

# *Illusion of Painful Painkillers*



*Upul Nishantha Gamage*

*A person who suffers within always asks for painkillers. A painkiller taken in the past becomes a pain today and one given today can become another illness by tomorrow. Just see how this chain develops. A day will come where no painkiller is left but only suffering. Therefore, practise meditation to be mindful and be observant today, and thereby to be watchful of you or inner nature or pain without looking for painkillers.*



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Light of Nilambe

*Dhamma Dāna*

In Memory of our Parents

May they attain Nibbāna!

**Upali Illangasekera**  
**Chintha Illangasekera**

# **Illusion of Painful Painkillers**

Talk given by

**Upul Nishantha Gamage**

On July 03, 2012 (Esala Full-moon Day)

At Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

Transcribed and translated by

Chamara Illeperuma

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**www.nilambe.net**  
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For further information

**upulnilambe@yahoo.com**

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## 1. Spiritual setback

*Dear Dhamma friends.* You have come on this Esala full-moon day to Nilambe Buddhist Meditation centre and engaged in meditation in different postures for a considerable length of time. Actually, meditation does not require a particular posture. Sometimes, a particular posture/s may be used when eating or sleeping or playing sports or reading or writing. However, **there is no exact and compulsory posture for Buddhist meditation because it is about developing spiritual skills within.** A particular posture is not required for developing spiritual skills. Further, developing spiritual skills is not limited to a particular posture either. Acting or doing something in all postures requires mindfulness. Therefore, it is impossible to group postures into those requiring and not requiring mindfulness by drawing lines or making boundaries.

Mindfulness is the foundation of the five spiritual faculties and all spiritual skills. For instance, if the spiritual task is building a house consisting of walls, windows, doors, door-frames and a roof, its foundation is mindfulness. **Skills like one-pointedness,**

**realization and effort are also built on the foundation known as mindfulness.**

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Therefore, no particular posture is required for being mindful. One may think that it is necessary to be mindful today, as today is a full-moon day, but not so necessary at other times. This is a narrow thought. It is the mindfulness that makes a person a human being. **There isn't a human being wherever there is no mindfulness.** It is the mindfulness that makes a human being a great human being. Moreover, mindfulness makes a human being who is undergoing suffering a non-sufferer and a restless human being a restful and serene human being. Such a transformation requires mindfulness.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Therefore, you need to practise meditation in all postures as if one breathes-in and breathes-out in all. **If you are mindful, you are a winner, you are free and you are a person experiencing consolation and peaceful joy.** Absence of mindfulness is a spiritual setback. Without being mindful, one may win worldly-wise. However, **with all these worldly victories, it is a loss within.** As a result of what is said, done and thought in the absence of mindfulness, one becomes

mentally restless and sorrowful at that moment itself or after some time. As such, a journey taking place in the absence of mindfulness is called “a journey of accumulating unrest.”

## 2. Origin of mishaps

The journey called living can be made in two ways. One way is to live without being mindful, as living does not need sharp mindfulness. One can take on this journey of living in the absence of mindfulness. **Such a person has no considerable vision, knowledge and understanding about what is done, said and searched for.** One may also benefit by living such a life. But, spiritual-wise, that person is empty. Such a person is empty within; no accomplishment, no victory, no experience in peaceful joy and freedom. Therefore, live mindfully. This is one of the most remarkable ways of living.

Mindfulness is one of the vehicles for making the journey of life. It is also possible to make this journey in the vehicle known as devoid of mindfulness. However, the absence of mindfulness makes a person experiences more collisions, more conflicts and more accidents. Further, disappointments, repentances and griefs

are plenty. Just see that the origin of any repentance is a result of something done or said in devoid of mindfulness. If you go back to the origin or the fountain of any grief, you'll come across a person who had talked or bought something or made some transactions or engaged in an affair in the absence of mindfulness. **Devoid of mindfulness is the origin of all these sufferings.** It is not just an ordinary grief. Just see that even **common conflicts in day-to-day life are a result of the absence of mindfulness.** For instance, we bump against a wall or a door while walking due to the absence of mindfulness. Even a small conflict is a result of the absence of mindfulness. **Wherever mindfulness is absent, there are unending conflicts.** It is impossible to say where the beginning and the end of these conflicts are.

### 3. Non-stop searching

*Dear Dhamma friends.* In this lengthy life, we are in search of something with or without being mindful, especially without being mindful. What do we look for? It is only a person who is in search something mindfully can give a direct and a definite answer or an answer, which does not require editing. A person

who has not been living mindfully has no idea about what he/she has been looking for. Such a person may give an answer just to suit that time or moment or situation or place; searching for a book, a person, a pen, some water and so on. However, it is impossible to give a definite answer when searched with eyes closed. If you ask such a person, he/she wouldn't know where to look for or what to look for.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* We may have looked for something as a little son or a little daughter. Afterwards, we may have looked for something in adolescence as well. Having passed that stage of life and reached youthhood or adulthood or old age, we are continuously looking for something. There is nobody who has stopped. Even a toddler or a little son or a little daughter has not stopped. They keep on looking for something. Similarly, a youth or an adult has not stopped either. Neither an elderly nor a senile person has stopped. All of us are in search of something.

When we think in this manner, life is such a long journey. The age tells us about this lengthy journey measured in years, months and days. For how long has a person lived? In other words, for how long has a person been searching for? The age tells how long has a person been searching for? If one wishes

longevity for further 5 or 10 or 15 or 60 or 70 or 100 or 120 years, it is the expectations that tell for how long does a person search for or for how long does a person expect to search? What is searched for? There is no definite answer. If one asks about what is searched for today, an answer will be given. If the same question is asked in a week, another answer will be given. If the same question is asked in 2013, a totally different answer will be given. There is no definite or absolute answer. If an absolute answer to be given, one has to know exactly what is searched for.

#### **4. Game of the nature**

Childhood had worn away without knowing what was searched for. Childhood had worn away without getting what was searched for. Someone had passed the childhood and stepped foot on the adolescence without accomplishing what was searched for in the former. The nature and time have turned the child into a youngster. However, what was searched for has not been given. The nature has been doing this game with us all along. The nature and time make us get old and age day by day, from today to day after tomorrow, from the last week to this

week and from 2012 to 2013, without letting us stop. Who has been allowed to stop? Have you been allowed to stop within a day or have you stopped within a day without looking for anything? Just try to remember. We proudly talk about our age; 30 years, 40 years, 50 years and so on. Have you stopped just for a year? Just leave aside a year. Have you stopped for a month or a week or a day without looking for anything? No. We are not allowed to stay that way. Nobody is allowed to stop by the nature or time.

A clock stops when the battery dies or wind runs down. But, the nature does not allow human beings to stop but makes them run with new objectives, expectations and aspirations. Therefore, there is nobody who has stopped. Even a baby or a toddler or a child or a walker with a walking stick runs though running is not visible. None of this type of running is visible, but one keeps on running. **A runner is there within. The inner nature is running fast. The inner nature of each one of us has not stopped.** Though we think that our inner nature has stopped, it is not the case even while sleeping or being in a deep sleep. It is impossible to stop either. One becomes an adult without

accomplishing what was searched for while running or without being contented with what was accomplished as a youth.

Though one has not been able to accomplish what was searched for as a youth, the nature does not allow him/her to extend adolescence by a year or five years or 10 years, till what was searched for is accomplished. Definitely a child becomes a youth, and a youth becomes an adult. As growing old is compulsory, an adult becomes an elderly without keeping what was searched for as an adult in his/her pocket.

## **5. Growing vacuum**

*Dear Dhamma friends.* In this manner, all along the line, we do not know what was searched for; we do not know whether we have got what was searched for, we do not know whether there is any point in searching, we do not know whether we have given up on searching. A huge vacuum is there in all these places. The vacuum was there even as a child. That vacuum was carried forward when a child became a youth. There was no fullness or absoluteness but a vacuum. Two types of vacuums

now; **the vacuum of adolescence and the vacuum carried forward from childhood.** All along, this vacuum grows.

We have accomplished so many worldly things. As adults, we possess many more things than a child. How many worldly materials and resources are there? There are external recourses sufficient to fill a room, a house or even a couple of houses. But, **the inner nature of an adult is poorer than a toddler.** In this manner, **it is the poverty that has grown all along. The inner poverty has grown all along with external wealth. It is absolutely poverty within, unrest within and vacuum within.** Vacuum grows day by day. The more it grows the more we run, which is the wonder.

**The wonder is about getting more and more fuel for running with growth of vacuum, as if the need for looking for food grows with the increase in hunger.** This growth is not because of increase in energy but because of growth of vacuum with increase in hunger. One runs looking for some food by some means with increase in hunger. This is the truth. One runs not because of increase in energy but because of increase in weakness. One runs with a vacuum as we do not like to live in

it. We are also not used to living in it. We think that a vacuum is a fault or a shortcoming.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Therefore, we have a long list at hand or in mind of things to be accomplished or completed, places to be visited, people to be met, things to be bought, things to be given, things to be prepared and so on. Likewise, our heads are filled with such a big and long list. That toddler might have had a list too. Though it is impossible to verbalise, a huge fire or vacuum is there inside a small child. It is the vacuum that is on fire. Hunger is a vacuum or an empty fire. **So the vacuum is on fire. An insufficiency within is on fire. One looks for something and runs to fill the burning insufficiency. The more you run, the more the vacuum grows and the faster the running becomes.** There is no mindfulness here. That is the primary matter. We meditate at a moment while running or being engaged in running in the absence of mindfulness.

## **6. The jigsaw puzzle**

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Therefore, if a person needs to solve this puzzle known as life, he/she has to analyse life. This puzzle

can be solved not with the help of a book or a school but by analysing one's own life. **Analysis of life is called insight meditation.** In insight meditation, one needs to look at life by making cross-sectional and vertical dissections. One has to get used to analysing life. It is so unfortunate if someone becomes a puzzle of him/her. It is not surprising if others become a puzzle for you. There is no need to solve such puzzles. It is impossible to solve these puzzles 100 per cent, as understanding another 100 per cent is not possible at all. Try to understand others as much as possible, as it is necessary to understand especially those who you live with or work with or mingle with. Moreover, it is not possible to live without understanding friends, relatives and neighbours. However, **it is an utter lie to say that we know about a particular person.** The real truth is, "I do not know about that person. It is not possible for me to know either." It may be possible to know a little. However, **when we try to put pieces from here and there and make a picture about a person like making a jigsaw puzzle, he/she has already changed. Now we need new pieces to complete the puzzle.** This is the truth.

It is not that others merely deceive us, though there may be situations where we are deceived purposely. But, the truth is, a person is someone who has not stopped, but is changing all the time or is running. It is impossible to draw a still picture of a person who is running. Even if you draw, the picture may be wrong. **It is impossible for us to definitely come to a conclusion about anybody;** not even the parents about their children, saying that my son is like that or my daughter is like that. As we are so possessive of them, we have come to a state where it is impossible to make conclusions about them. The outsiders may have better understanding about our children, because the more we are possessive of them, the narrower our views become.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* In any case, we have been sacrificing our whole life to solve the puzzle know as others or to understand others. It is alright to devote some time for that. However, do you have to devote your whole life for that? Were you born for that? Do you think that you were born to understand a particular person? Having committed so many merits, did you acquire this esteemed human life for that?

*Lo-wáda Sangarāva: Poem19*

*Rare indeed is the birth of a Buddha. Hard it is to get human birth. It is with the help of these two that one makes an end of this saṃsāric suffering. Good men! Why don't you put forth your best efforts?*

How much have we suffered to acquire a human life? Having suffered so much, we did not acquire a human life to understand a person who changes and is impossible to be understood fully. As a secondary objective, it is alright to try to understand another. **The primary objective is to understand oneself. We were born as human beings to understand ourselves. It is only a human being who can understand oneself. That ability or skill or capacity or probability is possessed only by a human.** In this world known to us, it is only human beings who can analyse oneself and see through life. “Who am I? What am I looking for? Why am I looking for this?” This experiment is called meditation. This experiment is called insight meditation.

## 7. Blazing mental fire

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Therefore, subject yourself to this experimentation on analysing oneself. This has to be done frequently. Be watchful of yourself frequently! Don't let anything about you be searched without your knowledge or by stealth. Just see the hunger, which is on the move looking for various things. This hunger is not the physical hunger or stomach hunger but mental hunger and inner hunger.

**Inner hunger is more powerful than stomach hunger. Inner hunger keeps on blazing in every moment. The more it blazes the emptier it becomes.** The emptier it becomes, the more difficult for a person to be standstill. Therefore, one keeps on running to the past, to the future, to the store, to the town and so on. Moreover, one keeps on looking for things on TV and radio and in newspapers. In this manner, one keeps on looking for something. Just see clearly. See the mental fire that was there before reading a newspaper. It is the mental fire that makes you read a newspaper. So you put a newspaper into that inner fire. Does the fire extinguish when a newspaper is put into it? No. Instead, the fire intensifies. Having finished reading a newspaper, thousands of fires which were not present before

reading it have cropped up now. Newspapers or papers intensify blazing of fires. Fire blazes along advertisements, political news and crimes in newspapers. Like tiny sparks of fire in the mind, just see how the fire blazes intensely as a result of what appears in newspapers. In this manner, there is no ending and cooling down. Ending and cooling down go hand-in-hand. **The person who has ended is cool, and the person who is cool has ended.** The person who is on fire keeps on running and the person who is running is on fire. Both of them keep on panting.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Always be attentive to yourself. Being attentive to oneself is the greatest sacrifice one can make for oneself. There is no better sacrifice than that. You can buy a valuable dress or a pair of slippers for yourself. You can show yourself places never seen before. You can feed yourself with food never tasted before. You can get yourself to listen to music never heard before. While doing all these, if you think that you are doing and giving everything for yourself, it is not. All these things are consumed by the inner fire. You give all these things to that fire. You give food to that fire. You put all these sacrifices as fuel into that fire. As a result, the fire blazes more and more.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* If you really care about yourself or love yourself and wholeheartedly wish your own well-being and happiness, get to know yourself. As stated earlier, **the experiment on getting to know oneself is called meditation.** There is no other methodology for getting to know oneself. The methodology for getting to know oneself is called meditation in Buddhism. Meditation is a methodology or a technology. Use this technology for getting to know you. You have come so far without knowing who you are. We talked about this earlier. A child became a youth without knowing fully about the child, and also saying that “it is necessary to become a youth to learn more about the youthhood, as he/she knows everything about a child thus having no need of a childhood anymore.” This is the way one continues with formal education after passing exams. For instance, one enters the Advanced Level as he/she has learnt everything at Ordinary Level.

## **8. Question marks**

However, it is not the way we have journeyed through life. We did not deliberately pass different ages but unintentionally journeyed through. Therefore, we say that journeying through

life takes place in the absence of mindfulness. As stated earlier, journey of life is not deliberate. It just happens or is dragged along forcefully. One passed youthhood and stepped into old age without understanding everything about the former. There is nobody who has gone passing youthhood after understanding fully about it or manifesting fully in it. Moreover, it has not happened because one felt that there was no need of being a youth anymore and would want to enter into the next grade. Question marks are there in all these places. What is childhood? It is a big question mark because there is no answer and an answer was not searched either. Adolescence is a question mark. Youthhood is a question mark. Old age is a question mark. **When we journey through life with all these question marks, the death is an unsolvable problem.** We carry these questions marks or problems when going from one place to another.

## **9. This life is more than enough**

**The journey devoid of mindfulness creates problems.** It is a journey where the answers cannot be given. Therefore, wake up! You have lived enough like a dream walker. Just leave aside the past lives as we do not know about them for sure. If we get to

know about our past lives, we'll feel the gravity of this problem. But, even if we discard the unknown past lives, this life is more than enough to understand Buddhism. One does not need many lives to understand Buddhism. One life is more than enough to understand the Dhamma. One life is more than enough to understand life through the Dhamma. One life is more than enough to find out the answer to the question known as life. This life is more than enough for all these three matters; **to understand the Dhamma, to understand living according to the Dhamma, to put out the fire known as life.**

## **10. Lengthy journey**

Why do we often feel that time is not enough? The person who is going to experience suffering finds that the time is insufficient. If we do not know what is looked for, we do not get it. Even if we get what was searched for, we would not know that we have got it as we did not know what was searched for. Therefore, we keep on searching. We feel that time is too long when we do not get what is search for. For instance, you go to a bookshop to buy a book and find the book that you intend to buy on the first shelf. So you have found the book you wanted to buy

on the first shelf of the first bookshop. As such, the journey, which was in search of that book, ends at that point. There is no need to check other shelves or go to other floors of the bookshop or go to other bookshops. However, if you do not find the book in that particular bookshop, you have to keep on looking in other bookshops. This is how the journey gets longer. If the book cannot be found in all the bookshops in the town, you have to go to another town. The journey gets longer and longer without finding what was searched for. The length is something relative. Naturally, nothing is lengthy. Though suffering is not lengthy, we have suffered for a long time and will have to suffer for a long time. **There is no definite length for suffering of a human being as it is relative to his/her inner fire and craving. Suffering is proportional to craving.** Distance of running is proportional to the amount of fuel. When there is fuel, one is compelled to run.

## 11. What do we look for?

*Dear Dhamma friends.* What is looked for? This has to be clarified. One has to find out what is looked for, which is the greatest thing among everything looked for. One has to find an

answer to that question by oneself. Therefore, meditation is something that has to be done by oneself. Another cannot meditate on your behalf though many things can be done for us by another. Sometimes, one may sit for an exam on our behalf. However, it is impossible for someone else to mediate for us, as one ought to do it on his/her own.

“What am I looking for?” Just know what is looked for. Just find out what is looked for. It is only the person who knows about what is looked for can stop searching. At that point, there is calmness and ending of suffering. In this manner, throughout our life, we look for an experience devoid of suffering. I restate that **we do not look for suffering but an experience devoid of suffering.** There is nobody who looks for suffering. **Everybody looks for a place or a person or a moment devoid of suffering.** Even a small child did not look for suffering but something devoid of suffering. It is the same with a youth or an adult or an elderly.

## 12. The incurable disease

There is enormous suffering. How does one get rid of suffering? If there is no suffering, there is no searching either. For instance, we look for medicine when we are sick. All of us suffer from a sickness known as suffering. There is no other sickness more aggravating than suffering. The end result of all the sicknesses is suffering. The end result of even fever and cold is suffering not comfort. Therefore, **suffering is the most dreadful disease that all beings are afflicted with.** We are a group of beings laid up with this incurable disease known as suffering. We keep on looking for health or wellbeing or a way to escape from this disease.

However, the things we often take as medicine aggravate the disease. Instead of getting well, the disease gangrenes. As medicine, we take things that aggravate or intensify the disease called suffering. Therefore, the suffering intensifies with time. A youth suffers more than a child. An adult suffers more than a youth. See clearly. Why does the pleasant nature in the face of a child wear away with time? Strictly speaking, face of a child should get more and more pleasant when happiness increases with age. The face should shine more and more. However, why

can't the happiness in the face of a child be seen in an adult? Forehead of an adult is wrinkled as if a huge weight is on his/her head. This is because of intensification of suffering with age. We make the suffering grows. We make the illness aggravates. These things do not happen involuntarily. We make them happen.

### **13. Wrong medicines**

We make them happen not because we do not take medicines for the illness but because we take unsuitable medicines. Though we think what we take is medicine, often these things intensify the illness. We keep on eating and looking for things that intensify desire, anger and fear. This is because of misapprehension and devoid of mindfulness. Therefore, it is important to be mindful for finding out what the right medicine is and what the wrong medicine is.

If it is a medicine, it has to be right as there cannot be two types of medicine. What is the medicine? What is the non-medicine? What cures the illness? What aggravates the illness? We need to make these things out, which is the basic apprehension. This

basic apprehension is called “right understanding or right view (*Sammā Ditṭhi*)” in the Dhamma. These two, things that intensify and lessen the suffering, need to be made out and separated. The step towards complete recovery of the illness is called “right understanding.” What is this right understanding about? **It is the right understanding about oneself. It is the right understanding about what is searched for. You need to see the suffering within.** As there is suffering within, we keep on looking for happiness and comfort, thinking that these things are somewhere.

#### **14. Reality vs truth**

On the way of this journey of life, we get something resembling happiness and comfort. We experience realistic happiness and comfort. Reality is not the truth, but it seems like the truth. For instance, a particular film is called a realistic film not because it is the real truth, but it seems like true. Reality is not the real truth but is very close to the truth. Similarly, we experience realistic happiness, which is not the true happiness. We experience something seems like happiness. If that happiness were the true happiness, it would not have turned into suffering.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* It is very much important to clarify these matters. The first matter is about all of us having immense suffering within. Physical suffering crops up in the form of hunger, thirst, sleepiness or tiredness. Other than this physical suffering, there is immense mental suffering or inner suffering. This suffering is common for all of us regardless of age. We look for solutions for this suffering. A child may use toy cars and dolls as solutions for inner suffering. A child will be happy for a considerable length of time when a toy is given because suffering of a child is less. The illness known as suffering of a little child can be treated by giving a toy car or a doll or reciting a lullaby. This approach will work for awhile, not for a year, as suffering of a child is less. This toy car or a lullaby is a painkiller, not a medicine. See how small the painkiller needed for a little child is. None of these work on us.

A toy car or a doll or a lullaby cannot end our suffering. This is because suffering within us is enormous and serious. What have we done in our life? What have we collected in our life? We often talk about things we have collected; so many books, houses, vehicles, properties. With all these, just see what have we collected within? **We have collected nothing but enormous**

**suffering.** As such, we need strong painkillers to end this enormous suffering. What is the truth? **We have reached a state where living is impossible without painkillers.** We need some sort of a painkiller all the time; a friend, a television, a newspaper, a book, a telephone and so on. We use all these as painkillers. **Even after giving all these painkillers, the suffering within is incurable. Therefore, we keep on looking for different and stronger painkillers.** Though suffering of a little child can be subsided by giving rice water, it does not work on us. Just see how complex these painkillers given for hunger are? Even if all these painkillers are given, we have become owners and inheritors of unsatisfied suffering. Is this what is called life? Were we born for this? Very harmful results are there. All of us experience these harmful results. The whole world experiences these harmful results.

As stated earlier, the first matter is about having no end to taking these painkillers. The second matter is about needing for a stronger painkiller tomorrow and even far stronger for day after tomorrow. When we keep on taking painkillers, there will be a day that we run out of all of them. We may not be able to find a painkiller as we have already taken all of them, even the

strongest in the world. But suffering is left as it is. What should we do now? We have been approaching this state step by step or we have already reached it. You may have come across so many people in the society who have reached this state. Such people feel that there is no happiness in anything. Though happiness is there, as one has already experienced or used it as painkillers, such things do not make a person experiences happiness. The inner suffering does not go away. There isn't a new painkiller to take. One feels helpless with a big question mark. This journey devoid of mindfulness takes us to such a place. Devoid of mindfulness takes everybody to such places, nowhere else.

### **15. Unveiling of secrets**

If you get into the vehicle called devoid of mindfulness, you have to get off at such a place. Destination of passengers of the vehicle known as devoid of mindfulness is the helplessness. Therefore, you need to get off this vehicle before reaching that place. Otherwise, you'll go astray feeling stranded. When you comprehend on this, **get off that vehicle called devoid of mindfulness and get into the vehicle called mindfulness; see the suffering, find the person who asks for something,**

**investigate on what is looked for. Mindfulness investigates you. A person who is mindful is under investigation by mindfulness.** There are no secrets. A person who is devoid of mindfulness has secrets. Such a person is a secret for himself/herself. This is not about keeping secrets from others. The whole life of such a person is a secret for himself/herself. The whole life is a mystery for oneself. Death is a mystery for a person whose life is a mystery. **Mindfulness unveils secrets of life. Meditation unveils secrets of life. You need to be attentive to yourself. You need to be careful about yourself.** This is the best thing one can do for oneself.

## **16. Do not forget yourself**

*Dear Dhamma friends.* Therefore, be attentive to yourself all the time, as if a mother who protects with her life, her child, her only child (*Metta Sutta*). **Be careful about yourself all the time! Explore yourself all the time as if a mother keeps an eye on her child!** This does not mean that the mother keeps on looking at the child without doing anything else. In the meantime, she attends to other needs; cooking, tidying up the house and so on. No matter what she does, she is attentive to her

child. Likewise, one has to be attentive to oneself. **Don't forget yourself even for a moment.** We make thousands of promises to others saying "I will never ever forget you." It is a different matter whether you forget others or not. However, **you should not forget yourself.** Make that promise to yourself. **One should promise oneself "I will never ever forget myself. I will not forget myself while eating and be mindful about myself."** This is what is called mindfulness. **"I will not forget myself while brushing teeth. Even at that moment, I'll be careful about myself. I'll pay attention to myself."** If you don't pay attention to yourself, who else would do so? Who can pay attention to yourself? Even a person who loves you so much or thinks that living is impossible without you cannot be watchful of you at every moment. **Who can be watchful especially of your mind? Only you can be watchful of your mind. Therefore, you need to fulfil that responsibility for yourself. Be watchful of yourself!**

Pay attention to the person who suffers within. Such a person always asks for painkillers. Such a person does not know what else to ask for. Such a person is not aware of any medicine. Such a person does not know that there are medicines and treatments

available for complete cure of this illness. Because of this unawareness, such a person always asks for painkillers. You too give painkillers. Though the painkillers given in the beginning were rice water or a lullaby or a toy car or a doll, at present, severe painkillers need to be given to you. Today is not the last day for such needs. By tomorrow, even a more severe painkiller has to be given. There will be a day that there won't be any more painkiller left as all what is available have already been taken. No more painkillers are left, but suffering is still there as it is. What should be done at this juncture? Who should be told? Therefore, let's solve this problem beforehand. We are not late today. However, we may be too late then. Therefore, be mindful today! Be observant today!

## 17. Chain reaction

The next matter is more complex and more sensitive than this. What is the nature of these painkillers? What is the outcome of giving us everything we ask for? **The painkiller becomes a pain.** Sometimes, a pain we experience today is associated with a painkiller taken yesterday. A painkiller given today for a particular illness can become another illness by tomorrow.

Another painkiller given for this new illness can become a totally different illness in another week.

Just see, how this chain has come along joining links together. **Everything you refer to as suffering today was grasped by you in the past as comforts.** Just see clearly. Something that you thought of as a comfort in the past is a suffering in the present. **A painkiller taken in the past has become a pain today.** See clearly. **This matter is unseen as we do not look at it clearly. There is no painkiller which does not become a pain.** Even this word “painkiller” is wrong, as it is impossible to kill the pain. It is an illusion. Taking a painkiller distances us a little from reality. A certain technological device or a biological device distances us from reality as the pain itself is the reality. These devices interrupt and do not let us experience reality. As a result of this interruption, we do not feel the pain. However, this interruption is only temporary or continuous interruption is impossible.

## 18. Hypnotic life

In real sense, there is nothing called a painkiller. We experience something deceptive. **We experience a fallacy with all these painkillers. What we experience as happiness and comfort is not the true happiness but a realistic happiness or a hallucinatory experience.** It is not the true happiness we experience while laughing, dancing and enjoying with others, often thinking that we have won the life and so on. Though such experiences are there, just see for how long this happiness is going to last. Not for long, as the pain aggravates no sooner the power of a painkiller wears off. When this happens, do you think that life is won? Do you feel like dancing or throwing parties anymore? Obviously not! Now you cry and lament alone. See this truth. This truth cannot be concealed. **The absolute truth is the non-existence of something called a painkiller. Only things that temporarily hypnotise you are there.** You can be hypnotised temporarily. A food or a dress or watching a movie/drama may hypnotise a person for a short while. As long as a person is in hypnotism, there is no suffering. No sooner you come out of hypnotism, you step into reality, which is suffering. If those were painkiller, we wouldn't have experienced pain

after a short while. The painkiller itself has become a pain now. At present, we have to take a painkiller for a painkiller taken in the past. We have to take a painkiller tomorrow for a painkiller we take today. There is no end to this. Is this the life? Have we acquired a life that is impossible without these painkillers? Is this the life that we are proud of?

*Dear Dhamma friends.* There may be a life more pleasant than this. There may be a life more realistic than this. There may be a life more peaceful and wholesome than this. Let's find out that life. Such a life is not at Nilambe. It is not a life to be experienced while sitting at a meditation centre. That life is with you. However, we have not looked at that life. We have not made out that life. That is the problem. Having completely forgotten about that life, we have become inheritors of a deceptive, hallucinatory and hypnotic life. We see hypnotism as life. We see hallucination as life. We see deception as life.

Be awake from there! It is not a good place to stay long. Don't try to live in hypnotism everyday. **Don't think of living in deceptions and hallucinations forever while talking painkillers.** See the problem directly. **Look at the pain without taking painkillers.** We say that life is a suffering. One may say

that it is not only life but the whole world is a suffering. Another may say that it is not only this world but the whole universe is a suffering. Even beyond that, one may say that saṃsāra is a suffering. All these sound like the truth. At the same time, there is no absolute truth in any of those. **As we have not solved the primary inner problem, everything has become a suffering now.**

This suffering is not something in the world or on the earth or in the head. One day, a patient who visited a doctor says “my whole body aches.” Then the doctor asked “How do you know that you whole body aches?” The patient showed the parts of his body that were painful by touching different parts with his finger. The patient said “I have come down with a deadly disease and each part of my body aches. Therefore, please investigate the whole body.” The doctor did not investigate the whole body. Instead he said “let me investigate your finger.” Then the doctor found out that the finger was wounded. The wounded finger was painful whatever it touched, even the ground.

The problem is not the ground or the knee but the manner we touch the world. **If one touches the world with a painful**

**mind, the world is a suffering. If one touches the life with a wounded mind, the life is a suffering.** You do not have to give solutions for the whole world but to make up your mind. For instance, getting the finger cured is sufficient. Without looking at the illness or without treating the part where the illness is, we keep on looking for painkillers for the whole life. Instead of that, **look at yourself or your inner nature, as only you can see your inner nature.** You inner nature allows only you to look at it. One can ignore this. However, it is possible only for you to look at your inner nature. See yourself. Live while seeing yourself. Understand yourself.

*Dear Dhamma friends.* **Understanding with a vision about yourself makes you a calmer, a more peaceful, a more detached and a more serene person.** Meditation is for achieving that. Leave some time of your life to practise meditation for yourself. None of us have any refuge other than meditation. Therefore, practise meditation to find out that refuge.

**May the Triple Gem Bless You!!!**