

Buddhism = Mindfulness + Heartfulness

Upul Nishantha Gamage



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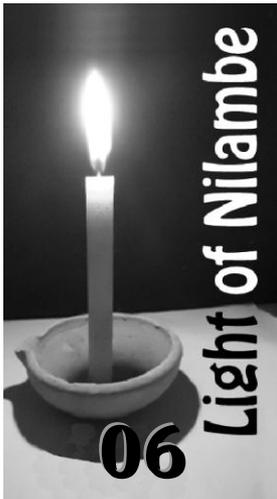
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You can say and label that Buddhism is a religion that you believe in. Also say that Buddhism is not a religion but a philosophy, which has to be understood with your intellectual and logical mind. You can further say that the Lord Buddha taught neither a religion nor a philosophy but a science, which can be experimented on your own. You can use whatever the label that makes you happy. However, I would like to say that Buddhism is a holistic path which focuses on developing wholesome skills and qualities in you.

- Upul Nishantha Gamage

Dhamma Dana
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Light of Nilambe

06

Dhamma Dāna

In memory of our beloved Father and Mother
Premadhara and Mabel Abhayawardhana

and

beloved Brother, who faced an untimely death
Dhammin Abhayawardhana

May they all attain Nibbāna
With Love & Gratitude

Ananda Abhayawardhana
Kandy 20000

Buddhism = Mindfulness + Heartfulness

Talk given by

Upul Nishantha Gamage

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At Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

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1. The day that we got our life

Dear Dhamma friends. Having experienced an untroubled and settled down mind, at this moment, we are getting ready to be attentive to the Dhamma. This attentive, settled down and focussed mind caused by meditation is required to listen, absorb and enquire the Dhamma. This is a complex internal matter as listening to the Dhamma is not an action like listening to a song, which is simple and merely limited to a feeling. The **Dhamma is not something we hear. We need to listen to the Dhamma. The Dhamma is something that is heard only by a listener. It is heard by the heart and not by the ears.** These Dhamma friends have come to Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre as today is the Vesak full-moon day. About 2600 years ago, the Buddha-to-be attained Buddhahood or enlightened on a similar day. Having left the Tusitha Heaven, the Buddha-to-be was born on a similar day to Queen Mahamaya. Moreover, the Lord Buddha passed away on a similar day, having preached the Dhamma for 45 years for the sake of human beings like us who were laden with thirst for the Dhamma and of other living

beings. During that period, Buddha's work was completed having shown us the wonder of consolatory life and the glory of restful life. Using diverse tricks, examples, stories, similes, silence, short discourses and long discourses, the Lord Buddha described and revealed the path for acquiring such lives. In short, **this is the day that we got our life**. This is not the day that we got a religion. There were, are and will be dozens or hundreds of religions in the world. This is not a day that another religion was added to the world. It is the day that a light was shed into the dark interior of human beings for showing them how to lead a life without problems that they were tired of and stricken by.

Dear Dhamma friends, just think for a moment. If not for Buddhism, we would not have become Buddhists. In that case, we would believe in some other religion and be either praying or reciting Mantra or making oblations or sacrifices. If not for Buddhism, we would definitely be partners of some of these beliefs and cultures. We would be on our knees praying and

asking for help for saving our lives, solving or giving answers to our problems and curing us. Or else, we would be either enchanting or referring to a particular religion. We would either make the body suffer by starving or being naked or taking a shower in the early morning of a very cold day with the intension of cleansing the soul. We do not do any of these things as we have Buddhism. We got this Buddhism on a day like today and it is our duty and responsibility, as grateful individuals, to recollect and think about it.

2. You are your saviour

Dear Dhamma friends. Human beings did not look for a religion in them till the Lord Buddha or Buddhism was emerged. It was believed that there was no religion on the earth at that time. The earth was seen as a miserable place or a hell or a sin. It was also believed that merits, purity and religion were in the upper regions or sky. Even today, everybody except the Buddhists looks upwards and raises hands when praying because of the belief that religion is not on the earth or in us but in the upper

regions. **It was the Lord Buddha who brought religion to the earth. It is the Lord Buddha who stated or preached that religion is in us.** Therefore, the Buddhists either look downwards or close their eyes and try to be attentive about them when recollecting Buddhahood qualities. This is a clear and decisive difference between Buddhism and other religions. **Religion is a virtue, which is not found anywhere outside you. Religion is about not harming anybody.** Where is religion? Is it in a different planet or a planetary system or Milky Way or universe? The first principle or the theory of Buddhism is about unharmed someone's life. Unharming another is in your hand. As Buddhists, when we observe 5 precepts over and over or endowed with higher virtues, the very first precept we observe or agree wholeheartedly is "I undertake the precept to abstain from killing." "I acquire discipline for abstaining from harming or killing any living being". This is not a vow or a promise made in front of anybody. It says "I acquire that precept or discipline." There is nobody to ask for this discipline. Nobody is there to give us this discipline. There is no place for us to find this discipline either. It is a quality that

we need to cultivate in us. **Buddhism is in you.** No teacher of religions has made such a statement. No teacher has stated about the philosophy of no-self. Your mind and heart are the most important place. Therefore, look at yourself. **Make you your saviour.** How can another person save you? Who can save you?

Dhammapada 160.4

Oneself is one's own protector (refuge); what other protector (refuge) can there be?

With oneself fully controlled, one obtains protection (refuge) which is hard to gain. As ordinary human beings, we like when the others help us. We always look for some help from outside; from those that can be seen and unseen, those living and non-living, those lived in the past and living at present. We plead for help from all these parties including even trees, stones, rocks, sky, earth, past and tombs. When you come across a problem, you feel helpless. We are helpless anyway. To feel the helplessness, one has to have a problem or fall sick. If not, one

has to spend money at a time when there is not enough money or likes to do some work but cannot do it alone. Whatever it is, when a problem arises, you would feel how helpless you are. You might borrow some money or ask for some help or take some medicine. If you get that money or help and get cured, then we think that everything is alright. It is not the case. That helplessness is still there. We become weaker and weaker. We need to kneel down more and more. The Lord Buddha, having seen that problem, preached that there is no point in asking for help from anybody because nobody can relieve your helplessness. One may be able to lend you money or help you. Even if one makes you prosper economically, money cannot get rid of one's helplessness. Understand this clearly. Though, money can swell your bank account or fill your pocket or fill your house with furniture, it cannot get rid of your helplessness. Having hundreds and thousands of people around you may make you feel that you are a very strong and a powerful person. However, not just thousands of people, even hundred thousand people cannot make you spiritually strong as it is something that is impossible to be achieved as a group. **Nobody can shoulder**

your heart and mind. You've got to be your own helper. You've got to be your own refuge. We may have heard about this so many times. **When you have a problem in your mind, just close your eyes for a moment. Just be attentive and listen to yourself instead of bewildering, struggling or sobbing your heart out.** That is the path for bringing forth a wise person. As I stated earlier, religion is in you. The Dhamma is in you.

3. Non-violence

The first step of the Dhamma is about not harming any living being including oneself without any condition. This is about non-violence under no condition. One may think that it is alright to harm oneself in an attempt to help another. Sometimes, this may be considered as an idea expressed even in Buddhism, which was the case in the past and even now. Though the Lord Buddha did not preach about it, harming oneself for the sake of another was considered good. Somebody may try to prove it using stories such as jumping onto a bonfire to provide food for

another. Is this Buddhism? Buddhism has not given any room for harming oneself as it is the same when one harms oneself or another. Sacrificing life seems like a very great and holy spiritual act. Most religions endorse and approve sacrificing oneself for the sake of his/her country, nation and especially religion. The followers of such religions respect those who have sacrificed their lives. For instance, Jesus Christ sacrificed his life. Therefore, the followers worship the cross, which is the symbol for crucifixion. All the religions except Buddhism talk about sacrificing lives. The Lord Buddha never preached about giving up on oneself or ending your life or putting a full stop for the sake of another. This is applicable to everybody; to a monk or a nun or a layman or a laywoman or a devotee. According to the Discipline (Dhamma Vinaya), committing suicide is considered a wrong act.

4. The real life offering

Dear Dhamma friends. Sacrificing life is a very sensitive matter. If you know that somebody is thirsty and have got drinking water, you can offer it, which is an alms-giving. It is the same with offering food or cloths or medicine or building a house. Can you offer your life? Who are you going to offer your life to? We take the term “sacrificing or life offering” seriously without thinking profoundly about it. One may die or commit suicide or end one’s living. However, has the remaining portion of that person’s life been given to another? Has that portion can be taken by another? NO. Believers of many religions have destroyed their lives untimely as they were deceived by the term “sacrificing life.” Life is not something that can be sacrificed. A different interpretation is given for life offering in Buddhism. **We offer our lives to the Triple Gem; the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma (His Teachings) and the Sangha (Nobel Community). Such an offering does not refer to committing suicide or harming oneself.** Our lives are for practicing the Dhamma. Our lives belong to the Triple Gem. **“My life does**

not belong to me but to the Triple Gem as I have offered my life to the Triple Gem.” Therefore, I have no right to use my life for things that are cheap, babish and vulgar. Those who have offered their lives to the Triple Gem have no right to use their life for unrighteous things. This is a great interpretation given in the Dhamma or the Buddhist tradition for life offering. Therefore, it would be so great if one can offer his/her life to the Triple Gem on this Vesak full-moon day. This is not merely by words or writing a deed as it is not possible to write a deed for life. One has to offer his/her life wholeheartedly. Afterwards, one can see a different beauty or meaning or path of living. One may be engaged in work or carry the responsibilities of the household. However, “I am not the owner but only the guardian of my life as it belongs to the Triple Gem. **I have accepted a property or a vehicle belonging to the Triple Gem for walking in the path preached by the Triple Gem and mitigating the unwholesome acts.”**

Dear Dhamma friends, this is what it is meant by “righteous life offering.” At any moment, **the ability of a person to letting go**

of anger is the real life offering. The Lord Buddha never justified the anger and preached about the anger as a right of a person and as something that brings forth comforts or benefits. Therefore, whenever you get angry, just think about the Triple Gem. The Triple Gem will not relieve you of your anger. However, **thinking about the Triple Gem when angry reminds us that we have no right to get angry and harm oneself or others as we do not belong to us but to the Triple gem.** We have no right to get angry and hurt the others by scolding repeatedly. Reflecting repeatedly on the Lord Buddha (*Buddhānussathi*), the Dhamma, meaning His Teachings (*Dhammānussathi*) and the Sangha, meaning the Nobel community (*Sangānussathi*) may help us to let go of anger, which is something very wonderful and attractive. It is the same when you are scared. We believe that we can let go of fear by chanting a stanza, which might even be possible. However, simply think that this life does not belong to us but to the Triple Gem. The fear comes with the ownership as we are scared of losing something belonging to us. **If there is no ownership, there is no reason to be fearful.**

213.5 Dhammapada

From affection springs grief, from affection springs fear; for him who is wholly free from affection, there is no grief, much less fear.

216.8 Dhammapada

From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear; for him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear.

This ownership/possession makes you cry, lament, heave and get scared. It is the ownership that makes you scared. The more you possess things, the more you feel sad, cry, lament, mourn, heave and get scared. Clinging on to people makes you weep over all of them while also having to share your happiness with them. We tend to feel so courageous when we think about those who we cling on to. At the same time, we get scared thinking that something might happen to them or they might die.

Dear Dhamma friends. All these things do not belong to us but to the Triple Gem. That thought helps us to mitigate our fear. The utmost fear is about our life, which is associated with the fear of death. The more you cling on to your life, the more you cling on to the fear of life and death. Thinking in this manner **“I have nothing to be scared of as my life does not belong to me but to the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Noble Community”** could mitigate your fear about life and death. We offer our lives to the noble community. Our lives belong to them. Our lives belong to the Noble Eightfold Path they follow. **Our lives belong to the Lord Buddha who preached the Noble Eightfold Path in a simple manner for us to understand it easily.**

5. Heartfulness

Dear Dhamma friends. This is the Buddhist way of life offering. This offering has nothing to do with life or committing suicide. The one who loves oneself or is friendly with oneself expects his/her progress and walks in the path of the Dhamma.

As stated very clearly in the Metta Sutta (Loving Kindness Sutta), the first qualification for the walk in the path of the Dhamma is the friendliness towards oneself. According to that Sutta, the Buddhism is for people who concern about their own well-being, though not much weight is given to that point nowadays. Nobody can reach the higher states of mind without stepping on to this first step. So the first precept is “I undertake the precept to abstain from killing or harming any living being.” Not only that, something so simple and beautiful is there for us to do, which is practicing loving kindness and cultivating the non-violence. This includes “letting go of harmfulness and also moving away from harmfulness. It is considered a shame to possess arms. Using a weapon or even a stick as a weapon is not considered a pride. Be merciful. Live as a dearest and a compassionate friend of all living beings and the entire existence.” This is the basic teaching of the Lord Buddha. See the beauty of Buddhism. This is something we need as a religion even for today.

This religion cannot be found anywhere or is given by somebody as a blessing or a message. The religion is something we need to cultivate in us. The one who cultivates it is known as the Buddhist. What do we need to cultivate? **The first thing is to live a life without harming anybody, neither oneself nor the others.** When we talk about non-violence, some say that the extreme end of non-violence is taught in Jain Religion. The followers of Mahavira, the last Tirthankara of the Jain religion, are prohibited from walking without sweeping, drinking without filtering water and breathing without filtering air, as all these actions could contribute to killing of living beings. When one listens to such descriptions, one may think that Jain Religion is the extreme end of non-violence. You may have seen how the followers of Mahavira harm themselves. These things were there even at the time of the Lord Buddha, who did not approve of people burning themselves. Nobody can experience liberation by engaging in such activities as nobody has won through violence.

6. Be an unknown friend!

Dear Dhamma friends. Harming oneself or another is not something to be proud of. One may think that it is possible to be a hero or show powers to the others by being violent or harming somebody. Ordinary people try to become heroes by harming the others. Those who call themselves to be spiritual try to become heroes by harming themselves. Such people starve and torment themselves. **One cannot become a hero by harming oneself or another.** One has to be ashamed of such harmful thoughts. Instead, one needs to cultivate mercy. Though we do not talk much about mercy in the Buddhist tradition, it is about gentleness not about viciousness. Be gentle. You can feel the pain of the others when you cultivate gentleness. We find it very easy to talk. However, it is important to be sensitive when we talk as the words we utter can hurt the others. Such sensitivity is called mercy/gentleness. **Once you develop or cultivate gentleness in your heart and become an amiable person, the words you speak are also gentle and amiable. You can console yourself and the others, as these amiable words do**

not come from your tongue or mouth or vocal cords but from your heart. Mercy is not in the throat or on your lips. It crops up from your heart. When your heart turns into a fountain of mercy, your words are merciful, your look is merciful, your walk is merciful and everything about you is merciful. This is the religion in the heart. **If the religion is the harvest, the seeds are sown in the field known as the heart.** You become a friend of all the living beings not that everybody is becoming your friends. When your heart becomes the fountain of mercy, name or address or telephone number or profession or gender or age or nationality of a person is not important. When the sunrays of mercy arise, these unimportant identities disappear like the mist.

Often this question, “Who are you?” crops up. Even the others ask you who you are and you ask the same question from them. This is a question for which there is no true answer. One may say something; name, profession, address etc. However, such answers do not tell about you. With the practice of the Dhamma, when someone asks you who you are, if you can wholeheartedly say that “I am a friend of you,” such an answer can change the

whole surrounding. Beyond that, there won't be any more questions as all these questions are focussed on finding about you with the intension of becoming your friend. You can do this heartfelt meditation, even if nobody asks you to do so. Just try to be a friend of everybody; Buddhists or non-Buddhists, locals or foreigners, children or adults and even an ant. Learn to feel the friendliness towards invisibles too.

7. Be a friend of yourself!

Dear Dhamma friends. One objective of Buddhism is to make you become a friend of the whole world and yourself. The Loving Kindness Sutta states in the very beginning that “if you wish for your own success, you have to help yourself as a friend of you. Without being your own friend how do you help to yourself? You need to become a friend of yourself. If you are a friend of yourself, you wish for your own success. You start thinking that it is possible to be successful and also start making attempts honestly to be successful. In this process, you can become a friend of everybody. Under such circumstances, there

is no fear, whether you are alone or wherever you go, as you are always with your friend known as you. **You are your own friend, so you go everywhere with your own friend. Therefore, one does not fear death because death is also a friend. Moreover, you become fearless of life or death or even the life after death.** Understand that all these fears are caused by the inability to recognize oneself.

8. Get hold of the right end of the snake

Dear Dhamma friends, all these things need to be planted in the field known as life. Therefore, look at yourself. Pay attention to yourself. See yourself. Recognize yourself. When references are made to “You” or “I” or “becoming friendly with oneself” or “practise loving kindness,” one may think that I talk about ego. When we say “May I be well, May I be happy and May I be peaceful” one may think that it is the ego that I talk about. When I refer to seeing oneself, one may think that I talk about “self.” It is a problem that crops up, if one gets hold of the wrong end of the snake. **One has to get hold of the right end of the snake.**

If not, one cannot understand the central teaching of Buddhism, which focuses on oneself. Therefore, look at yourself, change yourself and improve yourself.

9. Be an outsider!

Dear Dhamma friends. When one looks at oneself, there is a person who is looking at and also a thing that is seen. There is no room for ego here. Look at your life like an outsider. This is the central teaching of Buddhism. **Look at yourself with an eye of an outsider.** The subtle meaning of words such as mindfulness and awareness is about looking at something from distance. One can look at things without clinging on to them. Look at the breath as breath. Look at the body as body. Do not look at the body as your body. Look at the body as body. It is not the way we usually look at. We look at the body in this manner. “It is my body; this is I; this is my hair; I am beautiful because my hair is beautiful; if my hair is untidy, I am not beautiful; if I am to be beautiful, I need to tidy up my hair, comb my hair.” **The moments we think that hair is ours, all the**

problems related to hair also turn out to be ours. This is the way we have got used to looking at our lives. **Do not be inside the “self.” One has to come out of the “self.”** Look at your life as an outsider.

There are two ways of looking at aches and pains. One way is “I feel the pain **or** I am experiencing a crucial pain.” Looking at aches and pains in this manner is known as “view of self.” Buddhism does not refer to this view of self. One has to look at things with the “view of no-self,” which is the second way of looking at things. The difference between these two ways of looking at things is stated in the best possible manner. However, there is more to be realized about this difference, which is beyond verbal explanation. If I restate, we are in the habit of thinking about physical discomforts with our ego. “I am in such a pain. I feel uncomfortable.” This is the way we think about any pain. When one is experiencing pain, if he/she says that there is no pain, it is an utter lie. It is a lie uttered either knowingly or unknowingly. Therefore, there is no point in asking a person who is in pain about his/her pain. When you

visit a hospital, do not inquire about the wealth and health of a patient as the person would most likely say that he/she is alright, which is a lie. Similarly, when you feel pain, you can say that you are in pain. This is one of the ways of thinking, known as “view of self.” In the “view of no-self,” one can say that there is pain. The Lord Buddha had not asked about the wealth and health of perfected persons (*Arahants*) who were sick. They had not stated that they were well either. Instead, they had simply referred to the pain. Then, when the Lord Buddha asked “*How is the pain?*” they would say that the pain gradually goes up, which is the truth. One can look at this truth known as pain in two different angles. However, we have been looking at it as my pain or with the “view of self.” “I am in pain.” The other angle is to look at the pain consciously. **When you are conscious, you become the person who is looking at the pain without being the person who is experiencing the pain.** Be an outsider, come out of it and look at the pain as pain. Look at the feelings as feelings.

10. Who am I? –The first point

The next question is “Who am I?” We have already answered this question, which was “I am a friend of you.” This is the most practical answer one can give. Nobody can deny this answer either. This answer can be given to anybody who questions, regardless of the questioner, whether the person is known or unknown, human or non-human or god, the place whether in Sri Lanka or abroad and the language. This is the most beautiful and innocent answer that can be given. Who are you? “I am a friend of you.” Such an answer develops trust. That is one point. With the practice of qualities like loving kindness, compassion and mercy, one realizes that he/she is a friend of the whole world. The whole world is not a friend of him/her. If somebody says so, it is a lie. Nobody can say that the whole world is a friend of him/her. Even the Lord Buddha did not say that the whole world was a friend of Him. Instead The Lord Buddha tells that He is a genuine friend of the entire world. One could say **“I am a friend of the entire world because I radiate loving kindness to the entire world. I am a person who is**

friendly, merciful and compassionate with all the living beings and spirits in world.”

11. Who am I? –The second point

The second point is with regard to *vipassana*. We ask the same question “Who am I? Who are you?” There are no designated or composed answers for this question. For instance, name and title are composed or designated answers. These answers can be changed officially. In *vipassana*, there are no designated answers. It does not mean that there is no one called “I.” A certain person might describe or think of “no-self” as non-existence of “I.” If it is the case, there is no point in doing any of these things; observing precepts, alms-giving, meditating etc. There is “I.” It is important to recognize who this “I” is. Who is there as “I”? Where is this “I”? Just look at these things. The “I” does not emerge from somewhere. **The “I” emerges from what is done or from an action. It is the action that makes a person. It is not an action done by the others but by oneself.** It is very important to understand this matter. You are formed by

what you do. Therefore, we often say with pride that when the Lord Buddha argued with Brahmas or vice versa over who Brahma was, some blamed the Lord Buddha for addressing non-Brahmas Brahma. There were situations where the Lord Buddha addressed those who were not supposed to be Brahmas by the traditions and casts as Brahmas. The perfected persons (*Arahants*) were referred to as Brahms by the Lord Buddha. Those who were Brahmas by the tradition and cast had got hurt over this. At that point the Lord Buddha had said,

Vasala Sutta, verse 21;

By birth one does not become an outcaste, or a divine.

By action one becomes an outcast and one becomes a divine.

All of us accept this, preached by the Lord Buddha. If you think further on this point, it is the same with everything. **One does not become a Buddhist by birth.** If one does not become a divine by birth, how does one become a Buddhist by birth? Similarly, one does not become a non-Buddhist by birth either.

Both Buddhists and non-Buddhists are formed by the actions. When one acts according the Buddhist way, then that person is a Buddhist. When one does not act according the Buddhist way, then we cannot say that person is a Buddhist. Therefore, it is not easy to be a Buddhist but easy to be a non-Buddhist. Nevertheless, it is the action or what you do forms a person. If I am to take some simple examples, the visitors or first comers to this centre often ask who the meditation teacher is. At that time, I may be weeding or making a stone step or cooking in the kitchen. As there was no teacher at such occasions, what should be the correct answer? There is no teacher. There is a person who is either weeding or making a stone step or cooking, which is the truth. The action in the present moment is either weeding or making a stone step or cooking or cutting firewood or mending a broken water pipe or making tea. Can we say that the teacher is weeding or making tea etc.? I can say so, but these answers do not touch the reality. Whatever that is done springs up a person. There is a cook at the place where cooking is done or a carpenter at the place where carpentry is done or a mason at a place where masonry is done.

There is no teacher in any of these places. Though it is the truth, I cannot say so because such an answer could make the visitor even more confused. As such, I would say “Come to the meditation hall by about 9 or 9.30 am. The meditation teacher will come at that time.” When I go to the meditation hall at that particular time, the visitor would ask “why did not you say so earlier.” As there was no teacher earlier, it was not possible to say that I was the teacher. I am going to teach only now. The teacher is at a place where teaching is done. There are no teachers at places where there is no teaching. This might sound like a joke. However, there is no joke here. It is the truth. One can find a teacher only at a place where teaching is done. A doctor is going to be only at a place where treatments are given, treating a patient being the action. A driver is sprung up by the action of driving.

We have been travelling through this *samsāra* (cycle of suffering) looking for answers for these questions; who are you? Who am I? As we have not yet got answers, we meditate with the intension of finding answers for these questions.

Satipatthana (stabilizing mindfulness) is for that. In *Satipatthana* or practicing mindfulness, we are not at the place where we were. One does not look at oneself from the stage of “self” but from “no-self.” In other words, one goes from the stage to the auditorium. **One goes from the stage named “self” to the auditorium named “no-self.”** This is a critical transformation, which is beyond verbal explanation. *Satipatthana* (mindfulness) is a transition or transformation taking place from the stage named “self” to the auditorium named “no-self.” In walking meditation, the person who walks is no longer named “I.” If you walk as an exercise or with a target, that person who walks is the “I.” However, **in walking meditation, the person who is aware that he/she is walking is the “I.”** When one is walking, he/she knows about the walking, which is the walking meditation. So **the meditator is not the person who walks but the person who knows about the walking.** Similarly, the meditator is not the person who is sitting but the person who knows about sitting. The meditator is not the person who is breathing but the person who knows about the

breathing. The meditator is not the person who is experiencing pain but the person who knows about the pain.

12. See the anger

In *Cittanupassana* (watching the mind just as mind), as we look at the mind, one knows when the anger comes and he/she is angry. When a mind with anger arises, he/she knows, “This is a mind with anger.” **At any moment, when someone is aware of having an angry mind, he/she is miraculously transformed from a person being angry to a person who is seeing the anger.** This is possible only with *Satipatthana* or meditation. In this *samsāric* journey, we may have been human beings, animals, hell beings or gods and also been inside anger or desire or fear. Even gods experience fear. We may have lived inside the heavenly fear. We may have lived inside the human fear. Animals are fearful anyway. We may have experienced the fear of hell beings when in the hell. We may have lived in the desire of hell beings. In this birth, we experience the desires as human beings. We may have experienced the desires of gods and also

animals. It is the same with hatred. However, we have not experienced “seeing and knowing.” We need to step on to that place. We need to see the pain. We need to look at the pain. We need to reflect the pain. See the desire. See the fear and reflect all these. At that point, **you are not going to be a prey for anger or desire. The anger cannot digest you.** If not, the anger always sucks our energy. Therefore, the anger gets stronger and we become weaker. Every time we get angry, we become physically tired and weak. Our heart gets weak. Even, we become mentally weak. Therefore, the anger absorbs or digests all our physical and mental energy. Just put one step forward. **You are no longer an angry person. The anger will be there but you are no longer an angry person. You can see the anger. Who are you? You are a person who is seeing the anger. Who are you? You are a person who is seeing the desire. Who are you? You are a person who is seeing the pain. You are not a person who is experiencing the pain.**

13. The awoken “I”

There is no permanent “I” as the “I” changes from moment to moment. However, there is an “I” who changes from moment to moment in the form of actions. Even earlier, there was an “I” that was not permanent either. That “I” was either an angry “I” or suffering “I” or fearful “I” or craving “I.” **The “I” who is here now is different from those who were earlier. The present “I” is a completely different person. The present “I” is awake. The present “I” sees.** The anger cannot show you dreams anymore. The desire cannot show you dreams anymore. We saw the dreams of anger every day as we did not see the anger. We accepted such dream as true and acted upon with anger. Now we see the anger. Who are you? I am a person who sees the anger. Just say honestly that I am a person who sees me. That is all. Just see. Not merely to give that answer. See yourself. See yourself from time to time. There is nothing more to solve here. There is no need to make or cut or pound you to solve the problem associated with “I.” Simply see. Improve on seeing, which has to be done through meditation. Improve on

realization through meditation. **Look at oneself through an eye of an outsider. Look at oneself through the “no-self view.”** When one looks through the “no-self view,” one can see the **pain without experiencing the pain. The pain will be there but no suffering.** Look at the physical and mental experiences through the “no-self view.” Then you will see that the pain springs up, exists, changes and disappears. You will also see the springing up of new pains, new thoughts and new feelings and their changes and disappearances. You will also see that there is nothing permanent. You will also see that anything sprung up does not exist without subjecting to changes. This is true for anything good or bad and beautiful or ugly. This is an experience, which does not retain anything or does not collide with anything. This is an experience like a mirror. We need to do something, which is cleaning the mirror, as only a clean mirror can produce a true and real image or reflection. Clean your mind. Be a mirror. See the life correctly/properly. There is no problem to be solved here. A mirror does not need aids or assistance. A mirror does not become helpless in front of any scene/sight, not even in front of a devil/demon. **Nobody can**

make a mirror helpless as it makes us to see everything. The mirror does not retain anything at all. The mirror does not reject anything either. The mirror projects or reflects the present as it is.

14. Be a mirror of yourself!

Dear Dhamma friends. It is the foremost meaning or focal message of Buddhism. Be a mirror. With utmost love, the Lord Buddha advised the novice Rahula, His son, to be a mirror. Be a mirror of your life. Be a mirror of yourself. Look at yourself. Look at your words. Look at the thoughts. Look at the physical actions. The more you look at them, the cleanser these things get. You can clean them. **You do not become a prey of *kamma* (action and the result of action) anymore, which is the most important thing. A mirror never becomes a prey of *kamma*. The samsaric journey stops or there is no *samsāra* when one does not become a prey of *kamma*.** As a result, there is no suffering but an unlimited freedom, immeasurable consolation and extinguishing or liberation. On this Vesak full-moon day,

we celebrate the day that we acquired the message about consolation, freedom and liberation thorough offering by way of practice.

You can say and label that Buddhism is a religion which you believe in. Also say that Buddhism is not a religion but a philosophy, which has to be understood with your intellectual and logical mind. You can further say that the Lord Buddha taught neither a religion nor a philosophy but a science, which can be experimented on your own. You can use whatever the label that makes you happy. However, I would like to say that **Buddhism is a holistic path which focuses on developing wholesome skills and qualities in you.**

Buddhism = Mindfulness + Heartfulness

May the Triple Gem Bless You!!!