. The world is not to my liking, I don't want to stop my attachment, I want to continue to be attached to the world, but I also don't want to suffer. Now tell me what is it that I can change in my formula? The world is not to my liking, I'm happy to change with that but I'm not happy to eradicate attachment. I want to leave attachment as it is. So, the only thing I can do is what? Change the world to my liking. Is there a problem with attaching to a world that is to your liking? Is there? No. If the world is to your liking, then go attach to it, all you like. There's no problem with that, it's not going to lead you to suffering. But the problem with suffering is or the problem with attachment is you're attaching to a world that is not to your liking. So, if you're not prepared to stop attachment then the only thing that you're left with as an option is change the world to your liking. Are you with me? The only thing you can do then, if you don't like suffering and you're not prepared to do away with attachment, is change the world to your liking.

Why do people worship a super powerful omnipotent God? I can't change the world to my liking but who can? God can. God can change the world to my liking. So, all I need to do is be in his good books. This is my personal opinion I repeat, once again this is my personal opinion, take from it what you like. If you think this is all rubbish you can discard it. This is how I see the

Dhamma. Again, this is me outsourcing happiness. I'm not prepared to do that. I want to be the master of my own happiness and my own suffering. I don't want anybody else to be responsible for that.

### **Why people worship Gods?**

Sir, I'm not happy that you are responsible for my happiness. I'm not prepared to do that because then you get to make the shots, you get to make the calls, I'm not happy to do that. How come you get to decide when I'm happy and when I'm sad? No. I'm an independent man by myself. I should be able to decide when I'm happy and when I'm sad, when I'm in a state of suffering.

So, there's only one formula that describes where suffering originates. There's a world that's not to my liking, I'm attached to that world and that leads me to suffering. If I'm not prepared to change the attachment, if I'm not prepared to stop attachment, then there's only one way I can be happy and it is by changing the world to my liking. But can I change the world to my liking? Am I an all-powerful being such that I can make my parents stop dying? Can I stop my parents from dying? No. Can I stop all the money that I've earned and saved in my bank from disappearing overnight or can I stop my house from burning down? Can I stop my vehicle from getting into an accident? No. But there may be things that I can do towards it but everyone that's been in an accident do they want to be in that accident? No. No one wanted to be in an accident but they ended up being in one. If it's your child, you want your child to grow up, be healthy, get a good education, be a good person, so you like the child to be to your liking. So, what you do? Well, if you can't keep them to your liking then you have to go looking for somebody who can change the world to your liking and what do a lot of religions promise us? What hope do they give us? Well, there's an omnipotent power, there's an all supernatural or rather there's a super powerful, all-powerful being out there, somewhere. Don't ask me where? Somewhere. By the way I'm not ridiculing any religions or anything like that. This is just my personal opinion on why I think I have to be treating attachment. This is why I treat attachment and not the other factor which is trying to change my world to my liking. Because I did ask the question where is God? I asked the question. I never got an answer that I was satisfied with. What is his name or her name? Is it a he or a she? I never got an answer, an answer that I was satisfied with. Personal opinion, I re-

emphasize. Only for intelligent people, something to think about. You know you don't have to accept any of this, discard it if you choose, consider it if you may.

This is when I decided, I'm not going to be treating that problem, I'm going to be treating attachment. If you are not prepared to tackle attachment, then you have to tackle that the world is not to your liking. There's no other way to be happy in this world. Is there? No. You have to change the world to your liking.

So, if there's somebody else who is willing to do it for you, then you're going to have to find out what do they expect from you? Consumers and suppliers. For them to scratch your back, you're going to have to go and scratch their back. So, I had to ask the question what is it you would like me to do for you so that you will change the world to my liking? And then I began to ask a lot of religious institutes, even they said 'please the Gods. Please them, make offerings, make sacrifices, walk on fire, hook yourself and perform all kinds of rituals to please the Gods. Whatever money you earn in a given month, donate fifty percent of it to the Gods and then they'll be happy. Be naked and then they'll be happy. Walk backwards and then they'll be happy. Don't eat, starve for a month and then they'll be happy.' I'm not making references to any religious practices or anything like that. I'm just saying this is how I decided one fine day... 'no, that's not where I want to fix. There has to be another way to do this'. That's when I came across the Buddha's teaching where He said,

*"you cannot change the world to your liking. Any attempt to do so is futile, meaningless, essence less, joyless, give it up, son."*

That's not where you ought to try and fix the problem. If suffering is what your problem is, then forget about trying to change the world to your liking, just stop attachment because that is wholly internal. Now I don't have to rely on an external power.

## **Does the God always do things that you like?**

Let's say God really existed. Let's accept, for a moment that God exists, a super powerful God exists. Does this God always do things that you like? Your mother died. Did you like that? Surely God should have asked you. Your boyfriend cheated on you. Surely the creator of your boyfriend should have asked you. Should I stop that from happening? Your house burnt down, your company went bankrupt, surely God should have asked you. Because if he's so compassionate, he should have asked you. So even if a God does exist, something that I do know is God doesn't always do things that I like. Sometimes he does things that I like, he or she I don't know. Let's say he, just for argument sake. Sometimes God does things that I like but a lot of the time the things that he does, I don't really like them. I don't like hunger to begin with. Why do I feel hungry every day? If God is so compassionate then I really shouldn't be feeling hunger. Is that because I haven't pleased the Gods yet? What about all those people who dedicate their lives to pleasing God? Do they not feel hunger? Is that because they like it? What about people who please the Gods every day? Do they not die? Do they not lose their loved ones? Do they not succumb to fires and storms and earthquakes and things like that? Lose all the belongings, all their property that they've ever built up and saved up in their entire lives? Again, I'm not attacking any beliefs or anything like that. This is a wholly personal opinion. I'm just explaining to you. I'm trying to express you why I decided to fix a different problem. Because I studied God, only as much as I could obviously. I wanted to know who God was and how I could please the God, so that he might change the world to my liking one day but it never happened.

Coming across the Buddha's teaching I realized that there's another way to be happy. Let the God do whatever it is that he likes. If he decides to take away your parents, let him take them away. If he decides to burn your house down, let him do that. Don't go to fight with God, let him do what he likes. If he's the creator, then surely, he should be able to take it away when he likes. So, let's not fight God, let God be. Fight the problem at home. What's the problem at home? Attachment. Once you've eradicated attachment, now does it matter what God decides to do tomorrow? Does it matter what God decides to do tonight with your lives? Does it matter, once you've eradicated attachment? No. Does it matter what God decided to do with your son? Once

you've eradicated attachment, it doesn't matter. But until such time now you have a fight to pick with God.

### **Can people find happiness, seeking refuge in science?**

Yes Sir? Yes. You see, I have to be careful now. There's a way that the cosmos operates right. There's a way that the universe operates and *karma*, *vipàka*, all these things. These are concepts that are frankly beyond my scope. I know for a fact, that I'm never going to be able to sit on this seat and say I have understood *karma*. Well, perhaps maybe in four incalculable eons and another hundred thousand eons I might be able to say that but not today. Why do I say that? Yes, you have to become a Supreme Buddha to understand how *karma* works. But when we speak of the cosmos and how everything in the universe operates, you know there are lots of things that work beyond our understanding. But people aren't happy with that because people want to know what? People want to know how? people want to know when and why? and which and who, so they have to ask questions. When they ask questions, now they're in vexation. What's the best way to find relief from vexation? Just come up with an answer. You want to know where's the end of the universe, aren't you in vexation? As a young boy I wanted to study where's the universe? how many stars are there in the Milky Way? I wanted to know. It didn't matter what the answer was because I read one book and it said there are so many stars in the Milky Way. Okay, that was it! It didn't matter what the answer was, even if it was out by several million. I couldn't care less. So, was it the answer in which I found pleasure? Was it? No. What was it then? Relief from vexation. So, when man tries to understand the universe, when man tries to understand the cosmos and he comes up with questions to which he is unable to find answers immediately, he sometimes resorts to science. Science, where's the end of the universe? How many stars are there? Now, science takes upon itself to go and explore the universe. To relieve man from vexation. That is what science is? The mechanism to relieve man of vexation. Only relieve, not redeem. To find redemption you have to go to the greatest scientist man has ever seen. Everywhere else you will find relief, not redemption. People will forever, for as long as ***avidyà* and *tanhà* - ignorance and attachment** prevails in the mind of man, people will forever continue to investigate, people will forever try to explore the stars, reach out to other galaxies and maybe even other universes, parallel universes which people speak of, what lies beyond a

black star? Questions! What happens if you get sucked into one? Questions! Where does God live? How many wives does he have? Questions! and when people are in this state of vexation where they have all these questions burning inside, all they need is an answer. The real reason that man wanted to find out about the universe is not because he was interested in the universe. It was because he just wanted pleasure. So, ask a question to which it's really difficult to find an answer, now you'll be in that state of vexation for many hundreds, if not thousands of years. When do you think science is going to answer all the questions? Never. Science is never going to answer all the questions there are, that man has, never. So, if science is what people go to seek refuge in, when do you think man is going to be happy forever? Never. There's never, happiness forever, if you seek refuge in science. But seek refuge in the Buddha, seek refuge in the dhamma and seek refuge in the sangha, you have found happiness. That was only a personal opinion. So, don't attack this monastery or these monks or anybody else, after you listen to this sermon because, I know you all are intelligent people but I don't know who's listening to these sermons online. Right, then don't attack Buddhist philosophy and this is not something I've taken from Buddhist philosophy. It's just a personal reflection on why I chose the Buddha's' path.

### **I have to find my own salvation**

Why I chose the Buddha's teaching is because whether God exists or not is really irrelevant to me. Because even if he does exist, he still doesn't do everything that I like. I'm aging, can't you see? I had to go to the dentist just last week. What have I done to upset God? I didn't speak a word in his disfavor. I didn't speak a word against him but why did I have to go to the dentist? So, what I do realize is God doesn't always act in my favor. Think what you like but God doesn't act in my favor, he may act in your favor but not in mine, not always. Sometimes he does and sometimes he doesn't. So, the times he does I feel happy but the times he doesn't, which is the vast majority, I don't feel happy then. So, I need a cure for when he makes me upset.

This is why I've stopped outsourcing my happiness to God, and found a teaching, the path to true happiness, which is for as long as I have eradicated attachment, I no longer care from that point forward whether God exists or not. Whatever he decides to do, he's free to do so. I don't care. I

really don't care. Would you not like to become independent? Would you not like to become your own saviour and not have someone else come to save you? Because when are they going to come? Who here has made an appointment with the saviour? Have you been given an appointment? No, I have not been given one either. So, when are they going to come? What if they don't? What if they pick the wrong planet? What if they pick the wrong country? What if they pick the wrong race or the wrong complexion? Wrong compared to me, of course. What if I'm not in the subset that they decided to pick? Then I'm going to miss out on that opportunity. So, I'm not prepared to wait for a Titanic that may or may not come because it didn't come. I have to find my own salvation. I have the teaching, thanks to the Buddha, there's the path and I realized that the problem is at home.

### **Purpose of life is happiness**

If I treat attachment, then all suffering goes away with that. Happiness and pleasure can only come from relief from suffering, from vexation. There's no other source for it. If that is the case ladies and gentlemen, if you are prepared to accept that, not because I say so, but because it's true for you, it has to be true for you, it has to be true for each and every one of you. Then what good can the eye do for you, in your attempt to relieve? - In your attempt to be to find happiness? What good can the eye do for you? I'm not talking about physical because in the physical realm, yes of course, the eye can help because how do you know what you're going to walk into? You've got to have your eyes open, so you don't go and bang onto something or won't fall into a hole or something like that. So physical happiness, of course, the eye is there to help you. Sights are there to help you, your ears are here to help you, the sounds, smells, tongue, all these organs and the outside world you need help from, in order to survive. But, when we talk of the mental happiness or psychological happiness, what good can the eye do for you? Nothing. What good can sights do for you? Nothing. What good can your nose do for you? Smells? Tongue and taste? Body and touch? Nothing. If existence is nothing other than indulgence of the five senses in the outside world: sights and sounds and smells and tastes and the purpose of existence is happiness. Let me repeat, purpose of existence is happiness. Is that not why you all are alive and living? Isn't happiness the purpose of your lives? It certainly is for me. Happiness is the purpose of my life. If that is the purpose of life and in order to achieve that aim, what you do is you use your eyes, your

ears, your nose, your tongue and your body, your five senses and you seek refuge in sights and sounds and smells and tastes and touch. But their combination cannot bring you happiness and if the process of bringing these two things together is what living is all about, then how does living contribute to your purpose in life? Did I lose you somewhere along the line? Living is the process of what? Bringing sights in contact with your eyes, that's what living is. What's a life worth living? It's when you have sights worth seeing. What's a life worth living? When you have sounds that are worth hearing. That's what a life worth living is, when you have no Dhamma of course. For someone who has understood the Dhamma, they no longer need to rely on sights or sounds or smells or tastes or touch because they realize that pleasure doesn't exist in that, happiness doesn't exist in the outside world. Purpose of life is happiness for all of us. There's no question about that. Even if you're an *Anàgàmi*, purpose of life is happiness. What about an *Arihanthunwahansè*? What's the purpose of life? Still happiness. For as long as they are alive, they want to be happy. What happiness? Physical. Because no longer can they mentally be frustrated. So, it's only the physical happiness that they seek. That is why they go on *pindapàtha*. This is why they've don a robe, that's why they wash their clothes, for happiness. To be clean and tidy and hygienic. But even an Arihanthunwahansè looks for happiness in life but they never look in the wrong places.

### **What is living?**

So, if the purpose of all our lives, every man and woman in this room is happiness and life is the process of bringing sight and eye together, sound and ear together, taste and tongue together, smell and nose together, and touch and body together but in doing so if you're not able to achieve pleasure or happiness, then what is the point of living? Every moment we are alive, what are we doing? It's doing one of those six things, right? Bringing the outside world into the inside world. That's what we do when we say we are living. What else do you do when you say you are living puthà? That's all we do. That's what living is. When you're awake and living, that's what you're doing. You're bringing the outside world into the inside world. That's why you go to the doctor, *“doctor, my eyes are going blind, please help me to live longer, to live a better life. My ears are going deaf, please fix me, because I can't live a rich and full life.”* This is what you say when you go to the doctor, ‘please help me out!’

So, then the doctor helps to restore your ears, restore your eyes, restore your five senses, so you can lead a full life. So, **what is living again? It's bringing the outside world into the inside world. You need the five faculties and you need sight, sound, smell, taste and touch from the outside world.** But does happiness exist in the process of bringing these two things together? No. Happiness or pleasure only can be achieved by relief from vexation. Pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, is the output of a process. Understand that for a moment. Think about that for a moment. Pleasure is the output of a process, it's not an attribute of an object. There's the distinction. **Pleasure is not an attribute or characteristic of an object, it's the output of a process. What is the process? Relief from vexation.** To be vexed what should you do? Attach. Attach, then be vexed and then relief from vexation. That is the process. What's the output? Pleasure. But, ignorant people like myself have come to the conclusion that pleasure exists in the outside world, that it's a characteristic and it's an attribute of objects, people and events. So, so, so mistaken.

### **Can an Arahant go into *Samàdhi* and *samàpatthi*?**

(Question) Yes, so *Samàdhi samàpatthi* which even Arahant's attain, these are *jhànas* right. So, they do that when you go into *Samàdhi*, that happiness is also partly to do with the body, because you experience *Preeti sukha èkàgrathà*. And *sukha* is something that you experience in your body, *sukhaya*. That's why when you go to the fourth *jhàna* and so on *samàdhi, samàpatthi*, you no longer feel sensations from your body. Your body comes to a complete stop. Now for most of you, this will be something you have to take by faith, which is why I don't talk about a lot of these things. Particularly in English sermons, because I have to accept that a lot of our English listeners, people who are analytical and they'll only take things which are true for them. They're not prepared to accept things by faith. Excuse me for making that assumption. I'm not speaking about you sat in front of me but a lot of our listeners who come from other countries and they don't have that background, this is why I don't talk a lot about heavens and the hells and things like that. A lot of these sermons are focused on what you can all make sense of right now. But in answer to the question, yes, absolutely.

When you go through the *jhànas*; all monks the Buddha says,

*“either be quiet, discuss the dhamma or be in the second jhàna”.*

This is the advice He gives to all monks in the *Pari Nibbàna sùtta*. So even an arahant can go into *Samàdhi* and *samàpatthi*

### **The only selfless being there is, an Arahant**

For you and me, life is, bringing the outside world into the inside world. For an *arahant*, living is the outside world coming into the inside world not bringing it but coming into the inside world. So, when an arahant has eyes and ears open and they are working, they are functioning, he is still going to hear you speak, he's still going to see things happen in front of him. Again, *chittas* have to arise and pass away, arise and pass away, arise and pass away. And *sankàra* which even he finds exhausting, he finds the pure *sankàra* exhausting. The arising and passing away of the mind the finds exhausting. Having to listen to you speak He finds exhausting. What about giving a sermon then? If giving a sermon or just speaking, thinking about something, is exhausting to an *arahant*. Just think about the Buddha, forty-five years of His life. How many *sùttas* did He deliver? Don't you think He might have found that exhausting? Just having to think, look at the people sat in front of Him and like I said at the beginning, scan the room, check what potential each and every one of you have and then prepare a sermon in a flash of a second so that each of you will be able to attain *màrga pala* when He delivers that sermon. Having to do all that, was laborious for the Buddha. He's got to think about it. Because even that doesn't come to His mind you know through nothing, He has to think about it. If He thinks about it, yes you know He doesn't have to wonder; there's no wondering, there are no questions that He doesn't have answers to. But still He has to think about it. And when He thinks, it comes to His mind but even that is laborious. What about all the miles He walked on foot, for what gain? You and I, we walk so that we can bring the outside world into our inside world because that is where we think pleasure exists. But to the Buddha, for an arahant; When Sàriputtha, the great elder delivers a sermon what does he do it for? For no material gain whatsoever, for no gain for himself whatsoever. It's entirely, purely, completely for the benefit of others. Why? There's no self to take care of, there's no self to create. There's no self to maintain, no self to foster. So, an *arahant* is purely selfless, the only selfless being there is, is an arahant. Beyond an arahant, everyone, even an Anàgàmi, in the *arahath màrga chitta*, there's vexation. Don't you all like to attain *Nibbàna*? Do you not have a hope and

expectation? Aren't you vexing? That's okay because that vexing is going to help you, it's going to be productive, it's going to be supportive on your journey. Because otherwise what might people do? No, it'll happen when it happens. You can't let it happen, when it happens with *Nibbàna* because you did that for how long now? Let it happen when it happens. Has it happened yet? No, if you continue to do that, it's going to happen when it happens? Well, when? – never. So, there are certain things you ought to do but a lot of it will happen naturally once you've entered the path. Once you become a *Sotàpanna*, the other factors will begin to develop without really you having to make a lot of effort. They will develop naturally because from that point forward your perspective on the world will change because that's really all what's required. What we need to do is not try to get out of this world, we have to be here.

### **Lord Buddha's journey as Bodhisattva**

Think about this for a moment, when I say the word *Dèvadatta*, what comes to mind? What sort of feelings come to mind when I say *Dèvadatta*? Resentment, Perhaps a tiny bit of anger? Things like that right? No, I don't blame you. That's fair enough but had it not been for *Dèvadatta*, would we have a Supreme Buddha today? Had *Dèvadatta* not been around to trouble the Buddha or the *Bòdhisattva* every time He tried to do something, don't you think that *Dèvadatta* was one of the greatest supports that the Buddha or the Bodhisattva had in His quest to become a Buddha? Is it not because of *Dèvadatta* that the Buddha was able to give away his children, in the hope of becoming a Buddha one day? Was it not because of *Dèvadatta* that He was able to chop his arms and legs off and give them away in the hope that one day He would become a Buddha? So, aren't you now thankful that *Dèvadatta* was around? Had it not been for *Dèvadatta*, the *Bòdhisattva* would not have come across such situations, where He was able to develop those qualities. So, the point I'm trying to get across here is not to create a fan base for *Dèvadatta*, that's not my intention. The point I'm trying to get across to you is, don't try to run away from problems.

Because the problems that you have to face today, wherever they may come from, are the problems that shape you. It's how you tackle these problems that shape you to become who you are due to become; not running away from problems because then you are just a coward. In

which Bodhisattva life was the Buddha a coward? Tell me? Never! Because once He made a resolve 'I will not turn back until I become a Buddha and I redeem all sentient beings in every universe', that was the wish He made, although later on after having become a Buddha He realized;

What does Guru Swàminwahanse always say? '**Appakàtè manussèsù**'. He then realized with his supreme knowledge,

*'I'm not going to be able to do all those things that I thought I was going to be able to do.'*

But before He became a Buddha, He didn't realize that. As a matter of fact, if He had, He wouldn't have become a Buddha. If He had realized that he was not going to be able to redeem all sentient beings from *Sansára*, He may have not become a Buddha. Because, to become a Buddha you need to have such compassion. Your compassion has to be how much? What's the word? Infinity. Your compassion has to be spread to how many beings? infinite number of beings. In how many world systems? Infinite number of world systems. That is the making of a Buddha. These are the qualities that are required to make a Buddha. Once He became a Buddha, He realized

*'I thought I was going to be able to do that, but alas, I'm not'.*

But on His journey, as a Bodhisattva, there was never a time when He was a coward. He never ran away from problems. Didn't He welcome all problems with open arms? Every time there was a challenge, every time someone came asking for something, whatever was asked for; He gave twice over. Can I have your arm? Why don't you take the other as well while you're at it? Can I have a Tusk? Take the other while you're at it. Can I have your hair? Would you like my head as well with that? I would like an eye, you're welcome to have the other as well. This is your Buddha. So, did He run away from problems? Did He run away from the challenges that came to Him? No. Because had He done so, we would not have had a Buddha today. That would have been the story of a coward.

### **Consider all problems that come your way as a blessing**

The reason I'm relating this story to you, ladies and gentleman, is because I want you to realize, 'don't try to attain *Nibbàna* by running away from your problems.' Because, your problems are your blessings. Whatever problems you might have, it might be at the workplace, it might be in your family, might be with friends, might be with neighbours, or might be with your relations,

doesn't matter. You might have money problems. You might have family problems. All these problems have come to you as a blessing. These are the problems which are going to shape you. If you decide to act unwisely, foolishly then these problems might also take you to the four great hells. But, the same problem, if you act wisely by applying the Dhamma, they may just take you on your path to *Nibbàna*. They will. So, which problem do you want to run away from now? These are the problems that are shaping you every day. The problems that you face when you go to work, you know. When you sat at your computer working away, someone comes and starts shouting at you for no obvious reason, they're just shouting at you,

*"I asked you to do this report, why haven't you done that report for me, how many days has it been already",*

they don't realize that you have sat in the wrong seat, this is somebody else's seat, you just sat there for the day. Now you have a choice. You can either shout back for every word that has been said, you can say two in return and then paved the path to where? Oh, you know the answer. Or you can make use of this opportunity. It's an opportunity, come on, do a SWAT analysis on life. There are opportunities coming from left, right and center. Why are you running away? Why do you see them as threats? The only threat to your *Nibbàna*, ladies and gentlemen, is your volition. If you act unwisely, if you are inclined to do unmeritorious deeds, now you're becoming a threat to yourself. The world was never a threat to you. All the world brought you were opportunities. Get a SWAT analysis done on your lives.

Now tell me, do you have to come to the monastery and become a monk to attain *Nibbàna*? What is shaping you every day into an Arahant? What is shaping you? The problems and how you tackle them. That's what's shaping you. Do you not have problems in life, at work, in your household? Yes.

We have problems here too, and it's the way we face those problems that enable us to walk the path that we are on. You see, all these troubles that we had in the recent months, in the bygone weeks and months and so forth, where people abused us and shouted at us, we had a choice didn't we? When people said, you're distorting the Dhamma, we had a choice. When people said, you're just being stubborn or you being subordinate, you're being unduly submissive, when

people accused us falsely, we had a choice. We can either fight back or accept them as blessings. Because these are opportunities for us to make better men out of us. I didn't come here to become a coward. I didn't come into robes to end up a coward.

Answer this question for me, which of these do you think is a man? One, in the face of blasphemy, being shouted at shouts back, when being hit, hits back or in the face of blame, in the face of anger, in the face of attack, doesn't fight back, stays calm, and collected and maintains the cool composure. Which one of these two do you think is a greater man? Yes, are you like that? Think.

It's easy to answer the question but application is not so easy. It's these problems that help you to shape yourself to become great because if those problems never came to us, then where is the opportunity for us to shape ourselves? Because it has to be application otherwise it is just theory. What is application? When the problem comes now it's time to act. If there's no problem coming your way, how can you act? You have to have the problem coming your way, then you can act. Now that's the application. Then it makes sense to you. It becomes real for you.

### **Don't make the problem my problem**

So, don't run away from problems. Accept problems with open arms, embrace them. But here's my two cents of advice. Deal with problems as problems. Don't make problems your problems. A problem is a problem, don't make a problem my problem. Do you see the difference? A problem is a problem, which is simply the coming together of lots of conditions which at this moment in time are giving rise to a result and an effect, cause an effect. And one of these causes might be *karma* in your last birth, how are you going to change that now? You can't go back and rewrite that CD, that's already been written. Now it's playback time.

Remember the story I related to you last week I think, of the lady in the face of all those troubles, how she bears. Because she realizes, I'm not going to fight back. She and I, who do you think is going to go to *Nibbàna* sooner? I would think she is because every day she has an opportunity to apply herself, make it real for herself, problem after problem after problem, shouting and beating

and all that and in the face of all that, she stands forthright. “No, I will not fight back”. Why? Because otherwise I’m the biggest dishonour to the Dhamma.

A lot of people used to come and ask us,

*“when they accuse you of distorting the Dhamma, why do you stand like this? Why don't you go and fight back? Why don't you go ahead and speak in media and shout back at the people, accuse them of falsely accusing you?”*

People used to ask me and I said if I were to do that, that would be the biggest distortion of the Dhamma, the greatest **distortion of the Dhamma, ‘Dharmaya vikurthi kireema’**. Why? Because I am showing the world that this Dhamma is not practical. When someone shouts at me if I am shouting back and I am speaking the Dhamma and I'm saying that this Dhamma is pure, this Dhamma is practical, what am I not doing? Showing it in practice. Someone shouts at me I shout back. I've just proved that this Dhamma is not practical. I have lost. Someone hits me I hit back. Have I not just proved that this Dhamma is not practical? That would have been the biggest discredit that I could have done to the Dhamma, the biggest dishonor that I could have brought upon the Dhamma. So, every time when such events come to our lives and we stand unwaveringly, not fighting back, not retaliating, that is my offering to the Dhamma. I make a Pooja to the Dhamma. Because then I show by my character, the way I act, the way we act, that this Dhamma is real, it's true, it is practical, it makes sense, it works and it's potent. We prove it. Otherwise it's just *Vedi Bana*. Otherwise, if you were to act in retaliation, then it would be fair for you to say that's *Vedi Bana*. Why? You're not acting as you say. You're saying one thing but you're acting in a completely different way. So, this Dhamma cannot be true, it cannot be practical.

### **Pleasure does not exist in the outside world**

So, think about what we were discussing earlier on about this vexation. We took a short detour, but we’re coming back again. You know for a fact then, hopefully, that this beetle leaf, what's another word for beetle leaf now? Toodle-doo. I’m just calling it that term. It’s a toodle-doo. What are the five things that you can receive from this beetle leaf? Sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Revision time. If you have never seen a beetle leaf ever before in your life and I say “beetle leaf”, now you're all vexing. Why? What is it? All you need is the *dhamma* to come into your

mind. Now you have the question, what is it? And you're now trying to relieve yourself from vexation. I then show this beetle leaf, here is how a beetle leaf looks like. Now you know what a beetle leaf looks like but before that you were vexing. You were vexing to know, what does a beetle leaf look like. I've just relieved you of that vexation and I'm showing you the picture of a beetle leaf, you can see a beetle leaf in my hand, it's very clear, the sight is clear. It's touching your eyes, you know, you can see this leaf very clearly. Have all vexations ceased? No, now you want to know, what does it smell like? what does it taste like? what does it feel like? See. So, does pleasure exist in the sight then? Because if pleasure did exist in the sight then, the moment I showed you this beetle leaf, you should no longer be in vexation. But the moment I showed you this beetle leaf, now you are vexing, now you have to find another source of vexation. That's what you do. That's why when you say that you are hungry, when you filled your stomach and is no longer hungry, you're still looking for pleasure but you need a new source of vexation. A new source of pleasure is a new source of vexation. Once you find a new source of vexation which is go sit in front of the TV, now you have a new source of pleasure. But again, relief from vexation is all that ever brought you pleasure. So, does pleasure exist in this beetle leaf then? So which *rùpa* does it exist in then? Okay it's not in this beetle leaf. What about the other beetle leaves? Perhaps it's in one of those. Okay maybe it's not in beetle leaves. Maybe some other leaves, banana leaf, pleasure? No. Maybe it's not in sights and what about sounds? Does it exist in sounds? No? What about tastes? But surely in smells or touch. No, it's not in any of these things. Pleasure does not exist in the outside world. I really...really.. really... want this to sink within you, in your mind sets and gentlemen because, once you get this you will have found the path to freedom. You will have insourced your happiness from that point forward. No longer outsourcing happiness.

### **Why outsource your happiness?**

You would be free, you'll be independent. What's Independence Day? When is Independence Day? Yes, the day you become a *Sotápanna*. That's your Independence Day. The day you find the path to true happiness, that's your Independence Day. Because now you have the path, the way that leads you to true happiness, true independence because otherwise you're always outsourcing your happiness, you're dependent, your happiness is dependent on external factors.

Would you like ladies and gentlemen for me to be responsible for your happiness? Would you like for me to be that? I'm willing to pay you money. Now are you prepared to let me decide when you're happy and when you're sad, I'm willing to pay you money. I decide how happy you are or how sad or how much suffering you go through, I get to decide. I'll pay you money for that, is that okay? No. So why do you outsource your happiness then for free? If this beetle leaf gave you something in return, then at least we could argue there's something for you to gain out of doing that. But there's nothing that you gain in return, except vexation. That's why Guru Swàminwahanse asked in his sermons, *rùpa, vèdanà, sannà, sankàra, vinnàna* or if you look at the outside world sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, how can they bring you pleasure? Answer the question. What ways can they bring you pleasure? They can't. They can't bring you pleasure. What's the only thing that they can bring you? Vexation but you have to do something for that, attach. You attach, you are left with vexation. You don't attach, they bring you nothing. Like a snake, a serpent. What does a snake do if you tread on it? It bites you. But if you don't, no problem. It just goes on its way, you go on your way, no problem.

### **Sensuality is like fire**

Once the Buddha said, this *àshwàda*, even ***kàma, sensuality*** is like fire. Only recently did I realize why He used that simile, fire. What is the nature of fire? It burns. Isn't burning a good thing? No? So why do you cook your food then? Would you put your food on the fire if it didn't burn? How would you have a barbecue here if your fire wouldn't burn? You need the fire to burn, don't you? How can you put a fireplace if fire didn't burn? Do you not need fire? Yes. How could you make all these things, this stuff, how could you mould iron or whatever, if you didn't have fire? Is there a problem with fire then? No. To relieve you from physical vexation, use fire all you like. But when it comes to mental vexation, can fire do anything for you? No. That's why the Buddha says, '*sensuality is like fire*'. Sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch are like fire. Why? Because they have the potential to relieve you from physical vexation. You have to eat food. You know when you're about to eat a slice of bread, your eyes help you to see that there's mold on it, so you don't touch it, you throw it away. Because what might happen if you eat a moldy slice of bread? You're going to get sick. Is sickness becoming mental vexation or a physical suffering? Is physical suffering. So therefore, your eyes help you to relieve yourself from physical suffering to not fall

into that trap, for that, eyes and sight are extremely useful. If there's a fire at home, what's the first sense that's going to pick it up, it's in your bedroom, you're in the living room? Smell. Smell and your nose. So, aren't they helpful? In what? Relief from physical suffering. That's why the Buddha says, *'it's like the fire'*. The fire is used to mould objects. This is how they build homes and things like that. This is how they manufacture clothes and things like that, vehicles and things like that, all sorts of things. Fire usually has a key role to play in any manufacturing process or at least heat for that matter. And then the food, you cook your food. Shelter, of course it helps. Medicines, of course. Chemical reactions are catalyzed by fire and heat. They're all helpful but only in relief from physical suffering but not in mental suffering. By the way, there's nothing wrong with sensuality, ladies and gentlemen okay. There's nothing wrong with sensuality provided your interpretation of sensuality only involves using the five senses, using sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch for relief from physical suffering. The moment you tread into one step into the mental satisfaction realm, mental gratification realm, you have gone astray. You're on the path to destruction. So be careful. This is why *sathara satipattàna* helps. The land of the Buddha, for as long as you are cultivating *sathara satipattàna*, being mindful, being watchful, what are these thoughts that come into my mind?

### **Don't point the finger at the outside world**

And I'm going to ask you now for your homework from last week, do you remember? When you thought I forgot huh? What was the homework last week? So, I asked you not to complain for one week. Don't complain about things that you can't change, because that's when it becomes a complaint and I said you have to show your children right from wrong. That's not a complaint, that's doing right by them. Otherwise you're doing them a disservice. If you see them doing something wrong and you don't correct them, you're not a good parent. But complain is when you do something and you can't change it, you don't have the capacity to change, if you don't have the potential to change it. There's no point in complaining, like, why is it raining again? That's a complaint. What can you do about the rain? Nothing, so why complain then? Or the economy is just going bonkers now, what can you do about the economy? Now you're again pointing the finger at the outside world. The rupee is floating, what can you do about it? It's a bear market, so what are you going to do about it? Complain. He's dark, what are you going to

do about it? That guy he stinks, what are you going to do about it? Complaining. So last week's homework was, don't complain for an entire week. How did you fair? Did you complain that the food was too hot or too cold or it had burnt? Did you find yourselves complaining? Or you didn't have tasty food, did you complain about that? *"Ammi, how can you expect me to eat this."* Did you complain? *"Is it rice and curry again tonight, Ammi?"* Did you complain? Why did I say don't complain? There was a reason behind that. Because when you complain, what does your heart filled with, your mind filled with? Resentment, anger, frustration, annoyance. Conducive or destructive on your path to Nibbàna? Destructive, not conducive. Because when you complain, you fail to see good and great qualities in other people, in other things.

### **Be humble like a foot-stool**

You know there's a foot-stool that I've placed my feet on right now. Does it have life? But can you not give me one good quality about this footstool? What is it? Yes, it doesn't say one thing when I put my feet on it, doesn't shout back, doesn't complain. It bears my feet for as long as I put my feet on it and tomorrow it's going to be somebody else on this chair, would it complain? I only want this Swàminwahanse's feet, how dare you come and put your feet on it as well, what do you think I am a foot-stool? Have you ever heard a foot-stool complain like that? No, see how good a foot-stool is? What a great quality that is? See? When you think about it like that, what kind of thoughts come into your mind about a foot-stool? Thoughts of joy, thoughts of happiness, thoughts of benevolence, good thoughts not bad thoughts. Those that are going to be conducive. Then you think if the foot-stool is so humble why can't I be so humble?

### **Why be like the earth, fire, water & wind?**

*Ràhulòvàda Sùtta*, when the Lord Buddha gives instruction to Ràhula, the young novice monk, Ràhula, be like what? The earth. See He praises, He looks for qualities in inanimate objects. He says Ràhula, be like the earth. What does He mean by 'be like the earth'? Lay down on the floor? No, he said be like the earth. People come and throw all sorts of things onto the earth, they spit on the earth but does the earth retaliate, fight back, shout back? *"Hey, how dare you spit on me!"* What else do people put onto the earth? All kinds of things, right? Every orifice, things go onto

the earth. But does the earth complain? No. People defecate. Does the earth complain? No. Whatever you throw I will accept.

Ràhula, be like the fire. What is the nature of fire? Whatever you throw at it, it doesn't complain. It'll accept. For as long as it can, it will accept. If you throw water, of course, it's going to extinguish the fire. But does the fire complain? *"How dare you throw water at me!"* No, if you want to put me out, put me out. The fire doesn't fight back, whatever you throw at the fire, the fire will happily accept.

Rahula, be like water. What's the nature of water? Flexible, it's very fluid. Whatever obstacle you put in its way, does it complain about the obstacle? I asked you the question a moment ago, why do you run away from your problems? Why are you trying to find recluse from your problems? That's not where *Nibbàna* is. The Buddha says, 'be like water.' What does water do? Bring an obstacle, it's just going to find a way around the obstacle or over the obstacle, not against the obstacle. If you put an obstacle in its way and hold the water back it's going to be there for as long as it takes to overflow and then it will just continue to flow; be like the water.

Be like the wind, Ràhula. What does the Buddha mean by that? Be free, don't attach yourself to anything. Just be free. The wind blows, it doesn't pick and choose who it comes into contact with. It has no preferences. When the wind blows, it just blows. Again, if you put an obstacle, it will blow around it or it'll blow over it. Does the wind ever complain? No, so, if you want to attain *Nibbàna*, then you have to do as the Buddha said. You're going to have to follow Buddha's instructions and the Buddha said be like the earth, be like the fire, be like the wind and be like the water.

### **Am I like *patavi*, *thèjo* & *vàyo*?**

Now, when you sit down for meditation and you want to do *Patavi Kasina Bhàvanà*; There's one *Patavi Kasina* that you can do that goes through as a *Sàmàdhi* side. But, isn't there one way you can go towards the wisdom side along the wisdom reflection? Sit down, start meditation, think about am I like *patavi*? Am I like the earth? In the face of problems how do I behave? When

people come to me and they shout at me, am I like the earth and I just accept. When people tread on me, do I fight back? If not, well, then I should become like the earth, *patavi kasinaya, thèjò kasinaya, vàyò kasinaya*, See, this Dhamma is for the wise, ladies and gentlemen. It's not for the foolish. You don't have to go anywhere, be where you are. Don't run away from your problems, accept them as blessings. Face your problems. Don't be cowards in the face of problems because a coward never became an *Arahant*, a coward never became a Buddha. If you want to become an *Arahant*, what needs to change is how you tackle your problems, how you face your problems because the way you face your problems shapes you into an *Arahant*. No matter who you are today, how you face your problems shapes you into an *Arahant*. Accept your problems as blessings with open arms and embrace them. Don't run away from them.

### **Fulfil your perfections by facing the problems**

Let me find these and say this to you. How many lives was the Buddha a Bodhisattva? Well, lots, is the answer. Yes, we have the ***Pansiyapanas Jàthaka potha, the five hundred fifty stories of the Bodhisattva's lives*** but that's just a few and chosen 549. That's not the full number of lives that he spent as a Bodhisattva. Let's just imagine that it was only 549, although it's called the 550 there's only 549 stories in it, okay? Let's imagine, it was only the 549 that were required for Him to become a Buddha. What if in His last birth where He gave away Sàliya and Krishnajinà, His two children, what if in this last birth He did not have the opportunity to do that? Would He have become a Buddha? No. So that problem, that challenge had to come into His life for Him to fulfil His **perfection, *pàramità***. That challenge had to come to His life so that He could fulfil His *paramità, dāna paramitàwa and paramatta paramitàwa*. It was that challenge, that last tick, in the box that was required. Now you have everything you need and in your next birth you will become a Buddha. So why are we running away from our problems then? Because these are the problems that help us to complete our *pàramità*. A lot of people say why can't you attain *Nibbàna*?

***“Pàramità puralà nanè api hāmuduruwane.”***

People complain, always complaining. **I haven't fulfilled my perfections**, so well, why don't you start now then? Why talk about what you should have done in your last birth, in your previous

births and how you haven't been fulfilling your *pàramitàs* all the way up until now? Well, start now, for heaven's sake, if you haven't and the way to do that is, not to run away from problems.

When I ordained, I had a very different picture of what a life of a monk was going to be like, I will admit. I thought it was going to be a carefree life. I'll be able to wake up in the morning, do my meditation, go down for alms and then come back up again, listen to *bana* and then meditate again and then maybe take a nap and then wash my robes, take a wash, just a carefree life was what I imagined. But how wrong I was! Now we have around 40 to 45 resident monks and *Anagàrikas* at the monastery and Guru Swàminwahanse expects me to keep on top of all of them. It was entirely a different life to what I imagined it was going to be. Because I give Guru Swàminwahanse the time to go and do his meditation and so he can, you know, get this job done. So, then he can be the shining light for all of us. So, I try and free him up from day-to-day duties and responsibilities and I look after that with the help of all the other monks at the monastery. So, when I first started to have to face these challenges, I thought onto my myself,

*"this is not what I came here for, I came here to live a carefree life where I didn't have to treat any problems, I did not have to deal with any problems, I did not have to go and talk to people, I didn't want to do any of these things; go and speak to the Mahanayaka Theròs,"*

none of those things I imagined. I didn't want any of that. I spoke to enough people when I was a lay person and I didn't come here to go again, go and speak to people. That was not what I wanted. So, there were times in my life when I thought, God this must be a curse and then later on I realized, I was so wrong, I was so extremely wrong. This is my blessing, the things I have to do now, the things I get to do now are a blessing.

### **Why we shouldn't run away from problems?**

When I was in my lay life, I helped people become successful in life. But every time I helped someone it was to become successful in a material life. Useful or useless? For the ultimate purpose? Useless. But today at our monastery there are 40 to 45 young monks and *Anagàrikas*, whatever their problem might be, they could be ill, they could be, frustrated about something, maybe have a problem with somebody else, and I go and tackle that problem, I help them out.

What am I helping them for? I'm trying to remove another obstacle on their path to *Nibbàna*. Merit or not? Immeasurable and every time these problems come to me, I look at those problems and think, "*problem?*" Not my problem. Someone shouts at me, "*problem.*" Not my problem. Not my problem! It's just another problem I get the opportunity to tackle, I get the opportunity to deal with and the way I tackle those problems, the way I deal with those problems helps me to fulfill my *Pàramità*. So, if I have to solve ten more problems before I'm able to become an Arahant, will it be sufficient for me to have solved nine? No, I need that tenth one as well. If that is the case, why should I run away from these problems, let them come to me because the moment I have fulfilled my ten problems, that's it, my job's done. You can think the same in your lay lives. The *Bodhisattva* didn't always fulfill his *Pàramitàs* in the life of a monk. He fulfilled much of those *Pàramitàs* as a lay person, didn't He? Problems that came to his life, challenges, it was the way He faced them that enabled him to fulfill those *Pàramitàs*. So, do that. Don't be a coward. Whenever problems come into your mind, come to you, think about the Buddha, think about the Dhamma and think about the Sangha. Look for their protection, seek their refuge, not mine, the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha. Seek their refuge. If the Buddha could, I can. The Dhamma helps me to tackle these problems in the right way and therefore I seek refuge in the Dhamma. Then there's the *Maha Sangha*, who are walking that path and who are a living, breathing example of, how in the face of problems, in the face of challenges, you can be undefeated. That I will become, can you not do that? So, where do you have to run now? Where do you have to go? Where do you have to go to attain *Nibbàna*? Nowhere. You do it right where you are. *Nibbàna*, here and now not then and there. Here and now, okay.

### **Why do we transfer merits?**

Why do we transfer merits? Is it nice to do? Is it because we're good, that we transfer merits ladies and gentleman, or because there are so many beings that we owe a debt to. All those beings that we invited at the beginning of this sermon, remember, *Dèvas*, *Brahmas*, spirits, demons, the dead, all those beings, who deserve merits. Merits that we have today accrued, we have today acquired, we can invite them to witness this meritorious deed and rejoice in those merits. Gratitude is something I always talk to you about, something that has to be part of our day-to-day lives and things that we do in our day-to-day life.

## **A grateful event at the Monastery**

I just want to share with you something that happened at the monastery a few days ago, which I thought you might be pleased to hear because being grateful, gratitude is something we always talk with our monks at the monastery. We always remind them that the reason that today we are fed, we are clothed, we have a shelter over our heads, is because of you. I'm talking about you, those of you who come along listen to these sermons, whether in person or online. We don't make a living today, we never asked you for anything, you come here and listen to these sermons, all we ask you to do is make the most of your time while you're here, but you choose to give *dàna*, give us robes, medicines and so on and so forth. So pretty much every week, at least once or twice a week, we gather with our monks and we talk about that. We talk about how much you all do for us. So recently there was a '*Dolos Pirikara Pùjàwa*' that we had at the monastery. I think some of you may have taken part, where we transferred the merits of making those offerings to those who have pre-deceased us. The night before, there was a special event at the monastery, in the monks' quarters. What we did was, we got together and over the course of a number of hours, all of our monks and *Anagàrikàs*, we sat down around a Buddha statue that we have at the monks' quarters, and then from the moment, from the day that we came into this world, all the way until at that point in time, each one and every one that has helped us in our lives, in any way shape or form; whether that was to come into this world, parents, doctors, nurses, those who might have cured us when we were ill, our teachers from Montessori, our friends who might have played with us, relieved us of our vexations in any way, any shape or form, the *bombai motai* uncle who was at school, who used to sell us ice packets to quench our thirst, each and every one of them, the postman, maids who might have worked in our homes, our relations who might have helped us in lots of different ways and shapes, our friends, anyone and everyone we could think of, we shared the energy of the *Ārya maithriya*, the blessings of the *Ārya maithriya* with all of them. So, what our Swàminwahanses did a few days before that event was, I asked them all to write down on several sheets of paper, all those people that they could think of that had helped them in their lives. So, lot of monks came with lots of sheets of A4 sheets having written down my mother, my father, my teachers, my grade one teacher, my grade 2 teacher, my grade 3 science teacher, my grade 3 maths teacher, right, that's how they came having written down all these names. And then, from the time that they entered the monkhood,

look, of course you were all there as well. Those who helped us come into monkhood, those who have given us instruction and guidance from the day we came here and those who have abused us, why because that helped us fulfill our perfections. We transferred merits to them.

One thing that really caught my attention is something what I wanted to share with you. Some of our monks what they've done was they'd come down into the *dàna shàlàwa* and taken the book where you write your names and the names of your ancestors and your relatives, relations to whom you want to transfer merits, they took that book up into the monks quarters and instead of passing on merits and the blessings of the *Ārya maithriya* to their relations, what they did was they went through that book reading out your names, page by page and to them they transferred the blessings of the *Ārya maithriya*, and the merits that they acquired by doing that. I could hear some of them saying, read the name, the date of the *dàna*. So, for example, 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 and then read out the names of the people that gave the *dàna* and those who they were expecting to transfer merits to. I could hear them saying,

*“you relieved me from hunger on this day, the number of times you might have been a mother to me, the number of times you might have been a father to me, I have not done enough to pay back what I owe you.”*

I can hear them saying this, chanting this and saying,

*“may you be freed from the suffering of sansàra; may you be freed from the fire of desire; may you be freed from the fire of delusion; through the fire of aversion.”*

So, that was a very special day at our monastery. Each and every one of you, we remembered and transferred the blessings of *Ārya maithriya* and the merits that we all acquired. At the end of that session all our Swàmiwahansès including Guru swàminwahansè, all the merits that we had acquired, we transferred to all of you and all your relations, your ancestors in the hope that may they, if any of them have been born in the woeful planes, may they be able to redeem themselves, be born in the blissful planes and also if there are any obstacles in your progress in the Dhamma, in you attaining *màrga pala*, may the blessings enable you to remove those obstacles, so that you can make progress. So, I just wanted to share that with you.

I know it's not nice to do and say about it but there's no other way you're going to get to know about it. Also, the reason I share this with you is not really to big ourselves up but really I want you to try that out at home, try it out with your family, pick a day of the week, maybe a couple of hours, sit everyone down, ask everyone to come prepared with a sheet of paper having written down on that sheet of paper every single one that they can think of in this life that might have helped them, every single person. Then take that time, sit down and do *Ārya Maithriya*, passing on the blessings of that *Ārya Maithriya* to all of them. It makes such a difference because we are so indebted to so many millions, if not trillions of beings in *sansàra*. This is the time for us to pay back because now we have received the gift of Dhamma. I can't feed your hunger today because I don't make a living, I can't give you shelter, I can't give you clothes because I don't have the means to do that today, but yet you come in and you feed my hunger. So, the only thing I can give you in return is the Dhamma and any blessings that I can, in order that you may be able to progress on the path to Dhamma. But you know, you can do the same as well, so do that at home, pick a day of the week, parents, I ask you, I urge you do this with your children and show them by example. Perhaps ask your relations to come over if they're also listening to sermons and they are also trying to progress on the path to *Nibbàna* because otherwise, you know, it might be a joke to them, to a lot of people this could be a joke, so don't turn this out to be a joke but for those who are serious about it, those who realized that there are so many beings in *sansàra* that we owe a debt to, this is the best way to pay back what we owe. So, try it out, see if you can do that as homework for next week.

What a great thing that is to do, right? To pay our dues. One, it's going to help you on your path to Dhamma but that's not the main reason, the main reason is to be grateful for what they have done for us. Even if it's someone who polished your shoes, perhaps tied your shoelaces, perhaps held an umbrella over your head when it was raining, perhaps offered you a seat on the bus when you were unwell, perhaps when you were too weak to stand, perhaps you were hungry and someone offered you a meal, someone shared their meal with you at school, maybe their lunch with you at school. They made a sacrifice for your benefit, to relieve you from suffering, whatever vexation that might have been. Help them out now, give them what you owe them.

So, on that note we will conclude the sermon because now it's our time to pay back all those beings to whom we owe merit because if it wasn't for them, perhaps today we might not be humans. Our mothers and fathers might have done so much for us, perhaps even done unmeritorious deeds and then having done so, perhaps may have ended up in the hells. But they did that to save us from committing those deeds and today we are in the blissful plane. So, it's time to pay back.



- 00.00.12 Pay Homage
- 00.01.36 Observing five precepts
- 00.06.18 Seeking forgiveness from the Noble ones
- 00.08.58 'If you can hear, why not listen?'
- 00.12.10 Man's greatest invention
- 00.16.24 Do you know what I know?
- 00.20.03 Ego
- 00.34.52 Listen more, talk less
- 00.38.45 Becoming a Sotàpanna is a reconciliation of sansàric debt.
- 00.45.11 Assuthawà pruthajjanò
- 00.46.50 Antharà parinibbàyi
- 00.50.15 Need to know - examples
- 00.52.35 Need to know – Example 'Toodle-doo'
- 00.55.08 Vexation or wanting to know
- 00.59.49 Man's greatest invention?
- 01.01.03 The Purpose of the man's greatest invention?
- 01.04.20 The most primitive state of vexation
- 01.07.46 Would you eat a soggy papadam?
- 01.10.12 Vexation

- 01.12.50 Pleasure is simply relief from vexation
- 01.19.02 Why is TV time usually after meal time?
- 01.27.44 If pleasure exists in the outside world, can we attain Nibbàna?
- 01.31.15 Why did people come up with the concept of a God?
- 01.32.43 “What if, I never accepted that attachment led me to suffering?”
- 01.36.20 Why people worship Gods?
- 01:41.58 Does the God always do things that you like?
- 01.45.38 Can people find happiness, seeking refuge in science?
- 01.51.22 I have to find my own salvation
- 01.54.04 Purpose of life is happiness
- 01.58.12 What is living?
- 02.01.02 Can an Arahant go into *Samàdhi* and *samàpatthi*?
- 02.03.12 The only selfless being there is, is an Arahant
- 02.07.36 Lord Buddha’s journey as Bodhisattva
- 02.12.34 Consider all the problems that come your way as a blessing
- 02.18.39 Don’t make the problem, my problem
- 02.22.40 Pleasure does not exist in the outside world
- 02.26.20 Why outsource your happiness?
- 02.28.51 Sensuality is like fire
- 02.33.00 Don’t point the finger at the outside world
- 02:35.55 Be humble like a foot-stool
- 02.37.11 Why be like the earth, fire, water & wind?
- 02.40.13 Am I like patavi, thèjo & vayo?
- 02.41.50 Fulfill your perfections by facing the problems
- 02.46.20 Why we shouldn’t run away from problems?
- 02.52.24 Àrya Maithri meditation
- 02.58.19 Why do we transfer merits?
- 02.59.21 A grateful event at the Monastery
- 02.58.19 Transferring merits

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