

The Law of Dependent Arising

The Secret of Bondage and Release

Draft Version



Bhikkhu Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda

Pothgulgala Dharmagrantha Dharmasravana

Mādhyā Bhāraya

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Sermon No. 5

(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 187)

‘Namo tassa bhaḡavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa’

‘Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!’

*Akkheyyasaññino sattā
akkheyyasmiṃ patiṭṭhitā
akkheyyaṃ apariññāya
yogamāyanti maccuno*

*Akkheyyaṇca pariññāya
akkhātāraṃ na maññati
tañhi tassa na hotīti
yena naṃ vājā na tassa atthi ¹*

- Samiddhi S.Devatā Saṃyutta, S.N.

Beings are aware of what can be named
They take their stand on what can be named
By not fully understanding what can be named
They come back to go under the yoke of Death.

He who fully understands what can be named
And thinks not in terms of one who speaks
For such things do not occur to him
That by which they speak, that is not for him.

Dear Listeners,

The teacher of the three realms, the Fully Enlightened Buddha, has revealed to us, through the Law of Dependent Arising, that a good many of the problems, controversies, debates and disputes in the world arise from linguistic conventions. The problem of *Saṃsāra*, which is the biggest problem, is also due to it. On this first full moon day of the new year, we have taken up as the topic of our sermon, two verses relating to that aspect of linguistic usage.

These two verses are found in the Samiddhi Sutta of *Sagāthaka Vagga* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. There is an interesting introductory story to these two verses which has a flavor of Dhamma in it. When the Buddha was staying at the Tapoda monastery in Rajagaha, Venerable Samiddhi woke up at dawn and went to the hot springs at Tapoda to bathe. Having bathed in the hot springs and come out of it, he stood in one robe drying his limbs. Then a certain deity,

who was exceedingly beautiful, illuminating the entire hot springs, approached Venerable Samiddhi and standing in the air addressed him in verse:

*Abhuvā bhikkhasi bhikkhu
na hi bhuvāna bhikkhasi
bhuvāna bhikkhu bhikkhassu
mā taṃ kālo upaccagā*²

Not having enjoyed, you go for alms, monk
You do not go for alms, having enjoyed.
Having enjoyed, monk, you go for alms
Let not the time pass you by.

‘*Abhuvā bhikkhasi bhikkhu*’- Monk you have come to this monkhood which is dependent on alms not having enjoyed the fivefold sense-pleasures. ‘*na hi bhuvāna bhikkhasi*’ - Not that you have come to monkhood after enjoying the sense-pleasures. ‘*bhuvāna bhikkhu bhikkhassu*’ - Monk, go to monkhood having enjoyed the sense-pleasures. ‘*mā taṃ kālo upaccagā*’ - Do not let the best time for enjoying sense-pleasures – that is youth – pass you by. Here is an invitation that goes against the Dhamma and here is the reply Venerable Samiddhi gave to it.

*Kālaṃ vo’haṃ na jānāmi
channo kālo na dissati
Tasmā abhuvā bhikkhāmi
mā maṃ kālo upaccagā*³

I do not know the time of death
Hidden is the time – it is not seen
That is why I go for alms without enjoying
Let not the opportune time pass me by

‘*Kālaṃ vo’haṃ na jānāmi*’ - I do not know when I have to die, ‘*channo kālo na dissati*’ - The time of death is hidden from me – it is not seen. ‘*Tasmā abhuvā bhikkhāmi*’ - Therefore I have come to monkhood without enjoying sense-pleasures. ‘*mā maṃ kālo upaccagā*’ – With the thought: ‘let not the opportune time for monkhood pass me by.’ The deity’s advice was not to let the time for enjoying sense-pleasures, that is youth, pass by. What Venerable Samiddhi says is that youth is the proper time for striving as a monk, since one cannot do it in decrepit old age.

But the deity did not give up his attempt to mislead Venerable Samiddhi. He came down and standing on the earth said: “Monk, you have gone forth while young with a lad’s black hair, endowed with the radiant youth, without having dallied with sensual pleasures. Enjoy human sensual pleasures, monk, do not abandon what is directly visible in order to pursue what takes time (‘...*mā sanditṭhikaṃ hitvā kālikaṃ anudhāvī*.’)

Venerable Samiddhi's rejoinder is exemplary.

"Friend, it is not that I abandon what is directly visible and run after what takes time. For the Fortunate One has said that sensual pleasures involve time, are full of suffering and full of despair and that the danger in them is still greater. Visible here and now is the Dhamma, immediate, inviting one to come and see, leading one onwards, to be personally experienced by the wise."

And then the deity asks: "But how is it monk, that the Fortunate One has said that sensual pleasures involve time, full of suffering, full of despair and that the danger in them is still greater? How is it that this Dhamma is visible here and now, immediate, inviting one to come and see, leading one onwards and to be personally experienced by the wise?"

But the Venerable Samiddhi said: "Friend, I am newly ordained, a new-comer in this Dhamma and Discipline. I cannot explain in detail. There is that Fortunate One dwelling at the Tapoda monastery in Rajagaha. You had better approach him and question him on this point. As he explains it to you, so you should bear in mind."

However, the deity says: "Monk, it is not easy for me to approach that Fortunate One. He is always surrounded by other deities of great influence. If you go and question on this matter, we too will come to hear the Dhamma."

Venerable Samiddhi agreed to the request and approached the Buddha and related the whole incident. That deity also was present. Then the Buddha addressed the above two verses to that deity.

*Akkheyyasaññino sattā
akkheyyasmim patitthitā
akkheyyam apariññāya
yogamāyanti maccuno*

These words might sound strange to some of you. If we go by etymology, *vkhyā* in 'akkheyya' means 'to tell' and 'akkhāna' is 'tale'. 'akkheyyam' is therefore 'what has to be told'. It can also mean 'what can be named' or verbally conveyed. The perception of beings is based on the 'nameable'- ('akkheyyasaññino sattā') They take their stand on what is named or expressed – (akkheyyasmim patitthitā). Not having fully understood the nameable – (akkheyyam apariññāya) they come back again to go under the yoke of Death – (yogamāyanti maccuno).

*Akkheyyaṇca pariññāya
akkhātāraṇaṃ na maññati
tañhi tassa na hotīti
yena naṃ vajjā na tassa atthi*

Then the other side of the position is given which is relevant to the arahant. Having fully understood the nameable for what it is (*akkheyyaṇca pariññāya*), He does not conceive of a speaker – (*akkhātāraṃ na maññati*). If the limitations of language are correctly understood, one does not take seriously the subject - object relationship. Such imagining is no longer there in him (*tañhi tassa na hotīti*). Not for him is that by which one may speak of him (*yena naṃ vajjā na tassa atthi*). That means, the arahant has transcended linguistic limitations.

Having uttered these two verses, the Buddha, as if challenging the deity's powers of understanding, said - "Yakkha, if you understand, say so." Sometimes in the discourses, even for deities and gods, the word 'yakkha' is used. It is not to be taken as a derogatory term here. Even the *Sakka* is sometimes called a 'yakkha'. Anyway the deity confessed that he could not understand in detail what the Buddha has said in brief and asked him to explain it in detail. As if to tease him, the Buddha uttered another deep verse.

*Samo visesī athavā nihīno
yo maññati so vivadetha tena
tīsu vidhāsu avikampamāno
samo visesīti na tassa hoti*⁴

He who conceives himself equal, superior or inferior
Might thereby get involved in debate
But to one unshaken in the three grades of conceit
A fancying as equal or superior does not occur

Equal (*samo*) superior (*visesī*) and inferior (*nihiṇo*) are the three grades of conceit. Whoever conceives in terms of these grades will dispute over them. But he who is unshaken by these three grades does not think in terms of equal or superior. With this verse as explanation, the Buddha again repeated the challenge: "Yakkha, if you understand, say so." The deity confessed that he still cannot understand and begged the Buddha once more for a detailed explanation. The Buddha responded by uttering a longer verse which goes even deeper than the previous one.

*Pahāsi saṅkhaṃ na ca mānamajjhagā
acchecchi taṇhaṃ idha nāmarūpe
taṃ chinnaganthaṃ anīghaṃ nirāsaṃ
pariyesamānā nājjhagamuṃ
devā manussā idha vā huraṃ vā
saggesu vā sabbanivesanesu*⁵

He cast off reckoning, no conceit assumed
Craving he cut off – in this name and form
That bond-free one – from blemish and longing free
Him no gods or men – in their search could ken
Searching here and beyond – in heavens and in all abodes.

The verse sums up the accomplishments of an arahant. '*Pahāsi saṅkhaṃ*' – he has given up reckoning. As we once explained, '*sankhā*' is literally, 'number.' We pointed out that the numeral is the most basic or primary ingredient in a linguistic medium. You may have seen how dumb people converse counting on fingers. So we may call it a 'reckoning' – a term denoting a characteristic of language in general. An arahant has given up 'reckoning' – that is, he does not go by it. '*na ca mānamajjhagā*' – he does not take up conceit. '*acchecchi taṇhaṃ idha nāmarūpe*'⁶ – he cut off craving in this name and form. We have pointed out that 'name' is not 'bending' as traditionally explained but that it is a collective term for feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention through which we get an idea of 'form' (*rūpa*) based on the four great primaries – earth, water, fire and air. Worldlings are attached to this name and form but the arahant has cut off that craving. Having severed that bond ('*taṇ chinnaganthaṃ*'), he is free from blemish and desire ('*anīghaṃ nirāsaṃ*'). Gods and men searching for the object of an arahant's mind, cannot locate it in heavens or in other abodes.

With this profound verse, the Buddha repeated the challenging words: "Yakkha, if you understand, say so."

This time the deity himself utters a verse in which he claims to give the detailed explanation of what the Buddha has preached in brief.

*Pāpaṃ na kayirā vacasā manasā
kāyena vā kiñcana sabbaloke
kāme pahāya satimā sampajāno
dukkhaṃ na sevetha anattasaṃhitam*

Let one not do any evil by word or by mind
Or else by body anywhere in this world
Giving up sense pleasures, mindful and fully aware
Let one not form ally with suffering bound up with woe

With that, the episode ends. One might wonder why the Buddha addressed such deep verses to the deity. It may be that the Buddha wanted to impress the deity of the depth of this Dhamma since the latter made light of it by trying to mislead Venerable Samiddhi. Whatever it is, these verses are highly significant in revealing the Buddha's attitude to language. Let us try to analyse the meaning of these verses.

'*Akkheyyasaññino sattā*' – The perception of the worldlings is language-oriented. '*akkheyyasmim patitṭhitā*' – They rely heavily on language. They are unaware of the limitations imposed on language by grammar and syntax. The subject-object relation is part and parcel of the linguistic medium. But the worldlings take it seriously. '*akkheyyaṃ अपariññāya - yogamāyanti maccuno*' – by not fully understanding the nature of language, they come again and again to go under the yoke of Death.

On a previous occasion, while talking about ‘*nāma-rūpa*’ (name and form) we brought up the simile of the dog on the plank. Later we improved on that simile by relating the story of Narcissus. The handsome Greek youth Narcissus who had never seen his own face, while roaming in a forest, bent down into a pond to wash his face. Seeing the reflection of his own face in the water, he imagined it to be an angel’s, and fell in love with it. After a vain attempt to embrace it, he pined away and died by the pond. ‘Narcissism’ as a term for self-love, now found in the Dictionary, is reminiscent of that Greek youth. The sum-total of the ‘nameable’ is found in name and form of which beings are conscious and on which they take their stand. By not understanding fully name and form, beings go under the yoke of Death. Take for instance the case of a wealthy man. What is the self-love that comes up at the moment of his death? “How can I part with this house and property? How can I leave behind my wife and children?” That is the name and form he grasps – the reflection of his own self. In that grasping there is a longing for another birth. “Oh! Give me a chance to fulfill my desire!” “There you are” says *Māra*, and gives him not exactly what he wants but what he deserves according to his Kamma. So he comes back to his own house either as a rat, a snake or as a frog. Or else he comes back to sit on his own chair as a dog. That is how one takes one’s stand on the nameable – (*‘akkheyyasmim patitthitā’*). Worldlings are involved in an inter-relation between consciousness and name and form. They are not aware that name and form is only a reflection. That is what the Buddha makes known to the world. If one takes one’s stand on name and form, one comes under the yoke of Death.

There is another reason for our choice of this particular topic for today’s sermon. You might remember that in a previous sermon we discussed at length an extremely important discourse which our commentarial tradition has not taken seriously – namely, the *Mahā Nidāna Sutta*. We showed how the Buddha explained to Venerable Ānanda, the inter-connection between name and form as well as the inter-relation between name and form and consciousness. Although we quoted the highly significant passage in which the Buddha sums up that exposition, we could not explain it the other day. It is with the aim of paving the way for a discussion of that passage that we brought up the above two verses, as the topic today. First of all let me cite that passage in full.

*“Ettāvatā kho Ānanda jāyetha vā jīyetha vā miyetha vā cavetha vā uppajjetha vā, Ettāvatā adhivacanapatho, ettāvatā niruttipatho ettāvatā paññattipatho ettāvatā paññāvacaraṃ ettāvatā vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthattaṃ paññāpanāya yadidaṃ nāmarūpaṃ saha viññānena.”*⁷

“In so far only, Ānanda, can one be born, grow old or die or pass away or reappear, in so far only is there a pathway for verbal expression, in so far only is there a pathway for terminology, in so far only is there a pathway for designation, in so far only is there a sphere of wisdom, in so far only is there a whirling round for a designation of thisness, that is to say, as far as name and form together with consciousness.”

Now for an explanation - Here the Buddha is telling Venerable Ānanda that one could be said to be born, to grow old or die or pass away or reappear, that there is a pathway for verbal

expression or terminology or designation, that there is any scope for wisdom and a whirling round for designating a thisness – all these are traceable to a connection between name and form and consciousness. The range of wisdom extends as far as consciousness and name and form. The most important declaration is that there is a whirling round for a designation of ‘thisness’ (*‘ettāvatā vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthattaṃ paññāpanāya’*). We have explained earlier the meaning of the term *itthatta*. ‘*Itthaṃ*’ means ‘this’. So ‘*itthtta*’ is ‘thisness’. It stands for ‘the state of this existence.’ Therefore, the phrase in question means that there is a whirling round for designating this state of existence. You had better recall the simile of the vortex. Only when there is a vortex or a whirlpool in the ocean, can one point out a ‘there’ or ‘here’. In order to explain this whirling round between two things, we cited the change of prices in the market based on supply and demand. In fact, all forms of existence are traceable to an inter-relation between consciousness and name and form. This, then is the Samsaric vortex.

When we see how a whirlpool in the sea or in a river draws in the flotsam and jetsam around it, we point it out saying ‘There’ or ‘Here.’ Likewise we call a heap of grasping – a ‘live-whirlpool’ – a Person. The ‘first person’ is of course ‘I myself.’ ‘You are’ the ‘second person,’ and ‘He, over there’ is the ‘third person.’ At least there has to be the latent conceit ‘Am’ (*‘asmimāna’*) to justify ‘Existence’. With the recognition of this ‘Person’, the entire repertoire of grammar and syntax falls into place. Here ‘I’ am, yonder ‘you’ are and there ‘he’ is. This is the basic framework for grammar. The Buddha points out to us that it is because we are enslaved by the grammatical super-structure that we cannot understand *Nibbāna* and put an end to *Samāsāra*. But if one reflects deeply, one would discover that the grammar itself is the product of ignorance and craving. Because of these, the worldlings get enslaved to linguistic usages. They do not understand the pragmatic purpose of linguistic usage. They think that the grammar of language conforms to the grammar of nature. The Buddha, on the other hand revealed to the world that language is merely a convention of limited applicability.

Let me mention another point that is relevant to this subject. Once a deity raised a question in the Buddha’s presence regarding a doubt which even some of you might entertain. It is worded in the form of a verse but we shall give the gist of it. He asks why the arahants who have accomplished the ‘TASK’ still go on using such expressions as ‘I say’ (*‘ahaṃ vadāmi’*) and ‘they tell me’ (*‘mamaṃ vadanti’*). Is it because they still have conceit (*māna*) in them? The Buddha explains that the arahant has given up bonds of conceit but that he uses the worldly parlance only as ‘a way of speaking’.

*‘Loke samaññaṃ kusalo viditvā
vohāramattena so vohareyya’* ⁸

Being skillful in knowing the worldly parlance
He uses such expressions merely as a convention

Not only the arahants but the Buddha himself uses such words as ‘I’ and ‘mine’ only by way of convention. So you may understand that the fault is not in using worldly conventions, but in being unaware of the fact that it is merely a convention. It is due to the ignorance of this

fact that all logicians, philosophers and scientists have got stuck in the ‘WORD’ and created a lot of confusion for themselves and for others to languish long in *Samsāra*.

There is a wonderful maxim made known by the Buddha which throws more light on this hidden aspect of language. The term ‘*akkheyyasaññino*’ (lit, ‘percipient of the expressible’) reveals the close connection between perception and linguistic convention. The worldlings are in the habit of taking in perception. This perception has a connection with linguistic usage. The Buddha draws our attention to this fact with the following declaration, which is like a maxim.

*“vohāravepakkāhaṃ bhikkhave saññaṃ vadāmi.
Yathā yathā naṃ sañjānāti tathā tathā voharati evaṃ saññī ahoṣinti.”*⁹

“Monks, I say perception has as its result linguistic usage. In whatever way one perceives, just in that way one makes it known saying: ‘I was of such a perception.’”

The word ‘*vipāka*’ implicit in the expression ‘*vohāravepakkāhaṃ*’ is not to be confused with ‘*kammavipāka*’ or karmic result. It only means that perception matures into linguistic usage. In whatever way one perceives, so one makes it known. One does not stop at perception. There is an urge to express it – to make it known to others. There comes in the need for language. The way one conveys it to others is: “I was of such a perception” or “I was percipient in this way.” One is already involved by saying so. In our writings we have explained the term ‘*papañcasaññāsaṅkhā*’¹⁰ as ‘reckonings born of prolific perception.’ Through prolific perception worldlings get caught up in language. ‘*Saṅkhā*’ as reckoning includes not only numerals but linguistic usage as well.

It is very important to understand the connection between perception and linguistic usage. This understanding helps us to solve the problem of existence (‘*bhava*’) which is apparently insoluble. When it is said that perception gives rise to linguistic usage, one can ask whether it is possible to be free from the bane of perception. There are some discourses which, until recently have escaped the serious attention of scholars where it is said that the arahants, when they are in the attainment called the ‘fruit of arahanthood’ are free from all perception. Whatever there is in the world that could be regarded as an object of perception, from all that they are free while in that supramundane state. There are quite a number of discourses describing that extra-ordinary attainment. For instance in the *Sandha Sutta* we find the Buddha explaining to Venerable Sandha the nature of that *Samādhi*. Within the context of a simile about an excellent thoroughbred of a horse, the Buddha calls an arahant ‘an excellent thoroughbred of a man’ (‘*bhadro purisājāniyo*’) and describes the nature of this concentration. It is said that in him the perception of earth, water, fire and air as well as other perceptions are not there.¹¹

There are many who raise the question whether materiality is fully negated and only mind is asserted in this Dhamma. We gave a certain simile to illustrate the correct standpoint. Suppose a blind man in his groping hits against a block of ice. He might come back with a perception of earth in it. When he approaches it the next time it is getting heated and he would

come back with a perception of fire. By the time he goes there again it has melted and he returns with a perception of water. When he goes there for the fourth time it is evaporating and he brings back a perception of air. To make this simile meaningful we may compare the worldling to that blind man. The four great primaries (*cattāro mahābhūtā*) cannot be recognized as they are because they are always found as a combination. They can be distinguished only according to their intensity by means of constituents of the name group – feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention. Because of the feeling of hardness at the collision, that blind man got a perception of earth in the block of ice. That way name and form are inextricably interwoven. That we called the ‘tangle-within’ (*antojaṭṭā*). The ‘tangle-without’ (*bahijātā*) is the interrelation between name and form and consciousness, for which the doting on his own image by Narcissus is an illustration. The entire Samsāric puzzle is traceable to this vortex of existence.

How does word and concept aggravate this situation? The worldling, like that blind man, thinks that there is a ‘thing’ called ‘earth’, a ‘thing’ called ‘water’, a ‘thing’ called ‘fire’ and a ‘thing’ called ‘air’. Surely, can one deny these ‘things’? In the Sandha Sutta there is a complete list of such ‘things’, a perception of which is not there in the attainment of the Fruit of Arahant hood – the Realm of Infinity of Space, the Realm of Infinity of Consciousness, the Realm of Nothingness, as well as the seen, the heard, the sensed, and the cognized. Existence as a whole has ceased. Whatever perception there is characteristic of existence, whatever object of the mind there can be, from all that, that ‘thoroughbred of a man’ is free while in the *Arahattaphala Samādhi*.

The way the Buddha winds up that sermon is highly significant. Having said that the excellent thoroughbred of a man does not meditate (*‘na jhāyati’*) on any of the possible objects of concentration, the Buddha emphatically asserts in the end that he does meditate (*jhāyati ca pana*). Now comes the impressive final declaration.

“Evaṃ jhāyiṃca pana sandha bhadraṃ purisājānīyaṃ saindā devā sabrahmakā sapajāpatikā ārakāva namassanti.

Namo te purisājañña

namo te purisuttama

yassa te nābhijānāma

yampi nissāya jhāyasīti” ¹²

“Sandha, the thoroughbred of a man thus meditating the gods with Indra, with Brahmā and with Pajāpati even from afar bow down saying:

Homage to you, O thoroughbred of a man

Homage to you, most excellent of men

For what it is on which you meditate

That we can never comprehend”

This is the marvel of a Dhamma that transcends the world. The Buddha has presented this transcendental Dhamma through the *Arahattaphala Samādhi* (concentration of the Fruit of Arahant hood). This is none other than the experience of the cessation of existence

(*bhavanirodha*). It is, at the same time the cessation of the six sense spheres (*saḷāyatanaṇirodha*). All the six sense spheres are rendered inactive. It is within these six that all the turmoil of the world goes on. During that extraordinary concentration, the existence has ceased. It is in fact a reverting to an experience already gone through at the attainment of arahant hood. That is why we pointed out that the arahants are not reborn by virtue of the fact that their last thought is this cessation of existence: '*Bhavanirodho nibbānaṃ.*' *Nibbāna* is the cessation of existence. The arahants experience the taste of *Nibbāna* while in this paradoxical Samādhi.

All this shows that this is an extraordinary Dhamma. The question of language is also implicit in the solution offered. When the mind is fully liberated from perception, it is completely free from objects. We have earlier mentioned the terms used with reference to the emancipated mind – '*appatiṭṭhaṃ, appavattaṃ, anārammaṇaṃ.*'¹³ That mind is not established anywhere, It has no continuity or existence and it has no object. '*Bhava*' or existence has ceased. The realization of cessation is itself the Deliverance. That is *Nibbāna* – not anything else. There is a lot of controversy among scholars regarding *Nibbāna*. Some would even call our interpretation Nihilistic.

Let me therefore bring up something special from this point onwards. In an earlier sermon we have already mentioned what the Buddha had said about consciousness. The nature of the consciousness of an arahant and the emancipation meant by *Nibbāna* can be understood in the light of what we have discussed so far. If we are to clarify further in terms of the simile of the vortex, it is as if the vortex has ceased. As a matter of fact, this simile of the vortex or the whirlpool is not something we have arbitrarily introduced. It is there in the discourses as a word of the Buddha, but the commentarial tradition has ignored it. Commentators have not understood its true significance. There is a very important verse in the *Udāna* that can be quoted in support of this. It comes as a paean of joy uttered by the Buddha in praise of Venerable *Lakuṇṭakabhaddiya* who was an arahant.

acchecchi vaṭṭaṃ byagā nirāsaṃ
visukkhā saritā na sandati
chinnarū vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati
*esevanto dukkhassa*¹⁴

The whirlpool he cut off and reached the Desireless
Streams dried up flow no more
The whirlpool cut off whirls no more
This itself is suffering's end.

He cut off the whirlpool or vortex. That is to say, the whirling around between consciousness and name and form has been cut off. Thereby he reached the Desireless (*byagā nirāsaṃ*). The current of water is dried up and flows no more. The whirlpool thus cut off no more whirls. And this itself is the end of suffering.

Supposing a whirlpool in the ocean comes to cease. As long as there is a whirlpool we can point out a 'here' and a 'there', 'this place' and 'that place'- or personifying it, 'this person', and 'that person'. But once the whirlpool has ceased, all these words lose their point of reference. Now there is only the wide expanse of the ocean as it was before the whirlpool came in. That 'foolish' current of water went in search of permanence in an impermanent world. It was a perversion, pure and simple. If at any point of time that current of water got dried up there is no whirlpool or 'vaṭṭa' anymore. This is the whole story going by the 'vaṭṭa' terminology. But strangely enough the commentators brought in some other kind of 'vaṭṭa' to explain *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*. They speak of 'kamma vaṭṭa', 'kilesa vaṭṭa' and 'vipāka vaṭṭa' (kamma-round, defilement-round and result-round). They have fully ignored the most important story of the round. You all can now form some idea about *Nibbāna*, about the arahants mind, and about the objectless mind.

Because of this charge of Nihilism let me touch upon another aspect of the problem. While discussing *Mahā Tanhāsankhaya Sutta* in the previous sermon, we said that the Buddha had compared consciousness to a fire¹⁵. As you know there are six consciousnesses - eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness and so on inclusive of mind-consciousness. The Buddha has pointed out that each of these consciousnesses is like a specific fire dependent on a specific type of fuel. For instance consciousness dependent on eye and forms is eye-consciousness. It arises only in dependence and not otherwise. Apart from that there is no consciousness either in the eye or in forms. Because of eye and forms arises eye-consciousness. Because of ear and sounds arises ear-consciousness and so on. What is the simile that the Buddha has given to illustrate this point? A fire that burns dependent on logs is called a log-fire, a fire that burns dependent on faggots is called a faggot-fire and a fire that burns dependent on chaff is called a chaff-fire. There is no abstract fire. It is always a specific fire. The Buddha compared the six kinds of consciousness to six kinds of fire. There is no independent consciousness to be called 'the consciousness'. Whatever has arisen due to causes and conditions has, of necessity, to cease when these causes and conditions are not there. It is when all the six consciousnesses, namely eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mind-consciousness, cease that there is deliverance which is also called: '*viññāṇūpasama*' (appeasement of consciousness). As you all know, it is compared to the going out of a lamp as we find in the famous verse in the *Ratana Sutta*.

*Khīṇaṃ purāṇaṃ navaṃ natthi sambhavaṃ
Virattacittā āyatike bhavaṃsmiṃ
Te khīṇabījā avirūhicchandaṃ
Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyampadīpo*¹⁶

Extinct is the old, nothing new to arise
Detached in mind as to future existence
They of extinct seed with no desire to sprout
Go out like this lamp- those Prudent Ones.

The verse figuratively conveys the situation at the last moment of the life of the arahants. ‘*Khīṇaṃ purāṇaṃ*’ – All past kamma is finished. ‘*Navam natthi sambhavam*’ – There is no arising of new kamma. ‘*Virattacittā āyatike bhavasmim*’ – They are detached in mind as to future existence. ‘*Te khīṇabījā*’ – Their consciousness seed is extinct. ‘*Avirūhicchandā*’ – Therefore, no desire can sprout forth in them. ‘*Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyampadīpo*’ – The prudent ones get extinguished even like this lamp.

The simile of the going out of a flame comes up again in the ‘*Upasīva māṇavapucchā*’ in the *Sutta Nipātha*.

*Accī yathā vātavegena khitto
atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkham
evaṃ muni nāmakāyā vimutto
atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkham*¹⁷

Like the flame thrown off by the force of wind
Goes to its end and comes not within reckoning
So the sage when released from the name-group
Goes to its end and comes not within reckoning

‘*Accī yathā vātavegena khitto*’ – just as a flame thrown off by the force of wind. ‘*atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkham*’ – goes to an end and cannot be reckoned as gone somewhere. ‘*evaṃ muni nāmakāyā vimutto*’ – even so the sage released from the name-group. ‘*atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkham*’ – comes to his end and cannot be reckoned or predicated.

Upasīva is puzzled by this verse and implores the Buddha to explain further.

*Atthaṃgato so udavā so natthi
Udāhu ve sassatiyā arogo
taṃ ve muni sādhu viyākarohi
tathāhi te vidito esa dhammo*¹⁸

Has he reached his end, or does he not exist at all
Or else is he eternally hale – not ill
That to me explain well, O’sage
For this Dhamma as such is known by you

Upasīva is asking reverentially whether that sage has gone to the end or whether he does not exist any more or else is eternally free from disease. Now the Buddha clarifies it further in the following verse with which the discourse ends. But unfortunately many scholars are confused over the grand finale.

*Atthaṃgatassa na pamānamatthi
Yena naṃ vajju taṃ tassa natthi*

*Sabbesu dhammesu samūhatesu
Samūhatā vādapathāpi sabbe*¹⁹

Of one who has reached his end - no measure is there
That by which they may speak of him - that is not for him
When all objects of mind are rooted out
Rooted out too are all paths of debate

The Arahant who has reached his end is beyond reckoning. He cannot be measured. Name and form is that by which others may speak of him, but that he has given up. When all objects of the mind which were listed above are eradicated, all pathways of debate and controversy such as the dilemma and the tetralemma of the logicians are rendered ineffective. Logic is imprisoned between 'is' and 'is not'. Dhamma is beyond the pale of logic (*atakkāvacaro*).²⁰ It is like the fire extinguished. This is an extremely clear-cut answer. But scholars have confounded the issue.

However, some Buddhist philosophers have correctly understood this position. *Aśvaghoṣa*, both a philosopher and poet, has beautifully presented this simile in his Sanskrit epic *Saundarānanda*

*Dīpo yathā nirvṛtiṁ abhyupeto
naivāvaniṁ gacchati nāntarīkṣaṁ
diśāṁ na kāncit vidiśāṁ na kāñcit
snehakṣayāt kevelameti śāntiṁ*

*Evaṁ kṛtī nirvṛtiṁ abhyupeto
naivāvaniṁ gacchathi nāntarīkṣaṁ
diśāṁ na kāncit vidiśāṁ na kāñcit
kleṣakṣayāt kevalameti śāntiṁ*

Even as the flame of a lamp when it goes out
Goes not to the earth nor to the firmament
Not to any direction nor to a sub-direction
By exhaustion of oil only reaches appeasement

So too the accomplished one when gone to extinction
Goes not to the earth nor to the firmament
Not to any direction nor to a sub-direction
By extinction of taints only reaches appeasement

When the flame of a lamp goes out by the exhaustion of oil, one cannot say that it has gone to the earth or to the sky or to any direction or sub direction. All one can say is that it has got extinguished. The term '*kṛtī*' stands for an arahant who has done his task (*katakaraṇīya*). He cannot be traced after his final attainment of *Parinibbāna* even like the flame of the lamp.

So it seems that although we started with *Paṭicca Samuppāda* as our topic, it automatically leads to a discussion of *Nibbāna*. As a matter of fact, *Nibbāna* cannot be understood without a knowledge of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Therefore let me add a special message at this point that could be helpful to those who listen to these sermons. Twenty years ago when I was at Meethirigala Nissarana Vanaya, I happened to deliver thirty three sermons on *Nibbāna* to the group of meditating monks there. After a number of years the Dhamma Publications Trust of Colombo (D.G.M.B) published those 33 sermons in eleven volumes. An English translation also came out in seven volumes called “*Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled.*” The audio trust in Kandy (D.S.M.B) circulated those sermons and their translation in C.D. s and through its website all over the world. In those sermons on *Nibbāna*, we had occasion to say something on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* as well. However, now a new series titled ‘Pahan Kanuwa Paṭicca Samuppāda Sermons’ is just coming up. This is the fifth sermon. I do not know how many sermons would make up this series. Let time decide it. Though the topic of the series is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, we cannot help discussing *Nibbāna* as well.

There is an episode which clearly shows the connection between these two topics. You may have heard that the Buddha after his enlightenment reflected on the depth of this Dhamma. It is said in *Ariyapariyesana Sutta* that after comprehending this wonderful Dhamma which is so profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, the Buddha wondered how the worldlings can understand such a Dhamma. It occurred to him then that there are two truths which it is hard for the worldlings to see ²¹, namely, specific conditionality (*idappaccayatā*) or Dependent Arising (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) and the stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the extinction of craving, detachment, cessation *Nibbāna*. It is because worldlings are confined within linguistic conventions that they cannot understand the links of the formula of Dependent Arising. They are imprisoned by logic and compelled to assert ‘is’ or ‘is not’ – absolute existence or absolute non-existence. But the correct position is otherwise.

We have clearly pointed out what the basic principle of the law of Dependent Arising is.

This being – this comes to be

With the arising of this – this arises

This not being – this does not come to be

With the cessation of this – this ceases. ²²

Here itself is the transcendence of logic (*atakkāvacara*). Logic wants us to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question of existence. But this is what the Buddha says. Worldlings find it difficult to take it in. They think that when an arahant finally passes away, he could be located somewhere. In this Law of Dependent Arising, there is a direct order and a reverse order. In the direct order we have the nature of *Samsāra* as-it-is. Venerable Sāriputta became a stream-winner already as the ascetic Upatissa, when he heard only the first two lines of the verse uttered by Venerable Assaji.

*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā
tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha* ²³

Whatever things that arise from causes.
Their cause the Tathāgata has told.

Upatissa inferred by it, that if something arises from a cause, it has of necessity to cease when the cause ceases. The last two lines are on *Nibbāna*.

*Tesañca yo nirodho
evaṃ vādī mahāsamano.*

And also their cessation
Thus teaches the great ascetic.

If a problem is properly understood the solution is also in it. The direct order of the Law of Dependent Arising is the statement of the problem. The reverse order gives the solution. It is very difficult for the worldlings to understand that they are incarcerated between 'is' and 'is not'.

Given ignorance, a series of conditioned phenomena come to be. With the cessation of ignorance they cease to be. There is an extremely important discourse which highlights these distinctive features of the Dhamma. Let us briefly touch upon it for the present. It is the *Kaccānagotta Sutta* ²⁴ of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. A monk, *Kaccānagotta* by name, approaches the Buddha and says:

"Venerable Sir, 'Right View', 'Right View' it is said. In what way Venerable Sir, is there right view?"

You may have heard various definitions of right view. Here is something peculiar:
The Buddha says:

*"Dvayanissito khvāyaṃ Kaccāna loko yebhuyyena atthitañceva natthitañca.
Lokasamudayaṃ kho Kaccāna yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā loke natthitā
sā na hoti. Lokanirodhaṃ kho Kaccāna yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā loke
atthitā sā na hoti."*

"This world, Kaccāna, for the most part depend upon a duality - upon the notion of existence and the notion of non-existence. For one who sees the arising of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of non-existence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world."

Here the Buddha points out that the world is resting on the two extreme views of existence and non-existence. Then this is how the Buddha shows us the middle way. For one who sees the arising of the world as it is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of non-existence. To the insight meditator who sees the arising aspect of the world, the notion of absolute non-existence does not occur. And to the insight meditator who sees the cessation aspect of the world, the notion of absolute existence does not occur. The world is holding on to the two dogmatic views of absolute existence and absolute non-existence. But the Buddha

avoids this absolutism. *Paticcasamuppanna* means arisen in dependence on causes and conditions. The world is incessantly arising and ceasing. But the worldling resting on the notion of the compact due to craving and grasping, tenaciously believes that a thing exists absolutely. If absolute existence is one end the other end should be absolute non-existence, tantamount to annihilation. But as we sometimes pointed out, if anything is lost, it is only the ignorance that ‘there is something’ and the craving that ‘there isn’t enough.’ That is all. There is nothing to lament. This is precisely why Gotama Buddha as well as Vipassi Buddha made known their realization with the words:

“*Samudayo samudayoti kho me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammasu cakkhurū udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.*
... *nirodho nirodhoti kho me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammasu cakkhurū udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.*”

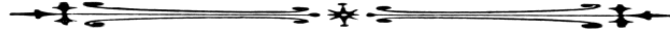
“Arising, arising – thus monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light.
... Cessation, cessation - thus monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light.”

The process of arising and cessation is going on all the time, but the worldling has taken up the wrong view called ‘*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*’²⁵ (personality view) misconstruing the whole group to be existing (*sat + kāya*). Because of that view they are imprisoned by the limitations of language and logic which rest on the duality of absolute existence and absolute non-existence. Not only the ordinary worldling, but the worldly philosopher as well as the modern scientist has got stuck there. Not being satisfied with the dilemma, the philosopher has created a tetralemma²⁶ to make the confusion worst confounded. But the Buddha has transcended all these by this Dhamma which is *atakkāvacara* (‘not moving within the sphere of logic’). He transcended logic the moment he gained the insight into the incessant arising and ceasing. He understood that it is not possible to take a definite stand on ‘is’ or ‘is not’.

Let me give a simple illustration for your easy comprehension – a simile I gave in my sermons on *Nibbāna*. I suppose you all like similes. Sometimes behind a shop window or in a showroom they display a ‘magic-kettle’, from which water flows non-stop into a basin under it. The kettle never goes empty nor does the basin overflow. That is the magic. The secret is that there is a hidden tube which conducts the water back into the kettle. Well, take it that the world itself is a ‘Magic-kettle’. The process of arising and ceasing is going on all the time even within our bodies. So also in the world outside. World systems go on arising and ceasing – expanding and contracting (*vivaṭṭa* and *saṃvaṭṭa*). This is the profound truth the Buddha has revealed to the world. But the worldlings committed and limited as they are by ‘personality-view’ and enslaved as they are by perception, by language and logic, come again and again under the yoke of Death (*‘yogamāyanti maccuno’*).

Well, enough for today. I hope you will bear with me if some explanations appeared too deep. But you need not complain like that deity. Perhaps when the sermon comes in a form of a

C.D. you can absorb it quietly. I take it that you all have spent the day observing higher precepts in a meditative atmosphere with *Nibbāna* as your aim. I wish this sermon too will help you realize your noble aspirations. Whatever beings there be, from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma-world, may they all rejoice in our sermon. May the merits accrued by that rejoicing conduce to the fulfilment of their higher aims!



1. S.I - 11 Samiddhi Sutta
2. S.I - 8 Samiddhi Sutta
3. S.I - 9 Samiddhi Sutta
4. S.I - 12 Samiddhi Sutta
5. S.I - 12 Samiddhi Sutta
6. S.I - 12 Samiddhi Sutta
7. D.II – 63 – 64 Mahā Nidāna Sutta
8. S.I – 14 Arahāṃ Sutta
9. A.III – 413 Nibbedhikapariyāya Sutta
10. M.I – 109 Madhupiṇḍika Sutta
11. A.V – 324 Sandha Sutta
12. A.V – 325 Sandha Sutta
13. Ud.80 – Paṭhama Nibbāna Sutta
14. Ud. 75 - Duttiya Bhaddiya Sutta
15. M.I – 256 Mahā Taṇhāsamkhaya Sutta
16. Sn – 41 – 42 Ratana Sutta
17. Sn – 206 Upasīvamāṇavapucchā
18. Sn – 207 Upasīvamāṇavapucchā
19. Sn – 207 Upasīvamāṇavapucchā
20. M.I – 167 Ariyapariyesana Sutta
21. M.I – 167 Ariyapariyesana Sutta
22. Ud. 2 – Bodhi Sutta
23. Vin.I – 38ff
24. S.II – 17 Kaccānagotta Sutta
25. S.III – 159 Sakkāya Sutta
- M.I – 426 – Cūla Mālunkya Sutta

Sermon No. 6

(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 188)

‘Namo tassa bhaḡavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa’

‘Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!’

*Jāti maraṇa saṃsāraṃ
ye vajanti punappunaṃ
itthabhāvaññathābhāvaṃ
avijjāyeva sā gati*

*avijjā hayaṃ mahā moho
yenidaṃ saṃsitaṃ ciraṃ
vijjāgatā ca ye sattā
nāgacchanti punabbhavam*

- *Dvāyatānupassanā S. Sn.* ¹

Dear Listeners,

What is called ‘life’ is the period between birth and death. What is called ‘*saṃsāra*’ is the alternation between birth and death. We have taken up as the topic of our sixth sermon on Dependent Arising two verses that highlight the connection between these two.

The two verses are found in the *Dvāyatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. In the brief introductory story of this discourse which embodies a lot of deep points in the *Dhamma*, one can sense an intense fervour of the *Dhamma*. You had better form a mental picture of a moonlit night at *Poorwarāma* in *Sāvatti* on a full moon day when the Buddha is seated in the open air surrounded by the congregation of monks. Having surveyed the company of monks with the Buddha-eye as they were seated quietly with rapt attention, the Buddha started a deep sermon with this prologue.

“Monks, whatever skillful contributory mental states there are, that are noble and effectively leading up to enlightenment, if there are any persons who question about the justifiable purpose of listening to them, they should be told:

“It is just for the purpose of knowing as it is the dualities in this *Dhamma*. And what would you call a duality?

'This is suffering - this is the arising of suffering. This is one mode of contemplation.

This is the cessation of suffering - this is the path of practice leading towards the cessation of suffering. This is the second mode of contemplation.'

And therein, monks, of a monk who thus dwells diligently zealous and ardent, rightly contemplating the dualities, one of two results maybe expected – either full comprehension in this very life or if there is any residual clinging, the fruit of non-returning.” After this initial exhortation, the Buddha uttered four verses pertaining to the Four Noble Truths.

Then again addressing the company of monks, the Buddha said:

“Monks, if there are any who put the question 'Could there be another mode of contemplating correctly the duality?' - they should be told: 'There is', and how?

'Whatever suffering that originates all that is due to assets' - this is one mode of contemplation.' But with the utter fading away and cessation of assets there is no origination of suffering - this is the second contemplation.” You had better note that what is here called 'assets' or '*upadhi*' are the five aggregates of grasping we have deposited in this long *saṃsāra*. So according to the Buddha the cause of the entire mass of suffering is the five aggregates of grasping. So much so that with the remainderless fading away and cessation of these assets there is no origination of suffering.

In the same way this discourse introduces as many as sixteen modes of contemplation. The special feature is that each mode of contemplation is introduced with the supposition that there are those who question the possibility of another mode of contemplation. Firstly the Buddha describes the topic under consideration in prose and then gives three or four verses concerning its importance as a mode of contemplation. We do not propose to discuss fully all the topics raised in this long discourse but the special significance of this particular sermon preached by the Buddha is that at the end of it all the sixty monks who listened to it attained arahant hood extirpating all influxes. It is such an important discourse.

It is the third mode of contemplation given in this discourse that we have taken up as the topic of our sermon today. Now this is the statement in prose with which the Buddha introduces the verses relevant to the topic.

'yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti sabbaṃ avijjā paccayā, avijjāyatveva asesavirāga nirodhā natthi dukkhassa sambhavo.'

Whatever suffering that originates all that is due to ignorance, with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance, there is no origination of suffering.” It is after this declaration that the Buddha utters the two verses forming our topic.

*'Jāti maraṇa saṃsāraṃ - ye vajanti punappunaṃ
itthabhāvaññathābhāvaṃ - avijjāyeva sā gati'*

“Those who keep wandering again and again in this saṃsāra which is an alternation between birth and death tantamount to a 'thisness' and 'otherwiseness', are involved in a journey which is merely a perpetuation of ignorance.”

*'avijjā hayaṃ mahāmoho - yenidaṃ saṃsitaṃ ciraṃ
vijjāgatā ca ye sattā - nāgacchanti punabbhavam'*

“Ignorance is the great delusion due to which one has wandered long in this saṃsāra. Those beings that are endowed with knowledge do not come back to repeated existence.”

I wish to discuss these two verses in some detail. Let me cite at length a certain highly significant discourse which I touched upon briefly the other day, namely the *Kaccānagotta Sutta* ² of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. I shall give it in some detail so that even those of you who were not present the other day could easily follow it. This is how the discourse begins.

A monk named *Kaccānagotta* approaches the Buddha and asks him: “Venerable Sir, Right view, Right View it is said. In how far Venerable Sir, does one have right view? ”

The Buddha replies:

“Dvayanissito kho ayaṃ Kaccāna loko yebhuyyena atthitañceva natthitañca”

“Kaccāna, this world for the most part, rests on a duality, namely existence and non-existence.”

Then he proceeds to proclaim a wonderful middle path.

“Kaccāna to one who sees as it is with right wisdom the arising of the world, the view of non-existence about the world does not occur, and to one who sees as it is with right wisdom the cessation of the world, the view of existence about the world does not occur. The reference here is to the two views of eternalism and annihilationism.

Then the Buddha goes on to say that this world for the most part is given to approaching, grasping and entering into views (*upaya upādanā-abhinivesa vinibandho*). But if one does not approach, grasp and take one's stand upon that tendency to approaching,

grasping and that mental standpoint with the idea: 'This is myself', then one would not doubt nor waver about the fact that it is only suffering that arises and only suffering that ceases. He would have a knowledge of it which is not dependent on another. With this the Buddha gives the reply to *Kaccāna*'s question saying: "In so far *Kaccāna*, has one right view." In conclusion he says by way of explanation:

"Sabbam atthīti kho Kaccāna, ayam eko anto. Sabbam natthīti ayam dutiyo anto. Ete te Kaccāna ubho ante anupagamma majjhena Tathāgato dhammam deseti: avijjāpaccayā saṅkharā saṅkharāpaccayā viññāṇam,....., evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti. avijjāyatveva asesavirāganirodhā saṅkhāranirodho, saṅkhāranirodhā viññāṇanirodho, evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti."

"Everything exists' - this, O *Kaccāna*, is one extreme. 'Nothing exists' - this, O *Kaccāna*, is the second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes *Kaccāna*, the Tathagatha preaches the *Dhamma* by the middle: "Depending on ignorance preparations, depending on preparations consciousness, this is the arising of this whole mass of suffering. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance (comes) the cessation of preparations, with the cessation of preparations, cessation of consciousness, thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering."

You all are familiar with the middle path as expounded in the '*Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*'³ – namely the Noble Eightfold Path which avoids the two extremes of indulgence in sense pleasures and self-mortification. Now this *Kaccāna Sutta* is also a sermon preached by the Buddha. Here the concept of the middle path is the avoidance of the two extreme views 'Everything exists' and 'Nothing exists'. What does this middle way amount to? The Law of Dependent Arising.

As we mentioned earlier, the formula of Dependent Arising has a direct order and an indirect order. In the direct order the formula begins with 'Depending on ignorance, preparations, depending on preparations consciousness and so on and ends with the statement: Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering. In the indirect order the formula begins by saying that with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of preparations, with the cessation of preparations the cessation of consciousness,, and concludes with the declaration: Thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. You had better note the significance of the direct order and the indirect order. Thereby the Buddha evolves a middle path between the above two extreme views. Talking about the middle path, all this time we are used to identifying the middle path with the Noble Eightfold Path. You had better understand the reason for it. It is true that the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*

preached to the group of five monks is undoubtedly the very first sermon and as such a great discourse. But there is a particular reason which inspired it. Those five monks entertained doubts about the Buddha's enlightenment because he gave up the austerities of self-mortification. That is why the Buddha adopted that mode of presentation of the Noble Eightfold Path as the avoidance of the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. All the same the Law of Dependent Arising is implicit in that discourse. The reason for the point of emphasis was the necessity of convincing them.

Unfortunately, however, our commentarial tradition has not taken sufficient cognizance of this aspect of the middle path. Owing to that, quite a number of very important discourses on *Nibbāna* have remained obscure. A lack of appreciation of the Law of Dependent Arising, or the middle path between 'is' and 'is not' views is responsible for this neglect. As we pointed out earlier, that spontaneous utterance of the Buddhas, namely, 'arising, arising' 'ceasing, ceasing,' soon after their realization, sketches out the middle path between those two extremes in that it is a reflection of the incessant process of arising and ceasing going on in the world.

On various occasions we have brought up important discourses relating to this particular middle path. One such popular but abstruse discourse is the '*Bāhiya Sutta*'⁴. The middle path implicit in the *Bāhiya Sutta* is not understood by many who read it. Let us recollect it. *Bāhiya Dāruciriya* was an ascetic with a high degree of *samsāric* maturity. He had meditated on his own and reached a stage which he took to be arahanthood. A certain deity had pointed out to him that it is an overestimation and directed him to the Buddha. With an intense eagerness he came to see the Buddha. By that time the Buddha was on his alms round, and in all haste *Bāhiya* begged him to preach the *Dhamma*. For some reason or other the Buddha refused the request twice but upon the third insistent request came out with a wonderfully brief and cryptic sermon which begins with this initial injunction:

"Tasmātiha Bāhiya evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati. Evañhite Bāhiya sikkhitabbaṃ."

"Well then *Bāhiya*, thus should you train yourself: 'In the seen there will be just the seen, in the heard there will be just the heard, in the sensed there will be just the sensed, in the cognized there will be just the cognized.' Thus should you train yourself."

Then the Buddha outlines the final outcome of that training.

"Yato kho te Bāhiya diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati, tato tvaṃ Bāhiya na tena, yato tvaṃ Bāhiya na tena, tato tvaṃ Bāhiya na tattha, yato tvaṃ Bāhiya na tattha, tato tvaṃ Bāhiya nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena esevanto dukkhassa."

“And when, to you *Bāhiya* there will be in the seen just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the sensed just the sensed and in the cognized just the cognized, then *Bāhiya* you are not 'by it'. And when *Bāhiya* you are not 'by it', then *Bāhiya* you are not 'in it'. And when *Bāhiya* you are not in it, then *Bāhiya* you are neither here nor there, nor in between. This itself is the end of suffering.”

The implication is that at whatever time one stops short at the seen and takes it only as a seen and not something seen, and likewise in the case of heard, only as a heard and not something heard, in the sensed only as a sensed and not something sensed, and in the cognized only as a cognized and not as something cognized, that is to say, there is no imagining a 'thinghood', then one would not be thinking in terms of it. One would not imagine 'by it' ('*tena*') in the instrumental sense or 'in it' ('*tattha*') in the locative sense. As we said earlier, the problem of *saṃsāra* lies hidden in the linguistic medium. For instance in the case of a seen, when one takes the concept of a chair in the substantive sense there will be 'by' or 'with' the chair as well as a positing of 'in the chair' or else, if one does not stop short at the heard but imagines a 'music' in it there will be a 'by music' and an 'in music'. Thereby one takes a standpoint and tacitly identifies oneself with it. On the other hand, if one does not take such a standpoint, one is neither 'here' nor 'there' nor 'in between the two'. A middle exists relative to two ends. When one is free from the two ends and does not take a stand in the middle saying 'this is myself' as stated in the '*Kaccānagotta Sutta*' one would win to the conviction that what arises is only suffering and what ceases is only suffering. That itself is the end of suffering.

Then there is another brief but highly significant sutta in the same text- *Udāna*. It is a sermon specifically dealing with *Nibbāna* ('*Nibbāna patisaṃyutta*') which the Buddha addressed to the monks. That sermon too appears rather cryptic and riddle- like in its formulation. It is worded as follows:

Nissitassa calitaṃ
anissitassa calitaṃ natthi
calite asati passaddhi
passaddhiyā sati nati na hoti
natiya asati āgati gati na hoti
āgati gatiyā asati cutūpapāto na hoti
cutūpapāte asati nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena
esevanto dukkhassa. ⁵

The first two words are probably familiar to you by now: '*Nissitassa calitaṃ*'. The word '*Nissitassa*' might remind you of the term '*dvayanissita*' (resting on a duality) in the *Kaccāna Sutta* discussed above. '*Nissita*' has the sense of 'resting on', 'leaning on' or 'being attached to'.

To one who rests on the duality of eternalist view and annihilationist view, there is unsteadiness (*calitaṃ*). If you are leaning on something, when it moves or shakes you have to move or shake with it. This is the basic principle the Buddha puts forward first of all. Then he gives the converse of that statement: '*anissitassa calitaṃ natthi*.' To one who does not rest or lean on something, there is no unsteadiness or shaking. As it is said in the '*Kaccānagotta Sutta*', if one does not lean on extreme views by going the middle way, there is no unsteadiness ('*anissitassa calitaṃ natthi*'). When there is no unsteadiness, there is calm ('*passaddhi*'). When there is calm there is no inclination or bending ('*passaddhiyā sati nati na hoti*'). Understood deeply, it means the absence of craving. Where there is no inclination there is no coming and going ('*natiya asati āgati gati na hoti*'). When there is an inclining, there is a possibility of falling somewhere - a possibility of 'coming and going'. When there is no coming and going there is no question of death and rebirth ('*āgati gatiyā asati cutūpapāto na hoti*'). When there is no death and rebirth there is neither a 'here' nor a 'there' nor in between the two ('*cutūpapāte asati nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena*'). This itself is the end of suffering ('*esevanto dukkhassa*').

Here too we find the question of linguistic conventions coming in. As we have already mentioned the knotty problem of *saṃsāra* can be traced to linguistic conventions which we ourselves have created. Language and logic are transcended in this *Dhamma*. That is why it is called '*atakkāvacara*' ('not moving within the sphere of logic'). It grasps neither the two extremes nor the middle. This is the training which culminates in *Nibbāna*.

We put forward these ideas more or less as a commentary to the two verses in question. Let us now turn our attention again to these two verses.

*'Jāti maraṇa saṃsāraṃ- ye vajanti punappunaraṃ
itthabhāvaññathābhāvaṃ – avijjāyeva sā gati'*

Here we have two peculiar terms: *itthabhāva aññathābhāva* – 'thisness' and 'otherwiseness'. What is called 'birth' and 'death' is tantamount to an alternation between 'thisness' and 'otherwiseness'. Just ponder over this statement. So this alternation is merely a journey of ignorance. It is not someone's journey. Only a journey of ignorance. Therefore ignorance is a vast delusion ('*mahā moha*') as stated in the second verse. However the two most important terms are '*itthabhāva*' and '*aññathābhāva*'.

As you might recall, while discussing *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* we happened to mention that the Buddha in his questioning of venerable *Ānanda* step by step about the mutual relationship between consciousness and name and form posed the following question:

“*Ānanda* if consciousness having descended into the mother's womb slips out, will name and form get born into a state of thisness (*'itthatta'*)?” ⁶

There we came across the term '*itthatta*'; '*Itthatta*' is none other than '*itthabhāva*' just as '*nānatta*' is a synonym for '*nānābhāva*'. Granted that '*itthatta*' means '*itthabhāva*' we can gather something about it from the above reference itself. So it is only so long as consciousness and name and form are found together in a mother's womb, that we can expect the birth of a child. As we happened to mention in that context, if consciousness slips out only a ball of flesh would come out of the womb. It is only when these two continue to be together that a child is born into this world as a 'thisness'. This is because when the new born child looks around, he finds himself born into a world of six sense spheres. From his point of view it is a 'thisness'. Therefore thisness is equivalent to 'birth'. Otherwiseness is his journey towards 'decay and death'. So then, 'thisness' and 'otherwiseness' is an inseparable pair. The worldling tries to separate birth from death and keep back birth and reject death. But this is an impossibility. It is an inseparable pair.

So it is clear that thisness (*itthabhāva*) is birth. The moment one grasps something as 'THIS' giving it a 'thingness' it starts becoming otherwise. He comes under the inescapable law of impermanence. Therefore '*itthabhāva*' and '*aññathābhāva*' are tantamount to 'birth' and 'death'. The alternation between them in *saṃsāra* is merely a journey of ignorance (*'avijjāyeva sā gati'*).

There is an important discourse which brings out the implications of the two terms '*itthabhāva*' and '*aññathābhāva*'. Although we happened to discuss it earlier too, we take it up again because it is relevant. Soon after his enlightenment the Buddha as he was seated cross legged under the *Bodhi* tree in *Uruvelā* on the banks of River *Neranjara*, arising from his concentration after seven days, surveyed the world with his Buddha-eye and uttered this verse as a paean of joy. It is a powerful utterance showing how deeply he reflected on the pathetic condition of the world.

*ayaṃ loko santāpajāto phassapareto – rogaṃ vadati attato
yena yena hi maññati – tato taṃ hoti aññathā* ⁷

This grief- stricken world given over to contact
Speaks of a disease in terms of a self
Whatever 'thing' he thinks 'in terms of'
Thereby itself it turns otherwise.

In the introductory part of this discourse it is said that the Buddha in surveying the world with his Buddha-eye, saw beings stricken with grief due to various burning sensations born of lust, hate and delusion and uttered this verse. The world is grief- stricken and enslaved by contact ('*santāpajāto phassapareto*') and calls a disease or a nest of diseases (i.e. the body) a self ('*rogam vadati attato*'). What happens as a result of taking this nest of diseases as a self? Now comes a significant statement: *yena yenahi maññati – tato tam hoti aññathā*: whatever one thinks in terms of, thereby it turns otherwise. The newly born child thinks 'I am in this world' and with that very thought the germ of impermanence takes over and that itself is the beginning of turning otherwise or change.

Then the Buddha goes on to explain what happens as a result of this 'minding' (*maññanā*)

*'aññathā bhāvī bhavasatto loko bhavapareto
bhavamevābhinandati
yadabhinandati tam bhayaṃ
yassa bhāyati tam dukkhaṃ
bhavavippahānāya kho panidaṃ
brahmacariyaṃ vussati.'*⁸

The world attached to becoming
And given over to becoming
Though becoming otherwise
Yet delights in becoming
What it delights in
Is a cause for fear
And what it is scared of
Is suffering itself
But for abandoning that becoming
Is this holy life lived.

This is an extraordinary analysis of the predicament the world finds itself in. The nature of the world is to become otherwise due to the inexorable law of impermanence. But the world (i.e. the worldlings) is attached to becoming and given over to becoming ('*Attathābhāvī bhavasatto loko bhavapareto*'). It therefore delights in becoming ('*bhavamevābhinandati*'). The very fact that it delights is a fear – a dread. ('*yadabhinandati tam bhayaṃ*'). What is fearful or dreadful is suffering ('*yassa bhāyati tam dukkhaṃ*'). Then comes the solution to the problem: It

is for the abandoning of becoming that this holy life is lived. (*'bhavavippahānāya kho panidam-brahmacariyaṃ vussati'*).

Just ponder over this paradoxical situation. It is in the nature of becoming to become otherwise. But the worldling is attached to and given over to becoming. In fact it delights in becoming which itself is a cause of fear. What it is apprehensive of, is suffering bound up with the inexorable law of impermanence.

Then the Buddha makes this significant declaration:

“Whatever recluses or Brahmins spoke of release from existence by means of existence, I say that they are not released from existence.

Whatever recluses or Brahmins who spoke of a stepping out of existence by means of non-existence, I say that they all have not stepped out of existence.

All this suffering arises due to assets. By the destruction of all grasping there is no arising of suffering.”

A peculiar word came up in this discourse namely, '*maññati*'. Earlier too we called '*maññanā*' a 'minding' - a 'thinking' - in terms of: It is a fancying - in other words caused by ignorance. Once born into the world the child fancies itself to be a mannikin. Parents take it to be their own child - this combination of name and form and consciousness. Whether it likes it or not there is growth which in effect is decay. The Buddha speaks only of birth decay and death - not of any growth as such. From birth itself change takes over. That is to say from birth itself there is a progress towards decay and death. The world is imprisoned within this duality. That is what the Buddha calls suffering. Scholars suggest all sorts of etymologies for the word '*dukkha*'. We in our own way suggested a certain etymology in our *Nibbāna* sermons. '*Duh*' means with difficulty or hardship and '*kha*' means bearing up. So '*dukkha*' means though with difficulty one bears up. Though one bears up it is difficult.

Let me give a simple simile as an illustration. In fact I gave a simile of a 'serpent circle'. I borrowed the idea from a cartoon I saw in my boyhood. The cartoon had three cages or 'windows'. The first cage showed two serpents – say, a cobra and a viper – trying to swallow each other. In the first cage the viper's tail is shown to be in the cobra's mouth while the cobra's tail is in the viper's mouth. The second cage showed that the cobra has swallowed half of the viper and that the viper has swallowed half of the cobra. That means now we have a 'serpent circle'. Try to guess what could be in the third cage. Let us for a moment think that the cobra has swallowed the viper. Then the viper is not visible. If the viper has swallowed the cobra, the latter would not be visible. Whatever it is, the third cage only showed a few short lines in the centre suggestive of a “VOID”. But is it a possibility? can they successfully swallow

each other? It is a possibility only in the realm of logic - never in the world of reality. So the actual situation in the world is as represented by the second cage - the 'serpent-circle'. It is a conflict - a deadlock. The cobra has to bear up somehow though it is difficult to do so. It started swallowing but cannot finish it. Same with the viper's attempt to swallow the cobra. Though it is difficult both have to bear up. Though they bear up, it is difficult. They are in a fix!

Well, this is our predicament too. You talk about income and expenditure. It is a similar attempt to swallow up - whether at state level or household level. Husband and wife are in conflict with regard to income and expenditure. 'Income' tries to swallow up 'expenditure' and 'expenditure' tries to swallow up 'income'. In economics there is the risk of inflation. Between supply and demand there is another 'serpent-circle'. Just think about the society at large - institutions and the like. 'Duties' try to swallow up 'rights' and 'rights' try to swallow up 'duties'. The result is strikes. What about our in-breath and out-breath and our blood circulation? It is the same conflict everywhere. This is the suffering. But the world refuses to understand this precarious situation for what it is. Instead it goes on craving for existence - for birth again and again. It craves for birth but abhors death. This is the tragicomedy before us.

Talking about this liking for birth and disliking for death, let us bring up a little simile in the form of a parable. However much we explain this deep point some of you might not grasp it. But when it comes in the form of simile it is easily understood. Let us take one from the village life itself.

Simple Siyadoris, the habitual drunkard, suddenly dies. Usually in the case of a sudden death, a post-mortem is held. But before the formal inquest there is a tendency in the village to hold many informal inquests. First of all let us consult the venerable chief monk. His verdict is that his lay-supporter Siyadoris died because he could not keep the fifth precept (i.e. abstinence from intoxicants). Now let us ask the village school master. His opinion is that this premature death is due to illiteracy. What does the Member of the Parliament say? He would put it down to abject poverty due to misgovernment by the ruling party. Let us ask the wife of the dead man who was at his bedside at the time of the death. She might say that her husband died because he could not breathe. What is the coroner's verdict? It states that the death is due to chronic cirrhosis. But all these are partial truths. If we ask the Buddha he would say that Siyadoris died for the simple reason that he was born!

There you are laughing - but that is the fact. Of course you might say "You don't have to tell us that. We know that" But that is precisely what has to be told. That is what the world does not KNOW!

You may recall what we pointed out in our discussion of the *Mahāpadāna Sutta*. When we analyse the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula these days we usually begin with the first two lines:

'*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*' ('dependent on ignorance preparations'). It is very easy for us now. But how did the Buddha lay bare this most wonderful truth for the first time? It is through radical attention ('*yonisomanasikāra*'). *Yonisomanasikāra* means attending by way of the source or matrix. Therefore not only our *Gotama* Buddha, but also Vipassi Buddha before him aroused the knowledge of Dependent Arising by attending to 'decay and death' upwards. We have already explained these things. For instance the Bodhisatta Vipassi asked himself:

'*kimhi nu kho sati jarāmaṇaṃ hoti, kim paccayā jarāmaṇaṃ.*' when what is there (or "what being there") does decay and death come to be Dependent on what is decay and death? Then it occurred to him: '*jatiyā sati jarāmaṇaṃ hoti, jatiapaccayā jarāmaṇaṃ.*' 'When birth is there, decay and death come to be, Dependent on birth is decay and death.' Just see. There is nothing to laugh about it. Until then the world had not understood it. The worldlings only think up excuses for it. That is why they ask why a Buddha has to come and tell us that. But the Buddhas arouse the knowledge of this basic reason because they want to put an end to *samsāric* suffering. Worldlings are not concerned with radical solutions to the problem of suffering. Whether he observed the five precepts or not Siyadoris would die. Whether he is literate or illiterate he would die. Whether he held his breath or released it he would die. Whether he had cirrhosis or not he would die. But if Siyadoris had put and end to birth, he would not have died.

To refresh your memory a little more – now you can make sense of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula because radical attention starts from the very end. Then the Buddha asked himself:

'*kimhi nu kho sati jāti hoti. kimpaccayā jāti.*'⁸

'When what is there does birth come to be? Dependent on what is birth?' And it dawned on him through wisdom:

'*bhave kho sati jāti hoti, bhavapaccayā jāti*'

'When becoming is there does birth come to be. Dependent on becoming is birth'

So you can infer that the condition for birth is becoming or existence and likewise the cause and condition for becoming or existence is grasping because what you grasp that you are; the condition for grasping is craving since you grasp because of craving; the condition for craving is feeling since you crave because of feeling; the condition for feeling is contact because where you contact there you feel; the condition for contact is the six sense spheres since you contact because you have six sense spheres. The condition for the six sense spheres is name and form. Now we come to that deep point which we discussed earlier too. The condition for name and form is consciousness and then there is that crucial 'turning-back'. The condition for

consciousness is name and form. The process of questioning through radical attention stopped at the point of this mutual conditionality ('*aññamañña paccayatā*').

*'nāmarupāpaccayā viññāṇam
viññāṇapaccayā nāmarupā'*

Dependent on name and form is consciousness

Dependent on consciousness is name and form.

Although questioning stopped there the very ignorance of this mental conditionality itself is *avijjā* or ignorance and the consequent fumbling or groping about in that darkness is *sankhārā* or preparations. This is what we tried to illustrate by various similes – the delusion arising out of the duality. The tragic self-love of Narcissus is the best example. But the Buddha discovered the secret of this vortical interplay – namely, Dependent Arising ('*Paṭicca Samuppāda*'). That he accomplished through radical attention ('*yonisomanasikāra*').

So you may understand that this discourse which is regarded as deep reveals that Dependent Arising or '*Paṭicca Samuppāda*' is a middle path. It is due to a lack of understanding of this fact that many find it difficult to understand that the cessation of becoming is *Nibbāna*. We might have to take up for discussion several other deep discourses to clarify this aspect of the *Dhamma*.

Then there is what is called '*maññanā*' (lit. minding, thinking in terms of or imagining). Let us take up a short discourse to acquaint ourselves with this term and to clarify further the alternation between 'thisness' and 'otherwiseness' ('*itthabhāva*' - '*aññathābhāva*'). We pointed out that *maññanā* is an imagining. According to what the Buddha has pointed out to us we are living in a mirage of our own making. The mirage is mind-made. To reveal this fact to us he brings up a strange parable - the parable of *Vepacitti* in *Saṃyutta Nikāya* ⁹. It is a parable which conveys something extremely deep. The Buddha presents it to the monks as if relating an incident which actually happened in the past. Quite often in the discourses we find an allusion to a battle between gods (*sura*) and demons (*asura*). In this particular contest it is said that in the battle between gods and demons, demons lost and gods won. The gods bound *Vepacitti*, the king of demons in a fivefold bondage neck, hand and foot and brought him into the presence of *sakka* - the king of gods. The Buddha says that the bondage of *Vepacitti* has a peculiar mechanism about it. When *Vepacitti* thinks: 'Gods are righteous and demons are unrighteous, I will remain here in the *deva* world' with that very thought he finds himself released from the fivefold bondage and enjoying divine pleasures. But as soon as he thinks: 'gods are unrighteous and demons are righteous. I will go back to the *asura* world' he finds

himself bound again in that fivefold bondage. The point here stressed by the Buddha is that the bondage is 'mind-made'. In summing up the Buddha says:

'Evam sukhumaṃ kho bhikkhave Vepacitti bandhanaṃ. Tato sukhumataraṃ mārabandhanaṃ'

“So subtle, monks, is the bondage of *Vepacitti* but more subtle still the bondage of *Māra*.”

The bondage of *Vepacitti* is subtle as it is connected with the mind. But it seems the bondage of *Māra* is subtler.

Now comes the highly significant statement:

'maññanmāno kho bhikkhave baddho māraṃsa amaññanmāno mutto pāpimato.'

“Imagining monks, one is bound by *Māra*, not imagining one is freed from that evil one.”

Then the Buddha goes on to explain what this imagining is:

*'asmīti bhikkhave maññitametaṃ
ayamahamasmīti maññitametaṃ
bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
na bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
rūpī bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
arūpī bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
saññī bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
asaññī bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
nevasaññīnāsaññī bhavissanti maññitametaṃ
maññitaṃ bhikkhave gando, maññitaṃ rogo, maññitaṃ sallam.
Tasmātiha bhikkhave amaññitamanena cetasā
viharissāmāti evañhi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbam.'*

(I) am monks, this is an imagined

This am 'I' - this is an imagined

'I should be' - monks, this is an imagined

'I shall not be' - monks, this is an imagined

'I shall be one with form' - monks, this is an imagined

'I shall be formless' - monks, this is an imagined

'I shall be percipient' - monks, this is an imagined

'I shall be non-percipient' - monks, this is an imagined

'I shall be percipient nor non-percipient' - monks, this is an imagined

Imagining monks, is a disease, imagining is an abscess, imagining is a barb. Therefore, monks you must tell yourselves:

“We will dwell with a mind free from imaginings”. Thus must you train yourselves.

So here are nine ways of imagining. The first imagining is (I) am. We cannot help using 'I am' according to rules of grammar. But that itself is something imagined. That is not enough. We have to say 'This am I' identifying ourselves with one or the other of five aggregates. But that again is something imagined. So also is the assertion 'I shall be' or 'I shall not be'. Similarly even the Brahmas are bound since 'I shall be one with form' and 'I shall be formless' are imaginings. Whether one thinks 'I shall be percipient' or 'I shall be non-percipient' it is an imagining. So also the see-sawing 'I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient'.

Having thus shown that the entire range of existence rests on imaginings, the Buddha declares: 'Imagining is a disease, an abscess, a barb and advises the monks to dwell with a mind free from imaginings. This is the moral behind the parable of *Vepacitti's* bondage. That is why we pointed out that delusion is ingrained in the linguistic medium. But we cannot afford to reject it altogether. That is precisely why even the Buddha uses it but without grasping.

The other day, while discussing the simile of the whirlpool we said something about 'that place' and 'this place' or 'here and there'. Corresponding to that we have the three 'persons' - “I am” the first person 'here you are' the second person in front of me and 'he' over there is the third person. That is the grammatical structure. There are verbs that go with the three persons. 'Am', 'are' and 'is'. According to the Buddha all these are part and parcel of the disease of imagining. The world is imprisoned by language and logic. The Buddha on the other hand offered us a *Dhamma* that transcends logic. That in short is the middle path implicit in the law of Dependent Arising. I wonder whether you remember our simile of the magic-kettle. It is not something found in books. It is based on a little bit of experience in my young days. While on a shopping round we once watched a continuous flow of water from a kettle into a basin behind a shop window. The kettle never got empty nor did the basin overflow. We later learned that a hidden tube conveyed the water from the basin back into the kettle. The world is also such a magic-kettle.

'*Samudayo samudayo*' (arising , arising) - there is an incessant process of arising, '*nirodho, nirodho*' (ceasing , ceasing) there is an incessant process of ceasing. But the worldling ignores the ceasing aspect and emphasizes the arising aspect in order to hold on to the personality view ('*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*'). Just ponder over the etymology of the term '*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*'. '*Sat*' means 'existing' and '*kāya*' means 'group'. It is because we take the entire group or the heap as existing that we insist on proving an identity which we do not have in reality. We have our identity cards. How can there be an identity if the nature of the world is otherwiseness

('aññathābhāva'). Forgetting about this fact we assert saying 'This is me' not only our present form but even the beautiful photographs taken in our childhood or at our wedding. That conceit is implicit in the stance 'Am'. The perception of the compact ('ghana saññā') is already there. The world forgets that there is an incessant process of arising and an incessant process of ceasing. This process defies language. When we say 'River flows' there is only a process of flowing. But when we give it a name, say River *Kelani*, then we presume that it is the river that flows. So also is the fluxional nature of this body. Which is concealed. Only a Buddha points it out to us. Though our commentators failed to notice it, some Buddhist sects highlighted the fact that the middle path which avoids the two extremes is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. They give it prominence. This does not mean that we accept everything in those Buddhist sects. Some called it '*Sunyatā*'. The important point to note is that there is an incessant arising and ceasing which transcends logic because logic is based on the duality of existence and non-existence - on 'Is' and 'Is not'. Even the four-cornered logic the tetralemma - moves within this same duality. In place of this the Buddha introduced the law of Dependent Arising with its philosophy of incessant arising and ceasing summed up in the exclamation '*Samudayo Samudayo - Nirodho nirodho*.'

Let us reflect a little more on this imagining 'I am'. How does it come in? There is an important discourse which explains it for us. Once venerable *Ānanda* tells his fellow monks 'Friends when we were newly gone forth venerable *Punna Mantāniputta* was very helpful to us. He gave us an admonition like this '*Ānanda, upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya*'¹⁰. *Ānanda* the notion 'I am' occurs in-dependence not without dependence. That is to say, due to grasping and not without grasping. So the notion 'I am' occurs due to causes and conditions - not fortuitously.

Then venerable *Ānanda* reiterates the words of venerable *Punna Mantāniputta* :

'Kiñca upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya
Rūpaṃ upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya
Vedanāṃ upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya
Saññāṃ upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya
Sankhara upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya
Viññāṇaṃ upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya'.

Dependent on form arises (the notion) 'I am' – not without dependence
 Dependent on feeling arises (the notion) 'I am' – not without dependence
 Dependent on perception arises (the notion) 'I am' – not without dependence
 Dependent on preparations arises (the notion) 'I am' – not without dependence
 Dependent on consciousness arises (the notion) 'I am' – not without dependence

So it seems that the notion 'I am' is fostered by grasping or *upādāna*.

Then venerable *Puṇṇa Mantāniputta* gives a wonderful simile. It is a deep simile which you may ponder upon.

Just as *Ānanda*, a young woman or a young man who likes adornment looking at the reflection of her or his face either in a clean mirror or in a bowl of clear water would be seeing depending on it and not without depending, even so *Ānanda* depending on form arises (the notion) 'I am', not without depending. Depending on feeling arises (the notion) 'I am', not without depending. Depending on perception arises (the notion) 'I am', not without depending. Depending on preparations arises (the notion) 'I am', not without depending. Depending on consciousness arises (the notion) 'I am', not without depending. It is when one grasps the mirror that one sees one's form reflected on it. Now think of what happened to Narcissus. Because he had never seen his face as soon as he saw the reflection of his face in the water he imagined an angel in the pond. The notion 'I am' is the result of a similar reflection. The reflection in the mirror does not reveal what is inside the entrails. It only shows the external form. That is what the world prides on as self.

One grasps not only form but feeling, perception, preparations and consciousness as well. The Buddha has clarified to us why each of them is called a group (*khanda*). On a previous occasion too we explained the significance of the word '*khanda*' in *pañcupādānakhanda* (the five groups of grasping). The Buddha has given us an elevenfold analysis of each of the 'groups'. For instance in the case of form, the formula runs as follows:

'yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgata paccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā sabbaṃ rūpaṃ' ¹¹, etc..

“Whatever form, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all form., etc.”

This elevenfold analysis is recommended for insight meditation to eradicate the conceit of self.

Let us try to clarify for ourselves the significance of this analysis. '*yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgata paccuppannaṃ*' - 'whatever form whether past, future or present' - even the past form is prided on as 'my own'. That beautiful child in your photo album you claim with pride: 'This is me'. So that is your past form. What about the 'future' form. When you are getting ready to go for a wedding you do a lot of 'make-up' before the mirror and ask yourself: 'How would I appear there?'. That is your 'future form', you have already grasped. '*ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddā vā*' - 'internal or external'. You grasp not only your form but forms you see outside.

'oḷārikaṃ vā sukumaṃ vā' - 'whether gross or subtle'. 'hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā' - 'inferior or superior'. 'yaṃ dūre santike vā sabbaṃ rūpaṃ' – 'whether far or near'. Every one of the five groups is an 'aggregate' of these eleven modes. A person 'deposits' his experiences in life according to these eleven modes. This applies not only to one's present life but to one's entire *samsāric* past. This is the 'bedrock' of *samsāric* experience which influences one as a 'latency' ('*anusaya*').

So then we have before us a stupendous *samsāric* problem of the highest order. But we are not going to blame language for it. Language is of our own creation. After we created it we fell under its spell. That is what we pointed out in our discussion of the term '*papañca*'. We alluded to the legend about the resurrected tiger. Three experts in magic while going through a forest saw the scattered bones of a tiger. One magic worker showed his skill by assembling them into a skeleton. The second one gave it flesh and blood. The third one infused life into it. The magically resurrected tiger sprang up and devoured all of them. Our language and logic worked a similar tragedy on us. We have been imprisoned by language and logic in this *samsāra*. That is why we said in an earlier sermon that the complications in *samsāra* are traceable to linguistic conventions. That is not with the idea of stigmatizing it. In fact we cannot help using it. Even the Buddha had to use it. As the grand finale of the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* comes the following highly significant statement:

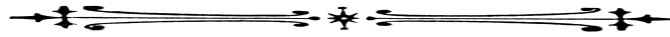
*'Itīmā kho Citta lokasamaññā lokaniruttiyo lokavohārā lokapaññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasaṃ'*¹²

"*Citta*, these are worldly conventions, worldly expressions, worldly usages, worldly concepts which the *Tathāgatha* makes use of without grasping"

The *Tathāgatha* makes use of them but does not grasp them. That should be the aim of following this *Dhamma*. Therefore it is from the misconceptions ingrained in the linguistic medium that we have to get free from. That can be accomplished only through insight and wisdom. By continuously seeing the arising and ceasing nature of phenomena in one's experience with insight we can extricate ourselves from these misconceptions and that too each one by himself.

So I think this is enough for today. It seems we are delving deeper and deeper into this *Dhamma*. But you shouldn't get disheartened. These sermons may not be as palatable as popular versified sermons. But it is here that we have the quintessence of the *Dhamma*. As we once told you if you wish to attain *Nibbāna* after seeing the Buddha, see *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. If you see *Paṭicca Samuppāda* you see the *Dhamma* and whoever sees the *Dhamma* sees the Buddha. So when you see *Paṭicca Samuppāda* you see both the Buddha and the *Dhamma*. You had better reflect wisely on these words.

I suppose you spent the day in meditation established on higher precepts. Today you had the opportunity to listen to a sermon which is particularly relevant to insight meditation. Making the best use of it in your meditation, I hope you all will put forth your best efforts to escape this terrible *saṃsāra*. May you all be able to attain in this very life supramundane states and the bliss of the deathless *Nibbāna*. Whatever beings there be from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma world may they all rejoice in our sermon. May the merits accrued by that rejoicing conduce to the fulfillment of their higher aims!



1. Sn.142 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
2. S.II 17 Kaccānagotta Sutta
3. S.V 421 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta
4. Ud. 6 Bāhiya Sutta
5. Ud. 81 Catuttha Nibbāna Sutta
6. D.II 63 Mahā Nidāna Sutta
7. Ud.32 Lokavolokana Sutta
8. D.II 31, Mahāpadāna Sutta
9. S.IV 201Yavakalāpi Sutta
10. S.III 105 Ānanda Sutta
11. S.III 47 Khanda Sutta
12. D.I 202 Poṭṭhapāda Sutta

Sermon No. 7

(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 189)

‘Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa’

‘Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!’

*Anattani attamānirū - passa lokam sadevakam
niviṭṭham nāmarūpasmim - idam saccanti maññati*

*yena yena hi maññati - tato tam hoti aññathā
tam hi tassa musā hoti - mosadhammam hi ittaram*

*amosa dhammam nibbānam - tadariyā saccato vidū
te ve saccābhisamayā - nicchātā parinibbutā¹*

-Dvayatānupassanā S. Sn.

Just see a world with all its goods
Fancying a self where none exists
Entering into name and form
It builds the fancy - ‘Ah! This is the truth’!

In whatever way one fancies of a thing
Thereby itself it turns otherwise
And that itself is the falsity in it
Falsifying by nature - the puny thing.

But Nibbāna unfalsifying as it is
Noble Ones knew as the truth
And they by their understanding of the truth
Are hungerless and fully appeased.

Dear Listeners,

The Fully Enlightened Buddha has revealed to us that the worldlings are bound to *Saṃsāra* due to the conceit that there is a self where there is no self. The fancying or imagining caused by conceit is called ‘*maññanā*.’ The release from this imagining which takes name-and-form as the truth is the release from the bondage of *Māra* - that is to say *Nibbāna* itself. Today we have taken up as the topic of our sermon three verses which declare this truth. These three verses also are found in the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. In our last sermon, we introduced this discourse as one that instils an intense fervor of the Dhamma. As the word

‘*dvayatā*’ in the title of the discourse indicates this sutta analyses sixteen topics of Dhamma in the form of dualities. Here the Buddha analyses in sixteen ways the eternal law of bondage and release in a way that reminds us of the direct and the indirect order of the law of Dependent Arising.

Today we have taken up for comment the three verses pertaining to the fifteenth mode of contemplation of dualities. As an introduction to those three verses the Buddha gives this prose description of the fifteenth mode of duality.

*‘yaṃ bhikkhave sadevakassa lokassa samārakassa sabrahmakassa
sassamanabrāhmaniyā pajāya sadevamanussāya idaṃ saccanti upanijjhāyitaṃ tadamariyānaṃ
etaṃ musāti yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya sudiṭṭhaṃ - ayaṃ ekānupassanā’*

“Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as ‘This is true’ by the world with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas* with its recluses and *Brahmins*, that by the Ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as ‘That is false.’ This is one mode of contemplation.” And then the second mode of contemplation is introduced as follows:

*‘yaṃ bhikkhave sadevakassa lokassa samārakassa sabrahmakassa
sassamanabrāhmaniyā pajāya sadevamanussāya idaṃ musāti upanijjhāyitaṃ tadamariyānaṃ
etaṃ saccanti yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya sudiṭṭhaṃ - ayaṃ dutiyānupassanā’*

“Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as ‘This is false’ by the world with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas* with its recluses and *Brahmins*, that by the Ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as ‘That is true.’ This is the second mode of contemplation.”

Having thus presented the two modes of contemplation, the Buddha, as he did in the case of other contemplations, declares that if any monk, rightly contemplating in this way, dwells diligently, ardent and zealous, one of two fruits may be expected by him: knowledge of arahantship in this life itself or if there is any residual clinging, non-returnership. The Buddha declares that this particular contemplation is so highly beneficial. It is after this declaration that the Buddha summed it up in these three verses.

*Anattani attamānirū - passa lokaṃ sadevakaṃ
niviṭṭhaṃ nāmarūpasmiṃ - idaṃ saccanti maññati*

See the world with all its gods entertaining a conceit of self where there is no self. Having entered into or entrenched in name and form, it loves to fancy: ‘This is the truth.’ With that the Buddha is stating the condition of the world and then he says:

*‘yena yena hi maññati – tato taṃ hoti aññathā
taṃ hi tassa musā hoti - mosadhammaṃ hi ittaraṃ’*

“In whatever way one fancies a thing thereby it becomes otherwise. That itself is the falsity in it - the puerile deceptive thing that it is.”

Then the third verse:

*‘amosa dhammaṃ nibbānaṃ - tadariyā saccato vidū
te ve saccābhisamayā – nicchātā parinibbutā’*

“*Nibbāna* is unfalsifying. That the wise ones knew as the truth. And they by their understanding of the truth being hungerless are fully appeased.”

So from these words of the Buddha, it is clear that the entire world including gods and *Brahmas* are caught by this bondage of *Māra*, due to fancying by taking name and form to be real. This fact is borne out by the parable of *Vepacitti* ² we brought up in our last sermon. Just briefly remind yourselves of what we have related the other day. The Buddha once addressing the monks related the age-old legend of the battle between gods and demons. He said that demons lost and gods won in this particular battle and the gods bound *Vepacitti*, the king of demons, in a fivefold bondage (i.e. neck, hand and foot) and brought him before *Sakka*, the king of gods. This bondage had a peculiar mechanism about it. If *Vepacitti* thought: “Demons are unrighteous, gods are righteous, I will remain in the deva world”, he would find himself freed from that bondage and enjoying heavenly pleasures. But if he happened to think: “Gods are unrighteous, demons are righteous, I will go back to the *Asura* world”, then he finds himself bound again in that fivefold bondage. After stating that, the Buddha goes on to say: “So subtle monks, is the bondage of *Vepacitti* but more subtle still the bondage of *Māra*.” And then he explains what this bondage of *Māra* is. The Buddha declares that even the basic postulate of existence, namely, the notion ‘(I) am’ is an imagining (*‘asmīti bhikkhave maññitametaṃ’*). There the Buddha mentions a nine-fold imagining. The notion ‘(I) am’ is an imagining. ‘This am I’ is an imagining. ‘I shall be’ is an imagining. ‘I shall not be’ is an imagining. ‘I shall be one with form’ is an imagining. ‘I shall be formless’ is an imagining. ‘I shall be percipient’ is an imagining. ‘I shall be non-percipient’ is an imagining. ‘I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient’ is an imagining. Thus the entire gamut of existence extending up to the realm of neither perception nor non-perception, including the Sensuous Realm, the Realm of Form and the Formless Realm is the range of imagining. Having declared that existence as a whole is bound up with imagining, he says in conclusion: “Imagining monks, is a disease, imagining is an abscess, imagining is a barb (*‘maññitaṃ bhikkhave rogo, maññitaṃ gando, maññitaṃ sallaṃ’*) and advises the monks to dwell with a mind free from imaginings (*‘amaññitamanena cetasā’*).

By means of the five constituents of name, that is to say, feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention, the worldlings take hold of the four great primaries, namely, earth, water, fire and air and due to self-love, enact a drama of Narcissistic affection best exemplified by the story of Narcissus itself, which we brought up several times. The handsome Greek youth Narcissus who had never seen his own face, while wandering in a forest, bent down into a pond to wash his face. Seeing the reflection of his own face he mistook it to be an angel’s and tried to embrace her. Every time he tried, the ripples foiled his attempt. If we bring this story in line

with the point at issue, as soon as the worldling imagines a 'thing', it turns otherwise. To fancy a 'thing' is called 'thisness' and the 'ripples' of impermanence is its 'otherwiseness' or change. For instance now we take this clock as a 'thing'. When it goes out of order, it turns in to otherwiseness. If we had not taken it as a 'thing' but as part of a heap of rubbish, such a situation would not have arisen, because there is no fancying. That is only by way of illustration. Through all this the Buddha puts across to us the truth of impermanence. In our last sermon we presented a deeper analysis of this truth. It is a very powerful sermon. Soon after his enlightenment, the Buddha surveyed the world with his Buddha-eye and seeing how beings are afflicted with lust, hate and delusion, came out with an inspired utterance which is a wonderful blend of prose and verse. Let us quote a portion of it.

*ayam loko santāpajāto phassapareto
rogam vadati attato*³

This anguished world given over to contact
Speaks of a disease in terms of a self

And then he says:

*yena yenahi maññati
tato tam hoti aññathā*

Whatever one thinks in terms of
Thereby it turns otherwise

Now comes the extraordinary statement:

*'Aññathābhāvī bhavasatto loko bhavapareto
bhavamevābhinandati
yadabhinandati tam bhayam
yassa bhāyati tam dukkham
bhavavippahānāya kho panidam
brahmacariyam vussati.'*⁸

The world attached to becoming, given over to becoming
Though becoming otherwise yet delights in becoming
What it delights in is a cause for fear
What it is afraid of is suffering itself
For abandoning this becoming
Is this holy life lived.

What is called existence has in it the nature of turning otherwise. To that existence which has the nature of turning otherwise, worldlings are attached. They are enslaved by it and

they delight in it. But that delighting is dangerous and fearful. Why? Because the existence they take as a 'thisness' is turning otherwise. It is inevitable. So this is the actual situation in the world. That is why the term '*maññanā*' is of so fundamental an importance in this Dhamma.

"Well, then" one can ask "where lies freedom?" we said that in imagining or fancying one conceives of a 'thing'. We all know that there are six senses. The five external senses are eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. When the objects taken in by these five senses reach the mind, they take on a different mould. All objects of the mind are called '*dhammā*' - 'things'. So you may note first of all that the problem concerns those things that come to the mind. About this 'thing' which is the object of the mind, there is a highly significant discourse in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, namely *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* ⁴. It is probably because of its fundamental importance that those *arahants* who held the First Council placed this discourse as the very first in this discourse collection. But unfortunately nowadays teachers when they teach this book to their pupils ask them to skip the first sutta and start from the second. They say that this is so abstruse that even those who listened to it could not understand it. But we wish to point out that this discourse is like the basic alphabet to the understanding of the philosophy of this entire Dhamma. Why do we say so? Because this *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* reveals the basic pattern of all 'things' that occur to the mind (*mūlapariyāya*).

Let us now describe the way this discourse is presented. It has a very brief introduction. The Buddha seated under a *Sal* tree in the *Subhaga* forest in the *Ukkatthā*, addressing the congregation of monks preached this sermon presumably because he wanted to bring up a very important subject. He introduces the subject with this exhortation:

"Sabbadhamma mūlapariyāyaṃ vo bhikkhave desissāmi. Taṃ sunātha sādhucaṃ manasikarotha bhāsisāmi."

"Monks, I shall preach to you the fundamental mode of all things. Listen to it. Attend to it well, I shall preach."

What is meant by 'the fundamental mode of all things' is this: There is a certain mode according to which all phenomena occur to our mind. It is this basic mode that is found in grammar. Within this linguistic usage, all phenomena that occur to the mind present themselves according to some grammatical pattern. In regard to that grammatical pattern this *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* analyzes the respective attitudes of the average worldling uninstructed in the Dhamma, of the monk who is a learner not attained to arahanthood, of the *arahant* and the Fully Enlightened One - the *Tathāgata*. But we can boil it down to three attitudes since the attitude of the *arahant* and of the Buddha are essentially the same. Because the *Tathāgata*, the Fully Enlightened One proclaimed this Dhamma as the teacher, he is in a category by himself. But for all practical purposes his attitude and that of the *arahant* are the same. So we are now going to analyze this discourse based on those three attitudes. We have already mentioned that this discourse describes the attitude of the worldling towards the grammatical pattern in usage in the world, the attitude of the learner training in this Dhamma and the attitude of the *arahant*. To represent all objects of the mind regarded as 'things' the Buddha lists 24 dhammas.

It is not a complete list of all possible dhammas, but a fair representation of them as instances. They may be summed up as follows in brief. Firstly, the four great primaries: earth, water, fire and air, then the eight classes of beings: namely beings, gods, *Pajāpati*, *Brahmā*, the Radiant Ones, the Lustrous Ones, the *Vehapphala Brahmas*, the Overlord. Then the four formless realms: the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, the realm of neither perception nor non-perception. Then the sum-total of sense-experience: the seen, the heard, the sensed and the cognized. And finally, the concepts of unity, diversity, universality and *Nibbāna* (*ekattaṃ, nānattaṃ, sabbaṃ, nibbānaṃ*).

Having thus introduced 24 mind-objects (*dhammā*) The Buddha describes the different attitudes of the above three classes towards each of them. When we give one instance you all can understand the rest of it. Out of the four primaries given first, let us take earth. This is how the attitude of the uninstructed average worldling towards it is described. He perceives earth as earth - even as the deer perceives water. Having thus perceived earth as earth (*‘paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito saññatvā’*) he imagines an earth (*‘paṭhaviṃ maññati’*). There we find that *maññanā* coming in. Then he imagines: ‘In the earth’ (*‘paṭhaviyā maññati’*). He imagines ‘from the earth’ (*‘paṭhavito maññati’*). He imagines ‘earth is mine’ (*‘paṭhaviṃ meti maññati’*). He delights in earth (*‘paṭhaviṃ abhinandati’*). Then the Buddha asks: ‘Why is that?’ (*‘taṃ kissa hetu?’*) and gives this explanation: ‘It is because it has not been comprehended by him’ (*‘apariññātaṃ tassāti vadāmi’*).

Then about the learner (*sekha*) who has not attained *arahanthood* this is what comes in the discourse: *‘paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhijānāti’*. In this case it is not *saññānāti* (perceives) but *abhijānāti* i.e. understands through higher knowledge. Through his attainment of the Fruit of the Path, even for a split second he had an experience of the Truth as if by a streak of lightening in a dark night, he had a glimpse of *Nibbāna*. Thereby he got an understanding which is of a higher order than mere perception. He has understood the true state of affairs though it is short of full comprehension. About him, this is what is stated in the sutta: *‘paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhijānāti’*. He understands earth as earth. And then: *‘paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhiññāya’* - having understood earth as earth - now comes a peculiar expression: *‘paṭhaviṃ mā maññi, paṭhaviyā mā maññi, paṭhavito mā maññi, paṭhaviṃ meti mā maññi, paṭhaviṃ mā abhinandi’*. The use of ‘*mā*’ here is a big puzzle for the commentator ⁵. But it is the prohibitive particle in *Pāli* language. You may have heard the dictum: *‘mā nivatta abhikkama’* - ‘Do not turn back, go forward.’ However, the commentator goes off at a tangent here. He says that this particle conveys the idea that the noble disciple neither imagines nor does he not imagine. This is not the reason for this peculiar usage. The learner (*sekha*) is that noble disciple who is still training. Though he has higher knowledge beyond mere perception, he has not yet attained full comprehension (*pariññā*). So he has to constantly remind himself to refrain from imagining, drawing inspiration from the higher knowledge he has won. *‘paṭhaviṃ mā maññi’* etc. means ‘Do not imagine earth as earth, Do not imagine in the earth, Do not imagine from the earth, Do not imagine earth is mine, Do not delight in the earth.’ Why? Because he has yet to comprehend (*‘pariññeyyaṃ tassāti vadāmi’*). This is an injunction for self-training.

Well then, that is as far as the noble disciple who is a learner is concerned. Now as for the attitudes of the *arahant* and the *Tathāgata*, we said that they are the same. For Instance, this is what is said about the arahant: ‘*paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhijānāti, paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhiññāya, paṭhaviṃ na maññati, paṭhaviyā na maññati, paṭhavito na maññati, paṭhaviṃ meti na maññati, paṭhaviṃ nābhinandati.*’ That is to say, the *arahant* as well as the Buddha has the following attitude towards the concept of earth. The *arahant* by virtue of his higher understanding of earth has seen its voidness. He does not imagine earth as earth, he does not imagine ‘in the earth’, does not imagine ‘from the earth’, does not imagine ‘earth is mine’, does not delight in the earth.

We said that there are 24 concepts listed, with regard to each of them the same mode of imagining is given in detail. What is said in particular about the *Tathāgata*, the Fully Enlightened One is that he is the teacher who revealed this Dhamma. In conclusion, the Buddha says: ‘*nandi dukkhassa mūlanti iti viditvā bhava jāti bhūta jarāmaranā*’ - ‘Having known that delight is the root of suffering. From becoming, birth and to the one born there is decay and death.’ That is why there is no delighting in any of those concepts. ‘*Nandi dukkhassa mūlā*’. Delighting is the root of suffering. It is by delighting that an existence comes to be, and that existence is turning otherwise. That is the beginning of suffering. Birth, decay and death and all the rest follow.

By way of explanation of this discourse we may cite the simile of the deer and the mirage. We have brought up this simile quite often. The deer imagines water in the mirage and runs after it. But if a person knows that it is not water but some seasonal phenomena, even if he thinks at first sight that it is water, he tells himself: ‘No, no this can’t be water’ and trains himself. One who has full comprehension does not have to advise himself because he has perfect knowledge. The commentator has confounded the whole issue. He cannot appreciate the fact that it is a step of training. But confusion is worst confounded when he comes to explain the last of all twenty-four concepts - namely *Nibbāna*. When it is said that one should not delight in *Nibbāna*, quite understandably the question comes up: “If we don’t delight in *Nibbāna* how can we attain it?” That may be the reason why the commentator says that *Nibbāna* here mentioned is not our *Nibbāna* but the concept of *Nibbāna* in other religious systems ⁶. With this observation the commentator makes an attempt to vindicate our *Nibbāna* despite the fact that the Buddha has here leveled an attack on linguistic usage as a whole. But it is a vain attempt because as long as one goes on imagining in terms of *Nibbāna* as ‘in *Nibbāna*’, ‘from *Nibbāna*’ and so on and as long as one delights in the concept of *Nibbāna*, one cannot attain it. Some of you might take it as an awkward position. We all look forward to attain *Nibbāna*. So if we cannot delight in *Nibbāna*, what else can we delight in? This is the problem for commentators too. But here we have something deep concerning linguistic usage. To explicate it a little let us give an illustration from the history of this dispensation.

In an earlier sermon too we have mentioned to you in brief, some incident recorded in the annals of the history of Buddhism. After the Buddha’s demise, when the time came for the holding of the First Council, Venerable Mahā Kassapa Mahā thera was faced with a problem in selecting five hundred *arahants* for the recital of Dhamma and *Vinaya*. It was Venerable Ānanda

who had committed to memory the entire Dhamma. But he had not attained arahanthood yet. Therefore 499 *arahants* were selected at first. They were in a dilemma whether to take in Venerable Ānanda or not. However, at last they decided to take him on the ground that he is incapable of being influenced by prejudices. It is said that on the day before the Council the *arahants* reminded Venerable Ānanda of his obligation saying: “Friend, tomorrow is our Council. It does not behove you to attend it as a non-arahant. Be diligent.”⁷ Those of you who have passed examinations would remember how much you have crammed when you are reminded that tomorrow is the exam. Similarly, Venerable Ānanda too made a firm determination to put forth his best efforts. It is said that he determined thorough mindfulness in regard to the body (*kāyagatāsati*) and spent the greater part of the night in the promenade pacing up and down mindfully. Probably due to tiredness, in the last watch of the night, he thought of taking some rest, and went and sat on his bed. He was going to lie down, his feet were raised from the floor and his head had not reached the pillow yet, and in the interim his mind was released from all influxes and he attained arahanthood.

Various explanations are given about this extraordinary illumination between two postures. The commentator says that Venerable Ānanda thought: “Now I am striving too hard. Let me balance my spiritual faculties.” That can’t be the reason. There is a subtle psychological norm involved here. Now for Venerable Ānanda, the concept ‘*Nibbāna*’ appeared as a ‘certificate’ to enter the Council. That is to say, for him ‘*Nibbāna*’ was something like a certificate. The word ‘*Nibbāna*’ which stands for ‘giving-up everything’ became a ‘thing’ to be grasped. “I must attain *Nibbāna*. It is beneath my dignity to attend the Council as a *non-arahant*.” There itself is conceit and restlessness due to over-exertion. He imagined *Nibbāna* to be a ‘thing’ and that implies ignorance as well. That is why he could not attain *Nibbāna* after all that striving. But then, what happened at that particular moment? He had already determined on strenuous effort in all four postures. So if he had lied down on bed he would have continued to put forth strenuous effort. But there is something called ‘posture-junctions’. Most probably he had reckoned without them. However, at that interim instance of bending his body to lie down, he suddenly became aware of an ‘interval’. In that INTERVAL it might have occurred to him: “Oh! I have made a ‘THING’ out of *Nibbāna*! Isn’t it a term for giving up everything? So why am I struggling?” In that moment of realization he realized *Nibbāna* and became an *Arahant*. That is our explanation.

On an earlier occasion too in the course of our sermons, we gave various similes by way of explanation. Even if you are driving in a hurry when you come to the cross-roads junction, you have to slow down. Likewise Venerable Ānanda found a brief interval at a ‘posture-junction’. That is probably how he attained *Nibbāna*. So there is nothing to take delight in ‘*Nibbāna*’, because to do so is to perpetuate the subtle notion of “I” and “mine”. But still you may have doubts. So let us bring up an illustration from our village life. Our National New Year Day is drawing near. Isn’t that so? Now among the New Year festivities, there is a game called ‘Blind man cracking the pot.’ Though we have no pots here we shall give a simile somewhat closer to it. You all have seen the artistically painted words on the wall at the far end of this hall. ‘*Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*’ (*Nibbāna* is Bliss Supreme). After all isn’t that our aim? *Nibbāna* is the supreme bliss and *Nibbāna* is over there on the wall. Now supposing I blindfold a

young *upāsaka* in this crowd and ask you all to get to a side to make way for him and ask him to turn towards that '*Nibbāna*'. Of course he cannot see it as he is blindfolded. Then I ask him to do as I say. 'Take a step towards it. Take another step another step another step'. You all are now watching. He comes up almost against the wall, step by step. But he doesn't see it. And then I say: 'Take another step!' What happens then? When he lifts his foot he finds that he has to turn back! This is a simile for you to ponder over. '*Sankhārā*' or preparations have been associated with the simile of the pot. If you can understand this, perhaps you can crack the pot of *Sankhārā* and attain *Nibbāna*. The moral behind our simile is that '*Nibbāna*' as a term is a target not to be 'grasped' but to be 'seen through'. It is a question of penetration. At last you have to 'let-go' of it and free the mind of imaginings about it.

What do we mean by 'turning back' at the last step? You may recall the lesson we taught by getting you to count on your fingers, while explaining the five representatives of 'name' in name and form (*nāma rūpa*). The five fingers are feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention (*vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phassa, manasikāra*). 'Contact' is the nearest to 'attention' even as the index finger is to the thumb. Contact as the index finger is the trouble-maker. The index finger (contact) is always fussy and busy with the THUMB (attention). So let us now pay more attention to this attention (*manasikāra*). We have analyzed it in various ways while discussing the middle-path tactic by which the Buddha discovered the magical illusion behind consciousness. There we made use of a certain simile. Sometimes in courts of law, a case of murder or theft would come up with no one to give evidence. When there are no other witnesses, there is provision for making one of the alleged culprits the crown witness to get the whole story out. We pointed out that the Buddha had to do a similar thing. Out of the five representatives of name (*nāma*) it was 'attention' (*manasikāra*) who brought us all this way in *saṃsāra* in the guise of 'non-radical attention' (*ayoniso-manasikāra*). It is due to this wrong attention that the deer keeps running after the mirage imagining water 'over there'. Now the Buddha converted this non-radical attention to radical attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*). What does '*yoniso*' mean? '*Yoni*' is matrix or place of origin and '*yoniso*' means 'by way of the place of origin'. So '*yoniso-manasikāra*' could be rendered by the term 'radical-attention'. The Buddha asks us to turn back and pay attention to the source or origin. The deer ran after the illusion of water misled by prolific conceptualization or '*papañca*'. The worldling is in the same situation. With the change over to radical attention, the meditator lets go of '*papañca*', cuts off '*vitakka*' (thought), gives up '*saññā*' (perception), frees himself from the grip of '*vedanā*' (feeling) and finally comes back to '*phassa*' (contact). That is the moment you are up against the wall!

If we analyze the word '*manasikāra*', '*manasi*' means 'in the mind' and '*kāra*' is 'doing'. So '*manasikāra*' is an activity within the mind. As a matter of fact, it is this 'guy' '*manasikāra*' who is responsible for the conspiracy that is *saṃsāra*. '*Manasikāra*' is an activity going on in our mind. We do not understand it as it is. The object used for this activity 'within the mind', we put before it. But the actual state of affairs the Buddha has made known to us through the maxim in the two opening verses of the *Dhammapada*.

manopubbaṅgamā dhammā
*mano seṭṭhā manomayā*⁸

‘Mind-objects have mind as their forerunner, mind is their chief. They are mind-made.’

The worldling thinks otherwise. He argues from the other end. If he writes a *Dhammapada* he would put it the other way around. ‘*Dhamma pubbaṅgamo mano*.’ ‘Mind has mind-objects as forerunners’. But the Buddha points out that the mind is the forerunner and that things are mind-made (*manomayā*). Venerable Ānanda finally realized that the term ‘*Nibbāna*’ is mind-made – that it is only a target symbolic of complete relinquishment. You may have heard a number of terms denoting *Nibbāna*: ‘*Sabbasaṅkhārasamatho Sabbupadhi paṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ*.’ ‘The stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, extinction.’ Any one of these terms is sufficient to denote that attainment.

Now ‘*Sabbasaṅkhārasamatho*’ means the stilling of all preparations. To think ‘I must somehow get this certificate of *Nibbāna* as a qualification to go to the Council’ is a *saṃkhāra* – a ‘preparation.’ The thought ‘I must go’ is also a preparation. So then preparations are not yet stilled. ‘*Sabbupadhi paṭinissaggo*’ (relinquishment of all assets) – the thought: ‘I must take this bundle of five aggregates and get it seated at the council’ shows that all assets are not relinquished as yet. Craving is also implicit in such a wish. *Nibbāna* implies a letting go of everything - an extinction. But the worldling grasps it as a term. That is why we say that the world is steeped in the delusion inherent in the linguistic medium.

The Buddha has already clearly pointed out to us this deluding trait in linguistic usage. But our commentators as well as many Buddhist sects have not fully understood his enlightened vision regarding language. Due to that lack of understanding, they incline to the same self-view. But here we highlighted the role of ‘attention’ (*manasikāra*). The object for the mind is ‘*dhamma*’ (the ‘thing’). In this context the mind-object is ‘*Nibbāna*’. What happens with the sudden realization that it is only a word? Mind-consciousness immediately goes down ‘object-less’. We have already said that consciousness by definition is a discrimination between two things. Now if the ‘mind-object’ is seen as something created by the mind itself (*manomaya*), how can one discriminate between two things? Simultaneous with the realization that what had so far appeared as the object of the mind is ‘mind-made’, there comes a moment of non-discrimination. Mind-consciousness ceases then and there.

Try to understand this deep point. Granted that consciousness is a discrimination between two things, the moment that the deer becomes conscious of water in a mirage, it thinks: ‘There is water over there and I am here’. That means there is a gap – an ‘in between the two.’ So now we come back to the same story of ‘two ends and the middle’. Where there are two ends there is a middle. The deer thinks: ‘Here I am and water is there. Once I pass through the intervening gap, I can reach that water’. That is the way the world thinks. The object is given precedence. It is projected when one thinks: ‘I am here and the object is there.’

However, the Buddha points out to us quite a different way of thinking - not the imagining or fancying a 'thing' as implied by '*maññanā*'. To hark back to the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, the worldling makes a 'thing' out of 'earth' (*paṭhavi*). Not only earth, water, fire and air but all the 24 concepts listed there under the heading '*Sabbadhamma mūlapariyāya*' (the basic mode of all things) are not to be taken as objects for '*maññanā*' - not even gods, beings, *Pajāpati* and *Brahmā*. The Buddha tamed even *Bhramā Baka* who boasted of his permanence.⁹ Simply because of their long life-span Brahmas entertained the conceit: 'We are eternal.' The ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriya went through the necessary discipline within a very short time. He was able to stop short at the 'seen' in the seen. But we do not stop there. Instead we make (for instance) a 'chair' out of the seen so that we can sit on it. Similarly, we do not stop short at the 'heard' but make a music out of it. That way we make a 'thing' out of our sensory experience. It is due to this conceiving of 'things' that we linger long in *Samsāra*. As soon as we imagine a 'thing', the ripples of impermanence take over. The inexorable consequence is the 'turning otherwise'. There lies the tragic end of this drama of existence.

The moment one makes a 'thing' for oneself, it starts becoming 'another thing'. As in our illustration of the love scene enacted by Narcissus, throughout *Samsāra* we have been grasping something or other with self-love at the last moment of our life. That is the reason for the perpetuation of mutual interdependence between name and form and consciousness inside a mother's womb. But then one can ask again: "If I cannot take delight in *Nibbāna*, what is the use of it?" It may even seem useless to attain *Nibbāna*. If it is not good to delight in *Nibbāna* after all the trouble we take to attain it, one can ask: "what is the purpose in attaining it?" A deity named Kakudha also had the same problem, according to a discourse in *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. When the Buddha was dwelling at the Deer Park in the *Añjana* forest, a deity named Kakudha approached him in the night and asked: "Recluse, do you rejoice?" The Buddha retorted: "On getting what, friend?" Then the deity asked: "If that is so, recluse, do you grieve?" "On losing what, friend?" asked the Buddha rhetorically. "Well, then, recluse, you neither rejoice nor grieve?" said the deity and the Buddha affirms it saying: "That is so friend". The deity was also curious to know whether the Buddha is dissatisfied with the monk's life as he is sitting all alone, now that he says that he neither delights nor grieves. The Buddha responds with an instructive verse:

*Aghajātassa ve nandi
nandi jātassa ve agham
anandī anigho bhikkhu
evam jānāhi mārīsa*¹⁰

Joy is for him who is stricken with grief
And grief is for him who becomes joyful
But as for a monk – friend know this as a fact
He is neither joyful nor does he grieve

What the Buddha means by this, is the bliss of equanimity free from joy and grief. In fact, as you know, *Nibbāna* is even called '*avedayita sukha*' - a bliss free from feeling since all three grades of feeling are in the highest sense reckoned as suffering.¹¹ Even from this brief

comment you may understand that *Nibbāna* is not something to be grasped. It is only a target to reach - not to be grasped. In one's striving for it, at last one reaches a stage which is something like a going 'topsy-turvy'. The ultimate realization is a sort of turning upside down. That is why even the non-returner (*anāgāmin*) is said to have attachment and delight in the Dhamma (*dhammarāga dhammanandi*) as a residual taint to be eliminated. It is true that he has '*Nibbāna*' uppermost in his mind. But there is a subtle attachment to it that prevents him from ending *Saṁsāric* suffering here and now, and gives him rebirth in the Pure abodes (*suddhāvāsa*) by that very attachment and delight ('*teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā ...*').¹²

That attachment and delight is the last thing to be given up since the Buddha has declared that this Dhamma is only for the purpose of crossing over and not for grasping ('*nittharanatthāya no gahaṇatthāya*')¹³ even like a raft. Similarly, the Buddha has preached that by those who fully understand, even good things (or mind-objects) have to be given up, what to say of bad things ('*Kullūpamaṁ vo bhikkhave dhammaṁ desitaṁ ājānantehi dhammāpi vo pahātabbā pāgeva adhammā*'). Now '*Nibbāna*' as a term is something pertaining to '*dhamma*'. Even that has to be given up at some juncture. The reason is that we use language only out of some practical necessity. It is not something to be 'grasped'. The moment we grasp it, we get into difficulties. This is the gist of what the Buddha has pointed out to us.

There is a certain depth in all what we tried to put across with the help of similes. There are some discourses which show that after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, Venerable Ānanda was highly esteemed by monks and nuns so much so that when they attained Arahanthood they went and informed it to him. There is a particular discourse which reveals this fact very clearly. Once Venerable Ānanda addressing the monks at *Ghositārāma* said that those monks and nuns who declare their attainments of Arahanthood in his presence, do so according to four normative factors.¹⁴ The path of practice they have followed comes under one or the other of the following four modes.

1. '*Samathapubbangamaṁ vipassanaṁ bhāveti.*'

Develops insight preceded by calm (or serenity) and as one goes on practicing insight meditation like this, the supra-mundane path arises and by following it one abandons fetters and latencies thereby attaining arahanthood.

2. '*Vipassanāpubbangamaṁ Samathaṁ bhāveti.*'

Develops calm preceded by insight. By this method too, a monk or nun can do away with the fetters and latencies and attain arahanthood.

3. '*Samathañca vipassanañca yuganandaṁ bhāveti.*'

Develops both calm and insight together like yoked bulls pulling together. By that method also one can accomplish the task.

4. The fourth method is very peculiar and its true significance is a problem to many scholars.

In this context, Venerable Ānanda brings up the case of a monk whose mind is in conflict due to restless thoughts ('... bhikkhuno dhammuddhacca viggahita mānaṁ hoti'). But then he says: "There comes a time when his mind becomes settled within - gets one pointed and

concentrated.” It is then that the supra-mundane path arises, which he successfully follows to attain arahanthood.

It is very likely that here Venerable Ānanda is speaking out of his own experience. He had hit upon a special method (by fluke!). The usual mode of practice is classified under three headings:

1. Developing insight preceded by calm.
2. Developing calm preceded by insight.
3. Developing both calm and insight together like yoked bulls pulling together.

The fourth method which has remained a problem, most probably exemplifies Venerable Ānanda’s own attainment. Because of his restless thoughts regarding the attainment as a qualification for attending the Council, he could not attain arahanthood. But there came a time when his mind got settled - at that posture-junction between sitting and lying down. This exceptional method he learnt by a happy accident, shows the depth of this Dhamma.

We are taking pains to explain all this because quite a lot of misconceptions and wrong views about *Nibbāna* are rampant in the world today due to a lack of understanding of the depth of this subject. In fact, I think the *Brahmins* of the Buddha’s time knew more about what the Buddha was speaking of than many Buddhist scholars today. Those *Brahmins* knew full well that the *Nibbāna* preached by the Buddha had nothing in it to bolster up the craving for existence - that it meant the cessation of existence. Only thing, they viewed it as tantamount to annihilation. That was their mistake. According to the Buddha there is no real self or soul to be annihilated. This is all what the Buddha proclaimed: “Formerly as now, I make known a suffering and its cessation (*“Pubbe cāhaṃ etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ.”*)”¹⁵

This much we pointed out. What remains to be abandoned last of all is the basic postulate of existence, namely that lingering notion - that conceit (I) Am. There is a significant discourse in the *Khandha Saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, which reveals the subtleness of the path from non-returnership to arahanthood. On a former occasion too we brought it up. It is the *Khemaka Sutta*¹⁶. It records a sequence of events as follows.

A group of Elder monks were dwelling at *Ghositārāma* in *Kosambi*. A monk named Khemaka who was sick, was dwelling at *Badarikārāma* in *Kosambi* itself. Those Elders asked a monk named Dāsaka to go and inquire about the health of that sick monk. When Dāsaka went and inquired, Venerable Khemaka told him that he is seriously ill and that pains are increasing. When Venerable Dāsaka brought that news, the Elder monks asked him to go there again and ask Venerable Khemaka whether he regards any of the five aggregates of grasping - form, feeling, perception, preparations and consciousness - as “This is mine, This am I and this is my self”. Venerable Dāsaka did as he was instructed and Venerable Khemaka answered: “Friend, in regard to these five aggregates of grasping I do not look upon any one of them as mine or myself, but I am not an influx free *arahant*. I have the notion ‘I am’ in regard to these five but I do not look upon any of them as “This am I”. When Venerable Dāsaka went and reported

Venerable Khemaka's explanation to the Elders, they were still puzzled and sent back Venerable Dāsaka to get further clarification. This time, on hearing Venerable Dāsaka's request for clarification Venerable Khemaka said: "Enough friend, Dāsaka, what is the use of running up and down, get me my walking stick. I will myself go and see those Elders." So he went with his walking stick to the Elders and explained: "What I said is true, I am not an *arahant*. But this is my position. I do not see any of the aggregates as mine. But I have a residual subtle conceit (I) am, a subtle desire as (I) am.

Then he gives a simile: "Just as, friends, there is smell in a blue or red or white lotus, whoever says that the smell comes from the petal or from the colour or from the filament, is he speaking rightly?"

"No friend"

"Then how can one explain it rightly?"

"One has to say that it is the smell of the flower. That is all one can say about it."

"Even so, friend, I do not see any of the aggregates as myself. However there is in me a subtle conceit as (I) am."

Though there is that conceit, he illustrates the subtleness of the five higher fetters of a monk who has cut off the five lower fetters by the above simile of the smell of the flower. Then he says as that monk who is a non-returner goes on attending to the rise and fall of the five aggregates, there comes a time when even that residual conceit gets worn out. Then he gives a simile for it. Someone has a dirty cloth. He gives it to the washerman to clean. They clean it with some soap-like substance and return it to the owner. Though the cloth is now clean, it has the odour of the substance used to clean it. The owner puts it away in his wardrobe for the time being. But after some time even that odour is gone. In the same way, by constant contemplation of the five aggregates with insight even that residual conceit is eradicated and one attains arahant hood. The extraordinary thing about this reasoned explanation by Venerable Khemaka is that on hearing it, all the sixty monks who listened to him became *arahants* and he himself attained arahant hood by intuiting into his own insightful explanation.

There is such a subtle aspect in this question of language in the context of *Nibbāna*. We do make use of the linguistic medium like that cleaning agent. We often use the couple of words relative and pragmatic to describe the Middle Path principle involved. In the Buddha's Middle Path, there is neither an absolute negation nor an absolute affirmation. Instead there is a systematic procedure of choosing and using with an awareness of relative validity. Sometimes the Buddha would sum up a discourse with this grand finale epitomizing the basic principle underlying his extraordinary middle path technique.

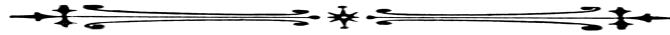
*"Iti kho bhikkhave dhammāva dhamme abhisandenti dhammāva dhamme paripūrenti apārā pāraṇ gamanāya."*¹⁷

Though we say: “I am going from this shore to the farther shore” in the end, there is no talk about an “I”. According to the Buddha, what we have in this dispensation is just this:

“Thus, O’ monks, mere phenomena flow into other phenomena, mere phenomena fulfil other phenomena for the purpose of passing from the not-beyond to the beyond.”

So we have now given you some deep points to ponder - all relevant to the Law of Dependent Arising. Just think about the depth of the constituents of name and form - what we told about ‘*manasikāra*’ or attention. It is a doing within the mind (*manasi-kāra*). What the Buddha has presented in the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* is a list of those ‘things’ pertaining to that attention. If you don’t adjust your viewpoint in accordance with Right View, you are setting off on a path not towards *Nibbāna* but opposite to it. Therefore I hope you all will make use of this sermon for adjusting your viewpoint. We shall be presenting more facts on Dependent Arising in this series from various sources. We happened to quote several times the dictum: “He who sees Dependent Arising sees the Dhamma.” You had better remember it and take heart to tread this path of Dhamma. To clarify these points for yourselves, you should constantly dwell on the impermanence of the five aggregates. As you go on doing it, you can proceed on the path of insight provided you have a clear understanding of name and form. Mere listening is not enough. You should apply these teachings to your own lives. The five aggregates are there with you. Not somewhere else. With radical attention you should always attend to your ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ seeing their rise and fall (*udayabbaya*) as keenly as possible. You should understand the aggregates for what they are. That is what is known as ‘knowledge of things as they are’ (*yatābhūtañāna*).

I hope you will find this sermon too helpful to your meditation. May you all be able to develop both calm and insight drawing inspiration from this sermon backed by the precepts observed and the meditation done today, and attain the goal of your endeavours in this very life. Whatever beings there are from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma world, may they rejoice in our sermon! May the merits acquired thereby conduce to the fulfilment of their higher aims!



1. Sn.147 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
2. S.IV 201 Yavakalāpī Sutta
3. Ud. 32 Lokavolokana Sutta
4. M.I. 1 Mūlapariyāya Sutta
5. M.A.I 38 (S.H.B)
6. M.A.I 35 (S.H.B)
7. Samantapāsādikā. 7 (S.H.B)
8. Dhṛ. V1/ 1,2. Yamaka Vagga
9. M.I 326 Brahmanimantanika S.
10. S.I 54 Kakudha Sutta
11. Sn.144 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
12. M.I 352 Atthakanāgara Sutta

13. M.I 135 Alagaddūpama Sutta
14. A.II 156
15. M.I 140 Alagaddūpama Sutta
16. S.III 126 Khemaka Sutta
17. A.V 3 Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta

Sermon No. 8

(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 190)

‘Namo tassa bhaḡavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa’

‘Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!’

*Rūpā saddā rasā gandhā
phassā dhammā ca kevalā
iṭṭhā kantā manāpā ca
yāvatatthīti vuccati*

*Sadevakassa lokassa
ete vo sukkhasammata
yattha cete nirujjhanti
taṃ tesāṃ dukkhasammataṃ*

*Sukhanti diṭṭhamariyehi
sakkāyassuparodhanaṃ
paccanīkamidaṃ hoti
sabbalokena passataṃ ¹*

-Dvayatānupassanā Sutta. Sn.

Forms, sounds, smells
Tastes, touches, ideas
All what they deem desirable
Charming pleasing things

Of which they claim ‘it is’
As far as their claim extends
The world with its gods is agreed
That these are pleasant things
And wherein they surcease
That’s unpleasant indeed say they

As bliss the Noble Ones have seen
The curb on self-hood bias
Behold in contrast is their vision
With that of the entire world.

Dear Listeners,

The objects of the six senses – the eye, the ear, the nose, the body and the mind – namely, forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and ideas, are regarded by the world with its gods as really existing and pleasant. But Noble Ones consider that place where these things that the world takes as real and pleasant cease itself, as pleasant. Today, we have taken up three verses expressing these two contradictory viewpoints. These three verses deal with the sixteenth contemplation of dualities found in the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. In two previous sermons we explained to you two contemplations of dualities in this *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta*. As in the other two, in this contemplation of dualities we are going to discuss today, the contrast between the worldling's point of view and the view point of the Noble Ones is explained. First of all, the Buddha declares this fact in prose as follows:

“Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as: ‘This is pleasant’ by the world with its gods, Maras and Brahmas, with its recluses and Brahmins, that, by the ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as: ‘That is unpleasant’. Then the opposite viewpoint is stated: “Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as unpleasant by the world with its gods, Maras and Brahmas, with its recluses and Brahmins, that, by the ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as: ‘That is pleasant’. Having presented these two modes of contemplation, the Buddha, as he did in the case of the other contemplations, declares that if any monk, rightly contemplating in this way, dwells diligently, ardent and zealous, one of two fruits may be expected by him: knowledge of arahanthood in this life itself or if there is any residual clinging, non-returnership. It is after this declaration that the same fact is presented in a set of verses out of which we have quoted the first three. First of all, let us try to understand the meaning of these three verses.

*Rūpā saddā rasā gandhā
phassā dhammā ca kevalā
iṭṭhā kantā manāpā ca
yāvatatthīti vuccati*

Forms, sounds, tastes, smells, touches and ideas that are considered desirable, charming and pleasant – whatever they speak of as existing,

*Sadevakassa lokassa
ete vo sukhasammatā*

The world with its gods has agreed to call them pleasant

*yattha cete nirujjhanti
taṃ tesaṃ dukkhasammataṃ*

And where ever these six objects cease, that, they are agreed to call unpleasant.

But then comes the statement:

*Sukhanti diṭṭhamariyehi
sakkāyassuparodhanam*

But it has been seen by the Noble Ones that the cutting off of the Five Aggregates of Grasping which is called 'Personality', is the bliss.

*paccanīkamidaṃ hoti
sabbalokena passatam*

But this vision of the Noble Ones is in contradistinction to that of the worldlings.

This is what is conveyed by these three verses. In fact the same idea is carried further in the four verses that follow. Those of you who have listened to our earlier sermons might remember that when we were introducing the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* for the first time, we said that this is a discourse which vibrates with a powerful fervour of the Dhamma. Rather than taking up the other verses one by one and paraphrasing them, I think it is better to give at least a foretaste of that Dhamma fervour through a set of English verses with which we summed up the content of those verses in one of our books: ²

Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, ideas,
All what they deem desirable charming pleasing things
Of which they claim: 'it is' - as far as their claim extends
The world with its gods is agreed that these are pleasant things
And wherein they surcease - that's unpleasant indeed, say they

As bliss the Noble Ones have seen the curb of selfhood bias
Behold in contrast is their vision - with that of the entire world
What others spoke of in terms of bliss - that as woe the saints declared
What others spoke of in terms of woe - that as bliss the saints have known
Behold a Norm so hard to grasp - baffled herein are ignorant ones

Murk it is to those enveloped, as darkness unto the undiscerning
But to the good wide ope' it is, as light is unto those discerning
So near and yet they know not - Fools! Unskilled in the Norm

By those who are given to lust for becoming
By those who are swept by the current of becoming
By those who have slipped into Māra's realm
Not easily comprehended is this Norm

Who else but the Noble Ones deserve
To waken fully unto that state
By knowing which, being influx-free

Tranquil *Nibbāna* they attain.

In an earlier sermon we dealt with the 15th contemplation of dualities. There too we came across two viewpoints which are diametrically opposed to each other. To refresh our memory let us cite it in brief:

“Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as: ‘This is true’ by the world with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas* with its recluses and *Brahmins*, that by the Ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as: ‘That is false’.

“Monks, whatever that has been pondered over as: ‘This is false’ by the world with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas* with its recluses and *Brahmins*, that by the Ariyans has been seen as it is with right wisdom as: ‘That is true’.

In the course of that sermon we pointed out that the worldlings take name and form which is a reflection on consciousness to be real and true but that the Ariyans point it out as unreal and false. You all know that what comes after name and form in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula is six sense-spheres. Now this sermon will deal with whatever that pertains to the six sense-spheres. Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and ideas pertain to the six sense-spheres. What is known as the six sense-spheres comprise eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind and their respective objects - forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and ideas. Worldlings regard them as pleasant and where they cease as unpleasant. But the Ariyans regard them as unpleasant and where they cease as pleasant. Where do these six sense-spheres cease? Is it in another world? They cease in *Nibbāna* which is regarded as the cessation of the six sense-spheres. *Nibbāna* is in fact defined as the realization of the cessation of the six sense-spheres.

So it is the very realization of the cessation of the six sense-spheres that is called *Nibbāna* and not something in another world. The state of that realization Ariyans regard as pleasant - as happiness. It is something that can be realized here in this world. Many present day scholars might have doubts about this. However much we write and preach on this there are many who cling to the ‘Simple Simon’ view of *Nibbāna* (*‘Siyadoris Nibbāna’* as we nick-named it). For them it is some non-descript state of existence after death. There is a very important discourse which can be cited in support of the fact that *Nibbāna* is none other than the cessation of the six sense-spheres. It is the *Kāmaguna Sutta* ³ in the *Samyutta Nikāya* found among the Connected Discourses on the six sense-spheres (*Salāyatana Samyutta*). That discourse includes among other things a riddle-like pronouncement by the Buddha which comes out as an abrupt exhortation. It runs as follows:

“*Tasmātiha bhikkhave se āyatane veditabbe yattha cakkhuñca nirujjhati rūpasaññā ca virajjati se āyatane veditabbe, yattha sotañca nirujjhati saddasaññā ca virajjati se āyatane veditabbe, yattha ghanañca nirujjhati gandhasaññā ca virajjati se āyatane veditabbe, yattha jivhā ca nirujjhati rasasaññā ca virajjati se āyatane veditabbe, yattha kāyo ca nirujjhati phoṭṭhabbasaññā ca virajjati se āyatane veditabbe, yattha mano ca nirujjhati dhammasaññā ca virajjati se āyatane veditabbe se āyatane veditabbe*”

‘Therefore, monks, that sphere should be known wherein the eye ceases and the perception of forms fades away; wherein the ear ceases and the perception of sounds fades away; wherein the nose ceases and the perception of smells fades away; wherein the tongue ceases and the perception of tastes fades away; wherein the body ceases and the perception of tangibles fades away; wherein the mind ceases and the perception of ideas fades away – that sphere should be known, that sphere should be known.’

You might be amazed to hear this exhortation. Here the Buddha is repeating a certain phrase over and over again. The phrase: ‘*se āyatane veditabbe*’ is equivalent to ‘*taṃ āyatanaṃ veditabbaṃ*’ (‘*se*’ – ‘*veditabba*’ - *Māgadhiṣṭhī*) which means: ‘that sphere should be known’. Strangely enough, the Buddha is emphatically asserting with the repetitive phrase ‘that sphere should be known, that sphere should be known.’ What sort of a ‘sphere’ is that? A sphere wherein eye ceases and the perception of forms fades away, that sphere should be known. Likewise ‘that sphere wherein the ear ceases and the perception of sounds fades away’. You can understand the rest in the same way – with regard to the nose, tongue, body and finally, mind. The last mentioned is the most intriguing. ‘That sphere should be known wherein mind ceases and the perception of ideas fades away – that sphere should be known, that sphere should be known’. But now comes a strange incident. After making this riddle-like exhortation the Buddha got up from his seat and retired to his dwelling. This is a clever ruse that the Buddha adopts to afford an opportunity to his pupils to get a training in exegesis.

Then the monks who listened to the sermon discussed among themselves: “Now the Fortunate One having made a concise utterance has got up from his seat and entered his dwelling without explaining its meaning in detail. Who will explain it for us in detail? Then it occurred to them: ‘this Venerable Ānanda has been praised by the Fortunate One so often and is highly esteemed by other monks. What if we approach him and ask him to explain this brief saying? So they went to him and requested him to do so. After some modest hesitation he agreed and gave the following commentary in just a few words:

“*Saḷāyatananirodhaṃ kho āvuso bhagavatā sandhāya bhāsitaṃ.*”

“Friends, it was uttered by the Fortunate One with reference to the cessation of the six sense spheres.”

In this context even the commentary grants that the cessation of the six sense spheres is *Nibbāna*.⁴ That was all what Venerable Ānanda said in assent to the request for a commentary. From this we can conclude that *Nibbāna* was called ‘*Saḷāyatana nirodha*’ (the cessation of six sense-spheres). The fact that the attainment of the six sense spheres has been emphatically asserted as a ‘sphere’ in this particular context is exceedingly important. This will serve as valid evidence in support of our interpretation of the following much vexed discourse on *Nibbāna*.

In the Udāna there are a number of discourses on *Nibbāna* out of which one in particular has puzzled our commentators as well as modern scholars. It runs as follows:

*“Atthi bhikkhave tadāyatanam yattha neva paṭhavī na āpo na tejo na vāyo na ākāśānañcāyatanam na viññānañcāyatanam na ākiñcaññāyatanam na nevasaññānāsaññāyatanam nāyaṃ loka na paraloka na ubho candimasuriyā. Tatra pāhaṃ bhikkhave neva āgatiṃ vadāmi na gatiṃ na cutiṃ na upapattiṃ appatiṭṭhaṃ appavattaṃ anārammaṇamevetarṃ. Esevanto dukkhassa.”*⁵

“There is, monks, that sphere wherein there is neither the sphere of infinity of space, nor that of infinity of consciousness, nor that of nothingness, nor that of neither – perception – nor – non-perception, wherein is neither this world, nor a world beyond, nor moon, nor sun. There, monks, I declare is no coming, no going, no stopping, no passing away and no arising. It is not established, it continues not, it has no object. This indeed is the end of suffering.”

Now this is that discourse. Let us try to understand it.

“Atthi bhikkhave tadāyatanam”, “There is monks that sphere.” It is just here that the scholars get stuck. They interpret this sphere as some kind of realm attainable after death. From the discourse we have already discussed, you must have understood that the cessation of the six sense spheres itself has been emphatically asserted by the Buddha as a ‘sphere’.

But let us delve deeper in to this discourse. After declaring that there is ‘that sphere’, the Buddha goes on to describe what sort of a sphere it is. “There is monks, that sphere wherein (*yattha*) there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air. That means the four primaries that are said to be there in a world are not to be found in this sphere. Also the immaterial states – namely, the sphere of infinity of space, the sphere of infinity of consciousness, the sphere of nothingness and the sphere of neither – perception – nor – non-perception are not there. This world and the other world too are negated. So too the sun and the moon. All this sounds very strange. That is why everybody is puzzled. Then there is also something deeper. The Buddha declared that there is no coming, no going, no stopping, no passing away and no arising in this particular sphere. Finally he makes known the nature of that sphere by three terms: not established (*appatiṭṭhaṃ*), not continuing (*appavattaṃ*), and objectless (*anārammaṇam*). He sums up by asserting that this itself is the end of suffering (*esevanto dukkhassa*).

For quite a long time, in fact for centuries scholars have been trying to interpret this passage. They have literally turned this passage inside out in search of a solution but in most instances their interpretation was in terms of a non-descript realm with no sun or moon. But we pointed out that if mind ceases in that sphere and perception of mind objects also cease how can sun and moon be there? Even this much, those scholars could not understand, since due to craving for existence the world tends to interpret *Nibbāna* as some sort of after death state. However from the foregoing it is clear enough that the cessation of the six sense spheres itself is *Nibbāna*. Be it noted that this is a sermon specifically dealing with *Nibbāna* (*Nibbānapaṭisaṃyutta*). The Buddha says conclusively that this itself is the end of suffering. It is in *Nibbāna* that suffering ends, certainly not in a non-descript realm. Whatever it is, this particular discourse is of cardinal importance. From here onwards we shall string up relevant

discourses from here and there like pearls in a necklace for you all to get a clearer understanding of this problem.

Let us now take up a discourse which also appears as a riddle. Once the Buddha addressing the monks said:

*“Nāhaṃ Bhikkhave gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñātayyaṃ daṭṭhayaṃ pattayyanti vadāmi. Na ca panāhaṃ appatvā lokassa antaṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ vadāmi.”*⁶

“Monks, I do not say that it is possible by travelling to know and see and reach the end of the world. Nor do I say that without reaching the end of the world there is an ending of suffering.”

Here again we have something of a riddle - a paradox. You all might think of the end of the world as some place one can reach by travelling. But the Buddha is telling us that by travelling one cannot reach the end of the world but on the other hand one cannot make an end of suffering without reaching the end of the world. After this declaration too the Buddha got up from his seat and entered his dwelling as before. Again the monks were puzzled and approached Venerable Ānanda to get an explanation. This time at their request he gave a fairly long commentary to the Buddha’s declaration. However it amounted to a redefinition of the term ‘world’ according to the Noble One’s Discipline (*ariyassa vinaye*).

“Yena kho āvuso lokasmiṃ lokasaññī hoti lokamāni ayaṃ vuccati ariyassa vinaye loko”

“Friends, that by which one has a perception of the world and a conceit of the world in regard to this world, that in the Noble One’s Discipline is called a ‘world’.”

The two words ‘*lokasaññī*’ and ‘*lokamāni*’ are noteworthy in this definition.

Then Venerable Ānanda himself raised the obvious question and offered the explanation:

“Kena cāvuso lokasmiṃ lokasaññī hoti lokamāni”

“By what, friends, does one have a perception of the world and a conceit of the world?”

“Cakkhunā kho āvuso lokasmiṃ lokasaññī hoti lokamāni”

“By the eye friends, one has a perception of the world and a conceit of the world.”

Likewise by the ear, by the nose, by the tongue, by the body and by the mind, one has a perception of the world and a conceit of the world. It is that perception and that conceit which in this Dhamma is called the world. From this it should be clear to you all that according to the Noble One’s discipline, the six sense spheres themselves are the world. Now from here onwards we shall draw your attention to another discourse which we had discussed earlier too but because of its relevance to this particular series on Dependent Arising, we shall bring up again. It is the *Rohitassa Sutta*⁷. This discourse is so important that it occurs in two discourse collections, namely *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and *Anguttara Nikāya*.

This is how the discourse begins. Once when the Buddha was staying at the *Jetavana* monastery at *Sāvatthi* a deity named Rohitassa visited him in the night and asked the following question:

“Where, Venerable Sir, one does not get born, nor grow old, nor die, nor pass away, nor get reborn, is one able by travelling to come to know that end of the world or to see it or to get there?”

The Buddha replies: “Where, friend, one does not get born, nor grow old, nor die, nor pass away, nor get reborn, that end of the world, I say, one is not able by travelling to come to know, to see or to reach.”

When the Buddha said this much the deity praised the Buddha with these words of approbation.

“It is wonderful Venerable Sir, It is marvellous Venerable Sir, how well said it is by the Fortunate One” and then went on to relate the whole story of his past life.”

“In times past, Venerable Sir, I was a seer, Rohitassa by name, son of Bhoja, gifted with such psychic power that I could fly through the air and so swift, Venerable Sir, was my speed that I could fly just as quickly as a master of archery, well trained, expert, proficient, a past master of his art, armed with a strong bow, could without difficulty send a light arrow far past the area coloured by a palm tree’s shadow; and so great was my stride that I could step from the eastern to the western ocean. In me Venerable Sir, arose such a wish as this: I will arrive at the end of the world by walking. And though such Venerable Sir, was my speed and such my stride and though with a life-span of a century, living for a hundred years, I walked continuously for hundred years, except for the times spent in eating, drinking, chewing or tasting or in answering calls of nature and the time I gave way to sleep or fatigue, yet I died on the way without reaching the end of the world. Wonderful is it, Venerable Sir, marvellous is it Venerable Sir, how well said it is by the Fortunate One.”

“Where, friend, one does not get born, nor grow old, nor die, nor pass away, nor get reborn, that end of the world, I say one is not able by travelling to come to know or to see or to arrive at.”

It is at this point that the Buddha comes out with a momentous declaration while granting Rohitassa’s approbation:

“Where, friend, one does not get born, nor grow old or die, nor pass away, nor get reborn, that end of the world, I say, one is not able by travelling to come to know or to see or to arrive at. But neither do I say, friend, that without having reached the end of the world there could be an ending of suffering. It is in this very fathom long physical frame with its perceptions and mind, that I declare, lies the world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world.”

Unfortunately, the commentator is silent on this momentous declaration. Even western scholars wonder why the commentator is silent about it. The only reason we can think of is the fact that by then the concept of *Nibbāna* as an after death state has already won acceptance in scholastic circles. They were not prepared to grant the possibility of *Nibbāna* as purely an experience here in this world. That is why in our writings we highlighted this deplorable situation by a trenchant translation of a few lines from the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* as an eye opener.

Nivutānaṃ tamo hoti - andhakāro apassataṃ
satañca vivaṭaṃ hoti – āloko passatāṃ iva
santike na vijānanti – magā dhammassakovidā

Murk it is to those enveloped
As darkness unto the undiscerning
But to the good wide ope' it is
As light is unto those discerning
So near, and yet they know not
Fools unskilled in the Norm.

'The light' is the light of wisdom. 'So near' means within this fathom long body with its perceptions and mind. Suffering and its cessation are to be found within this fathom long body. That itself is the world. The world and suffering are congruent. The world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world are all found here, according to the Buddha. Only the light of wisdom is lacking in the worldlings to see this. The world thinks that the objects of the six senses are the bliss or name and form is the bliss. But the Noble Ones are saying that where they cease is the bliss. To hark back to the topic of our *Nibbāna* sermons, which is also the meditation topic for Recollection of Peace (*upasamānussati*):

*"Etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṃkhārasamatho sabbupadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhaya virāgo nirodho Nibbānaṃ."*⁸

'This is peaceful, this is excellent, namely, the stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, extinction.'

It is that same peaceful, excellent state which the worldlings cannot even think of – the stilling of all preparations. All what pertains to the six sense-spheres are preparations. So here is the stilling of them all (*sabbasaṃkhārasamatho*). The five aggregates of grasping are the assets built up through the six sense spheres, and here is their relinquishment (*sabbupadhipaṭinissagga*). All the aforesaid objects of the senses are the involvements for craving and this is its destruction (*taṇhakkhaya*). That itself is detachment (*virāgo*) and cessation (*nirodho*). The cessation of the six sense-spheres (*saḷāyatana nirodha*) is also implicated. Whether you call it cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodho*), the cessation of the

world (*lokanirodho*), or the cessation of the six sense-spheres (*saḷāyatana nirodho*), it is the same. Finally comes that extinction or extinguishment of the conflagration. We are told that the worldlings are unable to understand this state. Though it is 'so near' they do not know it. Why is that? The reason is stated in the last two verses of this discourse:

*Bhavarāgaparetehi
bhavasotānusārihi
māradheyyānupannehi
nāyaṃ dhammo susambudho*

*Ko nu aññatramariyehi
padaṃ sambuddhumarahati
yaṃ padaṃ sammadaññāya
parinibbanti anāsavā*

-Dvayatānupassanā Sutta, VV 764-765 Sn.

By those who are given to lust for becoming
By those who are swept by the current of becoming
By those who have slipped in to Māra's realm
Not easily comprehended is this Norm

Who else but the Noble Ones deserve
To waken fully unto that state
By knowing which being influx-free
Tranquil *Nibbāna* they attain.

- M. M. P. 80

It is as if the Buddha is exclaiming with a tinge of compassionate fervour. This is the true state of affairs. This is the truth. However the world is not prepared to accept it. So at first sight there is such a wide gap, such a disparity. But what the Buddha is telling us is that if a monk rightly contemplating this disparity, dwells diligently and zealously devoted to the path of practice, he will either become an arahant or a non-returner. So this is not an idle declaration meant to arouse cheap curiosity among scholars and intellectuals. It is to explain to those monks who are training on this path of practice, what the truth is and what the un-truth is, what the bliss is and what suffering is, that the Buddha has revealed the wide gulf between the two viewpoints. Because we are all the time quoting from Pali Suttas you all might get tired of these sermons. So let us bring up same illustration as usual.

It is a sort of fable from village life which perhaps you already know and which you might recall as I go on relating. 'Gamarāla' (the legendary 'man-about-village') is going to hold a devil-dance at his house. As he is getting ready for it dark clouds gathered threatening a torrential downpour. So 'Gamarāla' and the troupe of devil-dancers entered a huge gourd-shell

and the devil dance started inside the thick shell of the gourd. Then it rained in torrents inundating the whole village. But blissfully unaware of it, the gourd-shell with its inmates got swept into the canal, and from the canal to the stream, and from the stream to the river and from the river to the sea. Once in the sea a shark swallowed it. Then the shark got caught in a net thrown by sea-going fisherfolk. A crowd from a wedding house going in search of fish bought the shark. They took it to the kitchen of the wedding house where they cut open the shark. And then – ‘believe-it-or-not’ – out stepped *Gamarāla* and the devil-dancers to the tune of the tom-tom: ‘*Denna-dena-deno*’! The dance was still going-on.

Now what is the moral behind this age-old legend? Neither *Gamarāla* nor his troupe of devil-dancers knew what was happening to the gourd-shell. Why did we bring up this legend? Just to show that all worldly philosophers and all modern-day scientists – these ‘Gamarālas’ and ‘devil-dancers’ - are holding their ‘devil-dance’ inside this gourd-shell of the six sense-spheres. In their ‘blissful-ignorance’ they are not even prepared to grant that there is something outside it. They could not reach even the outskirts of that gourd-shell with their space-craft. We haven’t heard yet that they at least reached the lowest heaven – ‘*Cātummahārājika*’.

So this is the situation in the world. But the Buddha has made known a supra-mundane state called the cessation of the six sense spheres. Why is it called ‘supra-mundane’? It means ‘gone beyond the world.’ If the world is the six sense-spheres, there must be a state that goes beyond the six sense-spheres and that is ‘*Nibbāna*’ – the experience of the cessation of the six sense-spheres. That itself is the end of suffering. Why is it that the worldlings cannot understand this much? It is because they are given to ‘lust for becoming’ and are swept by ‘the current of becoming’. They desire existence in the name of *Nibbāna*. For them *Nibbāna* is some sort of existence. As we sometimes sarcastically put it, it is that ‘*Siyadoris’ Nibbāna*’ or ‘Simple Simon *Nibbāna*’ which is eternally charming – some after death state that everyone likes to get. But that is certainly not the kind of *Nibbāna* the Buddha had made known to the world. In the discourse on the Noble Quest (*Ariyapariyesana Sutta* ⁹), it is said that the Buddha hesitated to preach the Dhamma because it is difficult for the world to understand it. If *Brahmā* Sahampati had not invited him to preach we would not have had the opportunity to hear it.

As we mentioned earlier too, when reflecting on the depth of this Dhamma, it occurred to the Buddha that there are two things which the worldlings delighting in and attached to existence find it difficult to understand. One is the Law of Dependent Arising or specific conditionality which we analyzed in various ways such as ‘This being – this arises.’ This is the middle way between and above the two extremes of absolute existence and absolute non-existence summed up in the couple of terms, ‘*samudayo samudayo* and *nirodho nirodho*’ ¹⁰ – (‘arising arising’ – ‘ceasing ceasing’). Even that much is difficult for the world to understand. The fact that there is an incessant arising and ceasing is the first thing that the world cannot easily understand. Then the second thing is as the Buddha puts it in the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*: ‘*sabbasaṃkhārasamatho sabbupadhipaṭṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho Nibbānaṃ*.’ – ‘The stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, extinction.’ This, too, is something the world cannot understand. In the

Law of Dependent Arising there are these two aspects, namely, arising (*'samudayo'*) and ceasing (*'nirodho'*). The world is always on the *'samudaya'* side. Worldlings keep jumping from 'arising' to 'arising' ignoring the 'ceasing'. In fact they are apprehensive of the ceasing aspect. They do not wish to see it. But it is in cessation that deliverance lies. The Buddha has stated this fact on many occasions.

*'Ye ca rūpūpagā sattā
ye ca arūpaṭṭhāyino
nirodhaṃ appajānantā
āgantāro punabbhavaṃ'*

'Those beings that go to realms of form
And those who are settled in formless realms
Not understanding the fact of cessation
Come back again and again to existence'

This is the situation in the world but then:

*'Ye ca rūpe pariññāya
arūpesu asaṇṭhitā
nirodhe ye vimuccanti
te janā maccuhāyino.'*¹¹

'Those who having comprehended realms of form
Do not settle in formless realms
Are released in the experience of cessation
It is they that are the dispellers of Death.'

However those who have comprehended form do not get settled even in the formless. Being released in the experience of cessation they dispel death. Now that we have brought up the folk tale of the devil-dance inside the gourd shell let us turn our attention to a simile that also has some connection with the fisherman's net. It is a simile made use of by the Buddha himself in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. That is a discourse which all Buddhist scholars are familiar with since it happens to be the very first discourse in the *Dīgha Nikāya*. As a matter of fact, it has been counted as the first discourse in this discourse collection because of its cardinal importance. As we had mentioned earlier too, whatever views that are in the world and whatever views that could arise in the world are caught in a supernet (*Brahmajāla*) thrown by the Buddha in this discourse. There are sixty two views enumerated there which comprehend all possible speculative views. The list of sixty two is all inclusive and nothing falls outside of it. There is an extremely important point which is often overlooked by the scholars. The Buddha rejects every one of those views with just three words of a deep significance which recur throughout this discourse. What are they:

..... *'tadapi phassa paccayā tadapi phassa paccayā tadapi phassa paccayā.'*

..... 'that too is due to contact . . . that too is due to contact . . . that too is due to contact.'

After citing a particular view the Buddha invalidates it with the phrase 'tadapi phassa paccayā' – 'that too is due to contact or dependent on contact'

How is it invalidated? Why is it regarded as the criterion?

The answer is to be found in the Buddha's conclusive statement in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. It is extremely important as it reveals the inherent flaw or fault in 'contact' (*phassa*).

" sabbe te chahi phassāyatanehi phussa phussa paṭisaṁvedenti. Tesāṁ vedanāpaccayā tanhā, tanhāpaccayā upādānaṁ, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti."

" They all experience by continually contacting through the six sense-spheres. And to them, dependent on feeling (there is) craving, dependent on craving, grasping, dependent on grasping, becoming, dependent on becoming, birth, and dependent on birth decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise."

In summing up, the Buddha bundles up all the views enumerated inclusive of those proclaimed by ascetics with higher knowledges (*abhiññā*) and psychic powers and refutes them with the above conclusive pronouncement. All those view holders derive their experiences on which they base their views by continually contacting through the six senses. By repeatedly contacting they are affected by feeling (*paṭisaṁvedenti*). Thereby they are caught up by the Law of Dependent Arising with the result they are subject to repeated birth and consequent *Saṁsāric* suffering.

What can one infer from this powerful declaration? The Buddha has gone beyond this state called 'contact' (*phassa*). If all the sixty two views are invalidated on the grounds that they are dependent on contact, the Buddha has transcended that stage. As a matter of fact, that is what the understanding of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* means. To understand *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is to be free from its snare.

Now this might appear as a riddle. It is due to the non-understanding of Dependent Arising that one is drawn into the vortex between consciousness and name and form. We have told you about Narcissus and about the dog on the plank across the stream. What Narcissus had done, we all have been doing throughout our *Saṁsāra* – that is to say trying to embrace our own shadow. What is the shadow? Name and form. It is due to contact that one gets involved in it. That is a deep point. But then, we have yet to mention that simile we alluded to. The Buddha sums up his sermon with the simile of a fisherman's net. It is a wonderful simile.

"Monks, just as a fisherman or a fisherman's apprentice were to go down into a small pool of water with a finely woven net. It would occur to him: "whatever sizeable creatures there are in this small pool, all of them are caught in this net. When they come up, they come

up attached to this net, they come up included in it, caught up well within the net, even so all those recluses and Brahmins who assert various views are caught in this super-net of 62 views.”

The simile is highly significant. When a finely woven net is thrown over a small pool, fishes when they try to escape it by coming up are caught in the meshes. What is the fine mesh that holds back all view holders in the Buddha’s super-net? The recurrent phrase: *‘tadapi phassa paccayā’* – ‘that too is dependent on contact.’

As we said earlier, all the 62 views are dependent on contact. Try to understand the depth of this simile given by the Buddha. Like that fisherman’s finely woven net, the Buddha’s net of 62 views is capable of netting in all the speculative views in the world. All those view holders whether they be the legendary *‘gamarālas’* and their devil-dancers or the modern scientists and philosophers, are well within this net. As the phrase *‘phussa phussa paṭisaṁvedenti’* implies, they all owe their experiences to ‘CONTACT’. When they can’t see with the naked eye, they make use of a microscope or a telescope. But isn’t it again resorting to contact? When they can’t understand at once with the mind, they resort to logic and reasoning. It is mind-contact all the same. However far they travel or speculate, they cannot reach the end of the world. They are still held well within the gourd shell. The very last sentence in that passage which repudiates the entire gamut of views, is the grand finale which solves the whole issue.

“yato kho bhikkhave bhikkhu channam phassāyatanānaṃ samudayañca atthagamañca assādañca ādīnavañca nissaraṇaṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ imehi sabbehi uttaritaraṃ pajānāti”

“In so far, monks, as a monk understands as they are, the arising, the going down, the satisfaction, the peril and the stepping out in regard to the six sense spheres, this monk has by far a higher understanding than all these (view-holders).”

One may take ‘monk’ mentioned above as denoting the arahant. This monk who understands as they are the arising, the going-down, the satisfaction, the peril and the stepping out (*samudaya, atthagama, assāda, ādīnava, nissaraṇa*) of the six spheres of sense contact has a knowledge far superior to that of all view-holders.

In referring to the Buddha’s deliverance too, the above five aspects are mentioned. One might think that the Buddha is always experiencing the Fruit of Arahant hood – No. He has attained that synoptic vision. He understands how the six spheres of sense contact arise and how they go down – as if seeing the sun-rise and sun-set. He understands the satisfaction characteristic of the six sense spheres as well as the perils inherent in them. When the Buddha is partaking of food his taste-buds are in working order – not that they are inactive. He sees beautiful forms with his eyes. Only that he is not attached to them. He is aware of the satisfying aspect as well as the perilous aspect. Last of all comes the stepping-out (*nissaraṇa*). This is what concerns us in particular here. That is to say – the attainment to the Fruit of Arahant hood, which is the proper range for the arahants.

The state of that attainment has been described in many places in the discourses. It is often worded in paradoxical terms. Therefore scholars are puzzled and instead of understanding it properly, speak of a *Nibbāna* that comes as an after-death state. Even the western scholars go astray in interpreting them. Just see what a delusion they are in. Right view is lacking in them. We have taken pains to clarify the correct position. As the Buddha has stated, the world is not prepared to accept the Law of Dependent Arising. They turn a blind eye to its most important aspect of cessation (*nirodha*). They keep on jumping from arising to arising ignoring the cessation aspect. That is why it is said that worldlings are always on the *samudaya* (arising) side. The Ariyans see the *nirodha*. For them it is the truth and the bliss.

Let me say something more about contact. Now it is a discourse of a different type. A Brahmin named *Uññābha*¹² once came to see the Buddha. The way he addressed the Buddha shows that he had no respect for the Buddha. He says: “Good Gotama, there are these five senses which have different ranges, different pastures and which do not partake of one another’s pasture of objects. What are they? The eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the body. Good Gotama, for these five senses which have their different ranges, different pastures, and which do not partake of the objects of one another’s pasture, what is the resort, who is it that partakes of, the objects of their different pastures?” What *Uññābha* means is that every sense faculty has its own particular range of objects. For instance, the eye can only see forms. It cannot hear sounds. The ear can hear but cannot see. They have their own pastures and cannot trespass on other’s pastures. *Uññābha* is curious to know the resort of all these five senses. He is asking whether there is someone who can partake of all objects received through the five senses. He must have been thinking of a soul (*ātman*) as the one who enjoys all those objects. But the Buddha says that the mind is the resort and that it is the mind which partakes of all those sense objects (‘. . . *mano paṭisaraṇaṃ mano ca nesaṃ gocaravisayaṃ paccañubhoti*’). Whatever objects that come through the five external senses are received by the mind. The mind partakes of them. Then the Brahmin asks: “What is the resort of the mind?” The Buddha replies that ‘Sati’ or mindfulness is the resort of the mind. *Uññābha*’s next question is: “What is the resort of mindfulness?” The Buddha says: “The resort of mindfulness is Deliverance.” Then the Brahmin asks: “What is the resort of Deliverance?” The Buddha’s answer is: “The resort of Deliverance is *Nibbāna*.” But the Brahmin has yet another question: “Good Gotama, what is the resort of *Nibbāna*?” Then the Buddha corrects him with these words: “Brahmin you have gone beyond the scope of the question. You were not able to grasp the limit of questioning. Brahmin, this Holy life is to be lived in a way that it gets merged in *Nibbāna*, that it has *Nibbāna* as the Goal and consummation.”

Then the Brahmin was pleased and rejoicing in the Buddha’s words worshipped him and left. But the discourse records something extraordinary. It is said that as soon as he left, the Buddha told the monks that the Brahmin attained the Fruits of the Path while listening to the exposition. There is something deep involved here. As far as we can guess it has something to do with the philosophy of the Brahmins. For them the five external senses are all powerful. Above them stands the mind and above mind there is intelligence. Above intelligence there is the soul¹³. This is the hierarchy in the Hindu tradition as recorded in the *Bhagavadgītā*. But according to the Buddha instead of a soul there is mindfulness (*sati*) as the resort of the mind.

Here is something highly significant. Why has the Buddha declared the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*) as the direct way (*ekāyano maggo*) leading to *Nibbāna*? The resort of the mind is mindfulness. We happened to mention on an earlier occasion that all things originate from attention (*manasikāra sambhavā sabbe dhammā*).¹⁴ The world thinks that the object of the mind is something far away. That is why we gave the simile of the cracking-of the-pot in our last sermon. When you come close to *Nibbāna* you have to give up even the concept of *Nibbāna*, just as one has to turn back when one finds oneself up against the wall. The final realization comes with the understanding that the ‘thing’ (i.e. the object of the mind or the ‘mind-object’) is produced by the mind itself. You may recall the occasion we gave you an exercise in folding your fingers so that you will have our definition of ‘*nāma*’ (name) at your fingertips. We had to do all that because some critics questioned our definition of ‘name’ in name-and-form. We got you to count on your fingers as an illustration of the five constituents of name – feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention. Attention is the ‘thumb’ and nearest to it is contact – the index finger. We have mentioned above that all the objects of the five senses flow in and accumulate in the mind and that the mind partakes of them. ‘Mind’ partakes of them only after converting them into ‘things’ (*dhammā*). Forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touches are all converted into ‘things’. What converts them into ‘things’ is attention (*‘manasikāra’* – lit. ‘doing-in the-mind’). That is why we brought up various similes to explain this deep point. To solve this difficult case of the magical illusion of consciousness – ‘this criminal case’ against *Māra* – the Buddha adopted a Middle Path tactic. He gave crown pardon to the alleged culprit No 1. ‘*manasikāra*’ (attention) who committed the crime with his gang – ‘*vedanā*’ (feeling), ‘*saññā*’ (perception), ‘*cetanā*’ (intention) and ‘*phassa*’ (contact). The ‘accused’ *manasikā* or attention had committed the crime in the guise of ‘*ayoniso-manasikāra*’ (i.e. as non-radical attention). The Buddha made him the crown-witness on condition that he gave evidence as ‘radical- attention’ (*yoniso manasikāra*).

Now as for radical attention, it has to play its role within mindfulness. That is why in the field of insight, radical attention is regarded as the seed of wisdom. What we have in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*) is the journey of radical attention with mindfulness as its companion. The course of the journey lies through the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Four Right Endeavours, the Four Bases for Success, the Five Faculties, The Five Powers, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment to culminate in the Noble Eightfold Path for attaining *Nibbāna*. That is why the Buddha said that mindfulness is the resort of the mind. So then, the resort of the mind is mindfulness. If that mindfulness as Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*) is properly directed, the crime perpetrated by this alleged culprit also becomes fully exposed. Finally, not only the other four culprits but the biggest culprit ‘*manasikāra*’ or attention is also found guilty. As we mentioned in an earlier sermon, it is as if a thief is caught ‘red-handed’. What is it that was stolen? The ‘THING’. The ‘thing’ or mind-objects which is ‘mind-made’ (*manomaya*) – a fake product of the mind. This is the clue to the entire Sāmsāric riddle. Worldlings think that ‘things’ exists in themselves. Now, we come back to the opening verse of the *Dhammapada*.

‘*Manopubbañgamā dhammā*
Manoseṭṭhā manomayā’

‘Mind is the forerunner of mind objects
Mind is their chief – they are mind-made’

If a worldling writes his ‘Dhammapada’ he would begin with the words:

‘*Dhammapubbañgamo mano*’
‘Mind has mind objects as forerunners’

That is why we asked that boy to go towards the wall so that he will have to turn back at the last step. When one turns back with radical attention one will realize that chasing the object of the mind is like running after a mirage, which is sense-perception itself. The Buddha, on the other hand, asks us to turn back with radical attention. That is why, as we pointed out in discourses like ‘*Mahāpadāna Sutta*’¹⁵ the *Bodhisatta* discovered the Law of Dependent Arising by reasoning from the very end, asking himself “what is the cause of decay and death?” In ‘*yonisomanasikāra*’ (attention by way of the source or matrix) one has to come back to the source from where one already is. What one discovers last of all is that the ‘witness’ himself is the biggest culprit! The crime he committed is the concoction of a ‘thing’. That is why in the end even the perception of mind objects fades away (*dharmasaññā ca virajjati*). You may recall now the statement: ‘*mano ca nirujjhati dharmasaññā ca virajjati*’ – ‘mind too ceases and the perception of mind-objects fades away.’ When a sense faculty ceases its object also has to cease. What was said in the verses forming the topic of this sermon is a description of the realization of *Nibbāna*. In other words, it is the realization of the cessation of existence (*bhavanirodha*). So then the cessation of existence is not something to be experienced in another realm. It is a realization here and now. That itself is the highest truth (*paramaṃ saccam*). That itself is the supreme bliss (*paramaṃ sukham*) - as it is said ‘*Nibbānam paramaṃ sukham*’ (*Nibbāna* is the supreme bliss).

Well, then you may understand that what we have said within this hour might require a long commentary. However you should try to grasp whatever you can. What we wish to point out is that this is not some intellectual stuff to satisfy the curiosity of philosophers or scientists. You should try to assimilate whatever is helpful for your practice. As the Buddha has said, whoever dwells diligently reflecting on the gap between the two contemplations ardent and zealous, overcoming defilements would pass from the mundane to the supramundane level. The mundane level if it has such vicissitudes is false. The truth is here in the supramundane. One has to understand that what the world takes as bliss is itself the truth of suffering, and that *Nibbāna* is the bliss supreme as is evident from that Recollection of Peace which formed the topic of our *Nibbāna* sermons:

“*Etam santaṃ etam paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṃkhārasamatho sabbupadhipaṭṭinissaggo taṇhakkhaya virāgo nirodho Nibbānam*”

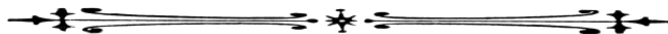
“This is peaceful, this is excellent, namely the stilling of all preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, extinction.”

The cessation of contact is also implicit in this. Even as depending on eye and forms eye consciousness arises, mind consciousness arises dependent on mind and mind-objects¹⁶. When mind consciousness arises due to mind and mind consciousness there is a discrimination between mind and mind-object. With that separation, proliferation (*papañca*) sets in. But if one sees consciousness as a dependently arisen phenomenon, as a fact of experience and not as a mere logical inference, there is no room for proliferation. What is the final conviction that comes when radical attention is razor-edge sharp? That the object of the mind is mind-made (*manomaya*). Along with that conviction, consciousness ceases because thereby it is made ineffective. It has nothing to do. Since consciousness is the very discrimination between the two, how can there be a discrimination when the true state of affairs is seen? As we pointed out in our ‘Magic of the Mind’, when the secrets of the magic show are exposed, the magic-show ends. That is why it was said:

“Murk it is to those enveloped -
as darkness unto the undiscerning
But to the good wide ope’ it is -
as light is unto those discerning”

You had better get the gist of what we have said so far. The most important thing is what we have highlighted in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. Worldly philosophers and scientists have formulated various views. All those are dependent on contact (*phassa paccayā*). But the Buddha proclaimed a supra-mundane experience which falls outside the gourd-shell of the six sense spheres. It is in this transcendental experience that birth, decay, death and the entire mass of suffering ends. That is why the Buddha summed up with the words: “*esevanto dukkhassa*”. This itself is the end of suffering.

Making use of the practical aspect of our sermon today and helped by the precepts you keep and the meditation you do, may you all be able to attain that deliverance from *Samāsāra* in this very life through the paths to Stream-winning, Once-returnership, Non-returnership and Arahantship. Whatever beings there be from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma world, wishing to rejoice in this sermon, may they all rejoice in our sermon! May the merits accrued thereby conduce to the fulfilment of their highest aim – the Deathless *Nibbāna*!



18. Sn.148 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta
19. The Magic of the Mind P.79f
20. S.IV 98 Kāmaguna Sutta
21. Sāratthappakāsinī. S.A.III 25 (S.H.B)
22. Ud. 80
23. S.IV 93 Lokakāmaguna Sutta I.
24. S.I 61 ; A.II 47
25. *Nibbāna* The Mind Stilled Vol.I.P2

26. M.I 167 Ariyapariyesana Sutta

27. S.II 10 Gotama Sutta

28. Itiv. 62

29. S.V 217 Uṇṇābha Sutta

30. Bhagavadgītā III 42

*‘Indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manah
manasas tu parā buddhīyo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ’*

‘Senses they say are great, but greater than the senses is mind. But greater than the mind is intelligence and that which is greater than intelligence is (that soul)’.

31. A.V 106f

32. D.II 31

33. M.I 111 Madhupiṇḍika Sutta.