Link: <https://youtu.be/ZGL60R40RZ0>

**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 **2018-02-04**. 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**

Parinibbana

Advertising

Bait

Arahant

Non-arahant

Yoniso manasikara

**Tame your mind by being a friend to yourself**

**04-02-2018**

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**Karma will bite you in the back**

Often times we are all so ambitious - we want to attain Nibbàna and we listen to the Dhamma, we listen to *anicca, dukka, anatta* and come to the conclusion,

*'well, there's nothing in the world that is to my liking. When I attach myself to anything that is conditioned, then of course that brings me suffering - the whole process is just useless, it's futile, is essence-less. So, let me just go ahead and attain* Nibbàna*'.*

Now, that's easier said than done. I'm sorry to lay it out so blindly, so bluntly, but that is literally the case. As you have just done and reflected on the fact that in that countless time, we have spent in *sansàra* and in all those births, we have not always been good people. We have done countless bad deeds through mind, speech and body. In having done so, we have caused great hardship, discomfort, pain and suffering to a lot of people and other beings. So today, when we try to attain Nibbàna*,* when we make that determination, having at least achieved a modicum of understanding, that those *karmas* really do come to bite us in the back. Chickens do come home to roost. Those consequences of the things we have done, we have to tolerate - they do come and bear fruit. This is why it's important to understand that to attain Nibbàna, the knowledge and the understanding you need is *anicca, dukka, anatta.* But that alone is not sufficient. You need the environment that helps you gain that understanding.

**Importance of understanding the Dhamma**

The Lord Buddha has, on countless occasions emphasized the fact that meritorious deeds are absolutely necessary for one to attain Nibbàna. The reason being that it helps create the environment for one to have the mental ability and the mental aptitude to understand the Dhamma. There are three kinds of births in the blissful plane. That is, you can be born as a human, a Dèva or a Brahma*.* Even if you are born as one of these three, you need to understand the Dhamma - I am not talking about being able to memorize and repeat - I am literally talking about understanding. Understanding is one thing and remembering is another. To give you a very simple example, I could teach you to work out a math problem, but if you understand how to work out that math problem, I could give you another problem and you will work it out yourself. But, if you just memorize what I taught you, then you'll be able to repeat and solve the same problem, but as soon as I give you a new problem, then you are going to fail. You will say *'you didn't teach me how to solve that problem'*. Well, the theory is the same, the method is the same, you only need to work out how to apply the method in that new example. That is the difference between understanding something and simply knowing something or just gathering knowledge. If you want to attain Nibbàna, there is not really a need to memorize or remember what is being said. Understanding is what's important; it's comprehension.

**Create a favourable environment for Dhamma**

Even if you are born as a human, you still need the environment that is conducive to attain Nibbàna. Conducive is supportive. And that environment is one where you have the basic comforts that you require. If you are feeling really hungry, I could sit down in front of you or perhaps even the Buddha might sit down in front of you and start preaching the Dhamma, but you are not going to understand a word of it. In fact, there is even a story, where the Buddha once visits a gathering where a number of monks had gathered, waiting for The Buddha to start the sermon. But He doesn't and waits for quite a while until this one person - it was actually a peasant, a farmer - until this farmer goes home having finished his work for the day - freshens up, puts on clean clothes and comes and sits down. Everyone is baffled as to why The Buddha waited for one person when he was not even a monk, to which the Buddha responds,

*Because this person is the only one who had the conditions required to achieve a noble attainment - a màrga pala. None of you will be able to do that today and therefore I do not waste my words, I do not waste my energy. This is why I waited for him to come and join us. So, I have preached today with him in mind".*

Now, this is in no way to say, the rest of them were useless - that is not clearly what he implied. There is a deeper message that we need to understand here. You see, that person was just a farmer. He was not a monk. So we think that to attain Nibbàna, what we need to do is to sit down, listen to a sermon - a sermon in which *anicca, dukka, anatta* is being discussed, perhaps becoming a monk is even better, then listen to one or two sermons and I will be able to attain the Noble Fruits. It doesn't quite work like that. It is because, you need that environment that is conducive and you need to create that environment.

How do you create this environment? You create this environment by accumulating merit. What do I mean by environment? I'll give an example. If you are feeling hungry, then your mind is not with the sermon; your mind is not able to absorb, understand and comprehend what is being said. Think about when you are in class, at school or perhaps in a meeting at work - you are feeling really hungry - you are famished. No matter how much effort the person who is talking or presenting is making, very little, if anything of what is being presented, is going to stick with you because your mind is going to be with your stomach. You are thinking about how am I going to satiate my hunger; where am I going to get some food. That's what you would be thinking about. Or perhaps, if you have a really bad headache then all you are thinking about is medicines and lying down. I'm sure you would have been in at least one of those situations where there is a sermon or a presentation and you are just not feeling up to it. That's either because you are feeling weak or ailed, either physically or mentally. That is not a conducive environment for you to listen to the Dhamma or any kind of presentation for that matter, and very little, if at all of anything, is going to stick with you.

**Proper frame of mind**

This is why, when you listen to the Dhamma, it's important that you have the proper frame of mind. And that frame of mind is a result of many different conditions. It's your physical health - so don't be fooled that, just because you have made a determination, *'I'm going to attain Nibbàna in this birth*, *why do I care about my health anymore? That's not important',* you are deeply mistaken. Your physical health is very important. It's your physical health that gives you the mental frame of mind to listen to the Dhamma without obstruction, without interruptions to understand the Dhamma. So, that is important just as much as not being hungry. That's not to say you've got to fill yourself up so much that you can't keep awake. That's the other end of the spectrum. That's not helpful either. So, you need to find the middle ground, where you are physically fit, physically feeling ready and therefore that does not interrupt with your mental mindset and your frame of mind at that time.

**Asceticism**

So, I hope that is clear to those who perhaps, might have been under some kind of delusion or misunderstanding. Let's say that, if it is Nibbàna you want to attain, 'I don't care about how I look anymore, I don't care about my health, my diet doesn't matter anymore, I don't need to wash, I don't need to shower*'*. Please don't fall into that trap. That's just craziness. I completely take it that there are people who do that and there are sometimes recluses who practice that. Let's think about Bòdhisattva - Siddhàrtha. Before he became a Buddha, when he lived the life of a recluse, he practiced extreme asceticism. He didn't wash for long periods of time; his hair was dishevelled and physically he wasn't feeling fit at all. This is why he said, *attakilamatànu yògaya* or inflicting extreme levels of pain, discomfort and hardship on your mental and physical self will not help attain Nibbàna. It's just the Noble Eightfold Path that you need.

**Mental and physical soundness**

We were talking about meritorious deeds, because it's these deeds that help you have that mental and physical soundness to be in a state that is sound, both mentally and physically. No matter how much you want, if you don't have the merits that you might have accrued by donating alms, by giving to the poor, by helping other people, perhaps even animals, you are not going to be able to have them, you are not going to have the merits to quench your hunger or thirst, you will not find food. All it requires is, for one to open their eyes, look around the world and observe how many people are there who can't feed themselves on a daily basis, people who don't have a home, people who can't clothe themselves. Remember, this is the blissful plane we are talking about - the *sugatiyas.* And yet, they are unable to find food or clothing or shelter or medicines, if they are ill. This is because they don't have the merits that reward them with these good fortunes. If you don't have any of those things, then you don't have the physical or mental frame or the background and environment to be able to both listen to and understand the Dhamma. So, merits are extremely important. I repeat, you absolutely need merit.

**Association of Noble beings**

So, the gift of Dhamma is actually what we are doing right now, by disseminating the Dhamma. Even if you look at the *Tripitakaya*, there are stories where people have attained the fruits of *Sòtàpanna* in particular -let's leave the other attainments to aside - but *Sòtàpanna* because, once you become a *Sòtàpanna,* then you know the path is open to you and you can fulfil your own path from that point onwards. But, to become a *Sòtàpanna,* you need to associate a noble person, a noble being and if you are in their proximity, when a sermon is being delivered, it is extremely helpful. But what you can do though is, rather than listening by yourself, if you are able to get together with friends, family or colleagues and anyone who has an interest and perhaps living in your locality, then get together and listen to the sermon. There are many benefits in doing that.

**Creating energy for comprehension**

One of the benefits is, when you are both focusing on the Dhamma, this is where your mind is when the Dhamma is being preached. Then, you are both generating a lot of good *karma* and good energy, which is continuously released into the universe. This energy can be helpful to not just yourself, but also to the person who is with you. So, if there's more than one of you who sits down and listen to a sermon, then the energy that each of you releases and generates, will help each other mutually and that's such a great thing. So, you have the benefit of actually associating noble people, even without actually being able to look face-to-face or look eye-to-eye with the person preaching the Dhamma at that point of time.

You are listening to this Dhamma, because you want to attain Nibbana. So, in that sense, you are all trying to remove yourself from the world, move away from mundane-ness into supra mundane-ness; from the *laukika* to *lòkòttara.* Therefore, to have the association of your friends and family around you is really a privilege. So, whenever you have that opportunity to do that, then please do that, it helps.

**Multi-tasking**

The second benefit I see in doing this is, that sometimes when you are sitting in front of your computer or your mobile device, you will have the YouTube open on one window. You are listening to a sermon, but you are probably multi-tasking. You are working away on something else as well. Perhaps you are playing a computer game. Perhaps you are watching TV with your eyes, but you've got the sermon plugged into your headphones, so that you are hearing the sermon. This is normal, because that's what we are always used to doing as human beings. It is very difficult for us to focus our minds on one thing at any given time. This is why we are still in *sansàra.* Even when we have the opportunity to listen to the Dhamma, we still can't find the ability to control ourselves and focus our minds on one thing. The reason I'm mentioning this here is, if you are prone to doing that, then when you have the opportunity to sit down with somebody else, at least one other person, provided the two of you don't start chit-chatting with each other and you are both able to focus on the sermon, then he or she can keep you in check and vice versa. So you are both keeping an eye on each other. Your mind has to be on the Dhamma.

Preaching the Dhamma and listening to the Dhamma are both very potent meritorious deeds. Disseminating the Dhamma, in whichever shape or form, is also very meritorious. This is why, we should be very grateful for those of you who have already started to transcribe these sermons. What that means is, type them up in English onto a Word or a PDF document and then to make them available for offline reading, rather than listening, because there are people who may not have the opportunity to listen to them. This is an extremely meritorious deed. When you do these deeds, you are accumulating good merit that will help you when you sit down to listen to a sermon, when you sit down to practice the Dhamma, when you sit down to meditate. All you need to do is, make a determination. May any merits that I have accumulated by helping someone to attain Nibbana, now help me in my search for liberation, in my practice of this meditation and all that is required. It is amazing how much good it can do.

So if you are interested, if you have the time, then please drop a message on to our Skype group and I'm sure our listeners will provide instructions on how that can be done. Again, there's certainly no obligation to do this. And if you don't do this, no one will say you can't listen to the Dhamma and no one will say that you can't attain Nibbana. But all of these merits will help you walk that path easily. If you are trying to follow a difficult path right now then there is no harm in trying to make it a little bit easier. Imagine you have to walk home and there are pebbles or sharp stones on the ground. Then why walk barefoot when you can put some shoes on. It's quite the same here as well. You will still get to the same place if you walk either way. But that journey can be easier if you have the merits to help you do that.

**World is placed on Dukka**

The Lord Buddha said, *dukkò lòke paticcità,* by which he meant, that the world is placed upon *dukka* - on suffering. The foundation of the world is suffering. I was thinking about this and I thought perhaps this needs a little bit more explanation – description - because it's easy to get the wrong idea when talking about this. An Arahant has eradicated all kinds of suffering, except for the suffering that comes with the *karmas* that they might have done in the past bearing fruit, the *vipàkas.* For example, an Arahan*t* feels hunger, The Buddha felt hunger. The Buddha had to endure physical aches and pains. All of those are *vipàkas,* and for as long as you have a physical body, you will have to endure those pains and discomforts.

An Arahant has eradicated the pain that can be eradicated while still being alive or the suffering that can be eradicated while still being alive. What do I mean by that? Let's just go back to the Four Noble Truths;

- suffering

- the cause for suffering

- the cessation of suffering

- the path to cessation of suffering

If you have done some study, you would have noticed that it does not say anywhere, that the path to cessation of suffering is death. The Buddha never said that, "*die and that's the end to suffering".* Why do you think that is the case? Because if you think about it, if I am hungry, if I am ill, if I am feeling weak and feel discomfort, there is a precise practice called euthanasia. Euthanasia - is where people opt to have a procedure done on to them, which results in their life being ended. What they do is, they inject a certain kind of drug into the body and then that stops your vital organs from functioning and then the last moments of your life are taken away at that point. Normally, people do this when the physical pain and discomfort is no longer bearable or tolerable. They feel that dying is the answer to this problem. But I would like to emphasize the fact that The Buddha, on no occasion advised this practice.

**Parinibbàna**

You might wonder, well, The Buddha, three months before his *parinibbàna*, made a determination that, 'I will attain parinibbàna in three months’ time'*.* Isn't that a way of making that affirmation that I no longer want to be alive and that is enough living for me? That applies to Arahants and it applies to Buddhas. This practice is called, letting go of your life vitality. Certain Arahants used to do that. In The Buddha's case, He had made a promise to the *Màra* that once He had established His Ministry, the Buddha Sàsanaya, when He had done His service to the world, when there were enough monks who were practicing the Dhamma and there were plenty of Arahants in the world, then He would let go of the life faculty. That is what He did in the premises of *Chèpala* - the *chaithya.* But this is not a practice that He advised on anyone that is not an Arahant*.* Why? Because that is not the answer to the problem; it is not the answer to the problem that The Buddha came into the world to explain and to teach us. It may be the answer to a different kind of problem but, it is not the answer to a noble problem and it is not a noble answer. Well, are we not tired and exhausted by having done all of these ignoble things and tried to solve ignoble problems, all these material problems and material answers? Isn't that why we are still - today in *sansàra,* trying to find the end to this useless and meaningless existence? Yes of course, this is why we need to think; we need to be intelligent.

We can't just be doing things, just because someone else does it. Unfortunately, this is where the world is today. You see, because of the association of immoral and ignoble people, and we get to know about the things they do by reading newspapers, watching TV, on Facebook - I'm not telling anyone off for doing any of these things - that's not my duty. But what I am saying is, these are the avenues through which the world attacks us, approaches us and contaminates our mind. So be very careful - be extremely careful when you are on the Internet, when you are tapping away on Facebook, when you are watching TV, when you are reading newspapers, magazines, whatever the case may be - be extremely careful and be extremely mindful. If you are mindful, if you practice *satara satipattànaya,* then you will be okay. But if not, the world is out to get you and the world will get you. As long as you allow the world to contaminate your mind, as long as you allow the world to put this kind of matter into your mind, then guess what it's going to do? Because that's how the world makes a living.

**Advertising is a bait**

How does Facebook make its money? Well, I'm sure there are lots of things that they do. But advertising is one of the main sources of revenue. I haven't done any research into Facebook but knowing how social media works - this is how it will work. This is why that tool is free. Have you not heard the expression - if something is free, then it's not that object that is being sold? It's the recipient of the object that is being sold. How so? Well, if you take the example of Facebook - you are probably thinking why we are talking about Facebook and all of these things when you just listen to a sermon to attain Nibbàna. Yes, understanding Nibbàna is about understanding *anicca, dukka, anatta.* But you need to create the environment for that. How many sermons have we listened to by now? We've probably got about 15 or 16 sermons online and there are also others that haven't been published. So, if you've had the opportunity to listen to these sermons you know we have been talking about *anicca, dukka, anatta,* we have been talking about the five aggregates, we have been talking about *dukka, viparinàma dukka, sankàra dukka. A*ll we have been talking about is, Nibbana.

**You are the object being sold**

Have you attained Nibbàna yet? Have you become an Arahant yet? Well, if not, then you need to think about why that is the case. Yes, you need to understand, we all need to understand *anicca, dukka, anatta.* But while doing that, we need to create for ourselves the physical and mental framework, background and the foundation that we need to get there.

As I was saying, take Facebook as an example and how these tools and these avenues are used to contaminate young people's minds. That is not to say Facebook cannot be used for good things. A lot of good things are shared on Facebook. We stream some of our sermons via Facebook. So, how does Facebook make their money? If you are not paying for it, then it's normally done via advertising. Advertising firms are paid to bring YOU, the readers or the viewers to their site, to that portal. That is how they make money and therefore you are the one that's being sold. Never knew that - did you? So that's what you need to think about. To bring anyone to that kind of place, whether it's TV or watching a movie or reading a newspaper - what does the world do? The world throws at you, the things that you are always looking for.

**You are being fished**

In the material world we are always looking for sites, so we can please our eyes. We are looking for sounds, so we can please our ears - sensual pleasures. Tastes which go well with our tongues, physical comforts that go well with our sense of touch and just the same for taste and sound and smell as well. So, if this is what sensual beings are looking for, then guess what they are doing – they are fishing. They are using nice and beautiful pictures of things that are attractive, which could be physical objects, it could be people. These are the baits that are used to fish you - you are being fished. Full stop. You are being fished, that is the bait. So you go on the site, along comes a bit of bait tied onto a string; that could be a picture of a young girl or it could be a picture of a very smart car and you think, *'oh! that looks pretty, that looks nice. I want to go and have another look at it*'. Now you are baited. Now you are caught at the end of the line and from that point forward, you have no idea what's going on inside your mind. You are not practicing *satara satipattànaya,* because, if you are, then you will be thinking about *anicca, dukka, anatta.* At any moment, your eyes, your ears, your nose, your tongue, your body - when any of your senses are experiencing pleasure - I'm talking about sensual pleasures - and you are not practising *anicca, dukka, anatta,* well, then you are not practising mindfulness. **You are not practising mindfulness** - that's a plain and simple statement.

This is why, you need to think about what you are doing and you need to, not fall victim to the antics of the world. Try and be mindful and keep away from them. This is why you need the association of noble people. Because noble people and noble Dhammas, as in the Buddha Dhamma, will always talk about the consequences of doing these things, of seeking sensual pleasures and the results of doing so. So, when we make this effort, a deliberate and strong effort to attain Nibbàna, if we don't have the environment, then we are in trouble. Therefore, we need to create the environment for us to be able to do that.

**Dukko lokè paticchità**

We were talking about how this world is created for us. This world that is based on *dukka* does not exist for an Arahant*.* Again, let me go back to the statement I made earlier; The Buddha says when he uttered the words *dukkò lòkè paticchità* – *dukka*or the suffering, *lòkè* being the world and *patittità* being based on or founded, or placed on. So the meaning being, the world is placed on suffering.

**The Two worlds**

If an Arahant is someone who has eradicated suffering, then he must be someone who has removed himself from the world. But, as we know, an Arahant still lives in this world. This is why an Arahant can see you; this is why an Arahant can go on alms and eat when he is hungry; this is why he dons robes. So clearly, he is interacting with the world that you and I can see when we open our eyes, when we open our ears, the world that we sense through our six senses – well, in Arahants as well. So if the world is based on *dukka,* and he has eradicated *it,* then obviously we should be able to infer from that, if *dukka* has been eradicated and the world is based on *dukka,* then the world has been destroyed. But he interacts with the world. So clearly, we are talking about two different kinds of worlds here. There is the one world that we interact with, the world that we experience through our senses and then there's the world that is based on *dukka.* Therefore, the world that is based on *dukka* is not the world that the Buddha says is out there - as in the world that we see with our eyes.

**Dukka is the foundation to the world that Arahants destroy**

If you walked outside your front door right now and looked at your garden or the front yard, you will see a world. You will see grass, perhaps you will see your car in the garage or perhaps you will see people walking up and down the street, perhaps you may see your neighbour’s house. Now that is the world that you can observe through your five senses. You can see those sights, you can hear people talk, you can hear birds and animals, you can smell the flowers, and you can taste the grass if you really wanted to. If you are on the beach, then you can taste the saltiness in the air. You can put your arms out; you can put your feet on the grass and now you know you are feeling the world. An Arahant can do exactly the same. But if we are saying that an Arahant has eradicated *dukka* and the world is based on *dukka,* then once you have destroyed the foundation, whatever was on the foundation prior to that, can no longer stand. So, if the foundation that is *dukka* has been destroyed, then the world that sits on top of the foundation can no longer exist.

So, you have this conundrum. There is a world that still exists for an Arahant. And yet, we are talking about world that has been completely and utterly destroyed. So, that concludes that there are two different kinds of worlds. We can draw the conclusion from there. These are two kinds of worlds that The Buddha was talking about. One kind of world an Arahant lives in and we live in as well. That is the world I just talked about, where you walk out your front door and there is a world in front of you. But there is another kind of world then, that has to exist.

**The difference between an Arahantand a Non-Arahant is the state of their mind**

Think about it this way. Imagine an Arahant has a twin brother who is not an Arahant*.* When you look at them - say they have both donned robes – one is a novice monk and has not attained the fruit of Arahant yet, but the other, has. When you look at both of them what are you going to see? You will see a carbon copy of each other. They will look identical. Perhaps maybe the odd difference is in the way they have donned robes or perhaps one might have shaved his head. But, if you ignore these subtle differences there, at first look you are going to see that they are identical. Then what is the difference? Where is the difference? If it is not in the looks, where is the difference? Is it in the robe? No, because they are both wearing robes. So it's not in the clothing; it's not in their physical looks. Then clearly, it must be in the mind. So, if it is in the mind, let's go back one step again. An Arahant has eradicated suffering. The world is based on suffering and therefore the Arahanthas eradicated and destroyed the world. And we are looking at an Arahantand a Non-Arahantand say, the difference between the two, is in their minds - is their state of mind. So, with the change in state of mind - I mean even if they're twins - one would have been an Arahant *-* the monk was an Arahanttoday - let's say he became an Arahantovernight. So, the previous day he was not an Arahant*.* So, what has changed now is, there is a state of mind where there was *ràga, dvèsha, mòha,* (desire, aversion and delusion) the previous day. There is no aversion, delusion and desire today - so his mind is free. His mind is free of defilements; and his mind is also free of what? Well, the world no longer exists for him. The world we are talking about here is not the physical world.

Hopefully the idea is clear to you; that the world that has been destroyed, removed, annihilated for an Arahan*t,* is not the world that you and I see, when we open our eyes in the morning and look out through the window. It is another kind of world and that is the conclusion that we can draw from that argument.

**Achieving Arahanthood**

So, that is the world that is based on suffering. If that is the world that is based on suffering and if The Buddha talks about the Four Noble Truths, nowhere does he say that the answer to removing suffering, eradicating suffering is going and hanging yourself. He is talking about a suffering that can be removed in this life itself. He is talking about a suffering that can be treated; that can be eradicated in this life itself. So, one does not become an Arahantagain. There may be some of you who think; perhaps you might have listened to other people say that, you become an Arahantafter you are dead. That is not the case. You become an Arahant before you die. If that is your last birth, then you absolutely become an Arahantbefore your last *chitta veetiya;* before that last thought process runs. So remember, you become an Arahantin this birth, not after death. That might be his last birth, in which case you have achieved Arahanthood before he passed away. But Arahanthoodis not something that is achieved after you have passed away and then you are born in another celestial world, which is just for Arahants. That's nonsensical. There is no such world where Arahantsare born. Because, if birth is the problem and you have put a stop to that problem, you can't be born again. But, if you are born again, then you can't be an Arahant *–* simple.

**World is in our minds**

The world that can be eradicated is the world that gives us *dukka.* What is this world then? This world must exist in our minds. Say, a waiter brings a chocolate cake and serves you. Let's say someone has put pepper into the batter when they were beating the cake. Not knowing this, the Baker continued to make the cake that has got pepper inside. You can't see it from the outside and all it would take is for someone to take a slice of it, put it in their mouth and without a second thought they are going to spit it out. So, that's the kind of cake that that we are using for our example here. You take a piece of the cake, the waiter brought you, and puts it in your mouth. A moment passes - a second moment passes - a third moment passes and it hits you; the taste of pepper. That scorching taste of pepper hits you like nothing you've expected. So, did the pepper not exist in the cake before you put it into your mouth? Of course, it did. So then, if the pepper existed in the cake and you at that point having looked at the cake thought, *'I am going to eat this', w*hy did you eat it? That is because, the cake that is in your world, did not have pepper in it. The cake that exists in the outside world had pepper in it.

Did you actually eat the cake that was outside on the table or did you eat the cake that was in your mind? That is the million-dollar question. Which cake did you think you were eating or which cake were you actually eating? If it were the cake that is outside where you can see it with your eyes, you would never have eaten it - because it had pepper in it. Of course, you can't see the pepper, but that doesn't change the fact that there is pepper in it. But, what about the cake in your mind? That does not have any pepper in it. In fact, it is delicious. So this is the cake that you ate.

Let's take that example one step further. Let's imagine for a moment - there's a cake, but there is no pepper in it. The cake is perfectly fine and it is edible. It is very similar to the cake in your mind. Now you slice it and put a piece in your mouth and you are chewing away. And then, I ask you to stop - quite abruptly - I say stop; and you stop chewing. Now I tell you to spit that cake out, back into the dish. Now I ask you to place this, next to another fresh slice that is on a dish. The other one is still edible, but this doesn't look appetizing, because it's been inside your mouth. Now, this is where the problem comes. If I now ask you to take the one that came out of your mouth and eat it again. How would you feel? Would you readily take it and eat, as you did the first time? Or would you be extremely reluctant and perhaps even completely unwilling to eat it? Why is it that you find it difficult to put that into your mouth now?

**Suffering due to the world created in the mind**

Well, this is where you should ask yourself,

'*are you eating the cake that you spat out, are you eating the cake that*

*has been served into the dish or are you eating the cake that's in your mind'*?

When you see the big cake that was brought to you, you looked at the cake. There is also a cake inside your mind - and that is the most delicious chocolate cake that you would have tasted. So, now you are ready to have that. Remember, when we used the example of the pepper cake – there is no pepper cake, it is a chocolate cake with pepper, you still ate it. Because, it was the cake that was in your mind that you wanted to eat. Not the cake that was actually served. But now you've got two options, you've got the slice of cake that is fresh, you've got the slice of cake that came out of your mouth. And what else? Well, you still got the cake that is in your mind. Guess what cake you are eating now? It is the cake that's in your mind. This is why you struggle to take that cake you spat out back into your mouth. This is just an example for you to think about what goes on in your mind. You are unable to eat the cake that's in your mind, because the cake that just came out of your mouth looks nothing like the cake that's in your mind.

**The world we live in, is the world we created in the mind**

However, the fresh slice of cake that has been cut out onto another dish that sits right next to that - that looks very much like the cake that's in your mind. Therefore, you are willing to eat it. Not because you are eating the cake that's out there, because, for all intents and purposes you are just eating the cake that's in your mind. What this piece of cake - that's outside and in the world outside is doing - is just helping you recall that cake that you had. Say, when you were really young you saw a beautifully decorated chocolate cake on a shelf in the shop and thought, *‘I'd like a piece of that’*. That cake was in your mind and now having looked at this chocolate cake sitting in front of you, you think, *‘right, it's time to eat that chocolate cake’*. But it is the one that's in your mind. I hope this helps you to understand the concept. The world we live in, is the world that we have created for ourselves in our own minds. This is why you can't eat the piece of cake that came out of your mouth when it has exactly the same ingredients as the fresh piece of cake.

**Yònisò Manasikàra**

This is how we need to analyse the Buddha Dhamma. Buddha Dhamma is nothing if not practical. It is the most practical teaching and philosophy ever. The Buddha never said,

*‘I have now spoken, go and think about what I've just said.*

*But use my own examples and do as I say’*.

What he said was,

*"here is the philosophy, here's how you need to look at your*

*own lives –* ***yònisò manasikàra"****.*

This is what you need to do. Take examples from your own life, apply the philosophy, apply the theory that you've learned, that you've taken from this into your own life examples and see how they fit. Whether that's cake, whether that's pizza, whether that's macaroni, it doesn't matter and it doesn't even have to be food. It can be anything - it can be clothes for some of you. Again, you think about what is it that always attracts you, what is it that you struggle to give up and to remove strong feelings of desire for. Use those examples.

**Object of meditation**

In fact, sometimes there are people who come to me and say;

*"Venerable Sir, I try to meditate and I've been listening to your sermons and I try to practice anicca, dukka, anatta. I reflect on the defilements of desire, aversion and delusion in my mind. I try to back them away using anicca, dukka, anatta. But when I sit down to meditate my mind runs away, it just goes all over the place. I've sat down trying to do ànà pàna sati. But, before I know it, my mind's thinking about how I had dinner the night before or how I met with a friend of mine and we were talking about something."*

I tell them that they have just found the object they need for meditation. Why do you think our mind always runs places? Think about where you go on holiday most - whether that's for a short weekend or whether you were on an annual holiday. If you have a habit of going to the same place, what you'll find is - it's the place that you like the most; it's a place where you enjoy going to the most. It's a place where the sights, the sounds, the taste, the smells and the feelings of touch, texture give you the most, the greatest sense of good feeling. This is why you find yourself going back to the same place.

Your mind is no different. Your mind is going to keep going back to the same mental objects that gave good feelings to it. And therefore, when you sit down to meditate, your mind is always going to the places that it knows best. Let's say it goes to the places that it knows best. Because you know there are times when the mind runs to places where it brings you a lot of grief. For an example, you've just had a death in the family - and you sit down to meditate the following day. Chances are you will struggle to focus your mind on your meditation object. Because your mind is thinking about the person you lost. So, wherever your mind goes most, where your mind is most attracted to, that's where your mind is. But in any case, where it brings you feelings of pleasure or feelings of sorrow and grief it's always going to be, because, that's what it has most closely associated and what it's clinging on to most. So, whether that is a sight, a sound, it could be a music or a song, something you tasted, perhaps some food that you had, it could be something that you smelt – may be your most favourite bottle of perfume that sits in your cupboard, or it's something you felt through your body.

**Mind is a great teacher**

So, if that's where the mind likes to go and dwell most of the time, to become an Arahant and attain *màrga pala* or noble attainment, is about finding out where the mind likes to dwell and then realizing and reflecting that these places are worthless, useless, futile and essence-less – *asàra*. If that is what we need to do, then do we need to look elsewhere? If we know for certain that this is where my mind spends most of the time, this is where my mind dwells most of the time, well then that's where you need to remove yourself from. But then you don't do that by force; you don't do that by pulling your mind away and telling your mind off. That's not what you should be doing. The mind is great at being a teacher. The only problem is, we are not good students. There is nothing wrong with the teacher g, the problem is with the student. You would have heard this expression - when the student is ready, the teacher appears. Well of course. When you are ready, when you know what you need to meditate on, what you need to cleanse off defilements are the places, the things, the objects and the people that your mind likes to dwell on and dwell around and dwell in, then these are the mental objects that you need to focus your meditation on.

**When desire gets the better of you (Example)**

Say, you saw a pretty girl or a boy or perhaps a flower or a really nice pair of shoes, and you're thinking,

*'I really want to get my hands on that or I really want to make that mine'.*

That's where your mind now begins to dwell on. You don't need to ask anyone else what should I need, what should I be doing *anicca, dukka, anatta* on. You've got the answer yourself; it's exactly that you need to do *anicca, dukka, anatta* meditation on. To practice *anicca, dukka, anatta* on anything else that you don't experience is a useless effort. Isn't that why people go running to their meditation masters saying, ‘*I'm struggling to focus my mind'.*

**When desire gets the better of you (Example)**

Imagine, you have a friend whom you care about, a friend you want to show the right path to. You want the friend to go to the temple, church or the mosque with you every Sunday. But he has other plans. He always wants to go to the park. You know he is just wasting his time going to the park. It would make more sense for him to go to the temple. So, what would you do? Would you go to the temple and then shout out to him,

"*Hey, come out from wherever you are, come to the temple."*

No, you don't do that. You will go to the park, down with him, ask him,

*“Hey, why do you keep coming to the park? What's so special? What is so fascinating about the park? Why do you keep coming here?"*

Then he will give you some honest answers. He may say,

*"well, you know these flower beds - they look really pretty. I can't help but take my eyes away from them".*

Then you ask;

*"Well, these flowers - are they to your liking? Have they ever been to your liking and do you not see the flowers that are just next to them? Those flowers which have withered now and are dying right now - were just the same as those flowers you're looking at right now and enjoying the look of."*

Then explain to him,

*"If you attach yourself to these flowers and think, Oh! What beautiful flowers they are and want to keep coming back to see them'. Well, two weeks from now, guess what's going to happen to them? The petals will fall and they're not going to look as pretty as they look today and then guess what's going to happen to you. You will feel sad. Feel disappointed; frustrated. Who's going to save you then?"*

All you're doing right now is sitting down with your friend and explaining to himthat the world that he fancies and finds pleasure in, is, *anicca, dukka* and *anatta,* meaning it's not to your liking, it's just conditioned and therefore, if you attach yourself to it, it will only bring you suffering. Why? As soon as the conditions change, the result changes and therefore, if you're attached to the effect or the result, then, you're attached to something that is in a constant flux. That is a useless thing to do. It's a pointless thing to do.You continue to explain;

*If you now understand that - is there a point in attaching yourself to what you're looking at right now because the more you look at it, the more you are going to be attracted to them, and the more you want to keep coming back here. The more you don't reflect on the reality of what you're looking at right now, the more attached you will get. If you keep coming back and see that these flowers don't look as pretty as they did two weeks ago, then you are going to be sad. Why dig this hole for yourself? Isn't that what you're doing? But if you come with me to the temple - we can go and speak to a monk who will explain to us that just like these flowers are anicca, dukka, anatta, so is everything else in this world. Because everything else is conditioned and in that temple, we can sit down and we can reflect on that. We can talk, we can discuss about other things that you might find yourself attracted to".*

Now, if you ask him to come to the temple, he's going to come with you; he will do it willingly. So, the point here being the mind is just the same. When the mind starts dwelling in other places where you don't want it to dwell, understand that is how the mind is, you don't fight the mind. You want to be your mind’s friend. Quite frankly, the mind already has enough and plenty of enemies. Everything in the world is an enemy coming into your mind, is it not? Why is it an enemy to your mind? Well, think about the flowerbed. The mind likes to go and dwell; the mind likes to go and attach itself - because the mind sees sensual pleasure and it likes to enjoy. But the world is not to the mind’s liking as the world changes constantly. Despite the world changing, the mind is still attached to what it saw before; what it heard before; what it tasted before; what it smelt before and what it felt before. And now when the result has changed, the mind is going to feel disappointed; feel sad. So, didn't the world make the mind sad? Didn't the world show all these beautiful pictures, nice sounds, lovely smells, delicious tastes and simply lure the mind in, only to disappoint it after all? How cruel a world that is?

So, all the mind has is enemies. Every single object, every single person out there, from the tiniest grain of sand to the Himalayas, to the little baby child, anyone that you can think of to the most beloved member of the family, they're all enemies. Please take this sensibly. I'm not saying that your family are your enemies. Please understand that we're talking about the mind here and why the world is the mind’s enemy because, the world is conditioned. The mind is not looking for a conditioned world. The mind thinks the world is to its liking. But it's not to its liking. That is the problem, this is what the Buddha comes and teaches us –

**World is conditioned**

***attakkarà tìni padà - Sambuddèna prakàsità.***

This is what Buddha comes into the world and teaches - that the world is constantly and forever conditioned and all of those conditions are *anicca, dukka* and *anatta.* So, if the mind has all these enemies and all these things and all these objects, are all the mind’s enemies, why should you, yourself be the mind’s enemy as well? Then who's going to be a friend to your mind? Do you ever think about it? You've got to be the mind’s friend; you've got to be kind to it; you've got to be compassionate to yourself. if you are not compassionate to yourself, no one else is going to be compassionate to you.

So, when the mind is wandering, our job and our duty is not to yell at it; not to scold it; not to shout at it. When you sit down for meditation what you need to do is to go along with the mind, help it understand, be a good teacher to the mind. Help the mind understand that whatever its dwelling on, whatever it finds pleasure with and whatever lures the mind, is only a trap. When the mind realizes that this is only a trap, the mind is going to run away. It will not stay there. That's how you tame your mind. It's not by being feisty, you don't be angry at it, don't be an enemy to it, be a friend to your mind.

**Five senses create the world**

The mind is constantly creating worlds. To create these worlds, it uses *rùpa,* *vèdanà*, *sannà,* *sankàra* and *vinnàna.* When the mind uses *rùpa,* *vèdanà*, *sannà,* *sankàra* and *vinnàna,* - *rùpa* being material form, *vèdanà* being feeling, *sannà* being recognition or identification, *sankàra* being formations and *vinnàna* being consciousness. So, the mind uses these *dhammas -* *rùpa dhamma,* *vèdanà dhamma*, *sannà dhamma,* *sankàra dhamma, vinnàna dhamma -* to create the world that it then lives in. This is the world that the Lord Buddha says is based on *dukka.* Now does an Arahant create these worlds? Of course, he doesn't. This is why an Arahant is able to see the world as it is.

**There is no world created in the mind of an Arahant**

An Arahant does not create a new world inside his mind. They observe the world and interact with it, but they don't create a world artificially for them. It's because, once you've created the world, you then expect the world outside to match the one you created. Therefore, once you've created this world inside your mind, you go out to the physical world - let's call that the physical world or **the external world** and the world that we've created ourselves - **the internal world**. So, once we've created the internal world, we go out into the external world looking for objects, people, things, occasions and incidents that match the internal world that we created. This is what brings us an enormous and infinite amount of suffering. Because the world that we created is based on *rùpa,* *vèdanà*, *sannà,* *sankàra* and *vinnàna* that we liked, we wanted and we clung on to. But the world that exists outside is conditioned and that is in constant flux. It keeps changing based on what goes on outside.

Let's take a simple example - the Rose bed again. Your friend is looking at the Rose bed. He's looking at a fresh bed of flowers; yellow, red, orange and some purple - violet flowers. When he's looking at these flowers, the world that has been created inside of him, researches. It comes to the surface. It comes to the surface because all of these *dhammas -* *rùpa,* *vèdanà*, *sannà,* *sankàra* and *vinnàna* - are all in these *upàdànas* or clinging aggregates - these are the aggregates that clung onto in the past when he first came across this and now by looking at the world outside, it recalls these *dhammas* inside of his mind and they come to the surface. When they come to the surface, this guy is now in a constant battle trying to match the outside world with the inside world. The problem is, the inside world is constant, because the inside world is to my liking. Because I can change the inside world if I wanted to. I can change the inside world because that's based on my thoughts; it's based on what I know about the world outside and it's based on what I'm ready to accept about the world. But the outside world is not to my liking because that is based on conditions and when the outside world changes that no longer matches the inside world and guess what happens - well, we have conflict. It brings an enormous and endless amount of suffering.

This applies to absolutely everything out there; applies to people, to objects. Again, as we said before, *yònisò manasikàra.* What you need to do now is, to take this principle and apply it to examples in your life. See how it matches, see where you did the same perhaps, and think - it could be anything really. Perhaps the last time you went out to a restaurant and you ordered a meal. When you walked into that restaurant, having seen all the adverts, having seen the signs outside the place, having seen the packaging of the food that has just been ordered by the person who stood before you in the queue. You only see the packaging and think, ‘*oh! That's what my foods will be like’.* All of these things are going to research the world that exists inside your mind and with that you set expectations.

**Matching inside and outside worlds**

What causes expectation is actually these *rùpa,* *vèdanà*, *sannà,* *sankàra* and *vinnàna* and those mental formations that we have created in your mind. Once we create those, our expectation is that the world outside must match what is in our mind and when we feel that they match, well, that brings us good feeling. When we feel like they don't match, then we feel disappointment; we feel unhappiness, we feel unfulfilled, we feel sad. This is how the world we have created for ourselves brings us pain, sorrow, grief and frustration and that is the world that The Buddha said is based on *dukka*. When He says *dukkò lòkè patittità,* that is the world is based on, is founded on *dukka.*

Hopefully it should now make sense to you how this world that we have created for ourselves is what brings us this *dukka.* Because, we set these expectations, and then we go out into the world expecting for them to be met. And yet, we forget that the world we go into is completely conditioned; every bit of it is conditioned; every inch of it, every millimetre, every micro millimetre, every grain of sand, every tree, every house, every man and every woman, - it's all conditioned. The nature of things that are conditioned is, when the conditions change the effect changes, the result changes. That changes happen in the outside world - that change does not happen in the inside world and of course, you then have a mismatch. When you have the mismatch, you are in tears, you are in pain and you are suffering.

**Nibbàna is unsurpassable**

Nibbàna is unsurpassable - it's beyond all kinds of happiness, it's beyond all kinds of bliss because, it's not conditioned. The path to Nibbàna is conditioned. You know there are things we need to do - we need to listen to the Dhamma, we need to practice the Dhamma, we need to bear the Dhamma, understand the Dhamma, comprehend, meditate - do all these things. We need to do meritorious deeds; we need to accumulate merit. All of these are things we need to do to get to our destination, which is Nibbàna. But once you are there then, that’s it. Once you bear that fruit - that result is not conditioned. No conditions can change the result of Nibbàna, because it is unconditional. This is the only thing you're ever going to find that is not conditioned. When the *Bòdhisattva* sat under the *Bòdhi* tree and reflected on all the worldly possessions that he had - the three palaces that he had to himself, the status of becoming an Emperor - that was his heir or his destiny, all the material wealth that he had and any material possessions that he had - understood all of those things were subject to death, decay, old age and illness. This is why he always looked for something that was beyond those conditions; that was beyond illness, death and decay. The understanding that he came to was, for as long as I dwell on something, in something or around something that is conditioned, I am going to suffer. Because all conditioned things are subject to death, decay, old age and illness. The only thing that is not subject to decay, death, illness and old age is Nibbana. Once we have attained that, once we achieve that, once we fulfil the journey, then ultimate happiness, forever lasting happiness is with us.



**2018 02 04 BBE 019 Tame your mind by being a friend to yourself**

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00.25.25 Importance of understanding the Dhamma

00.29.15 Create a favourable environment for Dhamma

00.34.38 Proper frame of mind

00.36.10 Asceticism

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00.40.57 Association of Noble beings

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