

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 2018-09-09. 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

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Chanda

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Vimansà

Advice

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Indriya bhàvanà

Mindfulness / Sathara Satipattána

Ārya Maithri Meditation

Broom

Sweep

Nail

Paint

Road

Merit

Girl friend

Satara Irdhipàda

Trap

Bait

Anagárika

Dung Beetle

Sankhàra

Brahmin

Discourse

Sepa

Duka

Hula

Upéksháwa

Adhimókkha

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The foundation in the Dhamma creates the foundation for mindfulness

So, last week we made a start to understanding the Sathara Satipattána. This is mindfulness. The foundations of mindfulness as we have come to know, over the past years. Now, prior to us delivering that sermon last week, I asked you a question “Are you all prepared, are you ready?” Because that is not a question that I can answer on your behalf. Only you will have the answer to that question and that answer is going to be unique for each and every one of you. So, it’s going to be a 'yes', or a 'no', perhaps a 'maybe'...and as I said, if it is a yes, then perfectly fine. If it is a no or a maybe, then there is more we need to do, in terms of making sure that we have that foundation in the Dhamma. Because it is that foundation in the Dhamma that creates the foundation for mindfulness. Because you need to know what you need to be mindful of and I appreciate from the feedback I received from yourselves that last week was a little bit heavy and that is welcome. It is always welcome feedback but that is ok because the Buddha says,

"Èkáyano Ayam Bikkhawé Maggó - Satthánam Visuddiyá" - if this is the only path, then sometimes it may be tough, but that is the path that we have to travel.

'Always tough, so I can't do it' That is the mentality of a loser not the mentality of a winner. And you know that yourselves. How many times in the face of life, in the face of challenges, did you stand up when everyone around you said 'no'. There is not a chance in hell that you going to be able to do that...you said “No! I will prove it. I will do it and I will prove it to you. Just watch! Just watch me do it! Watch me stand up in the face of these challenges!” and that is how we went forward. Isn't that right? You all have stories that you can relate to. You all have your own personal stories how you stood up when challenges came your way.

Now this challenge that we are trying to overcome is the greatest challenge of all time and once we overcome this challenge, then everything else is just small fry. This is that big challenge. This is the one challenge that we must all overcome and that is the challenge of overcoming these fetters

that keep us bound to *sansára*. So, we need to have a proper base in the Dhamma before we can tackle these obstacles, before we can start the foundation in mindfulness.

Now, I asked you go back and listen to that sermon a few times. Were segments of that sermon where, you were not quite sure of or perhaps bits that you were not really sure of, bits that you could not really understand? I hope you had a chance to do that. Because what I want to do is to continue on that and take you a little bit further. But I hope the number of people here is not a representative of the fact that... 'Good Lord we are not going to be able to understand anything the Swáminwahanse is going to say from now on. So, we might as well go elsewhere' and you know I have no intention of having a fan base as such.

What is bhàvanà (meditation)?

You know, the reason we do these sermons is to help you and this is why I am sometimes a little bit cautious, a little bit wary, about sharing with you everything that I know, sharing with you all the Dhamma that is sometimes quite profound, sometimes not easy to understand and I want to help you do that one step at a time. How many of you have heard of *indriya bhàvanA* few hands...great, ok. You see, that is something that the Buddha prescribed several times in the Tripitaka. If you study the Tripitaka, you will see that there are several places in which the Buddha prescribed the *indriya bhávanáwa*. This is the contemplation...like I said, I prefer to use the word contemplation rather than meditation, because meditation has lots of connotations which sometimes can throw people off. When you say meditation people immediately think 'oh! I have to be a Buddhist to do that?' By religion, they think, you know, it is only exclusive to Buddhism and sometimes actually, nowadays people use music to meditate. They listen to some music and put on their headsets and then they start meditating. So, there are various connotations to meditation...it has evolved over time, this word 'meditation', which is why I am wary of using that word. So, I prefer to use the word 'contemplation'. Because what we do in meditation is really contemplate. Having understood the basic doctrine, from that point forward it is a case of applying. It is the application. '***Bhávithá Bahulì Kathá***', *bhávithá* is 'using'. So, **contemplation is nothing**

other than using what you know in dealing with everyday problems. It's not what you do at your work place.

You know you went through the school system, through university, through some training programs and you learned some skills. Once you learned those skills, be that soft skills or hard skills what you do then is, in your workplaces you apply those skills to deal with people, to overcome day-to-day problems and to overcome challenges. Well, that is exactly what you need to do in the Dhamma as well. If you want to come out at the end of the year having achieved something, having achieved the *márga pala*...how many of you, at the start of the year made your list of goals and in there...how many of you had “*I want to be a Sotápanna by the end of this year*”? Very good, Sir. Very good! It is time that these goals need to start appearing in your list of goals. Remember, I had a very long list of goals. I shared my stories with you in the past, many times. How I had my goals broken down into eight different categories. My investments and my family goals, my health goals my holiday goals, education goals. I broke down my yearly goals, and that is how I started my year and I do the same now as well. It is just that I don't have so many categories now and all of these goals that I write down they are all focused towards one objective. Indeed, that is Nibbána.

‘May I never HAVE to’

So, no matter what I do, whether it is a *kusala* or a *pina*, I only have one purpose in mind. There are times when I walked up to young novice monks at the monastery and say “*Swaminvahansè, could you give me your robes, so that I can wash them for you?*” Young monks who might have just ordained a few weeks ago. So, I asked for their robes and I go and wash them and in doing so, I make a determination,

‘May I never HAVE to’

wash robes ever again in *sansára* not that I don't want to but I make a wish 'may I never have to'. The reason I have to wash myself, reason I have to feed myself is because I have to. I have got no choice right now because I have been born. For as long as this birth process keeps going, I am going to have to do this. So, whenever I sit down on this seat and I am aware that delivering a sermon acquires merit, so I make a determination may I never have to deliver another sermon. May I never

have to, doesn't mean I am not going to come around and...you know what happens if I become an Arahant tomorrow? Will you not see me again? You will! For as long as even there is just one person sitting here, who wants to listen to the Dhamma, I will be here. But right now, I am acquiring merits by doing this and I am hoping that may these merits help me attain Nibbána, just as much as you hope and determine may these merits help you attain Nibbána. So, it is something I still have to do because I haven't filled my tank up fully yet. I am still pumping. Pumping merit.

Merit is the foundation to Nibbána

So, this is practical stuff, right? Buddhism is nothing but practical and I said to you many times before, especially to the young listeners amongst you who have the opportunities, to come and sit down here face to face. You know if you come early, perhaps a few minutes, maybe half an hour before, why don't you find a broom and sweep the temple premises? That's an idea. There is a *welimaluwa* outside, you could sweep that. There is the *bódhiya*, you can go and put some water. You can clean the altar on which people have left old flowers or if there is a public toilet you can go and clean that in the temple, while you wait for the sermon to begin and when you do that, you make a firm resolve, *'today I am here to listen to this sermon and I want to attain Nibbána. May these merits help me do that.'* **'Pubbé Katha Punnatá'** What a great foundation that will be. In the time that you have, you are doing these deeds and hoping may I be able to understand this Dhamma. So, the moment you sit down on this seat, prepare to listen to this sermon, all the other factors that are required for you to attain Nibbána have now been lined up. Because what we can do is create the *sammanantara*. The *anantara* have already been produced. So, we create the *sammanantara*, so that we can achieve this objective that we have, that is Nibbána.

Chanda, citta, víriya, vimansà

You can't attain Nibbána just because you like to attain Nibbána. Because if that were the case, all of you would have become Arahants by now. Wouldn't you? Don't you all want and like to attain Nibbána? But liking and desire is only a very small point. It's just one factor. *Chanda, citta, víriya,*

vimansà, **Chanda (desire)** is just one factor. What about all the rest of it? Where's the ***virīya***? **The effort...**where's the ***citta***? **How you conduct your mind, your thoughts?** And are all your thoughts dedicated and directed towards achieving this goal? Where is the ***vimansà***? Where is your **inquisitiveness of the Dhamma**? So, you need to create this foundation.

Yes, we spoke of foundations of mindfulness. What about the foundations we need to attain Nibbána? Merit is the foundation to Nibbána as well.

'Má Bhikkavé Punyánam Bháhitta - Sukássetan Adivácchanam Bikkhavè Punyanthi' ...

“Monks, do not fear merit. Do as much merit as you can.”

Any time you get the opportunity...young children, you know...when you are at home, help your parents out. Perhaps in the past you helped your parents out because they promised you a video game but now, you can do the same but wish for something else. Because you are going to have to, if you are progressing in the Dhamma, then you are going to start understanding and experiencing that *'me waiting for a video game to turn up', I mean...that's a really negative feeling. That feeling of anxiety, that feeling of frustration...I don't want that.'* What if there could be the world's best game right in front of me and I didn't feel like I wanted to play with it? I didn't feel like it. I could play if I wanted to but I don't feel like I want to. What if the world's the best food in the world is laid out in front of you, your favourite food put on a plate in front of you and it didn't make you feel uneasy? You could eat it if you wanted to but you are not particularly fussed. It's not luring you, it's not attracting you. So, when you help your parents out at home, make a wish, make a determination. Because wishes don't get us anything but at least if you have a determination, then you can direct those merits towards that purpose, that goal that you have.

Applying Dhamma to the action of sweeping the house with the broom

When you sweep the house with the broom, make that a meditation. Remember last week I asked you

“Do you have to take a particular posture before we can do Ānápànasati?”

When we went through the *Satara Satipatthàna suttà* and there we try to give meaning to these words and while I didn't discard the conventional meanings, I gave you something else to think

about and I said, ***“Ujumkáyam Panidáya - Parimukham Sathi Upátta Pethwa’ ... “This is to be forthright in your actions”*** and to have that one objective in mind that is Nibbána.

So, as you sweep the house with the broom, why can't that become a meditation? I can see dirt on the floor. I am going to get the broom and now I am going to start sweeping the house. My objective is to clean the floor. When there's dust, when there's dirt on the floor, it's not pretty. It doesn't look nice. Like what? Like the state of my mind, right now. There's desire, there's aversion and there's delusion. So, what I need to do is, use this broom to sweep the house and likewise I am going to use the Dhamma to cleanse my mind. So, the Dhamma...imagine when you are at home when you want to clean the floor...if you go and put the broom to a side just by the dirt, is the broom going to sweep the house on its own? There's some dirt on the floor, there's a pillar and you go and rest the broom on the pillar. Is the broom going to sweep the house on its own? No. You want to clean the house you have no broom. Can you clean the house? No. So if there's dirt on the floor, I mean, you need the broom to clean the house but the broom on its own is not going to clean the house and you, without the broom cannot clean the house either or sweep the floor to keep to that example. So, you need two things. You are required to be there. You have to make the effort and you also need the broom. Like what? Dharmayai, Obai. You need the Dhamma, and you need yourself. This is the effort that you need to put in, like by using the broom you clean the house, you clean the floor, you sweep the floor. So, that can be your meditation. You know as you clean the floor, as you are sweeping the floor why don't you think to yourself,

“what kind of desires do I have in my mind?”

You know, some bits of the floor it is really difficult to remove the dirt. Some dirt is stuck to the floor and you need extra effort. That's what they call elbow grease. So, you need a little bit of elbow grease to get that dirt and grime off. So, you need to put in extra effort to get it off. This is like what we said last week,

'Deeganwá Anccantó, Dìgan Anchámìti Pajánáti' ...Like the wood carver who uses his jack plane, and how, where he needs to take long strides, he takes a long stride, where he needs to take a short one, he takes a short one.

What you need is to remove defilements in your mind

See, if you were to write the Satara Satipattàna sùtta today, what example would you put in there? You wouldn't need the example of the wood carver. You could put yourself in there. Why don't you rewrite the Satara Satipattàna sùtta? Put your name in there. So, where the Buddha says,

'Dakkò Bambakàròwà'

Dakkò is 'daksha' , someone who is talented in skills, **Bambakàrò** is a woodcarver. So, put your name in there. Let's say your name..." *what's your name puthà?" Chanura? Dakkò Chanura - Skilled Chanura.* So this skilled Chanura does what? He takes the broom and sweeps the floor. Where he needs to take long strides, he takes a long stride. Where a short stride is required, he just takes a short stride. Where he is to apply extra effort, he applies extra effort. Where a little bit more effort, a medium effort is required, then medium effort will do the job just fine. But you need a broom in your hand to do that and there has to be bristles at the end of the broom stick, to be able to do that. With only broom stick you can't sweep the floor, can you? You need the bristles, attached to the bottom of it. So, effort is required. The Dhamma is required and the bristles on the end of the broom stick is *Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta*. So, you need *Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta*...the understanding of *Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta* to be able to do this. Because how else are you going to remove these defilements that are in your mind

Being mindful while painting

What if you are a painter? You could do the same. Sometimes some of you may be handy at home and get yourself a bucket of paint, a brush, and start painting. Could you not do Satara Satipattàna meditation while you are painting? Is it just a wood carver that can be used as an example there? What about when you are painting? You got your paint brush. You see these patches on the wall? Some of them may be mouldy patches that you want to get rid of and some of them are very faint. But others, they are very prominent. So, you need a few layers of paint on it before it disappears. Others, just one layer does the job...just fine. So, then you could put yourself into that discourse, into the *sùtta*. See, the wood carver does not sit down and remind himself how he does the wood

carving. What he does is, he takes the tools that he needs and then goes to work. So, you have to go to work.

Do your meditation while your body is engaged in other things

Recently, one of our anagárikas came and spoke to me and said,

“Swaminvahansè, I find that sometimes I have lots of things I need to do at the monastery. Helping out the monks and sometimes...you know...attending to my own work, washing up and things like that and sometimes going for sermons. Coming along with monks...and you know, there’s lots of stuffs I have to get through in the day and sometimes we have the Buddha púja...I go and sit down there. I don’t really find the time to do just what I want to do. To be able to sit down and just contemplate on the things I want to contemplate, what do I do? Where do I find the time?”

“I need a few extra hours”.

I said,

“We don’t have extra hours. You have 24 hours and I have just the same. The Buddha had the same. Each and every one of us, we all got the same amount of time in our hands.”

So I suggested, why don’t you...and what he suggested was,

“Perhaps I just continue doing this until one day when I become a monk, then I will have the time to go and sit down and meditate and do what it is that I need to do.”

I said, *“So, you think.”*

Mind is always at work

Remember, I said last week, if you thought the life of a lay person was busy, the life of a monk is a lot busier. Particularly where we come to contact with the lay world, the general public. There are lots of duties and responsibilities that come our way as well. So, we have to be careful sometimes not to take on too much. But whether you take on extra duties and responsibilities or not, even if

you are a monk, just having secluded yourself in a forest, if you are not a busy monk, then there is something wrong. Because right now whilst you might be busy, using your body...your words...and your arms and your legs, as a monk my mind is always very busy and so it should be. Because my mind is always at war. My mind is always at work. So, for the mind to be at work, I don't have to sit down anywhere because the mind doesn't need to sit down somewhere to start thinking. It can think. I mean, that's great, it's fantastic. This mind is fantastic. It doesn't need to be rested anywhere. It can just continue thinking. Whatever you want to think about, the mind can think of. Can it not? If I give you a 2-minute break, I am sure there will be plenty of stuff, plenty of things that you can think about. You don't need a break to think about stuff. You just think all the time. So, the mind is really talented in that way. It's a great tool that we all have. It can think all the time doing whatever. Don't you sometimes sing in the shower? Don't you sometimes sing when you are in the toilet? How are you able to do that? Well...because your mind can do that no matter what your body is doing. Your mind can sing while your body is attending to its needs. Don't you sometimes sing while you are ironing? Or sometimes have other conversations with your family members while you are cooking, cleaning the house...right?

So, your mind can do lots of stuff while your body is engaged in other things. Likewise, you can do your meditation, contemplation even, doing whatever, it really doesn't matter. For as long as you are abstaining from the unmeritorious deeds, because that has to be your foundation. Where there are unmeritorious deeds, the mind becomes disturbed and when the mind is disturbed, then that does not become a good foundation to build this house of Nibbána.

Do as much merit as you possibly can

You know...like when a brick layer first lays the foundation, waits for the foundation to dry, and on top of the foundation he starts laying the bricks. Likewise, we need to have a good foundation on which we can start laying these bricks. So, that foundation has to be one based on merit. Abstain from all demerit and do as much merit as you possibly can. So, look for opportunities to do merits, always, wherever you are. When you are walking along the road, perhaps you see a nail that's on

the road. There's a chance that someone might hurt themselves. Why could you not pick it up and put it to aside? How much merit do you think that's going to acquire?

Applying the dhamma into the action of picking up a nail on the road

When you do some merit like that which is unprompted, these are merits that are so powerful that can give you birth in the Paranimita Vasavatti. Because you have not been prompted to do it. You are doing it out of your own volition. Very powerful merits. So, what if when you pick that nail and then you think of the Dhamma as well. Now that you have the Dhamma you can apply the Dhamma into that. You know these nails, it could prick somebody like *rāga, dvésha, móha*, like *rāga, dvésha, móha* that is always keeping us on fire. The flames of *rāga, dvésha, móha*. I want to put that away. I want to extinguish this fire. So, as I am about to pick this nail up and put it to a side, and that's going to help someone else who comes after me to walk this path without injuring themselves. May I be able to receive the gift of Dhamma from a kalyánamitra, such that I am able to remove these defilements of *rāga, dvésha, móha* from my mind. So that I can travel this path to Nibbána, unhampered, uninjured.

How can I apply the Dhamma to the things that I do in my day to day life - Vimansà

So, you see, you know if it's something that is not to do with an unmeritorious deed, no matter what example you give me, no matter what incident or what event you give me in your life, I can guarantee there will be some Dhamma that you can apply into it and use it as a meditation object. No matter what it is. Whether it is buttoning up a shirt, taking your shirt off, whether it's walking to your school, whether it's opening up your books, writing down something, drinking some water...no matter what it is, there's always Dhamma that you can apply. So, it's up to each and every one of you to now start thinking. You know these **things I do in my day-to-day life, how can I apply the Dhamma?** That is *vimansà*. Like I said '*chanda, citta, vèriya, vimansà*.' *Satara Irdhipàda*. So you need the *Satara Irdhipàda* to be able to fulfil your path to Nibbána. Just *chanda* is not

enough. **Vimansa** is 'vimarshanaya' - to constantly keep analyzing and applying and you need the mind to do that.

Five Hindrances

So, once you understood the Dhamma, then from that point forward no matter what you do in your day-to-day lives, apply the Dhamma. But you can't apply the Dhamma when you are doing an unmeritorious deed because your mind is too unsettled at that time. The defilements as well as the **five hindrances** (*kàmacchanda, vyápáda, tina-middha, uddhaccha-kukkuccha, vicikicchá*)...these five hindrances have now veiled your mind and at that time there is no place for the Dhamma. At that time, you have been defeated. So, you need to try and remove yourself from such situations as soon as possible, as fast as possible.

Fighting defilements in our mind with Sath purusha sèvanaya (The Noble associations)

Recently, one of our young novice monks came and spoke with me. I think when he was ordained, he was in Grade Eight. He is about fourteen now and he said,

"Swaminvahasa, when I was a layman, I had a girlfriend and I liked music a lot. So, whenever I'm with others, I have no problem but when I'm alone, then these thoughts of my girlfriend start coming back in to my head."

See! Practical problems! Just because we have donned robes doesn't mean we have become Arahants. These defilements are still in our minds! So, remember the only difference between you and I, ladies and gentlemen is that, I'm doing this 24/7, you all are taking your time with it. Time, I don't have. Time...I can't trust myself to be alive, during which...So anyway, this young novice monk says,

"Swaminvahansa, you know, thoughts of my girlfriend keep coming back to me. How we used to go out together, how we used to be together, how we used to eat together...how I used to go and see her...in secret and also the music, I loved my music...and these songs that

I used to sing, they keep coming back into my head. What can I do at that time? What should I do at that time?"

So I said,

"These thoughts come to you when you keep yourself away, when you seclude yourself from the company of others, then try and keep yourself in the company of others."

Because...when I said others, we are talking about all the other monks at the monastery.

*"They are all **sath purushayao - eager to provide sath purusha sévanaya - the association of moral and noble people**. So, when you are in their company, what we talk of is, the Dhamma. Where the Dhamma prevails, there's no room for Asadhamma to rise. Mára is not powerful at that time when the Dhamma prevails. So, keep yourself in the company of others as much as you possibly can."*

Remember I gave you the story last week about that monk, who tried to seclude himself from the company of other monks and that story went to the Buddha and then the Buddha summoned this monk and asked him,

"what is it that you are up to?"

And he said, *"Bhagyawatunvahansa, you tell us to seclude ourselves..."*

And what did the Buddha say at that time?

"I don't mean seclude yourself physically from the company of other monks. You have to be in the company of the other monks. Otherwise, how would you be able to find out your faults?"

Is it easier to find our faults or is it easier to find other people's faults? Other people's faults, absolutely! It's a lot easier to find other people's faults. It's very difficult to find your own faults. That being the case, should we not be with others as much as we possibly can, who are able to find our faults and who are able to point them out when they see them, with the right intentions? Isn't that what we should be doing as much as we possibly can? So, be in the company of other monks such that they will be able to spot your faults and they will be able to provide you with advice and guidance and instructions on how to fix them. So, likewise, I explained to this monk...

"You know, don't try to seclude yourself. Try and always be in the company of other monks as much as possible."

Then he said,

"Ok that's fine but then there are still times when I have to seclude myself. When there are times when everyone else is busy and I have to find something to do on my own. Then what do I do?"

Then I said,

"Remember that you are at battle. If you keep in mind these 3 things, I'm going to share with you and that will help you win this battle."

Aren't we always at battle with *ràga, dvèsha, moha*? Yes.

So, these 3 things...

The three things that will help you win the battle with Ràga, Dvèsha, Moha

Number 1: Associate the Dhamma as much as you possibly can. Remember the reason you come here is not to associate me. The reason you come here is to associate the Dhamma. If I sit here and started preaching nonsense, would you be here the next day? If I sit down here and started cracking jokes and say nothing else or just keep shouting at other people and finding faults with other people, would you be here the next day? No. I urge you not to be here the next day. Write it down if you ever forget and then, when I ask you "why don't you come along to sermons anymore?" "Swaminvahansè, that day you said, if ever you start to speak nonsense and rubbish when you sit on that seat and you start pointing your fingers at other people and say "look at them, look at what they are saying, look at what they are doing and finding faults with other people... you said don't come along to these sermons anymore." So, the reason you are here, the reason you continue to come here is to associate the Dhamma. Ok...so number 1 is to associate the Dhamma as much as you possibly can. This is why I urge you and I encourage you to listen to these sermons repeatedly. Whenever you have some spare time listen to these sermons, be it English ones, Sinhala ones...it doesn't matter and it doesn't have to be Dharmayai Obai sermons, it can be any sermon. As long

as these sermons help you to eradicate *rāga*, *dvésha*, *moha*, that's all we need to be thinking about. That's all we need to be concerned of. Right? So, number 1, associate the Dhamma.

Number 2: Be mindful. Be mindful! Because, remember we are at battle and we have this battle court. Now you have your soldiers, standing and protecting your King. Imagine if your soldiers stood in the shape of a square and they are protecting the King who's in the centre. These soldiers have to be mindful. Sometimes enemies come in disguise. They are the most dangerous ones. Sometimes, enemies come and you know you can tell the enemy from miles away, and you can shoot them from afar. They are not that dangerous. The dangerous ones are the ones that come in disguise. Because when they are in disguise they can come up very close to you. Sometimes they have got a whole load of weaponry with them. But they are in disguise and because they are in disguise you can't spot them from afar. Then you have to wait until they approach you. So, you have to be very careful. Now, relate that to your own life experiences. Sometimes, when you feel *rāga* (desire), you can spot it from very far away. Sometimes it comes in disguise.

A practical example to show 'ràga in disguise'

I will give you an example. A really simple example you can relate to. Let's take a simple example...of a guy and a girl. One day a guy meets a girl who comes from a relatively poor family and she is very sad. This is a guy who is trying to study the Dhamma. Well he thinks he wants to attain *Nibbána*. Something called *Nibbána*. He's trying to progress on that path. He's doing merit...he's not a bad guy, he's a good guy. So, he sees this girl one day and this girl is in tears. So, he approaches this girl and asks her "What's the problem? Are you alright?" And then she says, "Well, I don't come from a well to do family. My parents are really poor and I don't have a lot of money" and she goes on to start explaining all the problems that she has. Now, he starts to sympathize with this girl and he thinks...'well you know the Buddha says, show *mettá*, show *karuná*, show compassion towards people. So, I have to be compassionate to this person. Let me be compassionate with this person' and then he says, "Well, don't cry. Let me sit down, let's discuss your problems and I will help you tackle your problems and he starts giving advice to this girl. "You

know such is life...you know, don't worry...I have had problems like that. You know I had breakups in my life...people who came close to me and then they went away and there have been times I was really sad. It's always good to have someone to share your sorrows with, isn't it?" and then she said, "Oh you are such a nice person. How kind of you to come and sit down and talk with me" and then he says, "Well, you know what...I got to go now but I will come back next week, and perhaps you will be feeling a little bit better."

Now this guy, what he wanted to do was to show compassion. So, these are enemies who come in disguise. So, he wanted to show compassion, nothing other than loving kindness and compassion. This is the problem. If you understand it wrongly, see...if you understand *mettá* and *karuná* wrongly, and you don't see the relation to Dhamma, you are going to go completely off track. Because if *mettá* is going to be all about being nice to other people. Oh, you poor being, let me help you. Here's some water...this that..." There is *mettá* as well. That is *loukika mettá* not the *lokottara mettá*. *Karuná*, that compassion is all about "Hey can I help you? Come along...you know, I got a spare room in my home you can take a rest for a few days there." That's *loukika karuná*. Where there's room for defilements. There's room for *áshrava*. So, if you don't have the essence of the Dhamma, then *mettá* and *karuná*, *loukika mettá* and *karuná* can take you completely the wrong way. Because these are enemies coming in disguise.

So the next week the guy goes back and...after he's done whatever his chores are, he goes and speaks with the girl,

"hey, how're you doing today?"

She says,

"well, you know what, it was so nice of you to come and speak with me that day. You know I was in tears...I was really broken down and thanks to you, I was able to overcome that grief. You know...I think we should probably hang around some time, right? Here's my number, we will catch up later."

That's the end of that story, or at least that chapter. Fast forward a couple more days, this guy thinks,

'mmmm...I wonder how she's doing...let me give her a call. I'm just being nice to her, you know. I'm just being nice to her, nothing else. No evil intentions This is what people have to do...be nice to other people. You know, Swaminvahansè said "mettá karanna, karuná karanna", so this is what I'm doing. I'm being nice to her. Let me give her a call.'

"Hey how're you doing? By the way, I didn't get your name that day."

"Oh my name is Sandamali."

"Oh great, my name is Supun. I will speak to you later, Sandamali."

Next day he calls and says,

"Hi, Sando!"

Sandamali became Sando or Sandu. Why? Being nice! I'm just being nice to her. She has no other friends. She said her family is in a really difficult situation right now.

"Would you like me to come around some time...you know...help out your parents, if they are ill and maybe there's something I can do?"

"Yeah! You know, I think that will be a great idea. My parents would love to see you."

So, he goes around to her place and they sit down. They sit down for a cup of tea and then you know...introduce to the parents. All what for? This is all being nice, nothing else. This is all being nice. Showing what? Compassion and Loving kindness, **'LOVING'!** in bold. At least that's where this is heading, forgetting the kindness. Now this is turning into love and then you know...the next day the girl rings up and said,

"You know, dad thinks you are a really nice guy. By the way, Supun..."

"Yeah...I thought the same. You know, why don't we go to the cinema in a week's time or so?"

Now where is this story heading? What did this guy want to do? He wanted to show **compassion and loving kindness. Mettá and karuná**. Previously, he wanted to practice the Dhamma and his intentions were to become a monk perhaps, in the course of a few months but what happened? Completely went off track. Why? Because of enemies who come in disguise. So, you have to be mindful. You know, when you do good people and I'm sure that you are, right? who you were, and who you are now are, sometimes worlds apart and I'm sure you will be able to confirm that. You

are the best testament of the Dhamma. Really, nothing else. You will know how you, used to be. Fast forward...or rather rewind a couple of years' 3, 4 years back, the person that you were and who you are now, I'm sure you will be able to say "My God, swaminvahansè, we are worlds apart who I was then and who I am now. Thanks to the Dhamma! and nothing else. Thanks to the Dhamma."

So, you all are good people. What happens with good people ladies and gentlemen? This again is practical advice. You are going to attract other people towards you. This is going to happen. Both men and particularly women, be careful. Being a good person, you are going to attract other people. You are going to become the centre of attraction. Other people will want to associate with you because back in those days, you spoke harsh words but now, your words are very soft. You are very kind to people. You are very nice to people. You speak in a very soft tone. Because you think, 'I need to practice the Dhamma, the Dhamma has made me a very calm and collected person'. These are the attributes that people like to see in society. So ,they are going to be attracted towards you, both men and women, especially the young amongst you. This is practical advice I want to share with you. Well, guess what? This can happen to not just lay people. What about monks?

How many stories have you heard of where, monks who ordained came into the *sásanaya* to fulfil the path to *Nibbána* and then what happened? A pretty young girl came to the monastery or to the temple one day and then, because he wanted to be nice, he went and sat down and started to deliver a sermon and then she started brushing her hair to one side and the other side...a few smiles, a few furtive glances and the next day this monk forgets why he ordained in the first place.

Shouldn't we be careful? Is it just you, who has to be careful? No. For as long as *rága*, *dvésha*, *moha* are walking on two feet...who's that? Me? I'm just *rága*, *dvésha*, *moha* walking on two feet! This is who a person is. Just a bundle of *rága*, *dvésha*, *moha* walking on two feet! We have to be careful of enemies who come in disguise. Because otherwise what happens is, we forget our purpose and loving kindness and compassion turns to other aims and other objectives and before you know it,

you are off track and you are lost. Sometimes you end up as worse persons than you started. So, be mindful. That's number 2.

Number 3: Never give up. This is where effort comes in. Because when you are fighting that battle ladies and gentlemen, you are bound to come across enemies. Some of them will have quite heavy weaponry. Some of them will be quite fatal. Some dangerous weaponry they will have on them. The easy thing to do is...well...today is ok, tomorrow I'm going to be a better person. You are one day too late. Think about really practical day-to-day examples such as, when you have a report to do at work or perhaps some homework that has to get done and you have a week to complete it, what is the natural inclination? Procrastination. Today, I'm just going to let today go by. I will start tomorrow. I'm sure I will be able to do this some time. You are one day too late and then the next day comes along, well...I still got three days left in the week, I have only taken off two days, I've got so many things to do, there are lot of people who need my attention, who need my time...and by the way, Swaminvahansè said what? "Be nice to other people." He said "be good, be kind to other people. Loving kindness!" I have to be compassionate. So, I need to help other people out. So, I'm going to go and do that and he switches on the TV..."Oh, there is news on television...you know, I need to know, I need to keep myself abreast with what's going on in the world". So, news is from 7 to 8 o'clock. The 8 o'clock news finishes. It's time to switch off the television. But..."oh, just another 15 minutes isn't going to do any harm is it really"...Now you sat down for another 15 minutes another program starts. Now, you are curious what's going to happen next. Like how they do in tele-dramas. You know how they always leave you on a cliff hanger before the adverts? Or how they always leave you on a cliff hanger right at the end of the episodes so that you are always going to tune in the next day? Because this is the nature of the world ladies and gentlemen.

Promise of pleasure & Effort (viriyā)

Remember, I think a few weeks ago I spoke to you and I said about the promise of pleasure, wherever you go as you walk on the streets...the promise of pleasure...all these billboards and shops and...all these advertisements, promising you of pleasure. When in the face of pleasure,

when pleasure has been promised, our natural inclination is to bend towards it. Because this is what we have been practicing throughout *sansára*. In seek of happiness, we always lean towards sources of pleasure. Because we were never able to see the suffering that lies beneath the veil of pleasure. We never did *vidarshaná* - '*vidalà beluwe nehe*', what lies beneath? We were fooled by what lies on the surface.

So, this is why, whenever you feel the promise of pleasure...whenever you think..."mmm...this is something that's going to bring me pleasure'. That's the time to use the Dhamma. You have to be careful...what's that old saying? I can't remember it off the top of my head right now. But there's an old saying that has this meaning whereby...the people that you don't get along with, you know, them, you can kind of...be mindful, just keep an eye out for them from time to time. But the people who are closest to you, you have to be always mindful (Keep your friends close and your enemies closer). Because you have allowed them to come into your personal space. You've trusted them to come in to your personal space and then stand up right in front of you, right by you. Likewise, the pain that comes to your life, you have to be generally be aware of it. But when pleasure comes to you, that's when you have to be extremely cautious...extremely mindful. Because if you are not able to penetrate through the veil of pleasure and see the suffering beneath it, see the suffering behind it, then it's only going to be a matter of time before you are going to be defeated. So, this is where you need to have right effort. This is where you need to have that effort and to have the determination "I'm not going to give up! I'm never going to give up!"

If you see a line of ants in your kitchen or at home somewhere and if you don't like them, you want to get rid of those ants and there are two ways you can do it. What's the easier thing to do? Mmm... kill them? Or spray Baygon and they'll be gone! That's the easier way to do it. What's the better way to do it? What's the more efficient way to do it? If there are ants you will know that these ants are attracted by something that is sweet. So, you go and find the source of the attraction and then you do what? Remove the sweets, remove the source of the attraction. Once you've done that you don't have to deal with the ants again. The ants will be gone in a matter of minutes.

The two ways to deal with problems in life

So, there are two ways that you can deal with problems in life. I'm talking about the pleasures that come your way, the suffering that comes your way. Pleasure and suffering. Because they are two sides of the same coin. When you experience suffering, you can either try and get rid of the suffering and for that you can do *káya sankára*, *vací sankára* and *mano sankára* or you can look at the other side of the coin and you spot what? Pleasure. This was the pleasure that attracted you towards whatever it was that ultimately brought you the suffering.

How to avoid the trap or how to avoid the bait

Remember the rat that took the classes? We spoke about that in the past. When the rat wants to avoid the trap and there are two classes that the rat could choose. It could pick one or the other. One class teaches what? How to avoid the trap. The other teaches what? How to avoid the bait. Which class does the rat need to go to? The bait. If the rat takes the second class, then that suffering will no longer be a part of its life.

But there are various types of traps. Just because you learned how to avoid one trap doesn't mean you are not going to fall into another trap. Isn't that the case? When 50 years back...I don't know if they had traps for rats back then. Let's take 20 years back, there would have been some kind of traps for rats. But now, these traps are very advanced. In fact, there is a Youtube channel on which they show nothing but how to make innovative rat traps. There's a dedicated Youtube channel for that. Because recently Guru Swaminwahanse did a sermon called '*Mee Habaka*', this is the trap for the rat. Then it got posted on Youtube and so because Youtube does these analytics in the background and thinks we are now really keen about rat traps. You go on Youtube and it brings us the recommendations, now here's another way you can trap a rat. Ok, so there are these really clever ways now that people have come out with to trap rats. So, over time, the techniques are going to change. They are going to evolve and they are going to get more complicated, more complexed. So, if you are going to try to learn how to avoid the suffering, you are going to have to

keep doing that forever. But if you learn how to avoid the bait, then that's a one shot. Do it once and you will never have to fall into the trap, no matter what shape or how tricky the trap is.

So, what we need to do then is to have the effort. Never give up that determination. Whenever you experience *áshváda*, whenever you experience pleasure in your lives, please take a moment to look behind the pleasure. Because you have to be able to see the vexation that lies behind it. You have to be able to see the *peleema* that lies behind it. If you are not able to see the vexation that lies behind the pleasure, what do you do then? One, you don't give up, you continue to investigate. This is like Sherlock Holmes. When was the last time Sherlock Holmes ever gave up? No, he never gave up! Every story he found out who the criminal was, right? So, you got to be the Sherlock Holmes then. Because sometimes, like I said, these pleasures they come in disguise. These enemies they come in disguise. On the front of it, there's just a load of pleasure, very attractive, very luring. So, you got to be the Sherlock Holmes and then look behind the veil, until you spot...

"Aha I found it! I have been in vexation all along! This is why I felt like this is bringing me pleasure."

Now when you see that, you realise that this is not a friend but a foe. Now you start attacking and then you win the battle. But what if you say,

"Hey he looks like a decent guy. Let's take him in" and now you brought him in to your castle. Who's come in? A foe in disguise. Now this guy can wreak havoc, can't he? Straight to the kill. He's going to kill you. He's going to destroy you. Isn't it the pleasure in your lives that have destroyed you so far in *sansára*. Wasn't it the pleasure that always brought you suffering? The things that looked painful on the surface, you were never attracted to them. But the things that looked pleasurable on the surface that promised you a world of pleasure. like what? Pleasure land...right? The things that promised you pleasure on the surface, those were the things that attracted you, those were the things that lured you. So, you went after it. You allowed it to come into your personal space.

"Come, let's be friends. Be mine. Be part of me. You are welcome"

and then what did it do? As soon as it found the opportunity, backstabbed, slit your throat. So be very careful.

Make Dhamma your best friend

If you use these three things ladies and gentlemen, you can be safe. One, associate the Dhamma. The Dhamma has to be your best friend. So, if I ask you who is your best friend, please while you are under this roof, who should that be? The Dhamma. When you leave this building, when you leave the temple and your friend comes and asks you “who’s your best friend?”, don’t say the Dhamma. They will probably think you’ve gone mad. You can give an answer to that. But now at least if someone asks you “who’s your best friend?” At least you think about what Swaminwahanse said in the sermon, who should be my best friend really, and that should be the Dhamma. So, make the Dhamma your best friend. Befriend the Dhamma. So, if you are unable to spot the *Māra* that lies behind the *āshvāda*, if you are unable to spot the pain or the vexation that lies behind the pleasure, you continue to exercise effort. But then there are times where exercising effort itself is not enough. Then what are you lacking? Number 1. What? The Dhamma. That's what you are lacking. If after a continuous perusal, if after a continuous digging and digging and digging, you are still not able to see the vexation that lies behind the pleasure, you need more Dhamma. You need to go and study the Dhamma. So, go back to the drawing board, why is it that I sense this as pleasure?

You know, I sometimes wish that...more people would come and tell me "Swaminwahanse ...because actually what happens most of the time is, people come and tell me,

“Swaminwahanse, I’m frustrated. I’m suffering right now. I’m in pain. Please could you help me?”

That’s ok, I can help but I wish more people came and spoke to me and said

“Swaminwahanse, I feel attracted to this thing or that thing or the other. There’s a girl, there’s a guy I feel attracted to. How do I fight that battle?”

“ Swaminwahanse, there’s a particular type of food that I find myself always attracted to and I can’t break the attraction. I can’t break the lure.”

Now which lesson are you taking? How to avoid the bait! Well, if you are clever enough to say that the rat should go to the first class and not the second, well, what class should you go to then? Cause I offer both classes. You can pick which class you want to come to. The second class I’m not

really so keen on, but because I have a duty to you and you know...when you are broken down, when you are sad, when you are feeling frustrated and disappointed...yes of course we can help you there as well. But the reason you have to come along to this class is why? Because you skipped the other class. The reason you have to go for support classes because you skipped which class? The main class. That's why you need support classes. So I wish more people would really come and speak to me and say,

"Swaminvahansè, I feel attraction. I feel desire. There's a pretty girl in class and I can't break the attraction. I feel like I'm going to fall for her! What should I do?"

That's where I can help you best! Because now you are treating the problem before it becomes a problem. When you've come in to that relationship and now you are starting to suffer. Then, it's too late. Now we are trying to fix after the fact. So, all of that is just some practical advice, an advice that I shared with that young novice.

Remember those three things, forget everything else. Just keep those three things as your guiding light. One, associate the Dhamma as much as you possibly can. Every moment you get, every time you get, every spare moment you get, associate the Dhamma, learn the Dhamma, study the Dhamma. Learn the scriptures. Open up the Tripitaka and read some of the scriptures and you learn the Buddha's advice that He gave. You know, some people they have trouble falling asleep. When you sit down to listen to a sermon or sit down to meditate, before you know it, you doze off! Guess who else had that problem back in the Buddha's time? The Great Elder Moggallána - Buddha's chief disciple. He had that problem as well. Did you take a moment to go and read the advice that the Buddha gave? If you think you've got a problem, guess what? The Buddha covered it. He's seen it all before. He's the greatest doctor ever! He's seen it all before! So, if you have that trouble, if you have that problem, go and refer to the scriptures. Read some of those text. If you can't find it, then you can come and ask the Swaminwahanse. "Now, Swaminvahansè, what advice can you give me? I hear that the Buddha offered some advice to the Great Elder Moggallána. What should I do? Can you share with me some of that advice?" So, study the Dhamma, associate the Dhamma as much as you possibly can.

Being mindful

Number 2, be mindful always. Whenever you are doing something, be mindful. What am I doing this for? Remember it's not a case of being mindful that you are moving the parts of your body. It's not what you are doing that matters. It's WHY you are doing it, that matters. The 'what' is not so important, the 'why' is the crucial factor. Because two people doing the same thing, one can earn merit, one can earn demerit. Depending on 'what or why' they are doing it.

A really simple story, there's a man lying on a bed, he's bleeding. There's another man standing next to him. He's got a knife in his hand. What thoughts come to mind? Murderer or surgeon? One is earning merit. The other is earning demerit, acquiring demerit. Why? It's not the 'what'. It's the 'why', intention; '**Cétanāham Bikkhavé Kammam Vadāmi**'. So be mindful of what your intentions are when you conduct yourself in day-to-day life and that, each and every one of you can do it. Doesn't matter what age you are. Puthà, can you not be mindful of all the things that you do in your day-to-day life? Of course! When you open the door and you step outside, why am I doing this? What am I going after? Why do I need to do this? Before you open your mouth to speak to somebody, why am I sharing this? What am I about to speak?

Another *anagārika* came and spoke to me the other day and I offered him some advice recently. Because he said,

"Swaminvahansè, sometimes when I open my mouth, I say things that I regret, later on. You know, when I sometimes see people wasting things or sometimes when I see that people shouldn't be conducting themselves in certain ways, I go and say things and then later on I regret"

and then I asked him, *"Why did you say it in that way?"*

And then he said,

"It's because I want other people to know that they are wrong. I want other people to be able to spot the person who's done wrong."

I said, *"That's where the problem is."*

If through the course of giving your advice, whoever it is that stops doing the wrong thing, haven't you achieved what he wants to achieve? You know if among you there is a murderer...let's say one of you is a murderer. I give you advice...generally, one way I could advise,

“Hey guys, that guy over there, he is a murderer.”

Now everyone is looking at him. He's never going to want to change. He's going to feel belittled. All his self-respect is going to be washed away and he is going to start hating but what if I could give general advice and I say,

“You know what? If you do something like this...murder is a bad thing to do. Taking away someone's life. It's a really bad thing to do and these are some of the things that could happen to you.”

Now that person is willing to change but we never pointed our finger at that person. But he or she was able to take the advice and change for the better. Shouldn't that be our objective?

Are there good and bad people in this world?

Are there good and bad people in this world? Ok first question, are there bad people in this world? No. Are there good people in this world? No. There are good qualities and bad qualities. There are people, in whom all the qualities that they possess are good. Who are they? Arahants - The Buddhas, the *Paccéka Buddhas*, and the *Arahattha* Buddhas. There are other people...I mean there are only two types of people, from that context. There are some people in whom all the qualities that they possess are good. And then there are others who have a mixture of good and bad. But there is no one in this world who only has what? Bad qualities. There is no one person like that. Has never been born, will never be born. Didn't *Dévadatta* have good qualities? Didn't he? Did he not respect his parents? At least, himself? I'm not talking about what he got someone else to do. *Ajásatta*, what about him? Everyone has good and bad qualities, a mixture of good and bad. There is not one person who is entirely bad. Because there are no good and bad people. They are just qualities.

So, when you look at people and you try to judge people, it's really a lame thing to do. Because to be able to judge somebody, you should be able to make a list of all the good and bad qualities that

person possesses and can you do that? Aren't we so quick to judge people sometimes? You know, they speak of first impressions...isn't that a judgment? And how long do they say it takes, to make a first impression of somebody? Is it like ten seconds or something like that? There have been studies that have been done about this. First impressions and first impressions last long. Because what happens, in that first ten seconds, you associate someone, in your mind you try to spot those qualities that you can relate to. What about all the qualities that you can't relate to? What about the qualities that you don't know about, you don't know of? Because you can only measure somebody else with your own yardstick. If you have a yardstick, which is how long? A yard. That's why it is called a yardstick. That's the furthest you can measure, a yard. That's the longest distance you can measure. If you want to measure something that's longer than that, then you need a different tool, at once if not you are going to waste time because you are going to keep moving the yardstick and that's going to take time. But what if you only have a yardstick or let's take a meter ruler. You look at a kilometer and you want to try and gauge how long that is with your ruler and you only got a one-meter ruler. You can only, accurately say it's at least one meter long. Beyond that you have no sense. You are not able to gauge that. Because you don't have the qualities that person possesses for you to be able to gauge that person.

So, when you say someone's good, who are you comparing that person to? Yourself. When you say someone's bad, who are you comparing that person to? Yourself! If you are in a clique of drunkards, isn't each of them going to say "Hey, he's a really good guy, he never grasses us out. You know we should associate with him." But standing outside, if you are not a drunkard and then you look at that clique and you think, "no, don't associate with them." Because you say, "You know they are bad people" but that's wrong. What about all the good qualities that they possess that you don't? So, you have to really be able to appreciate other people. Not just other people, all other beings. Can you appreciate a dog? Absolutely! Let's take a dog, say you have a pet at home and this dog always litters in your living room. Now, one man could say, "this animal is a real pain" and he starts hitting the animal and every time he sees the animal all he can think of is...all he has is, thoughts of anger and aversion and hatred towards this animal and he hits the animal all the time and shouts at the animal. What about the fact that whenever he comes home, the animal comes running

because his master's come home and it's so happy to see the master, to meet and greet the master. Could you not appreciate that quality in the animal?

Dung Beetle & it's nature (or sankhàra)

Have you heard of this insect called, the 'dung beetle'? There's a small insect, it's called the dung beetle. Why is it called the dung beetle? Sorry? Rolls dung, yes. It goes looking for what? Dung. What's dung? Cow dung. It's called the dung beetle because it goes looking for dung. It rolls dung all the time. So, no matter where you put a dung beetle down, whether it's in your garden or somewhere on the floor, it's always looking, for what? Dung. That's the nature of that animal. Guess what it did when it was a human being? What kind of *sankhàra* do you think that animal did when it was a human? What did he go looking for? Dung. Never appreciated anybody. Always sought weaknesses in other people so he could criticize. So that's what a dung beetle does. It keeps rolling the dung and it keeps collecting bits of dung and amalgamating that to a little ball that it has, so it can make it bigger and bigger. You have seen it on perhaps on television...you can just punch it onto Google or Youtube when you get back home "Dung Beetle" and study that animal and the nature of that animal what it does. So, it plays with this dung. I mean...I don't think that it's playing with it but this is all the animal can do. Just rolls dung all day long because that's what he used to when he was a human being, when that animal was a human being, all it went looking for was the dung in other people. Not the diamonds. Not the gems. So, what kind of person are you then? Given the opportunity, do you spot people's faults and weaknesses immediately or are you keen to spot people's strengths and their positive attributes, their good qualities, their great qualities?

An Arahant is an amalgamation of Good Qualities

Remember last week I said an Arahant is nothing other than an amalgamation of a bunch of qualities. All what qualities? Good qualities and remember I also said, the reason I'm not an Arahant today? What's the reason I'm not an Arahant yet? Because I don't possess all the great qualities

that, who possesses? You. Sir, when I possess all the great qualities that you do, I will be an Arahant. When I possess all the great qualities that you do madam, I will be an Arahant. When I possess all the great qualities that you all possess today, I will be an Arahant. What if I possess all the dung qualities you all have today? What will I be? A Dung Beetle! If I just go looking for dung, I'm going to find dung. You can find what you seek for because until you find, you're going to keep looking for it. But if you're looking for gems, then absolutely you will find gems in people. So, look for the gems in other people so that you can make them a part of you. Because if you want to become an Arahant, then becoming an Arahant is nothing other than collecting, going after other people, associating other people and finding the gems that they hold that you don't...and making that part of your treasure chest. Then, do so! but for that you have to be able to spot the gems first. You have to be able to spot the diamonds first. If all you do is spot the dung, then you're going to become a dung beetle. Don't become a dung beetle.

So, I know in the past you have come and shared with me stories of sometimes people in your family, sometimes people at work and how some of them mistreat you. I think recently there was a really long email that came through someone forwarded and showed me a printout of that...and there was this one lady who's giving a really long description about some problems they're having at home and she wanted me to give some advice. I didn't really have the time to go through it...so...I will probably pick that up next week. But no matter who you associate ladies and gentlemen, you have to be able to spot the gems within them. If you can't spot the gems within them, whose fault is that? Indeed. It's our fault. It's my fault. Always spot the gems within other people. So, when you become an Arahant, what you are doing is really spotting these great qualities in other people and collecting them one by one into your treasure chest. You keep filling this treasure chest up. One day it's going to fill to the brim and that day, you are an Arahant. That's what we need to do. Not just in people but animals. Anyone you come across, try and find the gems within them. So, that was just another bit of practical advice.

Coming back to the main point that I wanted to talk to you about today... I wanted to continue on what we started last week and that is the foundations of mindfulness. But I'm not really going to

talk about the rest of it because there are 14 types of *káyánupassaná*. We only spoke about *ánápànasati*. Then there is '*iriyapátha pabbatha*', **how you focus your contemplation of the postures**. But what I want to talk to you about today is...what I ask you at the beginning which is *indriya bhávanà*. This is **contemplation on the faculties**.

Discourse the Buddha gave the brahmin about the contemplation on the faculties, *indriya bhàvanà*

Now, to start with, I will give you a short story. There was one day a non-Buddhist disciple who went and spoke to the Buddha. He sat down with the Buddha and he asked the Buddha,

"Venerable Gautama, you teach of indriya bhávanà in your dispensation, don't you?"

And He said,

"yes, I do."

And then this Brahmin says,

"Well...guess what, we teach the indriya bhávanà as well and our indriya bhávanà is something like this...we advise those who are engaged in this indriya bhávanà to pretend to be blind, to pretend to be deaf. So, while you still have eyes, pretend to be blind. Pretend that you can't see. So, walk around like blind people with your eyes closed. Pretend you can't hear things. Pretend to be deaf. You have a tongue and you can taste. Pretend you can't taste. This is the indriya bhávanà, that we teach in our teaching."

And then he asks the Buddha,

"Do you teach something similar?"

Venerable *Ánanda* stood next to the Buddha and the Buddha says,

"Ánanda, look at what this man is talking about. He says, while you got eyes, pretend you are blind. While you got ears, pretend you are deaf"

and He looks back again at the Brahmin and asks,

"So, Brahmin, what if I were to ask you the question: what if people who are born blind and deaf, would it not be easier for them to do the indriya bhávanà than you?"

So now this brahmin is lost for words. Because then they'll have cultivated that *bhávanà* much better than people who have been born with eyes and ears. So, if you really want to practice that

bhāvanà what's the best thing to do as soon as you are born? Blind yourself and make yourself go deaf! If you do that then it's much easier to do that meditation, that bhāvanà. So, the Buddha says,

"That is not the indriya bhāvanà that I teach in my dispensation"

and when He said that Venerable Ananda says,

"Oh, Venerable Sir, please would you preach to us the indriya bhāvanà?"

And he makes an invitation to the Buddha and then the Buddha says,

"ok, I shall speak. Listen."

The Buddha asks,

"All of you who seek pleasure in your lives and to seek pleasure (this touches on some of the points we spoke about last week), to find this pleasure, there are certain things that we have to use. Think of it as tools that we use to find pleasure. One of these is the eye. The other is the cakkhu vinnāna (the eye consciousness), the other is the rūpa, the rūpa that is in the outside world. Then there is the cakkhu samphassa, which is rūpa, eye, and the mind, all lining up. Think of it as all those three factors lining up to give you the result. Then there is cakkhu samphassajā védanà...the sensation that comes out of the process of looking at that object. Isn't that the process that we use, aren't these the things that we use to find pleasure in our lives?"

The Buddha asks and the brahmin says,

"Yes, this is what we use to find pleasure in our lives. This is the problem," he says.

So, isn't that true in our lives? To seek pleasure we use the eye, we use the outside world, the objects that we see in the outside world, the sights, we use our eye consciousness, the consciousnesses that we have.

So, if you die, then there is no consciousness. But there's an eye. There's no point. That's no good.

What if you have an eye, you have eye consciousness, but you are put into a dark room?

Now there's no light, so you can't see the outside world.

What if you have consciousness, there is light, but there is no eye? You still can't see.

So, all these three things have to be there for *cakkhu samphassa* to take rise. So *cakkhu samphassa* is something that is subject to what? *Udaya, weya - Udávenawà, weyawenawà* (arising and passing away).

Arising & Passing away - Example of fire

Remember, like the fire. You know, the fire is a great example of how things arise and pass away. When you look at a fire and you are pointing at a fire and say, 'that is a fire', the moment you point at the fire, what's happening? The factors that give rise to that fire are coming together. There's oxygen, there's temperature, and there's whatever that is flammable. So, all these three things coming together to give fire at that point in time. So, the next moment, half a millisecond later, it's the same factors, but not the same things. It's not the same bit of oxygen, it's not the same temperature, it's not the same flammable object that's giving rise to the fire half a millisecond later. So, with every moment, the fire is being risen and it passes away. Arising and passing away arising and passing away. So, this is the process that happens.

Indriya bhàvanà continued

So likewise, when we create this pleasure land within us and I'm borrowing material from last week's sermon, the self-procreation as we spoke about, this 'me' (*mama*), 'self' to give rise to this pleasure land, the self-procreation process, we use the eye, we use the object in the outside world and we use the *cakkhu vinnána*. When these three things come together, provided the condition of *avidyá* exists because ignorance is a condition, it's like a switch that is turned on or off, one or the other. So, like when the condition of *avidyá* is turned on, you know, a good example of that is photosynthesis. Because in photosynthesis, you have...what's the equation of photosynthesis I can't remember now...but you need light for photosynthesis to take place, right? But light is not part of the reaction. It becomes a catalyst for the reaction. For as long as light exists, the reaction takes place and then you get the food that the plant produces at the end of that process.

So likewise, you know you either have light or you don't have light. For as long as the condition of light is present, photosynthesis can take place. So you need carbon dioxide and I think it's sugar? I can't remember now. This is old stuff...water? Yes! Water and what else? carbon dioxide, So, carbon dioxide and water. Provided there is sunlight, you get oxygen and glucose on the other side ok. So, that's the photosynthesis process. Now, whether there is light or not, is a condition. When the condition is true, so 'Is there light? Yes.', then the photosynthesis process takes place. 'Is there light? No. Then no matter how much carbon dioxide you have there...no matter how much water you have there, you are not going to get out oxygen and the products you need out of the process. So, this is a condition.

Likewise, there is a condition of *avidyá*, the condition of ignorance. For as long as the condition of ignorance is there, when the *rúpa*, the eye, and the consciousness meet, you get *samphassa*. Not any old *phassa*. *Phassa* is one, *samphassa* is the other. So, ***phassa* is contact**. *Phassa*, not the...it's *Phassa* with *mahaprána payanna*. So, that's *phassa*, which is contact. These three come in together. But these three come together provided there is a condition of ignorance. That's why it's *samphassa*. Ignorance and attachment. So when ignorance and attachment is there you get *samphassa*. When ignorance and attachment are there and these three things come together, now you have *samphassajá védana*. *Já* is nothing but 'giving birth to'. Have you heard the name *punkaja*? Some people have the name *Punkaja*. ***Punka* is mud. *Já* is what? *Upan...to be born***. So that which is **born in the mud, is *Punkaja***. So, likewise, *Já* is...again it's to do with *nirukthi* (etymology)... *Já* is to 'give rise to'. So, *samphassa já védaná*, *védaná* that comes through the process of *samphassa*, which is nothing other than *rúpa*, the eye, and *cakkhu vignána*, the three coming together, provided the condition of *avidyá* exists, it's *cakkhu samphasa já védaná*. Now, so let's count them on our fingers. There's the *rúpa*, there's the eye, the eye consciousness, *cakkhu samhassa*, and *cakkhu samphasa já védaná*. So, these are the five things and *védaná paccayá tanhá*. Bringing a little bit of *Paticca Samuppáda* into this process as well - *védaná paccayá tanhá* ...ok. Now, we sentient beings, we look for pleasure through this process.

So, the Buddha asked,

“Isn’t it pleasure that you seek by attaching yourself to these five things?”

“Yes,”

is the answer that comes from this Brahmin. For you to be able to find pleasure by associating yourself and attaching yourself to these five things, these five things have to produce pleasure at the end of this process. Because if it doesn’t, then what you are doing is a futile process. What you are doing is very futile. It’s meaningless, essence less.

So He says, *“Take a moment to check if, what you are doing is ultimately going to lead you to pleasure. Otherwise, it’s a waste of time. If it leads you to pleasure, then great. Continue doing it. If it’s not going to lead you to pleasure, then there’s a problem which has to be fixed.”*

So once again, *rúpa* (which is all the *rúpa* that we see, through our eyes), the eye, *cakkhu vinnána* (which is the eye consciousness), *cakkhu samphassa*, and the *védaná* that comes (or the feeling that comes through that process *cakkhu samphassa já védaná*) and when this *védaná* arises, now you have *tanhá...tanhá paccayá upádána → upádána paccayá bhava → bhava paccayá játi → játi paccayá ...we will come back to that later on.*

So this is what the Buddha asked. The eye is one example. Then He asked,

“What about the ear? Do you not seek pleasure through your ears?”

The Brahmin says,

“Yes, Venerable Sir. We do seek pleasure through our ears.”

*“How is it that you seek pleasure through your ears? Well, there has to be sound (which comes from the outside world), we need the ear, and the ear consciousness (the *sóta vinnána*), then there has to be the *samphassa*.”*

The Brahmin doesn’t know anything about *samphassa* ok. So, the Buddha says,

“Isn’t this the case?” He explains and asks “Isn’t this the case?”

*So *sóta samphassa → sóta samphassa já védaná → védaná paccayá tanhá → tanhá paccayá upádána → upádána paccayá bhava → bhava paccayá játi → játi paccayá ...the rest of it. We will come back to that later.**

Then He takes another example.

“Do you not seek pleasure through your nose?”

He says, *“Yes.”*

“How is it that you seek pleasure through your nose?”

“Well, there are smells that we can sense through our noses (so the smells have to exist in the outside world), and we take in those smells through our noses (so there is the gandha, there is the nose, then there is the gandha vignána, gandha samphassa {which is the contact of all these three, provided there’s a condition of what? Avidyá and tanhá.}, and then gandha samphassa já védaná (which is the sensation that comes out of that).”

So that can either be sukkha védaná, dukkha védaná or adukkhamasukha védaná.

Let’s just talk about the *sukkha védaná* for now because that is what keeps us going round in *sansára*, right? This is what we find pleasurable. So again, *védaná paccayá tanhá →...tanhá paccayá upádána, → upádána paccayá bhava → bhava paccayá jati* and we come back later on to the rest of it.

So likewise, all five senses if you take...and I know the sixth sense which is the Dhamma (*mana*). *Mana*, being the mind faculty, there is the mind, there are the dhammas...so what are the dhammas? What are dhammas? Beg your pardon? The thoughts. So, these are the thought objects. The *aramunu*. These are the thought objects that come in to your mind, which then the mind clings on to and then uses that to run the process.

So again, you need the dhamma, you need the mind, you need the *manó vignána → manó samphassa → manó samphassa já védaná → védaná paccayá tanhá → tanhá paccayá upádána → upádána paccayá bhava → bhava paccayá jati*.

Now again the Buddha says,

“Isn’t this how you seek pleasure? Through your five senses and the mind.”

And the Brahmin says,

“Yes, Venerable Sir, this is how we seek pleasure.”

“If it is pleasure that you seek and if this is the process that you use to seek pleasure, should you not take a moment to check if this process is ultimately going to lead you to pleasure or not?”

That’s a very simple question, is it not? Absolutely! Cause, what if this process leads you to pain and suffering? Then this is not a worthwhile process. He doesn't say there is anything wrong with seeking pleasure. Seek pleasure, that's ok. Just check that the process you are using is going to help you get there.

Now, this is what *indriya bhàvanà* is, in the Buddha’s dispensation. Contemplation of this reality. This is why, I prefer to use the word contemplation rather than meditation because we need to contemplate on this truth. Now you and I...this is what we can do. What you need to do is, ask yourself, how do I seek pleasure in this world? I seek pleasure in six different ways - through my eyes, through my ears, through my nose, through my tongue, through my body, and through my mind. What is the process that I use to find this pleasure, to seek pleasure?

If you take the eye; there is the eye, then there are the sights. These two come in together and I need the consciousness that helps me to make sense of all these that’s going on. So, there’s the eye consciousness. Provided these three things come together, and the condition of ignorance exists, there is *cakkhu samphassa*. Through *cakkhu samphassa*, arises *cakkhu samphassa já védaná* and then that *védaná* leads to *upádána*, *upádána* leads to *bhava*, *bhava* leads to *játi*.

Now, what happens after that? Where does *játi* lead to? *Jará, marana, sóka, paridéva, dukkha, dómanassa, upáyása, sambhavanti éva métassa kévalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayó hóti*. The Brahmin doesn’t know any of these. Why? Who revealed the *Paticca Samuppádda* process to the world? The Buddha. So only a Buddha or someone who has understood and learned the Dhamma from the Buddha, can ever speak of the *Paticca Samuppádda* process. You are never going to find the Bible, or you are never going to find the copy of the Bible, in which the *Paticca Samuppádda* process is written down. That is never going to happen. Unless someone goes and distorts the Bible and puts the *Paticca Samuppádda* process into the Bible. The original Bible will never have the Dependent Origination process within it. The Holy Quran will never have the Dependent Origination process within it. It’s just not going to happen. It cannot happen. It’s not

possible. You will only find the Dependent Origination process in the *Tripitakaya*, which contains the Buddha's teaching. Otherwise, you don't need a Buddha to attain *Nibbána*. One who has seen the Dependent Origination process is a *Sótapanna*.

Now, to see the Dependent Origination process is not a case of memorising the words. It's a case of getting the feeling behind it, it's a case getting the meaning behind it, understanding the mechanism behind it, not the words. You could call it A causes B, B causes C, C causes D, D causes E and so on. That's ok. You don't have to call it *avidyá paccayá sankhára, sankhára paccayá vignána*...you don't have to call it that. Doesn't matter what words you use, it's the meaning that you need behind it.

So, coming back again to the conversation the Buddha's now having with the Brahmin.

"Brahmin, how is it you seek pleasure?"

"I use my six senses to seek pleasure."...

Then the Buddha asks,

"Isn't this the process that you use to seek pleasure? Now, there's a fundamental flaw with this process."

Yes Sir? What's the role of *avidyá*? The role of *avidyá*, is that...it gives us the perception or the view that this process is going to lead me to pleasure. That is why we have embarked on this path. Because if we knew that this process does not lead us to pleasure, we would never have embarked on that journey. If the captain knew what was going to happen to Titanic, he would never have embarked on that journey. What did he think? This is indestructible, impenetrable. I can overcome any storm. No iceberg can ever destroy the Titanic. So, what did he do? Himself and many thousands of people boarded that ship and off they went. *Avidyá paccayá sankhára*.

So, it's ignorance or *avidyá* that gives us this feeling...that gives us this misguided view...this distorted view...remember last week we spoke about *ditti-vipalyása, sagna-vipalyása, citta-vipalyása*...behind all these three, there is *avidyá*. Behind *ditti-vipalyása*, there is *avidyá*. Now this Brahmin is in *ditti-vipalyása*. That's why he is not a *Sótapanna* yet. See once you become a *Sótapanna*, you understand that, I still have *avidyá*, but any *sankhára* that I do because of *avidyá*

is never going to lead me to pleasure. It's only going to lead me to unhappiness and suffering and pain. So that's why from that point forward, you try to move towards a state of mind where there is no more *avidyá*. Having understood that *avidyá* is the problem, you start treating *avidyá*, while you still got it with you.

Treating *avidyá* with the understanding that *avidya* is the problem - Example

It's like...remember, I gave you the example of the trunk of a tree? If you are on top of the tree and you want to get down to the ground...you couldn't jump because that's going to break a leg. But you have a saw with you, what you do is, you stand on one half of the trunk and you start cutting the other half in the shape of an L. Ok, once you've done that, you move across to the half which you've cut the shape of an L, you've carved the shape of an L, and then you cut the other half. Then you cut another half and then move across to the other side and then you keep switching sides, left and right, left and right. Every time you switch you keep cutting a little bit off. Then every time you keep doing that you move one step further down towards the ground. So, while you're in *avidyá*, you have to treat *avidyá* but for that, you need to understand that *avidyá* is the problem.

So, one who has understood that *avidyá* is the problem, is a *Sótapanna*. That's all you need. You don't need any other understanding. If you have a completely solid understanding that *avidyá* is the problem, ignorance is the problem, ignorance and attachment coming together, working together, they create suffering and nothing else. If that understanding is cemented in your minds and no one can shake your confidence and conviction in that understanding, you're a *Sótapanna*. Because then, from that point forward, you are not going to point your finger to the outside person and say, "the problem is with you". Why, the problem is with whom? Ignorance and attachment. Ignorance and attachment does not live with the outside person. It lives in my mind! So, the problem has to be with me!

Indriya bhàvanà continued

So, let's come back again to the contemplation on the Buddha now speaking to the Brahmin. So He says,

"Brahmin, you seek pleasure through your eyes and to seek pleasure through your eyes you're using the object, you're using your eye, you're using your eye consciousness and when the three come together on the base of avidyá, it creates cakkhu samphassa and then that generates cakkhu samphassa já védaná and then to that védanà, you attach yourself and then from there you are led to játi paccayá jará marana."

So, He asks the question,

"If you are attached to the eye, if you are attached to the object, if you are attached to your vignána whatever arises and passes away. If you're attached to the things that arise in this world, anything..."

taking the example of the eye, He says,

"If you're attached to this eye, do you have an eye that does not pass away?"

He asks the question. Now the Buddha...this is the concept of *anicca* that the Buddha is preaching to the Brahmin. He says,

"Brahmin, this eye is anicca. Why? Because it is conditioned. There are conditions that have brought this eye into this world."

I'm not speaking of the 'I' coming into the mother's womb, you know, coming onto your body and coming alive and not all of that stuff. That is also *Paticca Samuppádda*. But what I'm speaking of is, at this point in time, the reason that you have an eye that is functional is because there are conditions that keep it in that state. If you attach yourself to the eye in your pursuit of pleasure, the eye has to bring you pleasure. Otherwise, you're attaching to the wrong object.

"Does the eye bring you pleasure?"

He asked this Brahmin. Because what is the eye? It's a conditioned object. What is the outside *rúpa*? They're also conditioned. Being conditioned is not the problem ladies and gentlemen. Remember that! Being conditioned is not the problem. The problem is attaching to conditioned things. It's like the fire. The fire doesn't burn you until you do what? Touch it! So, touching it, is the

problem. Attaching yourself to it, is the problem. Going and jumping into it, is the problem. So, the eye is conditioned, no problem. The problem is, you attach yourself to the eye, seeking pleasure.

'I like' & 'I don't like', it's two sides of the same coin

Now in your search for pleasure, you have defined what it is that brings you pleasure and what it is that doesn't bring you pleasure. So, let me take *rúpa* for an example. I will come back to the eye again. Let's take *rúpa* as an example, right? At home in your kitchen, do you like to see cockroaches in your kitchen? Nobody likes to see cockroaches in their kitchens. So, because you have a dislike towards seeing cockroaches and you like a clean kitchen because a cockroach equals dirty kitchen. You attach to that sensation, that concept, that feeling of, 'I have a clean kitchen', when you see a cockroach crawling in your kitchen, is that a *rúpa* that you like or you don't like? You don't like that *rúpa*. Now, if it's someone else's kitchen and they don't cook for you... you don't eat there...it's just someone's home, you have no problem with that. But when it's your kitchen, it has to be clean. Well, your neighbour's kitchen has to be clean if you eat at their place. If you go over there for lunch or dinner then it has to be clean. Then, you are concerned about that. But if it's not clean and it's not your neighbour, if you don't eat there, "I don't have a problem with that. They can do what they like with their own kitchen. My kitchen has to be clean". That's because I have an attachment to my kitchen and I have an attachment to the concept that my kitchen has to be clean. Through which you also have an attachment to, 'I don't like cockroaches in my kitchen'. When you say 'I don't like something', what are you saying? I like 'The other'. I don't like this, why? Because you like the opposite of that. Do you get that? Why do you not like someone shouting at us? Because we like them not shouting at us. It's two sides of the same coin. Ok, so when you are attached to that, I'm attached to a clean floor, I'm attached to a clean kitchen, I'm attached to a clean pantry where there are no cockroaches, as soon as a *rúpa* comes into your world which is against your liking, now that's going to bring you *dukkha*.

Dukkha-Dukkha 'What if' – Example 1

But what if you didn't have that attachment? For as long as you have the attachment, you have an expectation. For as long as you have the expectation, as long as there are no cockroaches in your pantry, you are ok. But what is the nature of the world? Does the world only bring you *rúpa* that you like? No. The *rúpa* throws all types of stuff, all types of things at you It throws good *rúpas* ,there are no good *rúpas* and bad *rúpas*. Isn't the cockroach a good *rúpa* to the cockroach's father? The baby cockroach is a good *rúpa* to the cockroach mother. So, there are no good *rúpas* and bad *rúpas*. But as soon as you draw that line, this is what I like, this is what I don't like,now there is good and bad in this world. Now there is black and white in this world. Without drawing that line, there is no good and bad in this world. As in, 'I like' and 'I don't like'. There's no such thing. So, when you don't like that *rúpa*, when the *rúpa* comes into your world, that's going to bring you suffering. Well, one could say but then most of the time there are no cockroaches in my kitchen, so that's ok, isn't it? Partly yes. Partly no because, what about the *dukkha - dukkha*? The 'what if'. What if, a cockroach comes into my kitchen? This is very subtle. I hope you're getting what I'm trying to say. It's very subtle and I'm trying to use a language which I really don't like to use to preach and to try and get the point across to you. As soon as you have defined my kitchen has to be clean and I'm attached to that, even if there is no cockroach in your kitchen, in the back of your mind you're always wishing, oh! let there never be a time where I have to see a cockroach in my kitchen, but what if you didn't have that expectation in the first place? Then, you don't care. Whatever the world throws at you, I don't care. It doesn't matter. But as soon as you say 'I don't like cockroaches in my kitchen', you'll be happy for as long as there are no cockroaches in your kitchen. But is that real happiness? No, why? What about the 'what if'? That vexation is always there in your mind, is it not?

Dukkha Dukkha – Example 2

Remember I told you the story, what happened on 31st January? This gentleman who came to drive us to a sermon and I remember this, like it was yesterday because it was 31st of January and I remember it was really busy on the streets that night. That's why it leaves with me a fresh

memory. You know, this gentleman who drove to the monastery in a brand new car and he got us into the car and he's now driving us out of the monastery. Those who visited us at the monastery will know that the road is not at its best yet. It's not been leveled yet and it's quite rocky. Ok, so you have to be very careful, especially if it's a new car. These new cars have ah...what do you call it? They call it low, aren't they? So, because they have a low chassis, you have to be careful so that these rocks don't damage the bottom of your car. So, this guy drives a brand new car and after we get in to the car and now of course the load is heavier than it was before he came in. So as soon as he drove outside the monastery, we heard a rock scratching the surface of the car. Now, the driver became intensely tensed from that point forward and then he became very nervous after that. In his mind, this is a brand new car, I have to protect this thing. It's my baby, right? So now he is looking on either side making sure that there are no other rocks and he wants us...he's saying, "Swaminvahansè, please could you check if there are any trees or any branches that might scratch the doors of my car?" Now I've become his servant. So, he drove past the unlevelled road and we drove all way until we got to the main road. So now, I'm thinking, "Thankfully, we are now out of the outskirts. Now at least we can go in peace." But no, it was a 31st night. So, although it was quite late at night, it was very busy. So there were cars and buses and people jumping the roads without warning. Of course, you have animals on the roads as well. So, it's a very busy road. Now this man, he's very tensed, he's very nervous. Nothing's happened to the car as yet. Nothing's happened apart from that scratch that happened, just as we left the monastery. He's on the main road, levelled tarmac road and he's driving on the road but the suffering that he is going through right now...the 'What If?' suffering. What if something happens? What if someone jumps in front? What if the guy in front of me brakes without warning? Isn't that suffering always going to be there, no matter whether something happens or not? Whether the car is damaged or not, at the end of that journey, throughout the journey this guy is going to be suffering, is he not? That is the *dukkha - dukkha*.

This is why last week, when I spoke to you about that graph...plotting a chart of *dukkha* with vexation on the y-axis and time on the x-axis...I said there is a constant *dukkha* all the time. This is the *dukkha - dukkha* that is constant. It never drops below that point until all the ignorance has

been uprooted. Because for as long as ignorance is there, what else is there? Attachment is there. For as long as attachment is there, you want to protect and preserve the things that you are attached to. When you want to protect and preserve the things you are attached to, whether things that you like come to you or not, whether there are natural calamities that come and steal the things that you like or not, whether there are natural disasters from which you have to protect the things you're attached to or not, it's always there with you. It's always there! It's a constant. That's the *dukkha - dukkha*.

Indriya Bhàvanà - continued

Now, above the surface of *dukkha - dukkha*, from time to time, there are other things that we find ourselves attached to. When we attach ourselves to...let's say that the *rúpa* ...going back to the conversation between the Buddha and the brahmin...if it's pleasure that we seek by looking at *rúpa*, right...let's say it's a flower. You're looking for pleasure by looking at this flower. As soon as you see this flower, now you have to do *abhisankhára* to take in this *rúpa*. Why? Because I like to look at flowers. What if you had no attachment to flowers? Now it's ok whether you see them, or not. But if you're attached to flowers and the sight of flowers, now you have to go looking for it and as soon as there's a *rúpa* in the outside world, you have to create the other...you have to get in line the other conditions to help you see the flower. What are the other conditions? The eye, the *cakkhu vignána*, and the *cakkhu samphassa*. Isn't that why you turn your head? Because the *rúpa* is on one side, now you turn your head towards that...or you turn your head which holds your eyes in your eye sockets. You turn your head so that your eyes can now line up with the *rúpa*, so that the *rúpa* is now there, your eyes are now looking at the *rúpa*, and the *cakkhu vignána* can now arise.

See! It's not because you like you can see the *rúpa*. You have to create the conditions. You have to put in line the conditions that give you the result. Otherwise, you wouldn't have to turn your head! If you can enjoy *rúpas* just because you like to, you shouldn't have to turn your head to look at it.

When you're turning your head, what is it that you're doing? You are creating the conditions! Why? Because *cakkhu samphassajā védaná* is conditioned! To receive that *védaná*, the *sukha védaná* that comes from looking at something that you like...because it's conditioned, you have to create the conditions. You have to put together, you have to bring together those conditions. What are those conditions? *Rúpa*, the eye, *cakkhu vignána*, *cakkhu samphassa*, and then, through all that comes *cakkhu samphassajā védaná*. Now that is *abhisankhára*. All that is *abhisankhára*. But the problem with all *abhisankhára* is, what you are producing, what you are doing is bringing together a series of conditions. But the nature of all things in this world, is that, they are subject to constant flux. That's just the nature of the world. There's nothing we can do about that. So as soon as you bring these conditions together, the nature of the world, the nature of the system is that, these conditions are constantly in flux. So, they change again and when they change again you have to go back and line them up again and then they change again and then you have to go back and line them up again.

So, for example you're looking at a flower. You've turned your head. Your eye is subject to constant flux. It dies and is born every so many times in every second...many millions of times. So, like I said, impermanence is part of the picture. Your eye is impermanent. Every moment it dies and is born again, dies and it's born again, why so? Isn't the eye conditioned? What makes the eye? The cells that produce the eye. What about those cells, aren't those cells conditioned? There are conditions that keep those cells alive. The cells need oxygen. It needs sugars that keeps it alive, right? So, all these are conditions. So, everything in this world is conditioned and when the conditions change, the effect changes, the product changes. So, when you are looking at that object, you have to constantly do *abhisankhára* to keep this eye alive. This is why we eat. This is why we treat ourselves when our eyes start you know...when you get a cataract or something like that, this is why you treat yourself. Why? Because you want to continue to keep these faculties in their perfect working order, so that you can continue to do the *abhisankhára*.

Why do we cage animals?

Now, let's say there's an animal that you like to see. Ok, you know you go to the zoo, and you see an animal that you like. Let's say a Peacock. You go to the zoo, you're looking at Peacocks and these Peacocks don't stay in one place. They keep moving back and forth. Now what do you have to do? You have to keep turning your head or you have to at least keep turning your eyes. Wherever they go you have to move. Now what's happening? The outside *rúpa* is constantly changing. Why were these animals caged in the first place? See how much Dhamma you can learn from this? Why did we cage animals? Why did we cage those Peacocks in the first place? Wasn't that *abhisankhára*? The animals roamed in the wild. People liked to see Peacocks. When they roam in the wild, you have to take yourself to the wild. You have to get on a truck and go on a safari or something like that and you have to now go looking for these animals, which is a lot of effort. No one likes to do *abhisankhára*. So, what's easier to do is bring the animal to where we live and then cage the animal. Now, it's easier to look at them. Why? Because the *rúpa* is in one place now. When the animal is in the wild, the *rúpa* is moving all over the place. You don't know if you will be able to spot a Peacock or not, if you go bird watching, how much effort have you got to make to spot the birds that you like, you got to take your binoculars, you have to keep looking for them and you have to be very silent so that you don't disturb them. There's a lot of effort to make which is a lot of pain. No one likes to make that extra effort. So, what you do is, you bring the birds and you cage them.

Indriya Bhàvanà – It's not anicca but tanhà that leads to suffering

Now the *rúpa* is there exactly where you want it. Now all you have to do is line up the eye and the eye consciousness. So, wasn't that *abhisankhára*? Was that *punnàbhisankhára* or *apunnàbhisankhára*? Well, you know the answer. You've taken away that animal's freedom, you've caged the animal, for whose benefit? "*Mama hadanna*" for self-procreation. In self interest, we've caged the animal. Yes, people will say, "*Well hang on, you know, they were in the wild. Now we can feed them. You know they don't have to be hungry anymore.*" Well, what if it was an animal that you really didn't like to look at? Would you still have done it? No! You only cage the animals that you enjoy looking at, that you like feeding. These are the only animals that are caged. If you can't

make money out of it, then you are not going to be caging the animal. So where is the compassion then? These are all excuses. Behind all these stories, behind all the *abhisankhára* there's a self. "*Sabbè sankhára aniccàtí*". So, you have to have the sight, the *rúpa*, you have to have the eye, and you have to have the *cakkhu vignána* and the three of them have to come together to give you any kind of *rúpa*.

But are we happy with any old *rúpa*? No, we have particular types of *rúpa* that we like and particular types of *rúpa* that we don't like. Because of what? Attachment, and attachment is there because of what? *Avidyá* (ignorance). Even for an Arahant to be able to see, he still needs the eye, he still needs *cakkhu vignána*, and he still needs the *rúpa*. But to him, there are no particular types of *rúpas* that he likes to see and he doesn't like to see. Therefore, anything goes. So, you won't see an Arahant going into the zoo to watch animals. You won't see an Arahant go bird watching. That's not going to happen. Why? Because, well if he's in his kuti, and he opens his eyes, isn't that *rúpa*, that he's seeing right now? Isn't that *rúpa*? Why does he need to go looking for any other kind of *rúpa*? This is also *rúpa*. All types of *rúpa* are *rúpa*. But the problem is when we say this is *rúpa* that we like, this is *rúpa* that we don't like, the ones we like, we go looking for. All of that is *abhisankhára*. But to achieve that pleasure we have to put in line all the conditions because all of this is, conditioned.

Now, the Buddha asks,

"You go looking for pleasure but all these factors that need to line up to give you this condition which is, to give you this product, which is, you are enjoying this pleasure that you are receiving through the eye, aren't all the factors that have lined up to give you this product, aren't they all subject to anicca? Aren't they all conditioned? And because they're all conditioned, you always have to constantly keep them in the right order, in the right fashion? And if you are attached to it, don't you have that constant dukkha - dukkha?"

Take your eye for an example. If you go into the deserts. Say, you've been to Dubai or some country in the Middle East and you go on a desert safari. If there's a sand storm, what parts of your body

do you start covering up first? Eyes. If there's a bright light or a bright sound somewhere, you first cover your eyes and then your ears. What about the rest of your body? Your immediate reaction is to cover up your eyes and to cover up your ears. Because these faculties are the keys in producing who? Self! Self can only exist for as long as *rúpas* come into your world. *Rúpa-rúpa* and *shabda-rúpa*. The beauty with the eye and the ears is that you don't have to go close up to the object to receive them. Whereas the other things...smell, you have to go close up to smell things. What about the tongue? You have to go really close up. What about the body? You have to go really extremely close up. But the eye, you can see stuff from very far away and the ear, you can hear things from far away; Yes sir, the liking is the self. The ignorance is that, liking is going to bring me pleasure. Ignorance is, let me produce this self, so that I can achieve pleasure. "*Let's go to pleasure land!*", that's what ignorance tells us. But for there to be pleasure land, you have to produce a pleasure land first. You have to create pleasure land. So, we create pleasure land and that is the 'self'. That is the liking. It's that condition that we create when we talk about sets.

So again, that conversation the Buddha's having with the Brahmin...

"Isn't the eye anicca?"

Why do we cover up our eyes when there's a sand storm? If the eye will remain intact without harm, without damage to our liking, would we have to cover up our eyes? If that happens to my liking, would we have to cover it up? If you hear a loud noise, would you have to cover up your ears, if your ears were going to remain intact, if your ear drums were in perfect working order because we like them to be like that? Would you ever have to go to an ENT surgeon? Would you ever have to have gone to an optometrist, an optician? No! Why do we have to keep doing that? Because they are not to my liking. Well then, what is it to? Conditions. And because it is to conditions, because it's conditions that create this product, we have to constantly keep doing what? Making sure that these conditions come in together. That is all *abhisankhára dukkha* not *abhisankhára sukha*! What are we seeking through this process? Pleasure. But what do we have to do to receive that pleasure? No pain, no gain! And then the constant fear of what might happen to my eyes, what might happen to my ears. The constant feeling of what might happen to me. You know, that's why when you hear a loud noise you cover up your ears as soon as possible Why?

Because you are worried something might happen to your ears and you might go deaf! There's always a constant fear. It's like if you are at home, if you have a home, aren't you constantly in fear of burglars? Isn't that a constant thing? What, do you only fear them at night and not at day? That's a constant thing, right? But you will only have to worry about burglars for as long as or until you have a house. When you don't have a house, then there are no burglars you have to be worried about. Do you see the relation between that and why is it that we are in constant suffering? It's when we're attached to something that we have to constantly keep preserving it and protecting it. What if there is nothing we are attached to? Then there is nothing to preserve, there is nothing to protect. Because anything goes. I don't care what happens. But when you are the housekeeper, when you are the owner of the house, now you have to be constantly mindful, constantly watchful and constantly vigilant. That's why you brought that dog and you put a board on the gate 'beware the dog'. I have seen some that say, 'beware the master' not the dog! Why? Because you are constantly in fear as to what might happen. The 'what if'. That's all *dukkha- dukkha*. So, for as long as *tanhá* is there, for as long as attachment is there, *dukkha- dukkha* will never go away. You'll have to live with it!

Let's say there's a child who has Downs syndrome or who is not able to cater to their daily needs. Ok, they can't look after themselves. This is a defect they brought from birth. Now as a parent, don't you know that 'throughout my life I'm going to have to look after this child? Till the day I die I have to look after him, feed him, wash him, take him you know...if he can go to school then do that. But every day of my life I'm going to have to look after this child'. *Dukkha- dukkha* is just like that. What if you didn't bring that child into this world? No *dukkha* but now that you brought the child into the world, now it's your problem. You have to constantly keep looking after it.

Likewise, all things that we are attached to we have to constantly keep feeding, we have to constantly keep nurturing because the nature of the world is, these things are always subject to change, constant flux because they're all conditioned.

Avidyà is conditioned

Yes madam? *Avidyà* is also conditioned. What are the factors that give rise to *avidyà*? That's a good question. No, *avidyà* is not a continuous thing. Because when you become an Arahant, no more *avidyà*. So what are the conditions for *avidyà*? *Asathpurusha sévanaya*. Association with ignoble and immoral people and Dhamma. When I speak of people, I'm actually referring to the Dhammas. Let's say if it's an ignoble person and he keeps his mouth shut, no problem, right? But, when he opens his mouth what is he doing? He's giving Dhamma. That is, *Sadhamma* and *Asadhamma*. They come in two ways, right? Good and bad. So, *avidyà* will continue to nurture for as long as you are subject to *asathpurusha sévanaya* - ignoble and immoral people. This is why when Venerable Ananda says, "Bhagavathunwahanse, *half of your sásanaya prevails because of 'sathpurusha sévanaya'* (association with noble ones)." Tathagata says what? "No, Ananda, you got it wrong. *The entirety of my ministry prevails because of 'sathpurusha sévanaya.'*" Because of the association with the noble ones." This is why, you know...the *asath purushayà* (immoral, ignoble person) can be a person outside, it can also be yourself. Why? Because we are speaking of the Dhamma not the physical person. I wanted really to get the point across to you. It's not the person. It's the Dhamma. Can an *asath purusha* influence an Arahant? No. Why? Because for an Arahant, he has become enlightened. He sees things for what they are. His view cannot be changed. Once you've seen the truth, you can't be fooled again. It's like if you know that whoever...let's take another example. Say you are in a relationship with somebody and someone says, "Hey, this guy's...you know, she's got another thing going (or he's got another thing going)." At first you take it by faith then you say, "Although you say that, she's very good to me and I don't think that's true. C'mon let's go. I'll show you. You go and see it for yourself." Once you've seen it for yourself and you've tested it, you've verified it, now it's true to you, that cannot be changed again. Because you've seen it yourself. After that, that cannot be changed. You've seen it for yourself. You've seen the truth.

So, an Arahant is like that. No more *cittavipalyàsa*, no more *dittivipalyàsa*, no more *sannàvipalyàsa*. What he's done is, he eradicated *avidyà*. Through what? Associating the noble Dhammas. Associate with ignoble Dhammas, ignorance will continue to defile your minds. Associate noble Dhammas,

ignorance will continue to be eradicated, will be removed, at least might be little by little but it will continue to be removed.

We've been speaking for quite a while now. I haven't got a problem but I know you have other things you need to get to and there's another sermon later on today that Venerable Darana Dassa is going to deliver. It's an English sermon. So, you're welcome to either join online. I don't know if there are facilities to come and join us there. But before I conclude, let me just finish that story I was relating to you between the Buddha and the Brahmin and perhaps next week I will go into a little more detail about *indriya bhávanà* and maybe we will spend some time doing the *indriya bhávanà* during the sermon. Perhaps that will be helpful. So, again, when I said *bhávanà*, think, **contemplation**. Contemplation, this is what we're doing. It's reflecting on the Dhamma.

So, He says,

"If it's pleasure that you seek, you have to seek pleasure from things that are going to bring you pleasure. If you seek pleasure from things that are going to bring you pain and suffering, that is a useless and meaningless and a futile thing to do."

So, He continues,

"Brahmin, do you not seek pleasure from the rúpas?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir, I do."

"Are the rúpas, nicca or anicca?"

Are they to your liking or are they conditioned, is what He is asking, basically. They are conditioned. Well, if they are conditioned and then you go and attach to them, in your pursuit of pleasure, what's going to happen to you? Well, as soon as the conditions change, the product is going to change. Then what happens? It's going to lead me to suffering. Ok what if the conditions don't change? Well, the *dukkha - dukkha*...the 'what if'...that's always there. So, there is no winning in this game. That's a really key point, I want you to understand. Suffering is not only when something that you like is destroyed, that is *viparináma dukkha*. *Abhisankhára dukkha* is the process of bringing together the conditions that give you that product that which you like. But *dukkha-dukkha* is constant. That constant *dukkha* is there from the moment you attach yourself...what might

happen, 'what if'...The moment you befriended that girl or boy and you started calling him boyfriend or girlfriend, from that point forward, *dukkha-dukkha*. Why? 'What if'. 'What if she dies' 'What if she leaves me' 'What if she befriends somebody else' 'What if she cheats on me' Before you became friends with her there was no *dukkha-dukkha*. But the moment you decided, "Yes! She's going to be my girlfriend!", then what happens? *Dukkha-dukkha*! They come as a package. So that *dukkha-dukkha* is what we really need to understand because that's constant. *Abisankhára* is only when you do *abhisankhára*. *Viparináma* is only when what you have produced as a result of *abhisankhára* starts passing away. That's *viparináma*. But the *dukkha-dukkha*? Constant. That's constant.

So again, the Buddha asks,

"The rupas? Nicca or anicca?"

"Anicca."

"Is it to your liking or because of conditions?"

"Conditions. They are all conditioned."

And in seek of pleasure - and pleasure can only be found because you like certain things - right? Otherwise, where is pleasure in *rúpas*? What are beautiful *rúpas*? Are there beautiful *rúpas*? No. There are no beautiful *rúpas*. Because what's pretty to me is not pretty to you. What's beautiful to you is not beautiful to me. So, that is based on ignorance and attachment. So, as soon as you have decided this is going to be bringing me pleasure, based on ignorance, you are going to do *abhisankhára* to receive that. All of that is *dukkha*. So that *rúpa*, as soon as you attach yourself to the *rúpa*, in the pursuit or in seeking pleasure, it's going to bring you suffering. Pointless.

What about the eye? Is the eye to your liking or is it there because it's conditioned? Conditioned, and then if you attach yourself to it, what happens when the conditions change? *Dukkha-dukkha*. *Viparináma dukkha* even and to keep the conditions in a working fashion, *abhisankhára dukkha* and the 'what if'? *Dukkha-dukkha*. That's constant. But what if you didn't have *rúpas* you really wanted to look at? I'm not fussed whether I see or don't-see, no problem. I don't care if I can see. I don't care if I don't see. Then, I don't care if the eye exists or not. Only an Arahant could be put into a dark room and be put in there for a week, everyone else, most of the people will go mad!

Why? I want to see! *Dukkha-dukkha*. I want to be relieved from this *dukkha-dukkha* and then the *cakkhu vinnána*, what about that? Well, *vinnána* arises and passes away, arises and passes away. So, we need to build that *vinnána*. That requires effort. Why do we want to be alive? Do you like to fall unconscious? No. When you are unconscious what's gone? Is the eye gone? Is the *rúpa* gone? No. But what's gone? Consciousness. The eye consciousness is gone. So you want the eye consciousness to come back. Why? *Peleema*. Constantly in this *dukkha-dukkha*. I want to be able to see! So, we are always in this *dukkha-dukkha*, constantly wanting this *cakkhu vinnána* to be functional, to be working and then *cakkhu samphassa*. So, constantly trying to bring these three things together. **The *rúpa*, the eye, and the *cakkhu vinnána***. Bringing these three things together. This is why we turn our heads to look at things. This is why we switch on the TV. This is why we climb the Sigiriya Rock Fortress. All this why? Because we wanted to bring these three things together. What? *Rúpa*, the eye, and *cakkhu vinnána* (eye consciousness) and as soon as these three things come together, we are working on the condition, on the basis of ignorance and attachment, ***cakkhu samphassajá védaná* arises. *Védaná paccayá tanhá***. As soon as that *védaná* arises, we attach ourselves to the *védaná*. Because it's a good sensation, that good feeling that we like. ***Védaná paccayá upádána***. Now we are into close association. We really wanted, we dedicate ourselves to seeking pleasure through that object. ***Upádána paccayá bhava*. *Bhava* is the being, the becoming**. This is the being or rather the becoming. **The becoming of someone 'that is looking at that sight'** and ***bhava paccayá játi* - 'Jàtiya hata gannawà'**. ***Játi* or the becoming of the being of someone who is using their eyes to seek pleasure**. That is the *játi* that has just been born. We are not talking about an animal. We are not talking about a human being or anything else here. We are talking about the *játi*, of someone who is using their eye and the *rúpa* and the *cakkhu samphassa* and the *cakkhu vinnána* and the *cakkhu samphassajá védaná*, to do what? Seek pleasure! That is the *játi* that has been born right now. But ***játi paccayá jará, marana,sóka, paridéva, dukkha, dómanassa, éva métassa kévalassa dukkhakhandassa samudayó hòti***. Whatever arises passes away. Why? Because all of those factors in that equation are conditioned. [So, *védanà* comes in three forms. They all go to *jará, marana, sóka, paridéva*].

But see, you have *sukha védaná*, *dukkha védaná*, *adukkhamasukha védaná*, ok. Where is *sukha védaná*? *Védaná paccayá tanhá*. Where is *dukkha védaná*? *Védaná paccayá adhimókkha*. Where you want to detach yourself. **Móksha** is what? **To remove yourself**. Again, '*nivanatath mókshaya kiyanne*' - To remove yourself, ok? **Adhimóksha is, you're really striving now to remove yourself, detach yourself from that feeling**. But that is immediately *védaná* anyway. I mean...*dukkha*. *Dukkha védaná* is obvious that, it brings us *dukkha*. *Sukha védaná* is not obvious that *sukha védaná* brings us *dukkha* and *adukkhamasukha védaná* is the *upekkha*. That's why the Tathagata says,

"Sepa dukak lesa dakinna" - "look at *sukha* as something that is eventually going to bring you *dukkha*.

"Duka hulak lesa dakinna" 'Ula' is a spear. Look at the *dukkha* as a spear. Because that is pretty obvious. You look at a spear, you know that if you go and touch it, it's going to bring you pain and then,

"upéksháwa anicca lesa dakinna." So, *upékka* is the *adukkhamasukha védaná* or where you have not yet determined whether this is going to bring you *sukha* or *dukkha*.

Remember I gave you the example of someone knocking on your front door? You're thinking who might it be, who might it be, who might it be. You keep walking, you're still thinking who might it be. So, you don't know to be happy or to be sad. You open the door and you see the person. Now you know whether you're going to be happy or sad. But until that time, you're in a state of vexation. Who is it? What might it be? What might it be...is this going to be bringing me pain or is it going to bring me suffering? But that feeling itself is *dukkha*. Yes? *Dukkha védaná* goes to *adhimókkha*. *Adhimókkha* is like, I said is where you're detaching...you want to distance yourself as much as possible from that pain. See, I'll talk to you about that on another day in more detail. But the problem here really...what we really need to understand is not the points where we experience *dukkha védaná*. Because, there really...you know, no one attaches themselves to *dukkha védaná*. Where we attach ourselves, because *védaná* is the problem here.

What is the Second Noble Truth of suffering? *Tanhá*. That is the problem. The Second Noble Truth is *tanhá*. That is what we need to be able to penetrate and understand and realise. Because it is

tanhá that we need to eradicate and what do we do *tanhá* towards? What do we attach us to? *Sukha védaná*. Not the *dukkha védaná*. No one here attaches themselves to *dukkha védaná*. It's always *Sukha védaná*. When *Sukha védaná* comes along, we need to be able to penetrate and look at the suffering that's going to be coming towards us eventually and then do something about it before it comes to us. That's when you act with wisdom - *Yadá pannáya passati, not yadá védanáya passati* .

So, that was the discussion that the Buddha had or a discourse the Buddha gave to the brahmin about the faculty contemplation, *indriya bhàvanà*. So ultimately, what He's asking is,

"Brahmin, you're using all these five things (the eye, the rúpa, the cakkhu vignána, the cakkhu samphassa, the cakkhu samphassa já védaná) in your pursuit of pleasure. But ultimately, you're seeking pleasure by seeking refuge in these five things. But are they going to bring you pleasure or suffering at the end of this?"

And he says,

"It's going to bring me suffering."

So now if you contemplate on that, if you contemplate on that truth, what happens? What is to contemplate on the truth? Where you've been looking at things as *icca, sukha, atta*. You need to look at them as what? *Anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

We used wrong kind of meditation throughout sansàra

Remember this is why I said last week, you have all been meditating all your lives. Throughout *sansàra* we have all been meditating. It's nothing new to us. But the meditation that we've been doing is the wrong kind of meditation. Every time we meditated, we contemplated, we thought of *rúpas* as being what? *Icca, sukha, atta*. We thought of the eye as what? *Icca, sukha, atta, subha*. We thought of the eye consciousness as what? *Icca, sukha, atta, subha*. We thought of the *cakkhu samphassa* as what? *Icca, sukha, atta, subha*. What about *cakkhu samphassa já védaná*? *Icca, sukha, atta, subha*.

But now, we have to change the way we contemplate on these things. But for that, we need first to remove the *dittivipalyása* and then, use contemplation to eradicate *sagnávipalyása* and *cittavipalyása* by contemplating on *anicca, dukkha, anatta, asubha*.

So, think of this week's sermon as an introduction to what we are going to be doing next week. So...I would suggest that if you able to come along next week and we continue what we talked about in this week's sermon and then we'll also find some time to perhaps do the *indrìya bhàvanà* for a few moments. Because like we do the *árya maithri bhàvanà*, there's a certain thing you can recite. I really don't like using these words like reciting, because reciting doesn't do anything for us. It's the contemplation that is required. You know, even when we do the *árya maitri bhàvana* and I sit down here and I'm reciting this, that is of really little use to you. Because when I say, "May I and all beings in all worlds be freed from the fire of birth.", how much time do you need to reflect on that? That's enough for you to reflect on for an entire day! For an entire week! That's enough for you to reflect on. But as soon I've said, I jump onto the next line and then, as soon as I've said the second line, I move on to the third line. "May I and all beings be freed from the fire of decay...from the fire of death..." So, where is the time for you to contemplate? Do you see? This is why I say, reciting is one. It's ok, it's helpful for you to memorise this but really, what you need to do is contemplate this in your own time.

If you sit down to do *árya maithri bhàvanà*, just use one line - "May I and all beings in all worlds be freed from the fire of birth." That's enough for you to do meditation for an entire week! Why? What do you need to contemplate on? How is birth going to lead me to suffering? Think about all the things that have given birth to. I'm not just talking about giving physical birth to. What about *játi*? I'm talking about *játi* here. Birth to what? The *rúpas*, the *eye*, the *cakkhu samphassa*, *cakkhu samphassa já védaná*...all these things I'm giving birth to. With every moment, every passing moment, do they lead me to happiness or do they lead me to suffering? That you need to contemplate. Reciting is one. It will be helpful but it's the contemplation that's really going to dig deep and remove those defilements of the deep and dark corners of your mind.

The three words of advice

Remember the three words of advice I gave that novice monk? If you use these three things as your guiding light, you won't go wrong ladies and gentlemen.

Number 1 **Make the Dhamma your teacher**, nobody else. Don't centre around individualities. Don't centre around people. Persons are not important. The Dhamma is what's important. Because what happens if you attach yourself to a person? *Dukkha-dukkha, abhisankhára dukkha, viparináma dukkha*. Isn't that true for all things? Aren't persons conditioned? What about the universal truth in this world? Is that conditioned? No! The universal truth in this world is not conditioned. It's the nature of the world! For as long as the world exists, the universal truth remains. From time to time it disappears from people's knowledge that's all. But the truth is still there and then you need a Buddha to come and uncover that. That's all Buddhas do. That's what Buddhas do.

So, don't centre yourself around people including myself. Don't put me on a pedestal. Don't think that I'm your saviour. I'm not. Don't centre yourself around me. I'm a nobody because I'm conditioned as well. Make the Dhamma your master. Make the Dhamma your teacher. Associate the Dhamma as much as you possibly can.

Number 2 **Always be mindful**. Because you're trying to protect yourself from enemies. These enemies are the *rága, dvésha*, and the *móha*. Some enemies you can spot from miles away. Others, they come in disguise and they are extremely dangerous. Because you are good people and you are becoming great people now, remember you're going to become attractive. You're going to become attractive to other people, other sentient beings and they're going to come looking for you sometimes for help, sometimes for advice. Be careful how you conduct yourselves with them. Don't fall into the trap. Because you can't help someone if you're in the same lurch as them. First you have to save yourself, then you can save others.

Number 3 **Never give up!** Never give up! You can do this. The *Bódhisattva* did it. You can do it. Between the *Bódhisattva* and the *Mára*, who was defeated? *Màra* was defeated. Our teacher, our master, the Buddha, was not defeated. What right do you have to say that 'Oh, what if I'm

defeated?’ You have no right to say that. You will be victorious! You can do it! Because your master did it! You can do it! Remember those three things. Conduct the next week with these three things and nothing else. Put everything else to a side. *Abhisankhára*, this that, *Paticca Samuppádha*...put all that to a side. Use these three things - **Associate the Dhamma, be mindful, never give up**. Fight! When *rága*, *dvéssha*, *móha* enters your mind, fight! Don’t give up! Until you have put the enemy down and beheaded the enemy, never to rise again, fight! If your soldiers, if you don’t have enough in numbers, then come and speak to me. I also have an army. Because I’m also at war and if you have other noble people that you associate...what about the people in your family? Because chances are you are not the only person that listens to the Dhamma at home. Perhaps your husband, your wife, your children, your brothers, your sisters. Perhaps they also listen to the Dhamma. And then you listen to the Dhamma they also start enlisting an army. What is this army? The *Dhamma - Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta*. When your army is not strong enough to fight the enemy, call upon other armies. If you can’t do it at home, come and speak to us. Go and speak to the *Swaminvahansè* in your own local temple. “*Swaminvahansè*, I find this attractive. Please help me. My army is not strong enough to fight this war.” Guess what? They will give you their army. Then fight together! But never give up. Fight until you have beheaded the enemy and until they can no longer stand up on their two feet. Because then, you’ve become victorious.

Do you have a question? Is it *pawu* (sins) that we’re talking of?

The enemy we need to behead is the *rága*, *dvéssha*, *móha*. That’s not *pawu* (sins). That’s *kusal*, ok? Your mother will explain to you on your way back home. Now you have a question to ask her. Ok, right. We will conclude the sermon there then.



- 00:00:17 Start
- 00:02:22 Observing the five precepts
- 00:06:59 Paying homage to the Lord Buddha
- 00:07:30 Invitation to witness the meritorious deed
- 00:10:34 Seeking forgiveness from the Āryas
- 00:13:22 The foundation in the Dhamma creates the foundation for mindfulness
- 00:17:25 What is bhàvanà (meditation)?
- 00:21:07 'May I never HAVE to'
- 00:22:57 Merit is the foundation to Nibbàna
- 00:24:37 Chanda, citta, víriya, vimansà
- 00:27:20 Applying the Dhamma to the action of sweeping the house with the broom
- 00:30:48 What you need is to remove defilements in your mind
- 00:32:33 Being mindful while painting
- 00:33:45 Do your meditation while your body is engaged in other things
- 00:35:08 Mind is always at work
- 00:38:08 Do as much merit as you possibly can
- 00:38:56 Applying the dhamma to the action of picking up a nail on the road.
- 00:40:20 How can I apply the Dhamma to the things that I do in my day-to-day life - Vimansà
- 00:41:37 Five Hindrances
- 00:42:20 Fighting defilements in our mind with Sath purusha sèvanaya
- 00:46:47 The three things that will help you win the battle with Ràga, Dvèsha, Mòha
- 00:50:00 A practical example to show 'ràga in disguise'
- 01:02:12 Promise of pleasure & effort (víriya)
- 01:06:08 The two ways to deal with problems in life
- 01:07:47 How to avoid the trap or How to avoid the bait
- 01:12:00 Make Dhamma your best friend
- 01:17:27 Being mindful
- 01:21:04 Are there good and bad people in this world?
- 01:27:19 Dung Beetle & it's nature (or sankhàra)

- 01:29:52 An Arahant is an amalgamation of Good Qualities
- 01:33:56 Discourse the Buddha gave the brahmin about the contemplation on the faculties, indriya bhàvanà
- 01:38:43 Arising & Passing away- Example of fire
- 01:39:42 Indriya bhàvanà continued
- 01:56:26 Treating avidyà with the understanding that avidya is the problem - Example
- 01:58:14 Indriya bhàvanà continued
- 02:01:04 'I like' & 'I don't like', are two sides of the same coin
- 02:03:34 Dukkha-Dukkha 'What if' – Example 1
- 02:06:29 Dukkha Dukkha – Example 2
- 02:11:02 Indriya Bhàvanà - continued
- 02:15:35 Why do we cage animals?
- 02:17:35 Indriya Bhàvanà – It's not anicca but tanhà that leads to suffering
- 02:27:50 Avidyà is conditioned
- 02:44:22 We used wrong kind of meditation throughout sansàra
- 02:53:23 Ārya Maithri Meditation
- 02:59:03 The three words of advice
- 03:04:27 Transfer of merit
- 03:12:25 Mettànisanza
- 03:14:07 The End

Proofread by C.P