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

**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 workis a transcription of the sermon held in **2018-02-25**. 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**

Buddhist philosophy

Science

Sacca gavesi

Kusala gavesi

Dentist

Dukkha dukkha

Viparinama dukkha

Sankhara dukkha

IS THIS WHAT YOU ARE DOING TO BE HAPPY?

2018-02-25

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**Kin Saccha Gavèsi - Kin Kusala Gavèsi**

*"How do I know when I have found The Lord Buddha’s teaching"?*

Well, forget the Buddhist teaching. When the Bòdhisattva was looking for something, he wasn't looking for The Buddha’s teaching. He was the Bòdhisattva. Obviously, he's not going to be able to get it from The Buddha. He would have to find it out for Himself. This was why when The Buddha or when the Bodhisattva went looking for the truth, in the text it says,

 ***Kin Saccha Gavèsi - Kin Kusala Gavèsi.***

***Saccha Gavèsi***: That is, He went in search of the truth. *Sacca* being the truth and *kusala gavèsi* is He went in search for a dhamma that would help Him eradicate these fires. *Akusal* being the defilements and *kusal:* ‘*ku*’ being bad and ‘*sal*’ being - to remove or to eradicate. Eradicating the part which is bad is *kusala* or wholesome as we usually use that word in English. So, he went looking for the truth. He went looking for what was wholesome. He didn't go looking for The Buddha to teach him that. If He had done that, He wouldn't have found it. Because He was the one who was going to become The Buddha. This is what we should always be doing; looking for the truth. We should always be looking for that which will help us find what is wholesome. The simplest explanation I can give is, look for something that helps you achieve whatever it is that you are looking for in life.

Unsurprisingly, what you will find is that we are all looking for essentially the same things in life. It might feel that, no that can't be the case. Because you open your eyes and look around and see people in all professions. You see people of all ages and you might wonder, well, how come you are able to say that, a baby is looking for the same thing as a young person, a middle-aged man is looking for the same thing as an elderly person? How can you say that a man is looking for the same things as a woman? How can you say that a teenager is looking for the same things as a mature, elderly gentleman who is at the pinnacle of his profession? Are they really the same thing? Well, I would argue yes, they are. Because, if you look at what we are all looking for fundamentally, it can be distilled down to happiness, satisfaction and fulfilment in life. This is what we are all looking for. Why does a baby cry? Because, it's looking for happiness. He is looking to relieve himself from some kind of discomfort he´s in. That could be because he has wetted himself. It could be because he's hungry. It could be because a mosquito is biting him and he wants somehow to make the world know, I am in discomfort, come and sort me out. Then once you go past that age and you are a young boy or a young girl, what do you do then? What does a child do? Well, the child obviously would start to school at some point and again when it's hungry would go and ask for food from his parents and play with toys, go see friends, watch a movie, whatever. Why does the child do these things? To be happy. Whatever makes him or her uncomfortable, whatever comes in the form of discomfort, he or she will do whatever is required to relieve him or herself from it.

**Why do we do the things that we do?**

If you think about, why is it that parents encourage children to go to school, it's because parents understand that to live a 'satisfied' life when you are older, you need a certain background and that background comes in the form of education. You can earn a living and that can only be done when you have a certain level of education. For that reason, children go to school. Likewise, a child might say, *'I don't want to go to school'*. Why does he say that? Because he wants to be happy. Because school for that child might not be something that is fun. Then in middle age you go to university. Why do you go to University? So that you can study further. You can get yourself a degree again, to be happy. Sometimes you even do things which in the immediate term are not pleasurable. I can't think of the last time I sat an exam thinking, *'yes, I'm going do this exam. I am overjoyed. I can't wait to do this exam'*. I can't remember the last time I did that. I think all of you would be the same. There will be times when you have to go for an interview which can cause butterflies in your stomach or when you have to deliver a speech in front of a large audience. All of these things sometimes can be discomforting. It can be unpleasant. It can be really difficult. Think of a marathon runner. Why does he run a marathon? Running the marathon is not fun. He runs the marathon because there is an end result, a reward to be gained from it. There is a target to be gained from that, a goal.

 As we are looking at this, people at various stages of life do a variety of things so they can seek happiness in life. The reason that you get yourself a job is so you can earn money. You earn money so you can put food on your plate. It comes down to the basic necessities. Feed your hunger, put a shelter over your head, put some clothes around your body and get yourself some medicine when you are not feeling well, the basic necessities. Why do you work hard for these basic necessities because when you don't have them, you can be in great discomfort? Why do we make friends? Because we want to be happy. We would like to talk to somebody. When I went to my parents and asked them, whether I can ordain, one of the questions was, *'why are you in such a rush'?*

So, I asked them,

*"you are in your late 50's and late 60's; tell me what is it that you wanted in life"?*

With no room for doubt, they say, yes, it was happiness that they were looking for. This is why they studied and worked hard. They got married. They had kids. They went abroad and they did all these things to be happy. Then I asked them the question,

"*well, in your late 50's and your late 60's, when you have a problem you get into arguments with people, between yourselves. You have other problems, it might be health problems, might be social problems; you are still battling. You still find yourselves with your heads in your hands, having sleepless nights. So, you've lived all this time looking for happiness and yet today there are things around you that make you unhappy*".

Clearly, that path that they walked on, that path that they've gone on looking for happiness, did not give them a permanent solution to the problem that they were looking for. It was just plastering all the time but when the plaster fades, you have to go and put it up again.

**Everything we do, we do to be happy**

Think of a guy who has just been jilted by a girl. What does he do? He gets into bed and starts sulking. He listens to boot songs. We call them boots songs because when you get booted by a girl or a guy, they listen to songs that talk about similar experiences, not necessarily ones that they've experienced, but that's obviously art. In listening to it they sulk in their own hearts and they feel like there's someone else that they can share that experience with. Why does a guy do that? It is to help him feel better. Why do you go to the doctor? It is to help you feel better. Why do you go to the lawyer, to your solicitor? It is to help you feel better, to be happy. So hopefully now, without a shadow of doubt why do we do everything from lifting a finger up in the morning, to opening the eyes in the morning, to closing the eyes, when I go to bed at night, everything we do, we do to be happy. At least, to try to be happy. So, if we are in this position, where we dedicate our lives to trying to be happy, then we need to understand, need to accept that we are not happy right now. That is like a man who was trying to be rich. If a man is rich, he wouldn't try to be rich. He is rich. You don't hear Bill Gates saying, *'I'm working hard, so I can be rich one day'*. You don't hear Warren Buffet saying, *'I'm working hard so I can be rich one day'*. He doesn't say that. But you hear the average guy on the street, the guy who is going to the interview, with his head held up high, with his shoes polished and smart shirt on, say, *'I'm going to get this job so I can be rich one day'*. He wants to be rich because he is not rich right now.

**Looking for happiness**

The reason that we are trying to be happy is because we are not happy right now. If I give you a sheet of paper with random numbers written on it and asked you if there is a particular number that stands out, that's particularly interesting, you would say 'no'. Then I give you a second sheet of paper. On that is a formula, a mathematical formula. Now I give back to you the first sheet of paper and one number stands out which looks particularly interesting. Why? Because that is the answer to the question that was written in the second sheet of paper. When you realize what the problem is, the answer becomes obvious. Or otherwise, when you slap someone in the face with the answer, they are not going to accept it. It's not going to be half as interesting. This is why we need to understand exactly what the problem is.

So, we are not happy right now. This is why we are always looking for happiness. We are waiting for happiness to come to us tomorrow. Why do I go to work today? So, I can be happy tomorrow. Why do I go to school today? So, I can be happy tomorrow. Why did I wake up this morning? So, I can be happy today. Why do I go to sleep today? So, I can be happy when I wake up. Every time we dedicate our lives to be happy in the next moment, tomorrow, next year, in the next ten years. The problem is that we are not happy right now. Let's accept that. What Buddhism teaches us, practically all religions give us is the path to happiness. There are religions that teach us that to be happy, one must go to heaven. There are religions that say, to be happy you have to reunite with the Mahà-Brahma. All religions teach a way to be happy, whether it's Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or The Lord Buddha's teaching. I prefer not to call it Buddhism. Because Buddhism is a religion, but what we talk about is Buddhist philosophy. What did The Buddha teach us? It's not necessarily a religion. Religion is an establishment for society to accept that there is a construct. There is a certain standing, a certain entity called this religion. But The Buddha’s teaching is just the truth. It’s just the way the nature operates. It's just how things happen in the world. You don't need a religion for that.

**Why do people look for a religion?**

Why do people actually look for a religion? If it’s science that helps us turn on a light, heat the water in a kettle, cook our food, watch television, go places, if it’s science that helps us make life easy or easier, then why do people actually look for a religion? That's worth considering. People are always looking for things that make them happy. When you've gone to one restaurant and a second restaurant opens up in town, you want to go and try that out as well. That is because the first restaurant didn't make you as happy as you could be. This is why you patronize a second restaurant. When you watch TV, why do you change TV channels? It's because the channel you are watching is not making you as happy as you could be. Likewise, when human beings begin to live their lives, they are encouraged to pick up a religion because their parents were religious. If you come from a Christian family, then you will most likely be Catholic or Christian and you will follow that teaching. If you come from a Muslim family, then you will study Islam and you will look to find happiness from that. If you come from a Buddhist family, then you will look to find happiness from Buddhist teaching. Then there are also secular people; those who don't accept any religion. Some may believe in Atheism, there are no Gods. So, they don't look for any supernatural or external factor, external source of happiness. They just live life, take life by the horns. They say,

*'well, if science helps me solve my day-to-day problems, that should make me happy. But even they are looking for happiness and if they are also looking for happiness, then that tells us that they are not happy right now*'.

That's what we need to understand.

**What does the Buddhist philosophy offer?**

Then, we come across The Buddhist teaching. Now we need to ask ourselves the question, *'what does the Buddhist philosophy offer, that is not offered in other religions and not offered in science*?' Because you have these alternatives, you could pick any one of them. That's what freedom of choice is all about. Freedom to follow any religion, any religious philosophy that you like. That choice is important and that choice is available to all. Then, why look at Buddhist teaching? What I've found in my study of Buddhist philosophy is that, it really makes the problem crystal clear. Until I came across Buddhist philosophy in the way that I practice it now, what I realized was, I was always trying to solve the wrong problem. Yes, I was trying to be happy, but I was applying the wrong formula to get this answer called 'happiness'. In my formula I've got happiness as the result of a certain function and I've got a number of variables that I have to keep changing to get to that answer, because I know what the answer is. It is happiness. But I keep changing these variables and what I realized was, in life when I tried out various different variables and plugging them into my equation, the happiness that came out or the answer that came out of that equation always looked like happiness. It was almost happiness, but it was never 'true' happiness. It was never this Supreme Bliss of Nibbàna that we wish each other and what we expect out of the Buddhist teaching and practice in the teaching. It always looked like the real thing, but was never the real thing. This is why you should keep looking.

***Kin sacca-gavèsi - kin kusala-gavèsi*.** What is it? What is the truth? Don't fall for something that looks like the truth. Until you find the truth, keep looking. But once you've found the truth, then you should be satisfied that my search is complete, and now, I should practice what I've found. It's like; if a man kept looking for a wife every day, he would never get married and settle down. You go looking, you visit a few young ladies and once you have found someone you are happy with, you settle down. By the way, I am not encouraging you to do that. I'm practicing a different path in life and this is the path I would encourage everyone and all to do. That's for you to decide. I was just using an example, an analogy there.

In my case, I was plugging in different variables trying to get this happiness that I was looking for in life, and what I found was the Buddhist philosophy. The Lord Buddha's teaching gave me the doctrine, gave me certain values, that I could plug into my equation. It was like,

*'voila! there you go, you won the jackpot'*.

It was just like that. I remember that day when I was listening to this teaching for the first time and those variables. I was always looking for happiness every passing moment, every waking moment and when these answers came true, I plugged with them. I plugged them into my equation and out came the result 'happiness'. The jackpot; I had it.

**'The problem' according to Buddhist philosophy**

This is what The Buddha's teaching offers. The way the Buddhist teaching offers this is, by helping us to understand what really is the problem in the first place. The reason that we fall for, and I use the word 'fall' deliberately, for science and perhaps follow some other teachings that promise us of happiness in the heavens is, because in all of these teachings and all of these doctrines, the fundamental premise is that, to be happy, you have to exist. Being happy is someone who is alive, someone who is living, someone who is creating something, producing something, generating something, or rejoicing in something. That is okay to a certain extent until you begin to wonder,

*'well, if I am creating something, if I've got to be producing something or making something, then what happens when I am unable to make those things? What happens when I'm unable to produce those things? What about all the factors that I need to plug in to create those things? What if I can't find the things, the raw materials that help me make that. Then what happens'?*

Also, when we begin to understand that everything in this world is transient, that nothing survives the ultimate test of time, everything perishes at some point, then, if creating something makes me happy, then what happens to those things that I have to create? They are going to be destroyed one day. They are going to perish one day. Then that's going to have an impact on my efforts to be happy. If that happens to be the case then you really have to think again.

**Bliss of Nibbàna**

This is why, in The Buddha’s teaching, the fundamental principle or the fundamental premise, the fundamental philosophy of being happy, is this Bliss of Nibbàna, where there is no existence, there is no birth. There is no being that is a life to be happy in that sensual sense of being happy. Because the happiness is defined in other religions and other teachings by defining this sentient being, it could be a human being, it could be a God, it could be an angel that is happy by enjoying sensual pleasures or by being in the presence of someone else. When The Lord Buddha comes into this world, He teaches us about 'cause-and-effect'. He teaches us that everything is conditioned. Preconditioned. For as long as the conditions exist and for as long as the conditions are fulfilled, you get a particular result. And if you are attached to that result, then when the conditions change, you are going to suffer. Attachment is the process of setting expectations. What happens when expectations are not met? You are disappointed. So, by looking for happiness, what we are doing is, setting expectations on material things that we think brings us happiness - this is what science talks about; to be happy, get hold of material things that can bring you happiness; a nice, brand new, 60-inch, 70-inch television, flat screen, surround sound, 3d vision. This is what science gives us. Every day it gives us some new gadget. Some new fancy item that says, *'well, this is better than the last one'*. What science is really saying is, *'this is going to make you happier than the last one'*. Yet we forget that the reason I'm still looking for something else to make me happy is, because I'm still sad; I'm still unhappy; I'm still disappointed; I'm still unsatisfied with my life; I'm still unfulfilled. So, every day we are looking for something new. Every day we are looking for a new gadget, a new item, a new toy, a new trick, to make us happy.

**How science differs from Buddhism**

This is where science and the Buddhist teaching go in different ways. Because Buddhist teaching is about understanding that all things in this Universe are conditioned, including your happiness. If your happiness is a condition of how many material possessions you have with you, how many people that you like you get to associate, how many people that you dislike you don't get to associate, those preconditioned things and entities are always in a constant change, a state of flux. They are always changing and if they are always changing, then plug those variables into your equation or those values into the array levels in your equation and you get a result which is called 'happiness', which is always changing. It's never the constant that you want, that you are looking for in life.

**Cause and effect**

But in Buddhism or in Buddhist philosophy, the fundamental teaching is that, all things are conditioned and the nature of all things that are conditioned is that when the conditions change, the result changes. This is the cause and effect. When the causes change the effect changes. If you then attach yourself, if you set expectations on something that is conditioned, when the causes change the effect changes and therefore, you are going to be disappointed. So, if you're looking for happiness, and by looking for the presence or the association of say, a celestial being - it could be a God, it could be a Brahma,it could be an angel, if you think that is where happiness is going to be, well, then I would encourage you to think. I would encourage you to consider and ponder what happens if that God or that celestial being or the angel does not do the things that you want them to do. What happens then? What happens if they don't say the things that you like them to say? What happens if they don't agree with what you are doing, what you are saying and so on. Then you are going to have a problem because you are looking for happiness through external factors. Whenever you are looking for happiness from external factors, from your external environment that is a really risky thing to do and it's never going to be permanent happiness. Because all those external factors are constantly changing. When those things change, then the object that you thought was bringing you happiness is going to change as well.

Think about the time when you got a new toy and remember when you were first given it, it was brand spanking new. It did all these nice fancy things. All the lights came on, it made all these nice sounds and it could move around, all you had to do was just wind it up and watch it. It would do all these fancy tricks which would make you really happy. But one day you found that your dog had chewed off one of its wheels. Then what happened? You were disappointed. Even if you just put it in your shelf and just kept looking at it, one day it's going to stop working. Everything has an expiry date. When that expiry date hits, if your happiness was dependent on that object, on that person, on that occurrence, on that incident, then you are going to be unhappy. You are going to be disappointed. Because you relied on that object, that person, that incident or that occurrence to make you happy.

**Science will give you temporary relief from pain and discomfort**

What you should understand then is, from the things that we've just been speaking about, we came to a common agreement that we are all looking for happiness in life; from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed you are looking for happiness. Then we began to ask where do people look for this happiness? Some people look for it in science and science as we said, is about giving you new ways to live your life. It's about making life easier. I've got nothing against science. I studied all the sciences while I was at school, in college and I would even say for the best part of my life, I was a scientist. In fact, I use science to this day. How do you think we deliver sermons? How do you think you are able to listen to them or read them? It's because we have science. It's because we have the technology which is a product of science. Buddhism is not going to help me solve that problem. I can't rely on Buddhism to help me preach a sermon, to reach you wherever you are in the world. We need science for that. So, use whatever you need for whatever that purpose is. You can’t slice up a loaf of bread with Buddhism. You need a knife for that. That only comes through science. The only thing I'm trying to say is, if what you are looking for in life is Supreme Bliss, ultimate happiness, you are not going to get that from science. Temporary relief from pain and discomfort, yes. Medicine was a product of science. Buddhism is not going to help you cure your headache or if you've got diarrhoea, Buddhism is not going to help you with that. Christianity is not going to help you with that. Islam is not going to help you with that. Hinduism is not going to help you with that. Medicine is what's going to help you with that and medicine is a product of science. So, you need science for that.

We have a huge population of people who believe in religions that talk about a Supreme God. They will say things happen because God wants it to happen that way. What I would encourage them to think about is, if your happiness is depended on this celestial being, supreme and omniscient God, then you are only going to be happy for as long as your God wants you to be happy. What happens when your God decides it's time for you to be sad? Then you are going to be terribly shaken. Just think about the tsunami that hit Sri Lanka. Earthquakes happen all the time. Volcanoes erupt. When these natural disasters happen, for those people who say, *'this is what my God, this celestial being that I worship and that I revere, wanted'*, then your happiness which is what you are looking for, from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed, from the moment you were born to the moment you die, is going to be dependent on what God wants for you. If He wants you to be happy, you are going to be happy. If He wants you to be sad, you are going to be sad. If He wants you to be disappointed, you are going to be disappointed. If He wants you to be frustrated, then you are going to be frustrated.

**'Happiness' according to Buddhism**

Buddhist philosophy teaches a very different way to be happy. In Buddhism, The Lord Buddha does not talk about finding happiness through external factors. He talks about happiness where there is no existence. If there is no existence, then you are not relying on external factors to make you happy. Because of existence you have to succumb to certain realities. For example, if you are alive, then you are going to be hungry. Think about yourself. What do you do on a daily basis? The moment you wake up, you put your kettle on. Why? Because you want a cup of tea to wake you up or that spurt of energy that you need from your morning coffee. Then you get yourself breakfast because again you are hungry. Then you get yourself a snack later on in the day because again you are feeling hungry. You want that spurt of energy again. Then lunch-time comes, you have to feed yourself. You are doing all of these things because you exist, because you are alive. Then if you are not feeling well you have to get yourself some medicine. If you need to get somewhere, then you have to use a medium of transport. If you are feeling thirsty, you need to get yourself a drink. So, all of these things are the result of being alive. This applies to humans, it applies to dèvas, it applies to Brahmas.

**Vexation**

Everybody - when I say everybody I'm talking about devas, Brahmas, anyone that's alive; anyone who is not an Arahant - wants to know. Wants to find out and to achieve that they will do things. They will say things. They'll go places. They'll do all sorts of things and for as long as there's a need for that this mental and physical agitation exists. This vexation exists in the mind to try and achieve that state of fulfilment; to be able to find out what's going on; to able to know what's going on; to be able to sense what's going on because that is the nature of the mind. The mind always wants to know. The mind always wants to find out. Even at that most basic level, all the way down to having to feed oneself, having to use the toilet, having to take a shower, having to get medicines, throughout that spectrum, you are trying to relieve yourself from discomfort, so you can be happy. The Buddhist philosophy teaches us that, whenever you are having to do this is because you are alive. This is why we say**,**

**Jàti, jarà, marana (birth, decay and death)**

*Jàti paccayà jarà - marana - shòka - paridèva - dukka - dòmanassa - upàyàsa,*

*èvamètassa kèvalassa - dukkakkhandassa samudayò hòtì*.

The reason for all of this is because you are alive. Because you are living and with being alive comes *jàti* or with *jàti* which is being alive, being in existence comes *jarà,* which is decay; *marana* which is death; *vyàdhi* which is illness; s*hòka* which is being sorrowful; *paridèva* which is lamentation.

So, all of these causes for suffering is a result of being alive in the first place. You don't have to accept this because I have told you so. You don't have to accept this because The Lord Buddha said so. Not because it's in the scriptures. Not because it's in the books. By all means only accept this, if this makes sense to you. This is why I say, keep looking until you find the truth. Apply this to your real-life examples.This is what *yònisò manasikàra* is all about.

**Yònisò Manasikàraya**

Apply this into your lives. From the moment you are awake, to the moment you go to sleep, aren't you looking for happiness? Think for yourselves. Look at your own lives, introspect. Do you do anything else other than trying to find happiness? If not, then that passes the test and this is a hypothesis. Like when you do any science experiment you come up with the hypothesis and then you do the experiments to prove or disprove it. Likewise, I'm giving you a hypothesis right now. Buddhist philosophy helps you find Supreme Bliss and happiness that is everlasting. That is a hypothesis. You can prove it for yourself. I can do my own experiments. I can give you the results of my experiment. You might believe me because you have faith in me, but that's not the same as conviction. That's the difference between faith which is *bhaktiya* and conviction which is *shraddhàwa. W*hich is what is really important in the practice of the Buddhist path, the Buddhist teaching. You need conviction. Conviction is tried and tested. You apply the doctrine. You apply the philosophy and see whether it makes sense to you. Does it apply to my life examples? Where does it not apply? Where does it not make sense? Then you go and clarify that. You ask somebody. You speak to someone and say, *'hey this does not apply. This does not work right, here. Is there's something wrong with the philosophy or is it because I understood it incorrectly'?* When you have a *kalyàna mitra,* they'll help you understand. They'll help you fill in the gaps and then one day you are going to come to a perfect understanding. Yes. I now get it. All suffering is because I'm in existence. All suffering, all kinds of sorrow, all kinds of grief, death, decay and old age are all because I'm alive because I'm in existence. So, wherever there's existence, whether that's in the human realm or the human world, the dèva world, dèva realms or the Brahma realms, wherever you are, there is complete suffering.

**Suffering**

Wherever you are, the reason you are suffering is because you are in existence. Because you are in existence you have to satisfy your needs, your wants and your requirements, your desire to know something, your desire to want something. Say, it's your birthday and your friend comes walking through the door with a gift wrapped in wrapping paper. How are you feeling right now? You are feeling really agitated. You want to know what is that gift he has brought. You can't rest until your visitors leave and you get the chance to unwrap those gifts and find out for yourself what they are. How does that make you feel? You want to know, want to find out. Even that is suffering. When it comes to Buddhist philosophy, that is suffering because you are restless at that time. You just want to know. When you walk past the TV and someone else is watching TV, even without you knowing your eyes turn towards the TV because you want to know what's on TV. If you hear someone speaking a language that you don’t understand, without you even knowing it, your attention is now focused on that. You hear a sound from behind. Guess what everyone does? They will turn around and see what that sound is, where it came from. You just want to know and sometimes it got nothing to do with you.

**Vèdanà and sannà (feeling and perception)**

All of this is because your mind is constantly looking for sensory inputs. It's looking to recognize. It’s looking to identify. The feeling of this state of looking for *vèdanà* and *sannà,* as long as that exists, your mind is in a state of agitation and that is true for all beings that are alive. Even from that most basic level of wanting to know and wanting to find out, to the levels of the other end of the spectrum, you are suffering. Think of an Arahant. An Arahant has to go on alms for food. This is because he is still in existence, he is still alive. When an Arahant is feeling sick or ill, he needs to go to a doctor. What did the doctor Jeewaka do in the Buddha’s time? He attended to The Lord Buddha. He attended to His disciples and treated them on a regular basis. The reason he did that was because, even if you are an Arahant, you still got a body that is subject to illness, subject to decay and death. They have to be treated. Therefore, they need a doctor. All this is because you are alive.

**Birth and death**

So, wherever there is cause for you to be alive, wherever there is cause for you to be born again, to be in existence, then you are subject to decay. You are subject to death. You are subject to sorrow, grief and disappointment. Particularly where you are expecting that happiness to come from external factors, you are always going to be disappointed. You will be happy for as long as those conditions work out in your favour. But again, think back to examples in your life. Did they always work in your favour? Think about your siblings. Think about your parents. Think about your job. Think about your husband, your wife. Think about your car. Think about when you went on holiday. Think about the last time you went to your favourite restaurant, your neighbours, your toys, your computer, favourite video game. Literally anything and everything that is conditioned, did it always work in your favour? Did it always work to your liking? Was there never a time when you felt frustrated, disappointed, agitated? Think and reflect. Because that is the only way you are going to understand this. Think and apply this to your own lives and analyse it for yourself and test this hypothesis until it becomes crystal clear, without a shadow of a doubt.

*'Yes, that is absolutely the truth. All my life I've been looking for happiness, but that happiness I've been expecting from external factors and all those external factors were preconditioned. When the conditions were right, they fulfilled what I was looking for. They fulfilled and they gave me happiness. But when those conditions change, then I still remain attached and associated them and as a result of that, I was disappointed and I was frustrated'.*

So, you are always in a constant state of flux. From happiness to sadness to sorrow to satisfaction to dissatisfaction to fulfilment to un-fulfilment, you are always going up and down like the waves of the ocean. Whereas, The Lord Buddha comes into this world and says;

*'why do you subject yourself to that kind of ups and downs of life? This is life in itself. If you rely on external factors, then this is the curse that you bring on yourself. When I can teach you the way to stop relying on external factors to make yourself happy and there in itself you are going to be happy. Because for as long as you are looking for those external factors to make you happy, you are going to have to expect to be disappointed. Your definition of happiness is in fact flawed. Once you understand this, you are going to disassociate yourself. You are going to detach yourself. You are no longer going to set expectations on those external factors to make you happy. Then you are really going to find happiness'.*

Think about this and apply it, and then this is what's going to help you understand yourself. Remember what we said at the start, Buddhism is about understanding yourself more than understanding anything else, because once you've understood yourself, you understand the world. When an Arahant is born, he has understood the world and in understanding the world, he has understood himself. He may or may not know about the suns and the stars and other celestial planets and all of those things, but he will understand his own true self. He will have completely eradicated all kinds of ignorance and delusion about himself. He knows how his mind operates. He knows why his mind used to operate in a certain way and he'll know that he has eradicated desire, aversion and delusion and how he is completely free of all those defilements now. That is all there is to understand oneself.

**Nibbàna**

The Lord Buddha says, happiness is simply relieving yourself from discomfort. Happiness is relieving yourself from pain. Comfort is simply relieving yourself from discomfort. Satisfaction is simply relieving yourself from dissatisfaction. Fulfilment is simply relieving yourself from un-fulfilment, until you come across Nibbàna*.* Because Nibbàna is where you have ceased, you have stopped, all reasons that have put you in a position where you are cursed with this problem of having to put out those fires. If you don't have to put out those fires, then you don't have that problem.

Let me give you this analogy. You go to the dentist because you've got an aching tooth and the dentist pulls out that tooth. Now you are feeling relieved. Now that pain is gone and you are feeling okay. You are feeling better. You are feeling that now because that tooth has been pulled out. But you didn't feel this satisfaction, this relief, before that tooth went bad, when that tooth was okay. When it was a healthy tooth, you didn't feel that same sense of happiness and relief. The reason you are feeling this relief right now is because the bad tooth was taken out and relieved your pain. What if you didn't have teeth in the first place? I mean forget for a fact that you wouldn't be able to live without teeth, but if you could and you didn't have teeth in the first place, then you wouldn't have to go to the dentist in the first place. You won't have to suffer from decayed teeth in the first place. Likewise, *Nibbàna* is all about finding those causes which can, over time and invariably, give you cause for suffering. Eradicating those causes at the root so that those causes do not exist to give rise to pain, discomfort, dissatisfaction and frustration in future, is what Nibbàna is and that is The Lord Buddha’s teaching.

**Cause and effect**

If you are looking for happiness and you are looking for happiness externally, what you need to reflect on is, the fact that all those external factors are conditioned, preconditioned. When those conditions change, the result is going to change, the effect is going to change: 'Cause and Effect'. This is the Lord Buddha's teaching. When the effect changes, when the result changes, if you are still attached to what was there, when the previous set of causes were in action, guess what's going to happen. Now you are going to be disappointed, you are going to be frustrated. Think about when you bought yourself a car. You go to the showroom and now you are looking at your dream car. It's got new paint, it has all the gadgets, the electrics work fine, you can turn the wheel with just your finger, but over time it's going to decay. It's going to come to the end of its lifespan and then it's going to have to be discarded. You have to go and get a new one and then you got to take it to the garage. You need to get it serviced. All of these things are not things you are attached to, but you have to do it. That is because, you need to maintain those conditions that were there that gave you the result, that you were attached in the first place. So, this is the *dukka Cause, viparinàma* *dukka* and *sankàra dukka* you have to subject yourself to, when you go and attach yourself to that object, that external factor which you thought was going to bring you happiness.

**Dukka-dukka, viparinàma dukka, sankhàra dukka**

So, if you're looking for happiness from external factors, then you are always going to continue to suffer. You are always going to suffer from *dukka because you;* which is what's going to happen to this? Would it break, would it fall, would someone come and take it away from me? You are always in a state of agitation, frustration and vexation. Then there is *viparinàma dukka;* no matter how much you are going to protect it, one day it's going to stop. One day it's going to break. That day's going to come and when that day comes, you are going to suffer. You are going to be sorrowful. And then there is s*ankàra* *dukka*; the *dukka* that you have to endure because you have to continue to feed the causes that give you the result that you were attached to in the first place. All of this you have to do, because you attached yourself to that object or that person or that occurrence. Before you went and attached yourself, you didn't have to worry about any of those things. It was someone else's problem. But the moment you attached yourself, now it's your problem. So, what you really did was to relieve yourself from discomfort, from pain, from dissatisfaction. You took away someone else's problem and made it your problem. Now you've got all of the above plus all of these new problems as well. So, have you not just jumped from the pan to the fire? That's what you've just done.

Again, don't just take this because I'm saying so. Don't just take this because it says so in the *Tripitakaya.* Apply this into your lives. Think about all the times when you went and attached yourself to something. Was this not what happened to you and is this not why you can't rely on external things to bring you happiness because all the time all its going to bring you *is dukka TripIt kaya, viparinàma dukka* and *sankàra dukka.* You turn on a fan when you are feeling hot, it's going to blow some wind at you and you will feel better. You are going to feel cool. I'm not arguing that, there's no debate about that. But if you come to the conclusion that, *'oh well, that’s ok then, whenever I'm feeling hot all I've got to do is turn my fan on. So, that's fine. I can just continue to live every day throughout sansàra, whenever I'm going to feel hot, I just switch on the fan and I'm going to be okay*'. You are not going to have a fan every day and the fan that you brought will have to be maintained. You have to get it serviced. You will have to pay the electricity bill and money don't grow on trees. You have to go and work for it. So, you have to do all of these things to get you that satisfaction, to feel that relief. But you have the opportunity to stop both in the first place, so, you don't feel hot. When you have the path to relieve yourself at the root, to cut it off at the bottom and not have to suffer in the first place, why do you go trying to treat the problem, when you can remove the problem in the first place?

If you wanted to find yourself some water because you are thirsty and what you are finding is, that every step you take, you are walking towards the desert, you are making a mistake. You are going to die. This is what people do. They are really thirsty. There's a well just a hundred yards in the one direction. But an immoral, ignoble person comes and says, *'hey, there's this beautiful desert where you will find lot of water'*. If you have not had an opportunity, pick up the *Jàthaka* story book, where there are five hundred fifty odd stories of the Jataka Lord Buddha, when he was the Bòdhisatva. Read them. There is one particular story where he was a merchant and goes with his carts full of merchandise. He and Dèvadatta, who was also a merchant in that time go from land to land. They are traveling merchants and they go across this desert. What they both unable to do is, take enough water with them. But the Bòdhisatva on that occasion uses his wisdom. When he comes across these demons where they meet on the desert where the demons come with wet hair and water lilies and things like that. They are coming to kill these people and to take their meat and to destroy them and feast on the cows that are pulling these bullock carts. But they come pretending like their hair is wet and there were water lilies and flowers all over their bodies and mud on their feet. When they meet the first set of merchants led by Dèvadatta, he falls for this trap. He advises his fellow travellers to throw away all the water they were carrying with them because it's going to be an easier journey and that apparently there's going to be an oasis nearby. But then they travel and travel and travel and ultimately what they find is they have run out of water. They don't have any water and they don't come across any water. Overnight when they are really thirsty and famished, these demons come and destroy and kill the people and the bullocks and they feast on them. Whereas the Bòdhisatva, he comes later on and he uses his wisdom and decides no, it can't be the case. In the middle of the desert, I'm not going to travellers find any water like these demons say and he suspects these can't be real people. They must be demons. They are pretending to be kind to us, but this is only going to cause us immense suffering. So, he advises his fellow travellers, '*you will not be throwing away any water without asking me and you will not be eating anything that you don't know. You will not be stopping anywhere. We shall continue to travel'*. That is the story of how he saves his entourage by using his wisdom. Go read this story as well. But at the same time, the reason that I mentioned about this story is because, when you go in search of water when you are really thirsty while walking in the desert and you think there is a well a few hundred yards in the opposite direction, aren't you mistaken?

**Noble associations**

This is why you need the association of noble people, because a noble person comes to you and says, the problem that you have is that you are alive, you are in existence. Being born is the root cause for these problems. What you do in life in your search for happiness, in your pursuit for happiness, always and constantly brings more problems in your direction. You are walking towards a fire. Your head is on fire and you are walking towards another fire and they say that's not what you should be doing. Put out that fire and I can give you the way to do it. I can teach you how to do it. So, without doing that you continue to go on that path. Then clearly you are not going to find yourself the happiness that you set out to achieve in your life in the first place. This is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism at its most basic. The reason that we have the Buddha’s teaching is not to achieve anything that is super natural, super normal. It is an answer to the problem that we are all suffering from. It's an answer to the problem that we've always been looking for an answer. And that is, '*how can I be happy'?*

**Setting expectations**

The Buddha’s teaching is nothing else. It’s no different in what its objective is, in what its aim is from any other religion. It's not different in what its aim is from what science helps us do today. To help you be happy. Which is what we all agreed at the start is what we are all looking for in life. But where Buddhism, where the Buddha’s teaching differs fundamentally and 180 degrees from all other teachings is, it's the things that you attach yourself to, that brings you unhappiness. Whereas other philosophies say, pick and choose the things you want to attach to, but regardless of where you attach yourself to, that brings you happiness. Whereas the Buddha’s teaching is, whatever you attach yourself to, you are going to set expectations on it and the moment you set expectations on unconditioned things, preconditioned things, when those conditions change, you are going to suffer. He also says these things that you believe are the sources of happiness, sources of satisfaction, are not really the sources of happiness or satisfaction. The reason you feel happiness and satisfaction and fulfilment is because you are suffering before that. You are suffering and to relieve yourself from that pain and discomfort, you go after these things and then you fall into this wrong and delusional view that it's those external things that brought you happiness in the first place. So, walk away from that. That's not what you should be doing. What you should be doing is finding the root cause for that problem, which is existence, *jàti* and *bhava* that brings you *jàti*. So, this is why *Paticca Samuppàda* or Dependent Origination is particularly required. By which I don't mean you have to take a book on *Paticca Samuppàda* and read it and then you will be fine. What I mean is you have to understand that this is where the problem is. This is the path to cessation of that problem and then therefore through that, by practicing that path you lead yourself to liberation. The Buddha can only teach us how to do that. We have to walk that path. He can't come and take us by the hand and take us to the water. We've got to walk to the water. We've got to drink it but without leaving any room for doubt, without leaving any room for suspicion, without leaving any room for debating or argument, He has given us in his perfect wisdom, with his perfect and infinite compassion he's given us the path and it's there in black and white. It's there, crystal clear and that path to liberation that path to become an Arahant is available today. It prevails today.

What we should all be doing is practice that path and once you come across that teaching give it time. When you want to plant a tree, you plant the seed. You put some water. You put some fertilizer and you let some sunlight in. You go back the following day and see there's no plant. You don't say, *'hey, this plant is never going to grow'*. You got to give it time. What if you come back the second day, there's no plant? What do you do is you go and dig the soil up again and plant a second seed? Then you come back the next day and find that didn't work either. There's no plant. Then you dig the soil up and you put another seed in there. Well, every time you keep doing that, you don't give those seeds time to germinate and therefore, you're never going to get a plant out of that. If you are giving it the right causes and the right conditions, then the result is going to be there, you are going to get to those noble attainments. But you need to give it time. Once you realize this path will help me get myself to liberation. I can see how detaching myself from things or allowing myself to be detached from things, is what's going to make me happy. Then practice that path. Practice it for a little time. Listen to these sermons. Invest some time in this like you do with any other investment. You don't put some money in the bank today go tomorrow and ask where's my money? Where's my interest? And they say, *'well, it's just a couple of pennies'*. You don't say, *'oh well, that's pointless. Let me draw my money out and put my money in another bank'.* No, you have to give it time. You have to give it time to compound. You have to give it a couple of years. That's when you are going to draw compounded interest.

**Liberation**

Likewise, anything is the same. Give it time. But before that make sure you are looking for the right answer and to do that make sure you are trying to answer the right problem. If happiness is what you are looking for, make sure that whatever path you walk, whatever solution you see, gives you happiness. That is something that you can check and look for before you start walking the path. This is why The Buddha teaches us walking the path of liberation is something that you do after having seen the result. It's not a case of you get to the result and then go, alright okay, that's interesting. That's not how you walk the path of Nibbàna. You see Nibbàna and then you walk towards it. The reason we get you these sermons is to help you see Nibbàna, to see enlightenment, to understand that this is the path that's going to help you get there and that is what becoming a *Sòtàpanna* is all about. It's realizing that detachment is what's going to bring me happiness because it's attachment that got me suffering all the time. So, cessation of that attachment is what brings me happiness and the path to that cessation can only be the path that can help me redeem myself.

So, practice this.



00.00.19 Paying homage to the Lord Buddha

00.02.54 Inviting all beings to rejoice in this meritorious deed

00.06.10 Seeking forgiveness from the Àryas

00.08.54 Some general advice

00.25.02 Kin saccha gavèsi - kin kusala gavèsi

00.29.28 Why do we do the things that we do?

00.36.50 Everything we do, we do to be happy

00.39.25 Looking for happiness

00.43.26 Why do people look for a religion?

00.46.35 What does the Buddhist philosophy offer?

00.50.56 'The problem' according to Buddhist philosophy

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00.56.50 Cause and effect

01.00.17 Science will give you temporary relief from pain and discomfort

01.05.55 'Happiness' according to Buddhism

01.07.48 Vexation

01.09.03 Jàti, jarà, marana (birth, decay and death)

01.10.09 Yònisò Manasikàraya

01.11.05 Bhaktiya and Shraddàwa (faith and conviction)

01.12.32 Suffering

01.16.53 Vèdanà and sannà (feelings and perception)

01.18.14 Birth and death

01.32.48 Nibbàna

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