

SUFFERING is a DREAM

(A Translation)



Upul Nishantha Gamage

See the craving in front of you
See that you are running after the desires.
Look at the running desires.
Meditate to awaken from the unawake sleep,
thereby to end the suffering.

- Upul Nishantha Gamage



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Light of Nilambe

Dhamma Dana

for our beloved mother and grandmother
Emilia Klein, Idstein/Ts, Germany

May she attain *Nibbana*

With love and gratitude

Julia C. Boettcher

Bremen

Germany

**SUFFERING
IS A
DREAM**

Talk given by our Teacher

Upul Nishantha Gamage

At Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

On January 08, 2012 (Full-moon Day)

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1. Changes beyond our desires

Dear Dhamma friends. Today is the first full-moon day of 2012 or the full-moon day of January, a month considered to be cold. Time is not that important, whether it is the first, the second or the last full-moon day of a year. The climatic condition, whether it is cold or warm, is not important either. These things just come and go. Even the year comes and goes. All the new things become old, coldness goes away and a full-moon day turns into a new-moon day. Though all these things change externally, the concept or the theory or the norms related to all these changes are within us. Whether we are aware or unaware of these concepts, they are in operation within us. Therefore, we too change and are being subjected to changes. We say at times with pride that I do not change or we do not change. At the same time, we try not to change and also try our best to keep things without any changes. Likewise, we request or plead for the others not to change. We also impose rules on the others asking them not to change. However, **everybody and everything change beyond all our rules, desires and expectations.** Actually there is nothing good or bad about these changes. We tend to like or dislike them based on the benefits

that these changes would bring about. For instance, if there are benefits, we tend to accept the changes as good and if there are no benefits, the changes are considered to be bad, whether it is the climatic condition or foods/beverages or the way someone behaves. So **it is our mind that looks for benefits and makes judgements on goodness or badness about any change.** One cannot say that January or December is good or the first, the mid or the last full-moon day of a year is good. There is nothing good or bad about any of these. However, we can make something good, which is different from analysing goodness or badness about something. In any case, as there are newcomers today to Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre for meditation, a request has been made to describe meditation in a simple manner. This description has always been simple as I do not know how to describe meditation profoundly.

2. Let's identify meditation in a simple way

–A journey with the physical body–

We have gained some experiences, understanding and realization about meditation and also about ourselves through our efforts in meditating for about 90 minutes. Awhile ago, we were not here. We may have come to the meditation hall at about 8.30 a.m. Some of you may have been in your meditation rooms or in the dining hall or at homes. Those who were home are here now. One has come a long way from home to this place, may be by walking or by one or many vehicles. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other way of coming to this place. Whatever the mode we had taken to reach this place, our journey was visible to the others. Not only today, we have been walking with our bodies in all our lives. When we were little, a mother or a father or an adult may have carried us on his/her shoulder, which was also visible to the others. There is no invisible journey of a body, though such journeys are depicted in myths and science fictions. However, to the best of our knowledge of science, bodily journeys are visible regardless of where we go. One can see us even if we walk in the dark. All of

us probably crawled when we were little. Afterwards, we have been using our feet to walk. In this manner, we may have walked on our feet and travelled by vehicles a lot. If we could calculate the total distance of travelling at least within a year, it would be a good mathematical exercise. In this journey, we may have travelled from village to village, home to home and back and forth between home and school, home and office or workplace, village and town and between countries. These travelling may have brought about some positive results. However, all of us get tired regardless of the mode and outcome of travelling. In the end, we are left with tiredness. As a result of travelling, we may get to see things that we have not seen before and/or encounter new experiences. Even if we are carried by someone on his/her shoulder, both parties get tired. All of us experience physical tiredness caused mainly by physical activities such as walking, travelling etc. There is no secret about physical travelling as it can be seen whether we disguise or travel in the dark or by a vehicle with tinted glasses. In the end, all of us experience tiredness regardless of the type of vehicle, whether it is a two-wheeler or a three-wheeler or a four-wheeler and the country of make, whether it is Indian or Japanese or German. We may feel comfortable in the beginning

of a journey. There is no vehicle in the world which makes you more and more comfortable as you travel. We experience some discomfort during travelling though we may or may not be conscious about it. Those who are conscious about discomfort or tiredness of travelling tend to limit their travelling. We need to use our wisdom to decide whether certain travelling we do is essential or not.

–The aging process–

There are some other types of physical travelling we experience either consciously or unconsciously. Aging is one such physical travelling, which does not use feet or someone's shoulder or a vehicle or earth or water or aerial routes. Any live body undergoes aging. Even if you do not engage in any other physical travelling or are rooted to one place, your body undergoes aging, which is true for all of us. Most of us are aware of this aging process both as a theory and as an experience. However, aging is not as visible as other types of physical travelling discussed earlier. Aging cannot be seen with the naked eye particularly within one or two hours or even within a couple of days. Unlike aging, walking or travelling by a

vehicle can be easily seen, even in second-wise. One has to wait for years to see the aging process with the naked eye. Even after waiting for years, aging cannot be seen as it is a very slow process. Our hair has its characteristic journey. Similarly, all parts of the body, starting from hair to nails, have their characteristic journeys. It may be possible to either expedite or slow down the aging process but can never be stopped. There is no medicine or charm or exercise capable of stopping this aging process. Aging is an invisible journey. The naked eye has never seen our own or somebody else's aging process. However, it can see that a person has become old practically having met after a long time. As we often do not like to say that someone has become old, we tend to say that he/she has changed, which does not mean that the person has become young. We can comment on changes related to aging only by making a comparison based on our memory between long time durations. In this comparison, one may refer to loss of hair, wrinkles, loss of teeth and/or a hunched back. Aging does not make you inspire or more alive but tired. So there are two journeys related to the body. The first one is a journey that carries the body, which is, most of the time, a result of our own will. The second one is a journey that the body makes in isolation of our own will, which is compulsory.

This journey precedes yearly, monthly, daily, minutely and from moment to moment. Tiredness of living is a result of this aging process. Weariness caused by discontent of the aging process may make one feels that he/she has lived enough. It does not take a long time for a person to feel this way. One does not have to live for 80 years to feel tired. Even a small child feels tiredness of physical journeys and aging, which are the only two journeys associated with the body. Though we think that both these journeys bring happiness, in real sense, we are left only with tiredness. We can journey through happiness before feeling tired. However, we cannot stop at happiness but travel through happiness. We are physically engaged in a journey that takes us through happiness towards tiredness. This is a simple matter experienced and known by all of us, for which one does not have to refer to a book.

–The journey of the mind–

There is another journey associated with the mind. Often we say that our minds wander, which is also a journey. All of us have had a good opportunity to experience the journey of the mind during the last 90-minute meditation session. We were

here physically and may have not even shaken our body. Even if we had changed posture, we got back to the same posture within a short while. However, though the body was restricted to an area of about one square feet, our mind may have wandered a long way breaking all these boundaries and fences. From the time of birth, the mind has been wandering all the time. In meditation, one can experience this wandering mind and how fast it wanders regardless of the beautiful expectations like one-pointedness, composure, absorption and *Jhana*. One can get to know that his/her mind wanders a long way without being affected by time as it is the body not the mind that is affected by time. How long does a person take to come here from home by foot or a trishaw or a car? As the time influences only the physical journey of the body and aging, the mind wanders endlessly. Where has the mind gone? Where cannot the mind go? Are all these journeys of the mind necessary? One can decide not to go on a physical journey, may be because there is no necessity. Even if you cannot stop yourself from going somewhere, another person can stop you simply by locking you in. A government, a police or a court can stop you from going somewhere. However, nobody can stop wandering of the mind. We cannot stop wandering of our own minds, whether we like it

or not. Often the mind wanders not only towards things and places that we like but also towards things and places that we dislike. If the mind wanders only towards things that we like and stays at the valley of happiness, we would not see anything wrong with having a wandering mind. The mind endlessly takes us to the unpleasant past no matter how much we try to forget. The mind wanders towards those we dislike and sorrowful incidents in the past. As we dislike unpleasant memories in the past, we try to stop the mind from wandering. However, our minds wander paying no attention to our wishes, dislikes and expectations. As a result, we feel sad. Whether we feel sad or not, the mind gets tired because of wandering. Anything that runs, whether it is the body or the mind, becomes tired as nobody can run either physically or mentally without getting tired. Therefore, thinking over and over makes you feel heavy, which is even reflected in the face. Sometimes, such a person may become more tiresome than a marathon runner. Those who feel tired tend to sigh, have wrinkles on their foreheads and are unable to attend to work due to lack of energy. The body can rest but not the mind. The mind will not stop thinking that it has run enough or out of breath and it is high time to take a rest. The mind itself cannot rest. The mind does not even know how to

rest. Therefore, we experience three types of tiredness, two of them are physical and one is mental. The intensity of mental tiredness is more than the other two. The naked eye cannot see the journey of the mind or the wandering mind. One can only know that the mind wanders. Therefore, nobody can see the wandering minds of the others, which is in a way good. Some possessing mental telepathy may be capable of reading the other's mind. According to books on these subjects, only those who have stopped wandering of their minds can see the wandering minds of the others. Moreover, only those who have reached a state of very strong composure or the 4th *Jhana* can practise and improve the higher knowledge, which is needed for reading the other's minds. Therefore, it is so difficult to read the minds of the others. A wandering mind cannot see another wandering mind. Therefore, the conclusions we make about the others are only assumptions, which can often be wrong.

3. Be standstill-The first meditation

Dear Dhamma friends. Meditation is connected with all three journeys discussed earlier. In meditation we try to be standstill for sometime either in sitting or standing postures, may be for 30, 45, 60 minutes etc. Being standstill is a nuisance. In a world, which has turned upside-down, running is considered a comfort and being standstill is considered a discomfort, though the opposite of this has to be true. It takes time to see and experience this truth. Until then, one may find it very difficult to sit standstill. One major reason for considering meditation as a tough task is the posture or difficulty in sitting standstill. Though running or riding is considered easy, it is not the real truth. We have not assessed the tiredness of physical travelling. Only a person who has stopped can assess, as if only the non-wandering mind can see the wandering mind. It is only a standstill body that can see the suffering, discomfort and restlessness of running or physical movements. This suffering will be there until you stop. Therefore, initially all of us experience a huge physical suffering, which is common for all. As such, there is nothing to worry about or get discouraged or think about not fulfilling the Buddhahood qualities, whether you

are a child or an adult. There is no relationship between fulfilling the Buddhahood qualities and physical discomforts such as aches and pains or numbness. The only problem is the lack of practice for being standstill. Therefore, one has to practise to experience the comfort of sitting standstill. However, practising anything takes time, whether writing with a pen or cutting with a knife or sweeping with a garden broom. Until practice, one may feel the heaviness of the pen, the knife or the broom. Moreover, one might cut oneself, scribble or make the place messy instead of clean. However, practicing makes such tasks easy. It is the same with sitting standstill, which becomes easy with practice. The difficulty one experiences in the beginning of meditation is due to the difficulty of being in a particular posture for sometime. It is not due to the difficulty of meditation. As such, one meaning of meditation is getting accustomed to or used to something. The more you use something, the more you get used to it. If you use a language more and more, it turns out to be as easy as your mother tongue. Even the mother tongue can be difficult if one does not use it. Therefore, according to Dhamma, **the first meditation is cultivating the body.**

Dhamma describes meditation in three steps. The first step is cultivating the body or getting accustomed to being in one posture. A posture is something that needs using. As we do not use a particular posture, it becomes a suffering or a discomfort. Therefore, we have to get accustomed to using a posture. Though it takes sometime for that, it is not a waste of time. One may think that he/she could not meditate as the posture had to be changed frequently; wiggling, folding and unfolding legs. That is not a waste of time. It is usual until one gets used to being in a particular posture. So the first meditation is cultivating the body. First try to be standstill for a minute, then for two minutes, then one can extend the time. Nothing is impossible if one practises. In this manner, we can stop one physical journey, whether we are sitting or standing, by cultivating the body as we do not physically go anywhere. Though we experience atypical aches and pains and numbness in the beginning, we can cross the short tunnel known as physical suffering. While we are crossing, we tend to think that 15 minutes is as long and infinity or at what time we will be asked to open the eyes or end meditation. The dark tunnel known as physical suffering is a very short one. Often we either stop inside the tunnel or just walk across few feet and come back. Even if the length of the tunnel is one yard,

it seems to be so long for a person who walks a foot or two feet and comes back to the initial position. Therefore, one cannot see the light beyond the tunnel. One has to make an effort to walk across the tunnel. If you walk across, as you cannot run in this journey, you can experience the physical lightness. This is the first happiness, first relish and first sweetness one can experience in meditation. The very first comfort in meditation is the physical comfort and lightness. The comfort experienced by the still body is known as settling down in Dhamma. This comfort is real, simple, can be experienced and is at hand. One does not need to fulfil the Buddhahood qualities to experience this. The Buddhahood qualities we have fulfilled are sufficient to experience this physical comfort or settled down body, which is at hand. What we need is patience. When we are mindful about the posture, we tend to be agreeable to or unite with all these aches and pains and numbness. These aches and pains may come and go and numbness may come, get intensified and disappear. Uniting with aches and pains is a very valuable and essential factor in meditation. One can only fight by disagreeing to aches and pains, which is not possible in meditation. **If one wants to meditate, he/she has to unite with or agreeable to aches and pains.** Unity or harmony is the common root of terms

such as settled down body, concentration, attentiveness, tranquility and absorption. It is the unity that makes these entire experiences blossom. Therefore, the root is the unity. It is the root known as unity that makes us experience blossoming known and concentration, absorption and composure. Therefore, unite with the body, aches and pains and numbness. The more you unite, the more you can experience lightness of the body. **Those who are unite live an easy life.** If you unite with dwellers in the house, you can experience an easy life. If you unite with those in the office, you feel easiness. If you unite when driving you feel easiness. If you disunite, regardless of or disagreeable to where you are, whether at home, in the office or on the road, you are stressful. So the reason behind stressfulness is not the house you live or place you work or the road you drive but the disunity. Therefore, unity makes you relaxed. If you like to relax, you need to unite. In meditation, you need to unite with the body, aches and pains, which shorten the journey. Disunity lengthens any journey. In this manner, it is important to practise cultivating the body without looking for super meditation objects. Body is a small object of meditation and one cannot explore deep meditational experiences if the meditation object known as the body is forgotten. It may be theoretically possible

but practically impossible. Therefore, the Lord Buddha emphasised on cultivating the body as the first meditation. If you do not do it properly or do not accomplish it, the other types of meditation won't be successful as cultivating the body is the basis or foundation of meditation. A house cannot be built without a foundation.

Dear Dhamma friends, age is immaterial for a person to meditate and even a small child can practise cultivating the body. One has to get used to sit quietly while being mindful about the posture. There are two important points here. ***The first is the quietness and the second is the attentiveness. Both are very much important for cultivating the body.*** To the best of your ability, you need to try to be in a particular posture quietly as long as possible. While being quite, it is important to be attentive about the posture. One may sit quietly while having a wandering mind and/or become restless while being in a particular posture. This is not meditation. One may change the posture without being restless. Changing the posture after meditating for the longest possible duration is different from becoming restless while being in a particular posture. Understand the difference between these two.

Dear Dhamma friends. You can practise cultivating the body in this manner, which is very simple. One does not have to know any particular language, either *Pali* or *Sanskrit* or any other text to practise cultivating the body. It is impossible to practise cultivating the body with all these knowledge. What really needs are the attentiveness and the ability to be quite and patient for sometime. This patience does not have to be like the determination made by the Bodhisattva at the Bodhi tree, which is “I will not stand up even if the skin, flesh, veins and blood dry up and only the skeleton is left”. One does not have to have such patience, though it looks possible. We have not experienced such a suffering. We say that meditation is difficult well before experiencing such a suffering. All of us experience a lot more suffering than this in our lives. Though we think that suffering experienced in meditation is so huge, all of us experience and may have to experience much more suffering than this in life. Comparatively, the suffering due to aches and pains caused by sitting during meditation is negligible, though we give it a high weight. Though meditation is difficult, if you do not meditate, life becomes even more difficult.

Now we can start this simple meditation. Anybody can start this at a time convenient to you. Just sit at a place and be attentive about the body. This is cultivating the body recommended in the Dhamma. In this meditation, you get the body to practise to be in a particular posture. In this practice, you may feel aches and pains which come and go and even aggravate. If the pain in a particular part of the body is more severe than in another part, then we tend to forget the latter. In this manner, one can be mindful about how aches and pains in the body change from one part to the other and disguise while being patient without upsetting the mind. When we stay like this, the meditator can cross the tunnel know as the physical pain. The meditator, who is the passenger walks across this tunnel called physical pain and comes out of it. After coming out of the tunnel, one can experience enormous comfort. Anybody can experience this comfort within a short time. If you practise to be in a particular posture for 15 minutes, you can experience utmost ease during that 15-minute period. This physical comfort experienced by a meditator is not comparable to any other type of physical comforts such as that felt by tongue when food is in the mouth or by eyes when looking at something beautiful or by the whole body. None of these is even nearly

comparable to the physical comfort experienced by a practitioner of meditation while being in a particular posture for even 10 minutes. This settled down body is really an intense comfort caused by not because of achieving something but because of practicing. At that moment, one can say that the body has come to a standstill. Now the body does not go anywhere. Till then, the body was restless because of the aches and pains even if it was possible for someone to be in a particular posture for sometime. Even if there are aches and pains, one may sit in one posture due to his/her intense willpower. However, all this restlessness disappears when one experiences physical comfort. As sitting itself is so joyful, there is no point in being restless, not just forever but during the period we have practised to be standstill. At any moment, when someone enters into this physical comfort, we can say that the body has come to a standstill. When this state is reached, the body does not move, even by a decimal, forward or backward or left or right. No need to move as nothing is there to look for. What was searched has been accomplished. This experience is described in Dhamma as settled down body or physical pleasure. **This experience is very simple. Anybody, regardless of the age, can experience this. Only requirement is patience and ability to be mindful while**

practising to be in a particular posture. Then one can experience the comfort of motionlessness. We often refer to such experiences as similar things are preached by monks or given in books. However, we cannot become witnesses until we achieve something. For the first time in life, you have become a witness to physical tranquility or physical pleasure with no doubt about these experiences. This experience is connected with the second physical journey, which is the process of aging. When one experiences physical tranquility or physical pleasure, both the physical body and the internal organs get to rest. As a result, aging slows down. One can experience reduction in tiredness. There are many other benefits of cultivating the body such as healthiness within some limits. Cultivating the body minimises ailments caused by tiredness, lifestyles, stress and impatience. As a result, we can experience the comfort of healthiness.

4. Cultivating the mind-The second meditation

The third journey is the wandering mind. The mind is faster than the body. As stated earlier, someone else can stop the body from moving either by holding or putting handcuffs, imposing laws or locking up. But the mind is above all these boundaries. Therefore, the mind does not obey any law, cannot be handcuffed or locked up. According to Dhamma, the mind needs to be put into practice, which is cultivating the mind. This is the second type of meditation, cultivating the body being the first. The mind has to be put into practice not to wander. Wandering is not a characteristic of the mind. Therefore, don't keep on chanting that wandering is a nature of the mind. We have practised the mind to wander. **The simile given for the mind in Dhamma is water. Water is tranquil by nature. The others do not allow water to be tranquil. Water falls from a mountain not because it is a need of water, but due to the gravitational force. Water evaporates from the sea to the sky not because it is a need of water, but due to the solar heat. If both the gravitational force and the solar heat do not influence, water is tranquil or does not move. That is why water is used as the simile for the mind in Dhamma. The**

mind is like water. It is restless because of external influences and habits. Therefore, nobody can brand that the mind was restless originally. If somebody brands, the mind can never be changed. We have to get used to meditating with the wandering mind. We can experience the non-wandering mind only if we mediate with the wandering mind. There is no other method or a secretive word or a charm or a way to bypass this. We have to face and accept the wandering mind. In this, we need to unite with the wandering mind too. Don't oppose the wandering mind thinking that we are here to meditate but the wandering mind does not let us do it. All these are oppositional attitudes. We cannot meditate with oppositional attitudes. We need to unite with the mind or with the wandering mind. If the mind wanders, just accept the wandering mind. However, there is a difference here. We know that the mind is wandering, not theoretically but through experience. At that moment we know that the mind wandered and also we know where the mind has gone. Has it gone to the past or to the future? Therefore, **meditation is not about wandering of the mind but knowing that the mind is wandering.** If the mind has wandered towards home, we know that it has wandered towards home; if the mind has wandered towards a friend we know that it has wandered

towards a friend; if the mind has wandered towards next week, we know that it has wandered towards future. Meditation is about knowing when the mind wanders. It is not important whether the mind is wandering or not. We can know when the mind wanders. We should not take the wandering mind as an excuse for our inability to meditate. We need to make the wandering mind a meditation object of cultivating the mind like we made the body a meditation object of cultivating the body. Simply know where the mind is wandering. When we know that the mind has wandered, wandering stops at that point. If not, the mind keeps on wandering from place to place without any itinerary. However, once we know where the mind has jumped into, it does not jump anymore. The mind stays for awhile at that point. If we again look away, the mind would again jump to another place. Then, look at the mind again. Therefore, meditation is looking back again and again. As we cannot continue to look in one angle, we have to look back again and again. If we can look straight, there is no point in looking back again and again. Because we look away, we have to look back again and again. When you look away, know that you have looked away. Unless you know what is happening, meditation is impossible. Just know that your attention has deflected. Once

you know that, you can look at the mind; What is happening in the mind? Where does it run? Where has it run?

Dear Dhamma friends. In this manner, we can get used to being attentive to the wandering mind. The goals such as attentiveness, concentration and tranquility are so beautiful. As such destinations are so wonderful and attractive, one may wish for such experiences. However, if someone wants to reach that state, one has to go across this tunnel known as the wandering mind. Nobody can reach the destination unless we walk across the labyrinth known as the wandering mind. Therefore, we need to practise cultivating the mind. Those who have practised cultivating the body find it easy to practise cultivating the mind as the problem related to the body has been solved or postponed for 15 or 30 minutes. Now the body is light, calm and comfortable. On that basis, one may find it easy to work with the mind. Otherwise, one has to solve two problems. On one hand, physical problems related to knee, back and/or shoulder. On the other hand, problems related to the mind. Trying to solve two problems simultaneously is difficult and probably even complicated. These lead to stress. If you meditate in this manner under stress, you become more and more excited. Therefore, one

problem needs to be solved first. The problem to be solved first is the physical problem. It is cultivating the body. One has to practise to settle down the body. Those who can settle down the body can stop the mind.

Dear Dhamma friends. In this way, it is possible and capable of meditating gradually and step by step. Without taking this route, one may say that he/she has meditated for a year or two or 10-15 years or many hours everyday. Meditation cannot be measured quantitatively, though there are many things in the world, which can be measured quantitatively. The progress of meditation cannot be measured quantitatively either. Therefore, we need to forget for how long we have been meditating and will meditate. Instead, we need to see what is happening at this moment. If we see the wandering mind, then get used to looking at the wandering mind. It is about not running with the mind. We have practised in this life or in *samsara* (circle of the life) to run with the wandering mind. We ran after the mind, wherever it directed us. We ran in our mind and also with the body to many places directed by the mind. If the mind asks us to walk to a particular place, we do so. It is the mind that goes to that place followed by the body. If the mind asks us to go by a vehicle, we

do so. We have been running with the mind throughout our lives. We do not send our body anywhere during meditation, regardless of what the mind says. If the mind says to go out for awhile or go to the kitchen for awhile, we go to such places in our minds. The body is not ready to go anywhere during that time, not because we have forcefully stopped the body, but because of the comforts experienced by the body. The body is calm. It has settled down. It experiences an enormous comfort. Once the body stops, the wandering mind can be seen clearly. **I restate that only those who have stopped can see the wandering mind. See the wandering mind again and again. The mind stops wandering right at the moment you see the wandering mind. Once we lose our contemplation, the mind wanders from there to another place. We need to contemplate again. Once we regain contemplation, the mind stops. In this manner, we did not impose rules on the mind, demanding it to stop wandering. We did not fight with the mind either. We went on a beautiful journey with the mind, without any rule or fight or punishment and asking the mind to stop wandering. This journey is called cultivating the mind.** When we meditate in this manner, all of us can experience moments at which the mind does not wander. It may

not be for hours. Do not measure meditation or its results using time. The moment we try to measure with time, we get excited and stressed out. One axis of the graph known as stress is time. No sooner we remove time, there is no stress. This is true for anything. We stress out during driving if we think of reaching a particular place within a certain time. It is the same with anything we do or even when we meditate. If you think of the next job to be done soon after meditation, then you stress out. Whenever you relate to time, you get excited and it would be such a nerve not to be excited. It is alright to relate to time at the start. Afterwards, just forget the time. Just because you are in a hurry, you cannot run. If you are in traffic congestion, you cannot go even if you are in a hurry. Similarly, all the thoughts are stuck inside this narrow mind. The more you rush, the more you get stuck. Therefore, we need to learn to stop.

Dear Dhamma friends, when you practise the mind meditation in this manner, even the mind stops for awhile, the rate of wandering subsides, the mind does not wander a long way, and the mind comes to the starting point again and again. This experience can be called composure to begin with. It is a particular state of composure. The mind reaches a particular

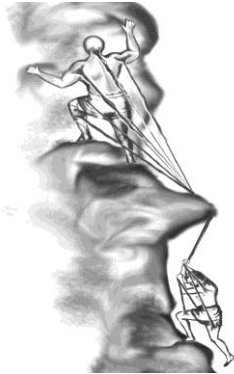
state of collectiveness. As we ran with a huge weight or a mountain of thoughts on our heads, and such heaviness is no longer there now, we feel such a comfort. According to Dhamma books, the comfort felt by the mind which has stopped or does not wander is beyond explanation. Now the body has stopped and reached a state known as settled down. The mind has stopped and reached a state of mental happiness. We experience the physical comfort on one hand and the mental happiness on the other hand. We use these in many ways. For instance, when we sit on a comfortable chair, we say that we feel comfortable. Meeting a person after a long time makes us happy. When someone experiences the physical comfort and the mental happiness through cultivating the body and the mind respectively, one may think that all these physical comforts and mental happiness experienced through non-meditational activities are only equivalent to the glow of a firefly. One may also think that the comfort brought about by meditation is the real comfort, though it is not the case. One may feel that way because there is no tiredness. The tiredness brought about as a result of running from one place to the other is no longer there. At that moment, the mind feels comfortable. Even if the mind wanders, it wanders a short distance. It just circles and comes to

the starting point. We do not have to bring the mind to the starting point as the mind itself comes back. Cultivating the mind brings about many benefits. These benefits are physical and mental health, improvement of memory, reduction of forgetfulness and ability to understand facts and figures well and to make right decisions. However, meditation does not end at this point. According to Dhamma, the suffering is not the physical tiredness or the mental tiredness. Therefore, results of the body and mind meditations do not end the suffering, as we did not make transaction with the suffering.

5. The insight meditation-The third meditation

–The fourth journey: the craving mind–

There is another journey that we take, in addition to the three journeys such as physical movements, physical aging and mind wandering. The fourth journey makes us suffer. We neither use the body nor the mind in this fourth journey. It is the craving that makes us go on that journey. We go on that journey because of craving.



Just clearly see the craving mind that arises before we do or say or buy something and go somewhere. Afterwards, we go behind that craving. We go after accomplishing, satisfying and fulfilling that craving or the desire. We go behind the desire or the desire goes in front of us. We may be going to get friendly or angry with somebody, buy something from a shop, sell something, look at something, and eat something or whatever. See clearly the presence of craving before all three actions in life; thinking, talking and bodily movement. The desire first goes to the supermarket followed by us. The desire goes a lot faster than us.

If the desire had not gone to the supermarket, we would not have gone there. The desire goes to the cinema hall before us. If the desire had not gone to the cinema hall, we would not have gone there. It is the same when you go to meet a person. When the desire goes to a particular place we are compelled to go. It is very difficult to resist doing something when the desire arises in the mind. If the desire has arisen to talk, it is difficult not to talk. If the desire has arisen not to talk, it is difficult to talk. As the desire is part of us and it has already left us, the remaining part is compelled to go behind it. Nobody can go in front of the desire. Nobody can say that he/she is in front of the desire. There are so many desires in front of us. After fulfilling a particular desire, we may say that no other desire is left. However, no sooner we go passing that bend, we get to see many more desires ahead. At every moment, all of us are miles behind the desire. As we do not like this distance, we keep running to get close to the desire. Once we meet that particular desire, other desires crop up ahead of us. It is like the race with snails. It is the same with trishaws. After overtaking one trishaw, we see many more of the same colour. There is no end to all these. We are always a long way behind a particular desire. The longer is the distance, the more is the suffering. Therefore,

according to Dhamma, the suffering is the distance between the desire and us. Aging or climbing up or down this hill or going to Kandy or wandering of the mind is not the real suffering. The real suffering or the problem is the distance or the gap between the craving and us. The walk behind the craving is the suffering. Our suffering is equal to the magnitude of craving. We cannot say that the world or life or home or job is a suffering. **The suffering always arises along with the desires. The suffering is a dream fulfilled by the desires. The suffering is not a truth. We cannot fight to win over the suffering. Dhamma describes the suffering as a mirage.** How do we win? Can we run in front of a mirage? Can we overtake a mirage by running at the full speed? Can we get rid of a mirage? All these are impossible. It is only a deception. It is only a dream. The desire gets us to dream about beautiful things or people or even meditation. Just see clearly. When we have the desires over a person or a thing or even meditation, we get very beautiful thoughts. So this desire shows us beautiful dreams and praises about these things. There is no other prudent advertiser like the desire. The desire can talk about the beauty of anything ugly. The desire can talk about the good odour of anything smelling. The desire can talk about the taste of anything tasteless. The

desire creates dreams. The desire creates a mirage. When you have a desire over something, it draws a magnificent drawing about that. Anything so ugly can be made to look so gorgeous in many angles by the desire. These dreams can also deceive a person. This is meant by the suffering in Dhamma. How does the desire be able to show us a dream and deceive? The desire might get you to dream about an ice-cream, a pizza, a book, a song, a dress, a person, a place, a village or a country. We are deceived by each dream. We run after dreams to make them come true. Whether these dreams come true or not, there is no end to these dreams. We are again behind another dream. Nobody can ever make all the dreams come true. Nobody has said that all the dreams were accomplished. No ending like blooming of mushrooms. We are in a deep sleep. As we are in a sleep, these desires are able to make us dream. Therefore, by being behind dreams, we suffer a lot within a sleep. In this unawake sleep, a dream shown by the craving is known as the suffering. There is nothing beyond this. There is no problem to solve by standing something on its head. It is a very simple matter. What is suffering? The suffering is the desire that cannot be fulfilled. There is a distance between the desire and us so we have to run. Having to run is the suffering. There is no other

suffering beyond that. I restate that the suffering is a dream shown by the craving when we are in the unawake sleep. If you realize this, we can live without being deceived by the dreams. Even if you realize it, the craving will show us dreams. However, at least we have realized that it is merely a dream. It is the craving that makes us think about things, which are not our requirements but desires. It is the craving that talks about beauty, praise, absolute necessities and uselessness of life without acquiring something. There are no more beautiful commercial advertisements anywhere than this, even on TV or in newspapers. These are the praises by the desires of our mind. Nobody tries to criticise when in a dream as everything is true when dreaming. There is nothing inside a dream but a state of childishness. Whenever the craving arises in us, we tend to become childish. Therefore, we need to develop insight, which is the only solution. Therefore, without going after the desires in ignorance, see the desires through realization. Until we stop going after the desire, there won't be an end to the suffering. In meditation, we can stay for about an hour enjoying the physical comfort and the non-wandering mind. However, the suffering of *samsara* (circle of the life) is still here as we are behind the desire. Therefore, **see the desire in front of you. Instead of**

running after the desire, just see it. Unless you stop, you cannot see the desire. Therefore, instead of chasing after each and every desire, stop for awhile and look at the running desires. Realize these praises and stories about the desires. All these are dreams. How many dreams have come true? What is left? I am again behind a dream. It is the same desire which says that everything would be alright once a particular dream comes true. It is the same desire that makes another dream. The same song is replayed. We were deceived endless times by the same song. We were deceived by the same slogan. The same slogan appears again. Therefore, we need to stop. If we stop, there is no distance. Those who are running keep a distance. When you stop, the desires can be seen. At least stop for awhile and look at the running desires. **This is called the insight meditation.** One needs to practise realization. Practising to see with realization is the insight meditation. If you awaken with insight, you would not have dreams. Nobody can show any dream to a person who has awakened. Those in half asleep or a deep sleep can be shown dreams. After awakening, the dream known as the suffering can no longer be seen. Even if an awaken person is aging or walking or riding, that person has stopped. There is no problem if the mind wanders to the past or

future. There is no problem if bodily movements are there or the mind wanders because there is no running after the craving. Once you awaken from the unawake sleep, the craving cannot create dreams anymore.

I restate that the suffering is a dream dreamt by a person who is having a sleep known as confusion. If you awaken from that sleep there is no suffering. The insight meditation is for awakening from that sleep.

Dear Dhamma friends. Meditation was described in three parts. All three parts are so simple. Therefore, one can start and practise meditation in a simple manner, while experiencing its comforts to some extent.

May the Tripe Gem Bless You!!!

February 2012



What is Human Life?

(A Translation)



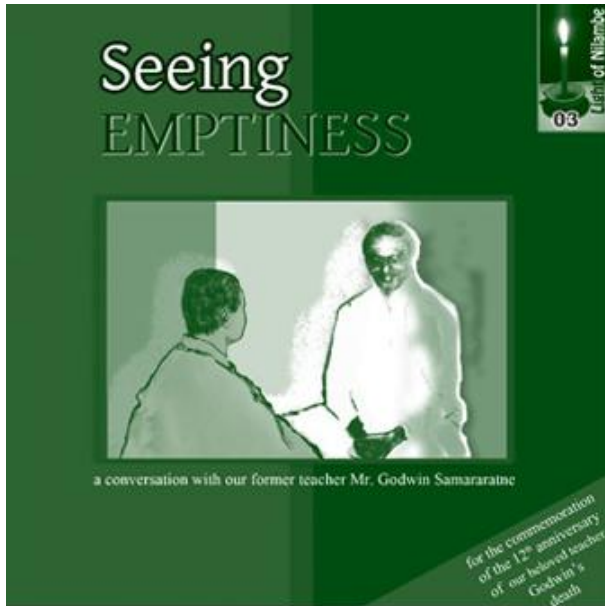
Be An Outsider



if
you
want
to
change
the
inside



Upul Nishantha Gamage



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