

Sit on Your Own SEAT



Upul Nishantha Gamage

On the way of the journey started with your mind, you let the feelings and defilements known as the passenger drive you around while you sit in the back. It is only the mindfulness that can hand over the steering wheel back to you. Therefore, practise meditation to sharpen your mindfulness and thereby to become the pilot of your own life.

-Upul Nishantha Gamage



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Sit on Your Own Seat

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1. Priceless peaceful joy

Dear Dhamma friends. All of you have come to Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre on this Posaon full-moon day and try to experience some relief and mental well-being, as ordinary life is a heavy burden. If you think of yesterday and also tomorrow, you may have fought over time yesterday and will fight over time tomorrow. No matter how much we fight, we are always behind the time. At this moment, all of you are engaged in an endeavour to offer certain mental well-being and peaceful joy not experienced yesterday and also may not be experienced tomorrow, to your own life.

One of the greatest gifts one can offer is peaceful joy. This peaceful joy is an experience, which cannot be bought with any amount of money. What is the value of peaceful joy? Can we give a monetary value, in LKR or in any other currency, for peaceful joy? Unfortunately, we let go of priceless peaceful joy for things that possess monetary values. One may think that money is more valuable than peaceful joy. Also think that things we buy with money or earning money to buy such things are more valuable than peaceful joy.

2. Needs and wants

All these things have some value as long as needs are there. Anything can become worthless as soon as needs disappear. Therefore, it is not possible to absolutely ask about or answer to questions with regard to the value of anything. Just take a person as an example. Is he/she worthy? For whom is he/she worthy? One may find a particular person worthy. The same person may not be worthy for another.

Worthiness of anybody/anything depends on needs and wants. As long as the need is there, things or people are worthy for us. As soon as the needs disappear, things that we have grasped as so important do not amount to a bucket of spit. Things worthy may turn worthless and vice versa. These things just circle around. A person or a thing that you did not pay much attention to earlier might receive your attention today. You might take that particular person or thing to be so worthy today. However, the same person or the thing might become worthless by tomorrow.

3. Three corners of the triangle

We spend the whole day going around this circle of “worthy/unworthy” and “need/no need”. Similarly, weeks, months and years pass by. We spend the whole lifetime in a similar manner, going around this circle of “worthy/unworthy” and “need/no need”. At times, we do not know whether a particular person exists or not. At times, we do not even know a particular thing is there or not. One day, we may need such persons or things all of a sudden. We may reach a point where living is impossible without such persons or things. We also fight, rumble and go on hunger strikes over such people and things. At another time, we say that it is immaterial whether such people/things are there or not. So it is a circle or a triangle of “worthy/unworthy” and “no need.” We keep jumping from one corner of this triangle to the other or going around this circle.

As living in this manner is a heavy burden and a tremendous exhaustion, we have come to the top of this mountain on a day like today. We sit in this posture, though with some difficulty, and try to step back at least for a moment from this cycle of *saṃsāra* (cycle of suffering), as peaceful joy is not found in all

these three places in the circle or at three corners of the triangle; worthy/unworthy/no need. If peaceful joy were there, we would have experienced it endlessly by now. Peaceful joy is not found at any supermarket for sale. If it were there, we would have already bought it. This peaceful joy which we could not acquire can be found within us in meditation. This is the first important point. **In meditation, one looks for peaceful joy within.**

4. Involvement of others

Many things can be done for us by others. For instance, many things with regard to our body can be done by others; feeding, putting to sleep, brushing, bathing, combing, giving medicine, moving here and there. It is impossible to say that something in particular associated with the body cannot be done by an external person. There is no need for us to attend to all these bodily needs by ourselves, as we can hand them over to another person or machines. Even the knowledge and ideas can be given to us by another. Our heads can be filled with ideas, whether we accept them or not. Often we cannot refuse these ideas. We cannot say that certain ideas are alright and certain other ideas are unacceptable, as our head is not something closed. Though

the brain is covered with a skull, it is open to the whole universe. Therefore, ideas, opinions, concepts, attitudes, ideologies and philosophies of others get into our heads knowingly or unknowingly. These things are a result of what we hear, read and see. It is impossible to stop these ideas from migrating to our heads. Even if we do not study on our own, the knowledge can be implanted in our heads to some extent. It is possible for a person to make another person knowledgeable, though not fully, but to some extent. Ideas can also be inserted from one mind to another. Some ideas that are rooted in us can also be eliminated. There is no need for us to attend to everything associated with the mind either. As stated earlier, we often do things associated with the body, though there is no absolute necessity, as another person can help us by doing such things. Another person can help us, to some extent, even with things associated with mental intelligence.

5. Be watchful!

However, there is something impossible for another person to do for us, which is giving peaceful joy. Nobody can give us peaceful joy. It cannot be passed around from hand to hand or

head to head. **Peaceful joy is something that cannot be given or taken but to be emerged within.** If a person has the need, he/she can make it crops up within.

Dear Dhamma friends. Such an exercise is called meditation. In other words, **being watchful of inner nature or of your own interior is called meditation.** It is impossible for another to do it for you. “What do we think? What type of a thought is there at this moment? Who can be so attentive to us?” Nobody can be attentive to us, no matter how close someone is. One can check fever from moment to moment. One can measure heartbeat or blood pressure etc. However, **nobody would know what we think about, feel about, the type of thoughts that arise and disappear and also suffering and heaviness associated with such thoughts.** Who can enquire about such things on behalf of us? Who can pay attention to such things on behalf of us? Can the parents do it for their children? Can the children do it for their parents? It is the same with husband and wife or among very close friends. Even the closest friend of us cannot be always on the lookout for our inner nature. This attentiveness is called meditation. **Always being watchful of oneself is called meditation.** Why should we be watchful of ourselves? As we lose peaceful joy on our own, we need to be watchful all the

time. Nobody else is responsible for loss of our peaceful joy but us. **We need to be watchful because we have become our own burden or our own problem.**

6. The real bitterness

We have only one crisis, which is the view of “We.” There is no problem or illness either. The **only illness or problem or crisis is the view of “I”; the crisis known as “I,” the illness known as “I” or the virus known as “I.”** There is no other germ here. Therefore, one has to be watchful of oneself, if he/she needs to have a healthy inner nature, feel light or not to be a burden on him/her. Sometimes, a person possessing a spiritually developed mind may be able to see the inner nature of another, as Buddhism refers to such abilities known as penetrative knowledge of the mind of the others and knowledge of the others’ mind. However, those who possessing such abilities cannot uproot but only cover the mental suffering of others. We have been covering our mental suffering all along. Moreover, we request others to cover our suffering.

We request others to spread bee honey over the bitter taste known as suffering. We use everything and everybody as something sweet for covering the bitter taste named “I.” This is like small children who have been eagerly begging for sweets, toffees and chocolates from whoever they meet. They do not ask for vehicles or property or positions but always beg for sweets. That is their childish nature. If such a child does not meditate, he/she would be begging always for sweets till death from everybody they meet or run into or associate with. They ask for sweetness from each experience. Why does somebody ask for sweetness from each experience? That is to cover the bitterness of inner nature. The inner nature is so bitter. **One tries to cover the bitterness named “I” with the sweetness named the world.** This is the childish or infantile or cheap nature. This covering may be successful for a short while but not so in the long run, because of three reasons.

7. The three reasons

The first reason is the inability to get rid of bitterness by applying something sweet, no matter how sweet that is. **After finishing liking of the sweet layer, one has to enjoy or eat the**

bitterness underneath. The teeth of a person who always looks for sweetness become sensitive.

Though we think that the world is a bowl of honey, it is not the case, which is the second reason. The world is not 100 per cent made of chocolate. It would have been so good if such a world were there. However, the human world is not 100 per cent sweet or dainty. There might be worlds of that sort but the human world is not such a place. There are no human beings who are 100 per cent pleasant or good either. Similarly, there isn't a place or a thing that is 100 per cent good. **A person who is asking for sweetness from the world gets a mixture of both sweetness and bitterness.** We may or may not get what we ask for. Whether our demands are met or not, often we have to accept things that we did not ask for as such things come behind our demands. As stated earlier, this is the second reason or the second point, the first being the emergence of bitterness after using up the sweetness. **It is impossible to cover the bitterness named "I" with the sweetness named "others" all the time.** The inner bitterness cannot be covered with an outer layer of icing all the time, as the latter will be used up with time by licking. As mentioned earlier, the second point is the inability to extract only sweetness from the world, as the world is not just a

bowl of honey. The outer world may be even harsher than the inner nature.

The third point is about our diverse attitudes regarding the taste. As a result, **our needs and wants associated with goodness and badness or beauty and ugliness or sweetness and bitterness keep on changing. We do not wish for the same thing over and over**, though an animal may live like that. For instance, an animal may eat the same feed all the time. Human beings cannot be like animals. A human being is a living organism, who lives in the fallacy known as diversity. Therefore, humans become monotonous very easily. **Humans tend to get tired of everything; food, music, apparels, as they cannot enjoy the same thing over and over.** One may not like to wear the same dress tomorrow, not because it is dirty or smelly. This is a mental factor, which makes us reluctant to eat the same food or watch the same drama tomorrow and listen to the same song in awhile. Moreover, always a variety is expected as we get tired of experiencing the same thing. Therefore, **this transaction known as beautifying the inner harshness with outer beauty is unsuccessful or is a loss or is discontented all along.** There isn't a contented or a satisfied person. We cannot see a satisfied face. The emptiness is seen in every face, young

or old. This is probably because of the expectations that are sky-high or inability to meet all these expectations or not having accomplished what was wished for. Therefore, we feel so disappointed. It is very difficult to come across a face or eyes full of contentment. Always we feel insufficiency. We keep on asking for something else or something new. In human society, we often see faces that are laid up because of this disappointment or monotony or illness.

8. Seeing the mind

Dear Dhamma friends. Therefore, in meditation, we try to see our inner nature instead of asking for external beauty or sweetness. Moreover, we try to be watchful of what is happening within, which is absolutely essential. Only a person who is watchful of him/her can see and recognize himself/herself. All these things such as **suffering or unrest or discontentment or impatience or restlessness emerge within**, not through ears. The suffering has never entered through ears or eyes. The suffering does not enter from anywhere. **We create suffering within. The fountain of suffering or unrest or pressure is in us.** Unrest crops up within and is transmitted

through eyes or mouth or walk. However, these things do not enter into inner nature. Therefore, if we are cautious about the real peaceful joy not about the superficial sweetness, we often need to pay attention to the mind, the thoughts and the inner nature. This cannot be handed over to anybody else. We may be able to hand everything over to someone else except being attentive to the mind.

Therefore, these Dhamma friends give the first priority for being attentive to and paying attention to your mind today. We know that **the mind or the thinking or the thoughts is not something that can be seen with eyes but to be known or felt by those who are mindful.** Therefore, mindfulness is something very important in meditation and also in the journey in search of peaceful joy. Mindfulness is an absolutely essential road kit or equipment required to go on this journey. **Mindfulness is a mental ability or a mental skill that can and should be cultivated.** Only mindfulness can see your mind, not somebody else's mind. It is very much essential to have a very sharp and skilful consciousness and mindfulness to see your own mind.

9. No prior notice

Thousands of thoughts, feelings, mental contents and memories arise in the mind and disappear in the blinking of an eye. All these things happen instantly. Anger arises instantly. Just one second is enough to get angry or to cry. No point in making plans for crying. Just one second or an incident taken place within just one second is enough for a person to cry or to get scared. On one hand, the mind is so fast. On the other hand, the mind is so instant. Many things that are happening turn upside down or inside out at a very fast rate. For instance, even one second is too long for turning happiness into unhappiness or love into hatred or courage into cowardliness. In this regard, **the first point is the swiftness of the mind and the second point is the instant inversion of the mind.**

The third point is the inversion of the mind with no prior notice. The mind does not tell us about the thoughts that would arise in another hour. The mind does not tell us about the anger that may crop up in 30 minutes or about crying on another day. There is no such prior notice. These three points are very important; **swiftness, instant inversion of the mind and not giving prior notice by the mind.** Sometimes, we are informed

of power cuts or water cuts in advance. Therefore, we can get ready. As a result, those who have got ready do not have to be in the dark. **As the mind does not inform us anything in advance, we are in the dark forever.** If it takes a long time for anger to arise or if it arises gradually, we would have enough time to take some action. However, as anger arises so swiftly and there is no long gap or long process in between the thoughts, we don't have an opportunity and time to act on. Therefore, the mind pressurises us all the time. This sounds like an injustice, as the mind does not give prior notice leaving no time for us to get ready.

10. Falling off the world's end

Dear Dhamma friends. Therefore, we have no other solution but to be mindful about this swift mind and fine mental process. If not, we have no idea what type of a precipice we would fall into. We have no idea about the type of pathetic and sorrowful experiences that our mind makes us to undergo. When you visit a place like the world's end, we experience a very scenic environment. We often visit such places feeling so happy and delightful. Therefore, we reach the peak of such places while

singing, eating and drinking. What we see when look down from the peak is also so beautiful. Having reached the top of such places, we might even feel so proud.

However, no sooner the mist covers the area, or when the restlessness crops up in twinkling of an eye, one may fall off the top within a second. This does not take a long time. Likewise, happiness totally turns into unhappiness. Did we climb up to that peak with such a difficulty while dancing, singing, spending money and taking leave to experience something like that? No. However, as a result of negligence, this joy can turn inside out within a second. We would call it “falling off the world’s end.”

We have fallen hundreds and thousands of times off such world’s ends throughout our life because of lack of mindfulness. This may not be about falling down physically. Whether we fall down physically or not, we may fall down mentally in any second. Especially, when we have very high expectations like a multi-storied building or a castle in the sky, it is possible to slip from it because of lack of mindfulness. For this, lack of mindfulness or deceitfulness or mental confusion for a second is more than enough.

Therefore, mindfulness is absolutely important to be attentive to self-expectations and expectations from others. This is important **as suffering always crops up with expectations and aspirations.** We had a wish before experiencing suffering. This wish we had was not for experiencing suffering but for experiencing comforts. **There is no suffering anywhere, if one does not wish for experiencing comforts.** As the world's ends are associated with all expectations and aspirations of your mind, it is important to be mindful about them. Otherwise, one falls from those expectations and aspirations.

If we have ever fallen, it is obvious that we have fallen from expectations. We have fallen from the edge of an expectation as a result of shaking of a tiny particle. **We need to be very carefully step onto the world's end called expectations. It would be so much better to live with no expectations. However, as it is impossible to live like that, we need to be very much mindful when climbing up step by step with expectations. We need to be very much attentive too.** This mindfulness and attentiveness is important as we can slip at any time due to our negligence or carelessness for a second, which can result in an unbearable suffering and unrest. One may have to suffer for a long time over these things.

Who are we going to tell about this suffering? No need to tell another but to be mindful. If one wants to protect oneself, the first thing to do is to be mindful about one's mind. Protect the mind. **The person who wants to protect the life needs to protect his/her mind. The person who looks for peaceful joy needs to be careful about his/her mind.**

11. The real miracle

Dear Dhamma friends. Where do you see the mind? **The mind is seen only by being mindful.** One of the best places to be mindful is the breath. Therefore, Buddhism has given an infinite value to breathing meditation. An ordinary person might not see any value in a breath. A breath is valuable for an ordinary person only when panting or wheezing or drowning. A value is given for a breath only under such circumstances. Otherwise, a breath has no value for an ordinary person. There are so many things more valuable than a breath. **But for a person who is in search of peaceful joy, there is nothing more important than the breath.** The breath is the life. The breath has helped you with everything enjoyed in life. At this moment, how many expectations do we have about happiness to be experienced in

the future? The breath is essential for all these expectations. **The breath is the life and the life is the breath.** There is no life where there is no breath. That is the worldly side or worldly value of the breath.

More than a worldly value, the breath possesses a spiritual value. Each breath makes us awake. Each breath makes us to be a person who is mindful. Just see what a miracle it is. There is no life after birth if a person is unable to breathe. Life ends if one doesn't breathe even after making him/her to breathe forcefully. The breath gives one's life. It is the breath that has given us our life. Similarly, the breath has given us a spiritual life. Worldly life that the breath has given us might just wear away while eating, drinking, making money, enjoying, and suffering. Having spent time like that, worldly life might come to an end. However, **the miracle of converting a worldly life into a spiritual life is also done by the breath.** That is the wonder of breathing meditation. The breath gives the life. **The mindfulness about the breath makes the life alive. Though the breath has given us life, the life is not going to be alive if there is no mindfulness or not knowing what is happening.**

The breathing meditation makes the lifeless life a living life. Numerous descriptions are there about miracles. Many are interested in and performing miracles like creating, walking above the ground and vanishing. These acts might be miracles. However, absolutely **the real miracle is the conversion of a worldly life into a spiritual life.** This is the real miracle and the wonder. I restate that **converting a worldly life given by the breath into a spiritual life is the real miracle.**

A person who is attentive to the breath can see himself/herself. What is the reason for looking at the breath? That is to see oneself, to see the mind. The breath is a place where the mind can be seen. Firstly, we see the breath. Secondly, we see the mind through the breath. As a result, the swift mind starts to calm down. In breathing meditation, the mind starts to calm down to a level where it can be grasped by one's sight. The mind and the thoughts start to calm down in the same manner as the breath. **Now the unseen mind starts to be visible. Is there a better miracle than this? A mind impossible to be seen is visible now. One can see the mind now. One can see what is happening in the mind now.** It is impossible for the mind to turn things inside out within seconds as you are closely there

with all the thoughts. The mind cannot make you cry or get angry or feel sad without your knowledge or in secret.

All these things happened before in the dark. At once, when the darkness of delusion covers us like a mist, we do not know where we step onto. We fall down no sooner stepping onto a slippery floor or an empty space. Now you see all the thoughts with the help of mindfulness or light of mindfulness or rays of mindfulness or the light known as mindfulness. “What is the thought? Where can I go with this thought? Is there a basis for what is being thought? Do I think of things that are possible to happen in reality? Can I make such expectations?” The mindfulness gives rise to wisdom about all these. As a result, thinking can be done wisely, not in a childish manner. We can climb up step by step realistically. Therefore, breathing meditation is very much important. We practise breathing meditation not only to look at the breath, though we experience it first, but also to look at the mind. Look at the mind gradually. **See what happens to the mind during inhaling. See what happens to the mind during exhaling.**

In the beginning of breathing meditation, you may have experienced the restless mind or the wandering mind, not the

restlessness of the mind. The mind wanders here and there. The mind jumps from one place to another. You don't even see the breath in the beginning. If you meditate for one hour, it is doubtful whether you would notice the breath even twice. However, if you continue to practise breathing meditation with confidence and without giving up, you may get to see the breath more and more. The more you see the breath, the less your mind become restless and the more you are aware of what you think and what is thought.

Only a person who sees the mind can be called a human being. Such a person possesses a developed mind. One has to see the advancement of the mind. **One who sees his/her own mind is not misled or cannot be deceived. This is because, in the end, we get deceived by our own thoughts. Though we think that we have been deceived by others, in real sense, we are deceived by us.** Our mind says that a particular person is good and honest and we are deceived by such thoughts. We accept 100 per cent what our mind says. However, nobody can deceive a person who is attentive to his/her mind.

12. Discoloured thinking

Dear Dhamma friends. Thinking does not stop at thinking but creates turmoil. This is the next point, which becomes obvious when you deeply explore the mind. Thinking creates turmoil. Thinking creates feelings. Thinking creates defilements. Just think about anything; your home or your vehicle or a friend of you or your job or yesterday or tomorrow. Just think freely. Within few seconds, such thinking makes a person emotional, agitated or excited. Defilements creep into such thinking. It is difficult to think about anything without becoming emotional or excited and allowing the defilements to creep into. No matter what you think or no matter how good the person you are thinking of is, a defilement creeps from somewhere into that thinking.

If thinking is colourless, only the first or the second thoughts are colourless. Afterwards, **certain defilements make the thinking discoloured. The colourless thinking is made colourful or multi-coloured or discoloured by some sort of defilement, a feeling or an agitator.** In the beginning of thinking, there isn't such an idea. However, it happens within a short time; anger comes, jealousy comes, ego crops up, vanity comes and

humiliation comes. Just see how thinking is discoloured by all these, though it is not the case at start. However, no sooner we get one, two or three thoughts, these feelings crop up from nowhere. Afterwards, the thinking is emotional, agitative and is based on defilements. As a result, thinking has got coloured and discoloured. It is not clean anymore.

We say that this is the nature of the mind. No, it is not the nature of the mind. Appearance of anger is not the nature of the mind. We have no right to say so. Coming down with cold is not the nature. All these are distortions not naturality. Anger is not naturality. Why do you want to make anger your normality? The more you think in this manner, the more and more the anger gets settled down. The more you think that getting angry is your nature, the more and more these things become your character. **No. Anger is a distortion. Suffering is a distortion not naturality.** If suffering is naturality, we can never get rid of it. How can naturality be changed? It is possible to make a distortion natural. Therefore, don't say that all these things are our nature or natural. Just make out how these things are happening. Just see how these things are arising.

Those who don't see how incidents are happening fight against them. As such, a high priority is given for incidents not for thoughts. A high weightage is given for incidents. Some incidents are considered horrendous. We look for incidents causing anger, provoking anger and so on. Many incidents happen at work, at home, on the road etc. We think that it is the incidents that make us suffer. Therefore, all these incidents are categorised and labelled. **An incident is merely an incident; no anger inside any incident, no tears inside any incident, no fear in any incident.** The incident is only an incident. However, we shed tears, heave and get angry when incidents combine with thoughts.

13. The hidden culprit

These thoughts are at fault, though the culprit points the finger at another person. It is the culprit who points the finger at others. **The culprit says that he/she is flawless but the incident is faulty or it is the fault of the incident.** Who do we listen to? We listen to what the culprit says. We accept what the culprit says. We have accepted what the culprit says, not just once but a million times. The culprit says that he/she is flawless. So we

accept it. Having accepted, we blame incidents, we punish incidents. We have punished incidents all the time. We have fought against incidents all the time. We have quarrelled over incidents all the time. We have tried to change incidents. The culprit is hidden within us and laughs at us. That culprit can make mistakes every day. The culprit knows that we don't look at him/her. Though we don't look at the culprit, we believe in every word uttered by the culprit. This is such a loyalty. We are very loyal. We are not fair. We are not impartial.

Therefore, the second road kit is the impartiality, which is known in the Dhamma as equanimity. Be impartial. Don't rush to accept what the mind says as the truth. "What I think is right. What my mind says is right." Just be impartial without being loyal. The person who is loyal can never end suffering. Such a person waves at suffering every day. In breathing meditation, the next quality develops in us is equanimity.

14. Deception of feelings and defilements

Dear Dhamma friends. In this manner, **when one is careful and attentive to oneself, he/she sees thoughts, feelings brought**

about by thoughts and how one thinks according to feelings brought about by thoughts. All these three situations can be seen by being attentive. The three situations: how thinking takes place, how feelings are developed by the way we think, afterwards how feelings or suffering take over or start thinking. In other words, **suffering becomes the thinker. This thinker thinks in a manner that intensifies suffering.**

In the beginning, it was us not the suffering who started thinking. Having had thoughts for awhile, suffering crops up without our knowledge. Afterwards, we let suffering take over thinking. We hand our thinking over to anger. Now, thinking takes place in anger. In the beginning, it was not anger but we were thinking. When we go along with the mind, on the way, the passenger named anger gets into the vehicle known as “we” or “I.” In the beginning, you were the driver of the vehicle. You started the journey with the mind while thinking. Having been misled on the way, you have let the unknown passenger named anger get into the vehicle. In this manner, you let fear, sorrow, jealousy and other feelings get into the vehicle known as thinking. Afterwards, these feelings take over. **These feelings become the driver.** You have let these feelings become the driver. What a foolishness this is. You become the passenger

and sit in the back. Afterwards, **the anger drives the vehicle with you to wherever the anger decides.** The anger keeps on driving while running others down and injuring you on the way. This is what has happened everyday.

When the anger stops at a place beyond which it cannot go, it would leave the vehicle. Having stepped out of the vehicle, the anger wouldn't help you; who have got injured and stuck with anger. Afterwards, repentance comes. Now you hand the driving seat over to repentance. The repentance drives you some distance. In this manner, just see who the pilot of the air-plane called you is. Who the captain of the ship called you is. At start, you were the driver or the pilot or the captain, but not anymore.

The driver/pilot/captain changes depending on the feelings and defilements. It is our foolishness to believe in feelings and defilements, whatever they are. As we trust these feelings, we just close our eyes and stay like blind, deaf and dumb persons, letting them take us wherever they want. We do not question and enquire about the way of thinking. "What would happen by thinking in this particular manner?" We would not ask them to stop either. This won't stop automatically. Instead, we are driven continuously by different drivers; feelings, impulses and

defilements-from one suffering to another, from one unrest to another, from one discontentment to another and from one turmoil to another. Therefore, **you have to take the steering wheel into your hand.** It belongs to you. **It is only the mindfulness that can hand the steering wheel of the ship called you over to you.** That is the miracle. You become the pilot of your life again. Is there any miracle beyond that?

Still the feelings like anger are there. But these feelings are not in front of you, but behind. The anger cannot become your guide. The anger cannot drag you to places of its choice. The anger has to follow you now.

Where would you want to go? You want to reach peaceful joy, calmness, patience and quietness. If the feelings don't like such places, they would just leave. You see how anger comes. You see how anger struggles to be your guide and tries to give you directions. Anger would tell you to turn left, turn right and drive fast. All this time, we have driven according to anger. We have lived according to anger. But for the first time, as the mindfulness is with you, you do not have to abide by them. You do not forget that you are in the driving seat. Therefore, you are very attentive to all the bends and junctions. These defilements

can no longer control you. Though defilements come, they cannot direct you. These defilements cannot drag you over a long distance. No feeling can drag you onto the world's end and throw you down.

Meditation gives us that certificate of responsibility or insurance or protection. Nobody, not even the parents or children can give us such protection. No insurance company can give that certificate. Meditation gives that to all of us. We have no other protection. **One who abides by the Dhamma is protected by the Dhamma.** There is no protection other than the protection given by meditation. There is no security other than the security given by the Dhamma/meditation. **This protection/security is given by the Dhamma/mindfulness/meditation. If not, we suffer as we get burnt by thousands of burning defilements coming from within. Moreover, we suffer as we don't know what to do when defilements come.**

15. Burning inner nature

Just look at a burnt person or a person being burnt. Such a person does not know what to do. He/she may run here and there

or roll over. We possess a burning inner nature or a burnt inside. We, the wordings, possess a burning inner nature or burning inside, not a calm and quiet inner nature. None of us can say that we are cool and have no more fire. Only the perfected persons (*Arahants*) have made such a remarkable statement. We try to reach that point because the present is on fire. It is a different matter whether we are aware of it or not. **Only in meditation, we see how much our inner nature is burning and how many fires cause this burning.**

We do not have only one thirst. Just see, when a thirsty person knows that there is water at home, he/she would be patient till goes home. Afterwards, this person will enjoy a glass of pure water. If the thirst is unbearable, on the way, this person will drink something not so good. If one cannot tolerate thirst for an hour or two, he/she is compelled to drink something, probably containing chemicals, instead of pure water. As a result, one's thirst may disappear momentarily. If the thirst of a person is very much unbearable, he/she may drink any liquid at hand. For instance, a person who is stranded in the sea may even drink sea water though such water can aggravate thirst. You may have heard of stories about people who have got stranded. Sometimes, one may drink his/her own urine, if thirst is very

much unbearable. This is the same with hunger. If hunger is unbearable, anything can be eaten. If we can bear up hunger, we can wait to eat something tasty and wholesome. In a situation where hunger is unbearable, all these standards, cultures and civilizations leave us, making it possible to eat even human flesh. It is impossible to say that we won't eat something in particular, if hunger is very much unbearable. Hunger is a fire. The faster the fire blazes, the more we become furious. Thirst is also a fire. In general, all of us are furious over physical hunger and thirst.

However, **we are more furious over mental fires and fires of defilements.** Anger is a fire. This inner fire is blazing. Therefore, we get angry at all the incidents that we set our eyes on. This anger is not due to any problem associated with incidents, as if we feel like eating/drinking everything we can get hold of, when furious over hunger/thirst. Similarly, a person who is furious over anger gets angry at any incident. There are no problems with incidents but thoughts. Likewise, a person who is furious over desires tends to long for everything seen or heard. A person who is furious over fear is scared of everything. This is the truth. The problem is not the incident or sea water. The problem is the aggravation of thirst to a level,

which makes us drinking sea water. These incidents are so tiny. The thoughts are so big. However, we don't see the big thought. This big thought tells us that the incident is big.

Dear Dhamma friends. If we don't put these internal fires of defilements out, there will be a day that we get angry at, cry over and get scared of all the incidents. If these fires reach that level, which is possible unless we put them out, these fires of defilements of the mind aggravate continuously. Therefore, we get angrier, suffer more and feel more jealous than when we were little. Unless we put these fires out, there will be a day that we see the whole world as a pile of suffering or a place which makes us angry. **These fires will take us to a place where there is no peaceful joy and consolation.** Therefore, we ought to know that the next step, after having reached such a place, would be like the one which made you fall from the world's end.

16. The real friend

Dear Dhamma friends. You need to calm your mind down without any delay. Tomorrow may be too late for that. **You need to be watchful of your mind, as if a person who is**

trying to put out a fire on top of his/her head, whether you are at Nilambe or at home or on the road or at work. A person who is watchful of his/her own mind is known as the meditator.

Be watchful of yourself. You cannot hand that responsibility over to another. Don't postpone looking at yourself by keeping many things, which can be handed over to others, on your shoulder. It is a big crime. Therefore, be attentive always to yourself. Breath helps you to be attentive to yourself. In our life, there is nothing/nobody closer than the breath. Therefore, be friendly with the breath. Make the breath a friend of you. **Each in-breath will tell you what is happening in your mind at that moment. Each out-breath will help you to let go of what is in your mind.**

When you are watchful, you will see the passengers, who enter into your mind on the way. You can recognize the defilements entering into your mind in disguise as passengers. If you recognise those defilements, just treat them as passengers. **Don't let the anger or desire sail the ship known as life. Always let the mindfulness do that.** Just see the volcanoes that emerge, which are not external but internal. Try to put that fire out. If not

we will fight against, grasp and entangle with all the incidents like a person who is furious over hunger and thirst. We'll eat and drink things that are digestible or indigestible and good or bad.

Dear Dhamma friends. A person who is experiencing peaceful joy emerges when all these things are fallen in place properly. Such a person does not suffer because of oneself or others and of the past or the future. A person who breathes in peace is there. At that point, you can always share your peaceful joy with others. Till then, we share the suffering with others. We share the suffering embraced by us. We share the anger embraced by us. **We can share the peaceful joy with everybody on a day that we let go of defilements embraced by us.** Meditation takes us remarkably on a beautiful and colourful journey. I end this morning meditation programme by requesting you to calm down, cool down and become peaceful step by step in the journey of life.

May the Triple Gem Bless You!!!