

The Happiness of Letting Go



Upul Nishantha Gamage

As a tree knows the theory of nature and the art of letting go, it does not grab the mature leaves, ripened fruits and blossoming flowers, which fall silently without hurting the tree or leaving scars on its branches. Though there are seasons of shedding leaves, ripening and falling fruits, blossoming and withering flowers, it is impossible to make a timetable for losing what we have.

Nature gives us beautiful, delicious and elegant things for a short time and then takes them back from us. Therefore, be happy about what you already have. Letting go of the things you have from your mind before you lose them makes you happy. Letting go of the thoughts associated with the things that you don't need makes you even happier. Meditation offers us the happiness that arises as a result of letting go. As meditation is a process that makes us see the entirety of things and understand the theory of nature, we can live happily, like a tree.



Published by

Upul Nishantha Gamage

Nilambe Deshana Publication Board

Buddhist Meditation Centre

Nilambe, Sri Lanka

Dhamma Dāna

For Free Distribution Only

ISBN 955-44634-7-9





Light of Nilambe

22

Dhamma Dāna

In memory of

our beloved parents

May this merit be conducive for them
to attain Nibbāna!

with Love and Gratitude

Dharmadasa Senadheera and Manel Senadheera

The Happiness of Letting Go

Talk given by

Upul Nishantha Gamage

On August 20, 2013 (Nikini Full-moon Day)

At Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

Translated and transcribed by

Chamara Illeperuma

Published by

Nilambe Deshana Publication Board

Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

Nilambe, Sri Lanka

For further readings and audios

www.nilambe.net

www.nilambe-deshana.net

For further information

upulnilambe@yahoo.com

ISBN 978 – 955 – 44634 – 7 – 9

Graphic design by Chamara Illeperuma

Copyright © Upul Nishantha Gamage

November 2013

Printer: Sanduni Offset Printers (Pvt.) Ltd.

No. 4/1, Sarasavi Uyana Good Shed Road,

Sarasavi Uyana, Peradeniya

Tel./Fax 081-2387777

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Problems associated with the body | 9 |
| 2. Mental discontent over everything | 11 |
| 3. Energy for the body and the mind | 13 |
| 4. The cause of loss of patience | 14 |
| 5. Exchange between the mind and the body | 15 |
| 6. The cause of the collapsing mind | 18 |
| 7. The mind drags the body along | 20 |
| 8. The selfish mind | 22 |
| 9. The helpless body | 23 |
| 10. What makes you rich or poor? | 25 |
| 11. Useless solutions | 26 |
| 12. What makes you happy and rich? | 27 |
| 13. Wealthy but poor | 28 |
| 14. The first kind of happiness | 30 |
| 15. The second kind of happiness | 31 |
| 16. The theory of nature | 32 |
| 17. 'Understanding' makes you rich | 36 |
| 18. 'Do not have' vs 'do not need' | 38 |
| 19. The smartest question | 41 |
| 20. What does craving do to you? | 42 |
| 21. Listen to meditation | 44 |

Previous Publications of Light of Nilambe

1. What is human life?
2. Be an outsider if you want to change the inside
3. Seeing emptiness
4. Suffering is a dream
5. In between happiness and unhappiness
6. Buddhism = Heartfulness + Mindfulness
7. No colour no shape
8. Living with awareness & watching thoughts and emotions
9. Sit on your own seat
10. Illusion of painful painkillers
11. Disentangling tangles
12. Rain of thoughts

13. No burning
14. Springs from the heart
15. Multiple characters multiple suffering
16. Save time by investing in time
17. Hatred, love & mettā
18. Acquiring a mind like pure gold
19. Seeing the nature of the world
20. Living inside a world of stories
21. The beauty of the silent mind

www.nilambe.net/light-of-nilambe.php

FOR INFORMATION ON OBTAINING OR SPONSORING ANY “LIGHT OF
NILAMBE” BOOKLETS PLEASE CONTACT: **upulnilambe@yahoo.com**
info@nilambe-deshana.net

1. Problems associated with the body

Dear Dhamma Friends, on this Nikini Full-moon day, at a time when you are crammed into this small hall for about one and half or two hours, it is quite normal to experience some physical difficulties. This is a small hall. Also, minimum facilities are available here for sitting. At home, you do not usually sit on the floor or on a mattress. If you are not used to sitting on the floor, it is quite normal to experience physical difficulties. There is nothing surprising about it. Nor is it a sign of weakness. Therefore, **do not give fewer marks to yourself because you could not meditate properly, you could not sit properly, you had aches and pains, you changed the posture or you sweated.** All this is normal. **All this has no direct relationship with meditation.**

In any case, everybody experiences all this and other problems because of the body. How many problems, difficulties and complexities do we face because of the body? Not only severe

illnesses and diseases, we also have other problems in our ordinary life, like sleepiness, hunger, tiredness and thirst. How many times do we experience all this within just one quarter of the day? Let alone the whole day or 24 hours, we experience all this within six hours or one quarter of a day. That is not because you have been meditating. That is the nature of the body. If we have acquired a body we have to face its problems. Nobody knows how many problems associated with the body exist.

The Dhamma refers to the four basic problems associated with the body and the solutions for them. We need medicine for illnesses, clothes to protect us from cold and heat, a shelter to protect us from the sun and rain, and food and drink for hunger and thirst. These are the solutions for the four basic problems. However, in addition to the four basic problems, humans have made many other minor problems their major problems. Only humans have made the minor problems major. **Many other problems are tied to the four basic problems like links in a**

chain. Just think about food. It has become a huge and a complex subject. It is the same with houses. A house is a heavy weight not only on the earth but also on oneself. Sometimes, a person may spend all the money s/he has earned and saved in the past on a house. But that money is not enough. Therefore, a person has to borrow money and becomes a debtor of the future. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to think about ease in life.

2. Mental discontent over everything

Dear Dhamma Friends, we need to understand the problem known as 'the body'. There is no other solution. If we do not understand the body or if we do not understand the needs of the body, all we earn will not be enough to solve its problems, no matter how much we earn. No matter how many clothes we buy or styles we choose, we are not content. No matter how big our house is, we are not content. No matter what kinds of

food we eat, we are not content. How much do we need to fill this gap or to be content with ourselves? We do not even know how much more we need. No matter how much we earn, we are not content. This is a big crime.

Human life is not something to be burdened by such a silly thing. Our lifespan is not just for wasting on food, on clothes, on building a house and on taking medicine for our illnesses. It is good if you can allocate a short time for such needs. If you think that even the whole time is not enough to attend to all these needs, then considerable ignorance (*avijjā*) exists. **This ignorance is mental, not physical, because our discontent is not physical but mental.** We all have this mental ignorance.

Therefore, we need to acquire 'right knowledge' or 'clarity' (*vijjā*). There is no other solution. If we acquire 'right knowledge' all these problems associated with the body will not be problems anymore. We need meditation to acquire

‘right knowledge’. Meditation is the method for acquiring ‘right knowledge’. Meditation is the procedure for realising the truth.

3. Energy for the body and the mind

Dear Dhamma Friends, the body needs food as it becomes weak without it. If you skip meals for some time, you will not be able to meditate in the sitting posture. You will not be able to do walking meditation. You’ll fall down if you do standing meditation. You’ll just lie down feeling faint without being able to meditate. Therefore, the body needs food for energy.

Not only the body but also the mind needs energy. If a person is very weak, his/her memory will be lost. If a person is physically weak because of starving the body, not drinking water, not taking medicine, exposing the body to the sun over and over and getting wet in the rain over and over, his/her memory diminishes. Neglecting the body does that. Such a person may not even remember who s/he is. Therefore, **the**

memory too needs food. Thus memory is also something physical to some extent. Remembering is physical.

The body gets energy with the help of exercise, good food habits, rest, medicine and a conducive or a suitable environment. As a result, a person can acquire a healthy and strong body. Medicine, shelter, food, environment and breath give us energy. Having a healthy and strong body is a fortune, a merit. When the energy diminishes, we have to eat again, drink water again, and sleep again. There is no end to all this. We cannot stop doing all this because we have to fulfil the needs of the body.

4. The cause of loss of patience

Usually the mind becomes weak soon after the body gets weak. **Hunger makes not only the body but also the mind weak.** What does 'a weak mind' mean? **A weak mind is not patient. A mind that is not patient is weak. The basic feature of a weak**

mind is loss of patience. Impatience is not a characteristic of power. Getting into fights and scolding others are not the results of strength. **Impatience is a characteristic of weakness.** If a person loses his/her patience at any moment, s/he will soon become a weak person.

It is not easy to be patient when we are sick. It is not easy to be patient when we are hungry. We cannot tolerate anything when we are hungry. We lose our patience when we are tired and sleepy.

5. Exchange between the mind and the body

If there is some mental energy in a person, it starts diminishing when the body is weak because the body acquires that mental energy. When the body is weak, it has only the mind to ask for some energy for its survival. A person may have a very strong friend. But the body cannot ask another person for energy. If your body needs something, it can ask only your body or your

mind, not your parents, not your children and not your relatives. **The mind is the only close friend of the body. The body can exchange energy only with the mind.**

Life is referred to as an exchange between the body and the mind. This exchange started before we were born. Birth is one of the results of this exchange. It did not start on the day we were born. It may have started inside the mother's womb. The moment the body and the mind unite with each other, their mutual exchange starts. What is this exchange?

If one person has something needed by another person, it'll be given. Whether it is given or not, the other person will acquire it. It is not possible to refuse because a condition associated with the exchange exists. We may forget this condition. **The moment the relationship between the body and the mind starts, they are compelled to yield to the conditions.** Therefore, they will help each other whenever the need arises.

As the body and the mind yield to this condition, they cannot refuse each other.

Therefore *Dear Dhamma Friends*, **when the body gets weak, the patience of the mind disappears.** When a person gets tired as a result of overworking, stress builds up in the mind. **Stress is a moment devoid of patience.** The mind gets so stressed that it feels like it is about to burst. The body has taken whatever the energy the mind had. Therefore, the mind appears to be dead. It is weak and feeble. If a person skips one meal, s/he does not faint, does not collapse, does not lose the ability to work, and does not die, because the energy is reserved in the body. The body can survive with the reserves for some time. **When it is not possible to use the energy reserves, then the body takes energy from the mind. As this is an exchange, the same thing happens when the mind gets weak.**

6. The cause of the collapsing mind

There are occasions when the mind gets weak. Suppose the mind has a big expectation. So the mind runs after the expectation thinking that it will come true one day. The mind dreams about it. But, the dream never comes true. The sun sets without fulfilling the expectation. Therefore, the mind becomes weak. This kind of weakness of the mind is not because of lack of food or any illness. The mind becomes totally weak. See what happens. The mind becomes totally weak.

Let alone big expectations. The mind collapses even when a small expectation does not come true. This happens because **the mind does not have any reserved energy**. The body knows that it needs to reserve some energy that is sufficient for a couple of days. The mind does not have even that kind of intellect and general knowledge. *Dear Dhamma Friends*, we highly praise a mind that does not have even the general knowledge that the body has.

We refer to 'my mind' and praise it saying: "This is the way I think. This is the way my mind thinks. My thinking is right." In this manner we highly praise a mind which does not have the general knowledge that the body has. The mind is foolish. Therefore, the Dhamma refers to the mind as 'ignorance.' **The ignorant mind is on a foolish journey. Therefore, a mind totally collapses because of a tiny problem, a little word. A little word is more than enough. Not even a little word, silence is enough.** Suppose a person expects another person to talk. When that does not happen, silence can make the mind totally collapse.

Where is the energy? Where is the energy of the mind that has been built up all this time? We say that it is the mind not the body that is great and superior, and the body is filth. However, **this so called great mind does not even have the energy of the filthy body.** The mind collapses. The mind collapses with each problem, each scolding, and each unfulfilled expectation. The mind does not get stronger. If a mind gets stronger when an

expectation does not come true, when a desire is not fulfilled, that is a wonder, a miracle. If such an incident happens, that is something miraculous. In general, the mind collapses under such circumstances.

7. The mind drags the body along

When the mind collapses, it collapses with the body. This is the next misfortune. **Though the mind brags a lot, it does not like to be lonely.** Therefore, when the mind collapses it makes the body collapse along with it. Therefore, **the body suffers a lot whenever any mental unrest arises.** The body suffers the most, not the parents, not the husband or the wife. All of them may suffer because of a mental problem of a person. However, **the body is oppressed more and suffers more than any of them. The mind cannot suffer without causing the body to suffer.**

The mind does not know how to suffer alone without causing any problem to the body. Therefore, as soon as the mind becomes confused, unhappy and sorrowful, see what happens to the body. See how the colour of the face changes. See how soon it happens. Does it take an hour or a day? No, it happens instantly. Pleasantness, beauty, radiance and the shine of the face disappear, making it small and ugly. **The suffering of the body is reflected in the changes in the face. A significant transformation has to happen to make such physical changes in the face.**

A person cannot make such a change intentionally. **The body must have been oppressed internally to cause a physical change in the face that is obvious to everybody.** The internal organs must have been oppressed. Sometimes, a person may feel as if s/he is having a chest pain, stomach-ache and cold sweat. Moreover, s/he sweats, cannot fall asleep, cannot eat, cannot go to the toilet or wants to go to the toilet more than usual. All this is physical. A person experiences all this because

of a tiny problem that arose in the mind. **As the mind does not know how to solve it on its own, it makes this small problem a physical problem, not only a problem of the brain or heart, or the digestive system, or the respiratory system, or the nervous system, but the whole body.** Now the whole body is a suffering.

8. The selfish mind

Others see that the body is weak, the body is sick. The body is fed with nutritious food. The body is given medicine. The body is given rest. However, **no matter what we do to the body, as the internal problem still exists, the body does not get the nutrients it needs from any food.** The body does not become well even though it is given medicine. The body does not get rest as the mind keeps on thinking about its problem. **The mind extracts energy from every possible part of the body-heart,**

lungs, the digestive system etc. The mind does that because it needs to stand up.

However, a mind cannot stand up by getting energy from the body. When the mind collapses because of a mental problem, eating delicious food does not solve the problem. No matter what kind of food is given to the body, the mind extracts all the energy from the body without letting the body use the energy. Though the food reaches the stomach, the mind takes the nutrients without giving them to the body. Therefore, **the body gets weaker and weaker no matter how much food is given to it. Similarly, the body falls sick no matter how much medicine is given to it.** As a result, the body wears away ahead of time.

9. The helpless body

This exchange of energy is always disadvantageous. It is especially disadvantageous to the body. The body is always at a loss. There is no advantage even to the mind. However, the

body is always at a loss more than the mind because of the damage caused by the mind to it.

Suppose two people open a joint account at a bank. They deposit their earnings in this account. They can withdraw money individually. This transaction is fair only if both of them earn equally and spend equally. However, one of them gives up earning but his/her expenses go up. Under such circumstances, most of the money in the account will be used by the person who spends more. As a result, this account turns into a profitless account. This profitless transaction continues.

Likewise *Dear Dhamma Friends*, **if the mind does not earn anymore but continues to spend, the body suffers over and over**. The body has to earn for two. The body has to earn for itself as well as for the mind. The body can earn only up to a certain limit. The amount of food it can take has a limit. The number of hours it can sleep has a limit. Thus, the body cannot

earn a limitless amount of money. But the mind spends limitlessly.

10. What makes you rich or poor?

The mind suffers limitlessly. The mind becomes poorer and poorer with each suffering. **The mind that suffers is a poor mind. The mind that suffers can never become rich.** The poor mind always suffers. A person becomes poor whenever s/he mentally suffers. It is not important how much money such a person carries in his/her pocket or how many bank accounts s/he has. If a person suffers mentally s/he is poor. **The rich mind does not suffer.** That is the law. That is the rule. **The rich mind is always happy.**

At any moment when a person becomes unhappy and restless, s/he becomes a poor person at that moment. **Happiness is the measure of richness and poverty. A person who is happy is rich. A person who is unhappy is poor.** As soon as the mind

gets unhappy it becomes poor. **The poor mind extracts reserves from the body for its existence. As a result, the body too becomes poor.** The body becomes ill. **Mental unhappiness opens the door to a physical illness.** This is not about becoming ill but about opening a door to an illness.

11. Useless solutions

Although everybody understands this problem, solutions are sought from the world while eating more and more nutritious food. The entire human race has always been weak. The world has chosen eating well and eating nutritious food as a solution for the weak and poor mind-not just one meal but two, not just two meals but three, not just three meals but in between meals. Sleeping for 4 or 6 hours is not sufficient, maybe 8 or 10 hours. It is necessary to take medicine frequently. It is necessary to take vitamins and minerals frequently. All this is identified by the world, both the western world and the eastern

world, as a solution for the poor mind. **No matter how well the body is nourished, the poor mind extracts everything from the body.** Even if everything is given to the mind, it feels insufficient.

12. What makes you happy and rich?

Meditation turns this mental state upside down. The mind starts getting rich. **Meditation is a medium for producing riches. Only meditation creates riches. Meditation makes you a rich person.** Meditation does not let you live like a poor person who sighs, who complains about their needs, who waits for expectations to come true and who worries about failures in life etc. Meditation makes you a rich person.

Meditation uses many methods to make you rich. One method is showing you what you already have. How many things do you have? We sigh about things we do not have. Look at the things you have. **You look at yourself in meditation. As**

a result you see how many resources you have. Seeing what you have makes your mind happy.

When you think about what you do not have, you feel sad. You need certain things but you do not have them. The more you think about the things you do not have the sadder you get. You need something. You desire to have something. But you cannot have it. The more you think about the things you desire the sadder you become.

Instead, **thinking of what you have makes you happy.** Such happiness teaches you that you are no longer poor but rich. *Dear Dhamma Friends, only happiness, not wealth, can make you a rich person.*

13. Wealthy but poor

Wealth can create a wealthy person. But wealth cannot create a rich person. While wealth makes someone wealthy, it also

makes him/her poor. Wealth creates a sufferer. **Wealth and money cannot create a wealthy person and stop at that point without creating a poor person.** As soon as a wealthy person is created, a poor person is also created.

Dear Dhamma Friends, there is no wealthy person who is content with what s/he has got. No wealthy person says: “I have got all I need. I do not need anything more.” **Have you met even one single wealthy person who is content with what s/he has got?**

If you were rich or if you are rich now, have you ever thought: “I have got the money I need. I do not need any more money. I do not need any more furniture. I do not need any more appliances. I do not need any more clothes. I do not want go anywhere anymore. I do not need anything anymore.”

No, all your money makes you think of spending twice as much. When you earn LKR 100, it makes your mind think of spending

LKR 200. Earning LKR 1000 makes your mind think of expenses worth of LKR 2000. Earning LKR 2000 makes your mind think of expenses worth of LKR 4000. Although the wealth creates wealthy people, it does not create the rich but the poor. **Poor wealthy people are seen everywhere.**

14. The first kind of happiness

Meditation creates the rich. Therefore, the Dhamma says that the greatest wealth is happiness because happiness can perform a miracle that wealth cannot perform. Therefore, **the greatest wealth is happiness. When you are happy, your mind is rich. When the mind is rich, the body can request what it needs from the mind.** Now the mind has got enough to offer to the body.

If you are happy even your body does not collapse. **Be happy with what you have.** Be happy about the opportunities you have got. **This kind of happiness is the first happiness.** You do

not need to make a big effort to experience this kind of happiness. **Just be happy with what you have.**

15. The second kind of happiness

The second kind of happiness has to be acquired by making an effort. This is about letting go of the things we do not have.

We can write down all the things we have on a piece paper. We do not need a book to write them down as we do not have a lot. However, all the books available in the world may not be enough for us to write down all the things that we do not have.

Often we worry about the things we do not have. Suffering over things we do not have is limitless because the things we do not have is limitless. **Let go of suffering over things you do not have.** You need to make an effort for this. **You need to make an effort to let go of things you do not have.** This does not just happen. We grab things we do not have. Grabbing

things we have is our foolishness. It is even worse if we grab things we do not have.

16. The theory of nature

We cannot grab anything and retain it. We could not grab the sounds we heard during meditation and retain them inside our ears. We hear the sounds that fade/diminish. Nobody can hear a sound that does not diminish after hearing it. We cannot retain any sound inside our ears and listen to it over and over. We hear something, and then the sound diminishes. We remember something and then we forget it. **We cannot retain any thought in our mind.**

When we meditate on the breath we can see these things very clearly. We have to give each breath we take back. We cannot retain the breath without giving it back. Nature definitely pulls the breath back. This is the theory. This is the phenomenon.

Understand this phenomenon. **If you do, you can acquire a moderate and simple life full of happiness.**

Meditation is for acquiring such a life. What do we grab? We grab what we have. Though we grab, we cannot keep anything. **Even if we do not let go of what we have, everything we possess will be taken from us. This is nature.**

Suppose a tree has got some fruits on it, maybe mangoes, oranges etc. Even if you do not pick them, they ripen, rot and fall. The tree cannot keep the fruits forever. Animals eat the fruits. Others may steal them. Have you seen any flower or fruit reigning as a blooming flower or a ripened fruit forever? No, that is not possible. A tree has to make a lot of effort to make a flower bloom. We do not see this effort. We think that the effort we make in our 8-hour job is the most significant effort. Just think about the effort that a tree makes: it absorbs water by sending its roots to the distant surroundings. A 50 feet tall tree has roots spreading across about 100 feet. See what an

effort a tree makes to pump a drop of water to a height of about 150 feet. A tree has to absorb sunrays and do a miracle to produce a beautiful flower, a delicious fruit. Sometimes, a tree makes effort for about 9 months for this. A tree may bear fruits only once a year. However, any beautiful flower or delicious fruit stays with the tree only for a short while. The fruits on the tree ripen and fall. Or else, an animal may eat them or somebody may pick them. This is nature.

Nature gives all of us beautiful, delicious, elegant things for a short time. Nature takes them back from us in diverse ways. Nature does not let us keep them for ever. **Owning ends in losing.** You get things and lose them. Breath enters and leaves. **If a person understands this theory of owning and losing, if a person sees this theory, s/he can live like a tree.**

What does it mean to live like a tree? The tree knows that the fruit or the leaf is mature. Therefore, the tree lets the mature leaves leave it. The tree does not try to grab the mature leaves,

ripened fruits and blossoming flowers. The tree grabbed onto them for some time. However, each tree knows when to let go of them. Therefore, **the mature leaves and ripened fruits fall silently without hurting the tree. No scar is left on the tree branch.**

All the trees know the theory of nature. Therefore, **all the trees know the art of letting go. Let go of the things that you are going to lose. Do not grab onto the things that you are going to lose even though you have them.** You have worked hard to earn them. You have borrowed money to get them.

No matter how much you whine, nobody can change the law of nature. Therefore, **let go of what you own before you lose it.** Just let go and live. **Let go of them from your mind.** Whether you let go or grab with your mind, the leaves fall, withered flowers fall, ripened and rotten fruits fall to the ground. Look at all this. **There is no meditation object better than nature.**

17. 'Understanding' makes you rich

Be happy about what you have. Such happiness makes you rich. When you are happy about what you have, you become well, your body becomes rich. **Have the 'understanding' in a corner of your mind that you may lose everything you have.** It is possible to lose things. Even if you do not understand this, you will lose everything you have. As a result, you will suffer. Losing things makes you suffer. **You are not ready to let go unlike a tree that lets a mature leaf leave. Even though you are not ready, you have to leave when the time comes.** If you lose something at a time when you are not ready, you'll experience a huge pain in your heart.

There are seasons of shedding leaves. There are seasons of fruits ripening and falling onto the ground. There are seasons of blossoming and withering flowers. We can make timetables for these seasonal events: the season of flowering, the season of withering flowers, the season of emerging tender leaves, the

season of fruit growing and the season of fruit ripening. We can recognize these seasons.

However, it is impossible to make a timetable for losing what we have. Even if you make a timetable we may lose what we have at an unexpected moment surprising and shaking us. Therefore, we need to reflect on what we have. We need to be happy about what we have. But, **we may lose what we have at any moment. Let this ‘understanding’ develop in your mind. A mind that has such an ‘understanding’ is rich.**

‘Understanding’ is the second feature of richness. A person becomes rich when s/he is happy about what s/he has got. Moreover, a person becomes happy when s/he understands that s/he may lose everything possessed by him/her at any moment. Such a person is rich in ‘understanding’. Just because a person has acquired such ‘understanding’, things possessed by him/her will not be prevented from being lost. **But such a person acquires ‘understanding’ of living without becoming**

unhappy, without crying and without grieving. In this manner, 'understanding' makes you rich again.

18. 'Do not have' vs 'do not need'

As I stated earlier, the third point is about what we need and what we do not need. We can prepare a list of things we do not have, which may be even longer than the great ocean. If we think in this manner, we will fall into a big hole, out of which there is no escape.

Ask the question: "What are the things that I do not need?" This question is not about the things that I do not have. **Asking about the things I do not need is totally different from asking about the things I do not have.**

We are used to thinking about the things we do not have, not about the things we do not need. The question with regards to things we do not have indicates that we desire to have them.

We create a vacuum in ourselves because the need exists but we do not have what we need. As a result, **we grieve in our mind about the things we need but do not have.**

Just see what happens if you think about something that you need but do not have. Thinking like this does not make the mind happy but unhappy. As a result, the mind gets weak and makes the body ill and weak. Instead, think about the things that you do not need.

There are so many things in the world. **Just go to a supermarket and meditate for a while on the things that you do not need.** You do not have to buy anything. If someone questions you, just say that you are there to meditate, not to buy something. Just walk around the shelves and think whether you really need the things on the shelves. Sometimes, there may not even be one or two items that you really need. As we do not look at things in this manner, we think that we need everything. **Even if we get everything, we are not content.**

When you watch your favourite teledrama, watch the commercials on things for sale as well. Watch them as a person who meditates. While watching the commercials, look at your mind too. What does the mind say? Does the mind ask for the things shown in the commercials? You do not have them but do you really need them? No, you do not need them. Watch the commercials with the feeling of not needing things shown in them. Just see the ease of your mind at that moment.

The feeling of needing something that you do not have exerts a huge weight on the mind. As a result, it is impossible to swim on the surface of the water in the great ocean. A person will sink to the bottom because of the huge weight on the mind. Suppose you make your body heavy. It is not easy to swim if the body is heavy. A person may be able to swim some distance with the heaviness of the body. However, if more weight is loaded on the body, the person will sink.

S/he will not be able to get across the ocean of saṃsāra. Instead, s/he will sink to the bottom. If more weight is loaded on, s/he may get stuck on the bottom. If the bottom is filled 500 feet with mud, s/he will get stuck little by little in mud. **As the question is posed incorrectly, a person jumps into a big hole and gets stuck in the pit of mud known as craving.** Under such circumstances, there is no escape.

19. The smartest question

Therefore, ask: **“What are the things that I do not need?”** You may even ask another person about the things that s/he does not need. You ask such a question not to acquire the things that another person does not need. As people who meditate and spiritual friends, ask another person: “What are the things that you do not need? Do you know the things that you do not need?” You can ask yourself the same question. **“Do I know the things that I do not need?”**

This question wakes you up. **This question creates awareness in you about the things that you do not need. If you have decided on things that you do not need nobody can make you buy anything.** As the mind has not yet made such a decision, we are doubtful. If we are indecisive the thought associated with wanting something that you do not have can infiltrate the mind at any moment. Therefore, come to a decision: “I do not need that.” **You do not want something if you do not need it.**

20. What does craving do to you?

The mind that knows the inessential things as inessential is rich. Such a mind is even richer than a mind that is happy about the things that you have. **A person who knows the inessential things as inessential can never be made poor.**

A pauper is a result of craving. **Craving creates the poor. Wisdom creates the rich.** *Dear Dhamma friends,* if the mind is rich like this, the partner or the buddy of the body is very rich.

This partner of the body will never become poor. The body does the transaction known as life with a partner who will never become poor. Such a body is extremely fortunate.

Meditation takes us to a path like that. Meditation teaches us not only the happiness of not having something but also the ease of not having it. Therefore, **meditation is a process that makes us see the entirety, not just half or a speck of something.** Is there anybody else who teaches us about the entirety? Nobody teaches us this, only meditation does. Only meditation offers us such an education through experience. Meditation offers the happiness that arises as a result of thinking about it. Meditation talks about such happiness. Meditation does not talk about suffering but about happiness.

Life talks about suffering. Craving always talks about suffering although we think that it talks about happiness. No, craving does not even know what happiness is. Craving always makes you a servant of discontent. Craving creates a slave of

impatience. Craving can do only that. Craving offers suffering. Craving offers discontent.

21. Listen to meditation

Meditation talks about the happiness of appreciating the things that you have. Meditation does not stop at that point. **It talks about the things that you do not need and do not have.** Therefore, you experience ease. **You feel free because of not needing something.** Meditation talks about this freedom. Listen to all this.

It is true that meditation is an attempt we make to go to a corner, sit in a certain posture, close our eyes and concentrate on the mind. It is an exercise. It is a rehearsal. It is an important step of tranquillity meditation. But without stopping at that point, turn meditation into a path heading towards 'understanding'. **Listen to meditation. Ask questions from meditation.** Get answers from meditation.

If a person starts listening to meditation, s/he will change marvellously. **Listening to meditation does not frequently happen.** We try and try to meditate. Our mind wanders and we bring it back. Such an exercise is very good. However, ask the meditation process about a problem associated with meditation. This does not mean a problem associated with the breath. **Reflect on a problem associated with life in a meditative frame of mind.**

Listen to meditation and ask questions: “I have this problem. What can you tell me about it?” **Make meditation your best spiritual friend.** Then you will hear meditation singing the song of happiness, the song of elation. **If you listen to meditation, you’ll start hearing the song of elation that you have never yet enjoyed.** A person may not have experienced such happiness and elation with anything in life.

Meditation sings the song of great wealth, nobody else does, not the television, nor the refrigerator, nor the air conditioner,

nor the luxury vehicle, nor the bank. **The song about the greatest wealth is sung by meditation.**

Let go of the thoughts associated with things that you do not need. What is the point of thinking about such things if you do not need them? Meditation sings the epic of ease, peaceful joy and the freedom of letting go. **What a fortune to listen to the song of the greatest wealth and the epic of freedom.** While being happy about it, let's conclude the morning programme.

May the Triple Gem Bless You!!!