

**Dhamma talk (Poya) delivered by Kalyanamithra
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Venue: Meditation Center at Nilambe
Date and Time: February 07 (Tuesday), 2012 at 10 a.m.**

Dear Dhamma friends. By visiting a meditation centre and being meditators, we look for peacefulness, freedom, happiness, contentment and liberation as a solution for this unending suffering. So many results and experiences can be gained by visiting a meditation center and practicing meditation. There is nothing that can produce results like practicing meditation. Therefore, the Lord Buddha immensely valued meditation as something that can produce unlimited results that are very much fruitful. Many things have no real value or meaning, like seeds with no ability to germinate or with no viability. Such seeds, though look like seeds on the exterior, possess only husks so cannot germinate or bring any fruitful result. Some viable seeds are capable of producing crops only once, while some other seeds are capable of producing crops that can bear fruits for so long, probably for longer than the life span of a human being. Some trees can produce fruits only once or twice while some other trees can produce fruits endlessly. Meditation is the only activity that can produce limitless results upon cultivation. Therefore, meditation is considered a spiritual cultivation capable of producing limitless fruitful results. Another reason for getting unlimited harvest in agriculture is the ability of not just one branch but all the branches of a tree to bear fruits making a tree full of fruits and thereby making the whole area of cultivation to be fruitful. Similarly, meditation can make one's life overflow with freedom, peacefulness, liberation and happiness. One can experience such a life through meditation, not only today but tomorrow also, not only this year but next year also, not only in this life but next lives also. If you rank all the activities that can make your life fruitful, meditation falls on the top of the list. It is not only meditation, but other activities also that can make your life fruitful. However, we are aware that it is the meditation, among all those activities, that can make our lives most fruitful. So meditation is worthy of praise and value. As we praise meditation from the bottom of our heart, we come for meditation, practice meditation and spend time on meditation.

Dear Dhamma friends, we sacrifice our lives for many things. Just think how many things we have sacrificed our lives for and keep on sacrificing our lives for. We all got a life at birth. No sooner we were born in this world, we were offered with human lives free of charge, for which we may have probably paid earlier. Human life is not merely something having length and width. Nobody can measure the length and width of human life, though it is possible with non-human life. We know what the animals are capable or incapable of doing or learning. All what the animals can learn/do have limits. With some difficulty, an animal can be taught Sinhala, probably can be trained to understand and respond when communicated in Sinhala. But the same animal cannot be taught Tamil or English. This shows that animals can be taught or trained to a limited extent with limits within languages and also concepts. An animal can never be taught that this month is February and today is Tuesday; such concepts cannot be taught. Human beings do not have limits to what they can learn. They can learn many languages, many words in a language. Length, width and depth of humanity have no limits. If at all there is anything without limits that is human life. Even lives of Gods and Brahmas have limits. This means that they can only do what they intended of being in

such places, nothing else. We do not really know the purpose of our being in this world as there are no such limits. As we are not aware of the real purpose of our being in this world as human beings, we just tend to use the human life arbitrarily. We sacrifice our lives for different things that we think of some use depending on the occasion and time. We sacrifice the unlimited human life for trivial things. We tend to pay attention to superficial things, as if one licks an ice-cream to enjoy the taste of it. Similarly most people do not think deeply but restrict their lives to superficial activities. Such people do not know the depth of life or real meaning of life. Not many experience the essence of life. Therefore, this valuable human life is sacrificed for superficial things and also for limited things. For instance, money is limited, whether it is hundred or thousand or hundred thousand or one million rupees. Therefore, money is a limited thing. We exchange an unlimited human life for a limited economy. These transactions are economically profitable but spiritually unprofitable. If one sacrifices his/her life for the sake of economy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 4 weeks a month and 12 months a year, there may be economical profits but no spiritual gains. Sacrificing such a valuable life completely over not so valuable things is a crime. In this manner, it is so unfortunate and worthless if somebody surrenders his/her life over superficial things with limited profits.

Life and time cannot be separated as life and life span are the same. For what purpose do we sacrifice our life span? We have lot of problems regarding time. These problems exist only in the human world. Just look at the animal world. Time is not a problem for animals, whether it is too much or too little. Often one may suffer because he/she would not know anything meaningful to do when there is plenty of time. In the end, the person tends to get depressed. For such people time is such a grief. They feel that even one second is like eternity. We all experience this in varying capacities, feeling loneliness, aloneness, monotony. One may also suffer because he/she cannot attend to all the work within the limited time. In the end, the person tends to get stressed out. See the way we suffer due to both these conditions related to time. Such conditions are called mental illnesses, which require medical attention. However, a person with some sense can realize that the time or life time or value of life cannot solve both the problems; nothing to do when there is plenty of time and inability to attend to all the work within a limited time. One can give up on the struggle to accomplish many things on a long list filled with things that are not very important or struggling to accomplish many things within seconds as if we created all these things.

Physical illnesses are caused mainly by germs. Regardless of the country, people are under pressure as they wonder about what to do, how to spend the day, how to spend the night, how to spend the time after retirement, how to spend the holidays. In the end, one may get depressed. Our heads are filled with goals, expectations, targets and aspirations. Therefore, it is difficult to prioritise what to do first, second or what to do today, what not to do today or what to do this month, this year or what to do when young, as a youth, as an adult, in old age, and this life. As there is no clear memory, we think everything has to be done at once. In the end we get stressed out or develop anxiety. The reason behind all these problems is due to one's inability to understand life. Because of that, we welcome depressions that are non-exiting and also endless illnesses. Meditation makes you understand life, which is to understand the present moment. Life is not 2011 or 2013 but 2012. Life is not January or

March but February. Life is not 6th or 8th but 7th. Life is not dawn or dusk but morning. Life is not 9 am or 11 am but 10 am. There is nothing difficult to understand. No need to get entangled, which leads to experience complexity and complication. With practice of meditation, complexity disappears or evaporates leaving behind simplicity. You become simple, world becomes simple, illnesses become simple. When an illness is complex, it is difficult to find its cause, its origin, and the kind of medicine to be given for a particular illness. There can be illnesses but simple. Similarly, expectations and goals are there but simple. For experiencing simplicity, we need to learn living in the present moment. Present moment and life are one beautiful entity. These two cannot be separated. Life time is not just 100 or 120 years but the present moment. If you think of life as 50, 60 and 80 years, even the thought makes us suffer a lot as we do not know what to do during that time. Time has nothing to do with nationality or ethnicity. Therefore, life time cannot be measured in years or decades. If you do so, you tend to experience loneliness, aloneness, monotony, etc. These experiences are sorrowful and bitter. On the other hand, one may feel that life is very short; not yet got a house built, not yet got a two-storied house built, not yet got houses built for children, not yet visited that place or this place-no end to all these complaints. How am I going to attend to all these? What have I done all these time? Have I just wasted life? All these thoughts make us stressful and sorrowful. Therefore, Buddhism refers to sorrow. Life does not have joy or sorrow. It is our responsibility to make our lives joyful because our lives were not given by our parents but we acquired it. Therefore, parents are not responsible for our lives and we cannot blame them. There is none in the universe who keeps on giving lives. Therefore, Buddhism says that there is no creator. It is just a myth. As such, there is no point in praying or no meaning of praying, blaming, cursing another for your sorrow. There is no receiver of the complaints though you make complaints. Even though we keep on complaining, the sender gets back all the blames and cursing, as there is no receiver. Because of this ignorance, the human society has become a joke. Those who have realized the real truth in life may see that all these things are mere jokes. Meditation makes you look at yourself, make you realise that you are not created by anybody. It is only causes/concepts and results/effects. The whole universe is about concepts and acting accordingly. There are concepts related to physics, biology, geography, economics etc. There is nothing else but actions/effects and concepts/causes. Take a simple example. We fall on to the ground. Tiles, fruits fall and keep on falling. At anytime whatever above the ground may have fallen and may fall one day. According to physics these things fall due to the gravitational force, a concept not invented by Sir Isaac Newton. He just discovered it. One can only make a discovery about the universe, about the nature and cannot impose rules on the nature. Nature is a book of unlimited concepts. We can compile these concepts and make booklets, such as physics, chemistry, sociology, psychology comprising different concepts. Understanding very few concepts can make a new science. Therefore, new sciences emerge. But these sciences such as psychology and anthropology may last only for a short while compared to other sciences.

The cause of action of falling is the gravitational force. In this manner, wherever we look at, whether there is a tree or a star or sand or a body or its interior, we see only an action, nothing else. We experience an action. We see something. It is an action not a thing. Likewise, hearing, pain, tasting, smelling, thinking, happiness; all are actions, not things. Everything we experience as life or world is an action or an effect. Nobody can experience

anything that is not an action. As our sensations are not sensitive enough to experience anything other than actions, we experience only actions. There are only six actions to experience; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling and thinking. Universe or life or world is a compilation of these 6 actions with regard to human beings possessing 6 healthy senses. For a blind person, life is a compilation of 5 actions. It is impossible to comment on a life of an animal though we try. Anything that is not an action does not become an experience. One may love you, hate you and scare you. You may feel cold, healthy. All these are actions. All what we experience as life are actions. However, we do not experience the causes but the actions because we do not see the causes. Often we do not even see the actions if we are in dreams and hypnosis, ignorant, deceit. No idea about what is happening. It is so sad that many lives pass days, months and years without knowing about what is happening. There is no difference between this building and such a life because the building does not possess sensitivity to know what it happening. Human life possesses such sensitivity and ability. However, if such ability is not used by human beings, there is no different between them and this lifeless building or a rock or a stone. We eat but often we are not aware of the taste. Therefore, the worst unskill is the ignorance, not the unawareness of the month, year, day etc. Ignorance is the unawareness of what is happening and what I am doing at this moment. This is very simple. No need to know any particular language, grammar, mathematics, psychology etc. Simply know what is happening in you and what you are doing in this very moment. Though it is very simple, this ignorance is the worst unskill one commits. As ignorance is not a sin but an unskill, it does not make you go to hell but travel in this unending samsara (circle of the life). It is not important whether we are on the ground floor, first floor, second floor, third floor or the top most floor of the samsara (circle of the life). All these floors are in the same building complex known as samsara (circle of the life). Those who are in samsara (circle of the life) suffer either because they cannot do what they want in life or they have nothing much to do in life. All our suffering can be centered on these two situations; suffering as there is nothing to do in life or suffering as there is no opportunity or time to do what we want to do in life. All those who are in samsara (circle of the life) undergo these two types of suffering. It is not the fault of samsara (circle of the life) or the building but the ignorance. As I stated earlier, ignorance is not a sin but an unskill.

Do we know what is happening? We see, but do we know that we are seeing. We hear, but do we know that we are hearing? We smell, but do we know that we are sensing smell? We taste, but do we know we are sensing taste? We are in pain, but do we know that we are experiencing pain? We think, but do we know that we are thinking? Do we know or not? What should we know? We should know what is happening in this very moment. That is all. It is very simple so it is possible. Every human being has the ability to be aware of what is happening. Animals do not have that ability. That is the real meaning of the word "human" (Buddhist term is Manussa for Human. It means who can develop their mind), referring to a higher state of mind. When we are born as human beings we acquire this higher state of mind, which makes it possible to know what is happening. However, we do not make use of that ability but use only the life. We do not observe the life but use it as if we use a vehicle without checking the levels of water, oil etc. Where we should or should not go in the vehicle? If we continue to live like this, what can happen to the life? So life shatters, becomes inactive, not because of age. It is only the physical body that becomes inactive due

to age. Life is not the physical body. Explaining the concept of cause and effect focussing on human body can be very complicated. Birth, sickness, aging, death are not only happening to physical body but also to life. According to Buddhism, one may live 100 years without any physical illness or without taking any medicine though it is very rare. It is extremely impossible for living without the life being afflicted even for a second. Buddhism points out that life often gets sick, feeble and weak, if it is used without any monitoring, observing or scrutinizing as if a vehicle is driven without paying any attention to the information displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle like without checking the levels of petrol, engine oil, air pressure of tires etc. Having led a life, which is feeble and sick, one may get to know about the benefits of life after reading a book or listening to a Dhamma talk. However, it may be too late now to experience the benefits of life as the life is so feeble and sick though there is no problem about the physical body or age. Birth, sickness, aging and death are not related to one's age. A child, a youth or an adult may experience these events. Life cannot be measured with years. It is only the body that can be measured with years. We make a living without looking at life. We make a living without seeing life. It is alright for an animal to live that manner as an animal suffers a lot physically. Both animals and humans suffer. But animals experience physical suffering more than mental; may be about food, coldness and warmness of the environment, getting killed by somebody. In addition to all these physical suffering we are loaded with mental sufferings. Humans suffered the most, not animals or ants, in way of mental suffering. Apparently we use the higher state of mind for suffering, particularly for mental suffering. When you think about it, it looks very hilarious. There is no better joke than this. One does not have to look for any other way of entertainment. We must not laugh but see the senselessness of this. Human life is the most wonderful creation of the universe. There is nothing better than human life. We may come across great inventions but nothing superior to human life can be found in the three worlds. As we are not aware of the value of human life we use this supreme creation to invent suffering, sadness, loneliness, monotony, restlessness and stress. Animals have problems that they inherited at birth such as hunger, thirst, safety for which they keep on looking for solutions. They do not invent problems. Dhamma says that human beings have only four needs, which are physical needs such as foods, shelter, cloths and medicine. Hunger and foods are not mental but physical things. There is no suffering in hunger as the solution is simply feeding with rice, bread etc. Most people suffer not because of hunger but because of the involvement of the mind, which projects questions/thoughts such as; What is to be eaten? What is to be eaten to suit the social status, profession, economic status? What is eaten by those around me? What is going to be bought by the others from this shop? All these are mental complications. Even at the time of cooking, similar thinking; How to cook? What to be cooked? Look for variety in each meal etc. All these make cooking a complex process. If the mind is complex, all the thoughts are complex. Even though there are only four basic needs, human beings suffer a lot unlike animals because of the involvement of the craving mind that cannot be satisfied easily. Let's use this supreme creation of the universe to end this suffering, to live a simple and ordinary life. We can meditate and look at ourselves to become ordinary persons. Only human beings can become ordinary. We experience unusual suffering as we have not used the ability of becoming ordinary persons. If you become a special person you have to experience a special suffering. Attempting to overcome suffering makes experiences more and more special. There is no end to it. Be simple as there is nothing so beautiful, delicious and deep

or meaningful like simplicity. Those leading meaningful lives are simple. Those having meaningless lifestyles tend to become complex as a cover up. In the simplest language, there is no real problem here. We look for solutions when there is no problem as if we look for medicine for a non-existing illness. As there is no illness, there is no cure either. Though there is no illness we have fallen sick. Those who are afflicted with mental problems think that there is a problem. No there is no problem. The way you think produces problems.

Simply see what is happening at this moment as life is nothing but the present moment. There are no units to measure life. The second, minute or hour hands of a clock or a calendar cannot measure life. The one who sees the present moment sees the life. We can see our involvements in one of the six actions at any moment. To understand how these actions take place, we ought to find out the concepts, principles, theories and mechanisms operating behind these actions. We see only the action not the mechanism. We ought to first see the action clearly to see the mechanism or concept. For instance, something falls on the ground, which is the effect, due to the gravitational force, which is the concept. When we see the effect first, the cause becomes clear, which makes it easy to solve problems in our lives.

We think that the creator has not properly created our lives or the parents have given this life to us. We also think that there is a person, parents or husband or wife or boss or children or someone invisible, who should be responsible for our suffering. Therefore, we either blame someone or pray for someone because of ignorance, unlike animals who do not pray. As there is a concept behind each effect, what is the pointing in praying? Can our praying or cursing stop or reduce the gravitational force for our own sake? There is no point in praying or cursing or blaming, which are useless acts as there are concepts/causes behind all the actions/effects. It is very much useful to know, learn and observe these concepts/causes. Meditation is very much meaningful as it makes us to know, learn and observe these concepts/causes. Therefore, the modern world is moving away from praying towards meditation. Who are you at this moment? Do you know who you are at this moment? We ask these all-time questions and try to find answers. Answers that are valid forever can be given. For instance, if someone asks me who was I about 25 or 30 years ago or even earlier than that, I would say "I was Upul". I would give the same answer if someone asks me who I am in 10 years. The answer is the same and it is not a wrong answer either. However, the question about "I" or suffering related to "I" does not get solved. We need to understand that these answers cannot overcome suffering as these answers are superficial with no real knowledge about the person. Someone who does not know me can say that "I am Upul". It is the same with your name. We transmit this ignorance from one person to the other. We can keep on giving this answer to the question "Who am I?" If you want to know who you are, you need to come to the present moment as you are right here, not in your birth certificate or passport or driver's licence. Why do we have to limit this supreme creation of the universe to a piece of paper? What a crime or foolishness it is. It is the worst ignorance. One cannot understand oneself with the help of an identity card. All these identity cards are not made by those who have understood you. All these identity cards, which provide information on signature, thumbprint, surname, address, date of birth etc. are valid for your body not for your life. Who has been circling around the Sun for 50 years of age? Nobody knows the answer. Anybody can ask the following questions and find

answers. How many rounds have we been circling around the Sun? When did one start circling around the Sun? Which year, Which month? Which day? What time? Answers to all these questions are related to date of birth. What is the name and surname of that person? From which country, village, and hospital one started circling? Was it as a male or a female? How many circles have been completed up-to-date? All these answers are easy. But, who has been circling around the Sun? Birth certificate or passport or driver's licence or any other identity card cannot answer that question. Suffering with no identity has been circling around samsara (circle of the life). To find out who has been circling around the Sun, one has to come to this moment. Who am I in this very moment? I am an observer of silence, a listener, a speaker. I am not only listening but also thinking. I am a decision maker on what was just heard. I am a person who agrees or disagrees. It is so easy to understand who I am in this very moment as if one looks at the dashboard while driving. Just look at your life while living. As life is a message, read the message. All the suffering is because of not reading the life as if one is getting stuck on the road while driving due to running out of petrol, water, engine oil etc. I am a listener, I am a person who agrees or disagrees to what I hear. I am a person who judges. The answer to who I am depends on what I am doing in this very moment. There is no other "I". It is only an action and there is no "you" or "I". The whole universe is an action. All three worlds is an action not an object or a thing. If it is taken as an object, then the compositions need to be investigated, which is unending? We were taught when we were little that atom is the smallest unit of elements. It is known now that there are other things within atoms, and the composition of such things is investigated. There is no end to these investigations. If you take life as an element there is no ending, but as an action there is an ending as the action can be stopped. As samsara (circle of the life) and suffering are actions not elements, it is possible to stop the samsaric journey (circling around the life) and end the suffering. Anger is an action not an element given by somebody, so no point in scolding somebody. When you understand the concept, action can be stopped. According to Buddhism and science, elements or energy can be converted but not possible to be destroyed. According to Buddhism and science, an action can be stopped. How can a person getting sick be stopped? How can a person coming down with fever be stopped? Science looks for solutions as these actions can be stopped. For instance, fever is not a thing but an action so can be stopped. Similarly, loneliness is an action not a thing so can be stopped. If you are person who feels lonely at this moment, just see that you are lonely. Then you need to find out as to why you feel lonely. It is about seeing loneliness and looking for cause of loneliness. If you change the concept or the cause, the action or the result changes ending the suffering over loneliness.

Dear Dhamma friends, you can end this samsaric journey (circling around the life), in which we have been experiencing an unending pain and suffering. We are thinking as to when this suffering can be ended. There won't be an end unless you end it in this very moment. Human is a supreme creation possessing the capability of ending this suffering and discontent. Just try to see clearly who you are. What you are doing in this very moment? Nobody is responsible for what you are doing right now. There is nothing much to do. The illness known as life is a result of ignorance. This illness can be cured by getting rid of ignorance, which leads to cessation of suffering (Nirodha). Use this ability for a healthy life.

May Triple Gem Bless you!!!

- Translated by Chamara Ileperuma