

No

Burning



Upul Nishantha Samage

A fire may set in at any time and spread surrounding you. If you are fully awake, no fire can get close to you. If you are inside the cover or the shelter of mindfulness, fires like anger and desire can't burn you down to ashes. If you are fully extinct, it is impossible to set fire, even with gasoline, as no spark of fire is left. Therefore, give the first priority of your life to mindfulness. Be mindful in every moment!



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Dhamma Dāna
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Light of Nilambe

13

Dhamma Dāna

**In memory of
My beloved parents**

May this merit be conducive for them to
attain Nibbana!

With Love & Gratitude

Shema Illeperuma

No Burning

Talk given by

Upul Nishantha Gamage

On November 27, 2012 (Full-moon Day)

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1. Where is meditation?

Dear Dhamma Friends, today is a full-moon day. Most of you have come today to the Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre because you felt the need for meditation on this full-moon day. Today has turned out to be a meditative day because of our enthusiasm in meditation. However, this day known as a full-moon day can't offer us meditation. Therefore, we should meditate. Meditation is in our hands, not in a calendar or a diary or a holiday schedule. **A person who has taken meditation into his/her own hand can take the life into his/her hand.** A person who has given meditation to someone else's hand can't take life into his/her own hand. Meditation isn't in books written on meditation, though such books are available. Valuable books written on meditation are probably there. Valuable talks given on meditation are probably there. However, meditation isn't found in any of those materials. A book can't meditate. A cassette tape or a CD can't meditate. Such materials can't offer/take meditation either. **Meditation is in the hands of the meditator, not even in the hands of the meditation teacher.**

2. Our responsibility

Though we often hear about giving/taking meditation or *kamatahan* (meditation objects), we need to understand such things independently, as meditation isn't a transaction. Further, transactions aren't possible through meditation either. Meditation comprises some phenomena and capabilities, requiring further development and cultivation in us. We need to use them. **Meditation comprises a number of talents, which require development, cultivation, practice and usage.** This entire activity or the process is known as meditation. It includes planting, cultivating, practising and using some talents which are instrumental in helping us to live peacefully. It is our duty and responsibility to lead a peaceful life. It is nobody else's responsibility, but ours. **We are responsible for leading a life without making our blood boil.**

3. Meeting yourself

Dear Dhamma Friends, meditation gives our life back to our own hands. Nothing else can give our life back to our own hands, but meditation. A law or an order can't do that. Life can't be given as a gift. However, **meditation can make you meet**

yourself again. This exercise and task is merely for meeting you, not for going somewhere or walking above or on the ground or seeing something. It is to meet your life, understand your life and manage your life. **You can manage your life only if it is in your hand.**

4. Going with the flow

Most of the time, we don't know where our life is, though we live. Most people live while attending to matters decided as essential by others. Often we do and say things decided by others. We dress the way others want. We eat what others want. We read the books decided by others. We watch the dramas and movies decided by others. When we compile all those things, it is obvious that we are often engaged in things determined by someone else. In this way, someone else decides everything we need. We don't even know who made those decisions. This is known as **going with the flow**. We think that going with the flow is life. What do we need to do about this? **We definitely need to do something as going with the flow isn't life.** If your life isn't in your hand, you can't call it your life. You experience something like life. We exert ourselves to experience something

like life. We make and spend money to experience something like life.

5. Unfulfilled list

We are of the view that we need a lot of things for living. We make a big list of things necessary for living. Most of us refer to life as a non-stop journey taking place while making a list of things necessary for living. Who has given you this list of things? We aren't aware of any such person. However, we have a list comprising things needed for living-things we need to do, goals we need to reach, things we need to acquire, things we need to buy and so on. In this way all of us have a list that we have already prepared and a list that we are preparing based on our needs. This list is getting longer. **We don't question about the list. Where has this list come from? Who has given this list? Is this a genuine list? How many people live without having the things on the list?** Most of us struggle day and night to fulfil the needs on the list one by one. The days, weeks, months and years pass by for that. Decades pass by for that. We have become adults or elderly after having wearied ourselves by trying to fulfil the needs on the list. However, the list of needs is

still with us. There are many more unfulfilled expectations and targets, which is taking us on a long journey.

6. Light in between

Dear Dhamma Friends, our life is like a journey which started from an unknown place and is heading towards an unknown place. We don't know where we came from. We don't know where we are. We don't know where we are going. We travel from ignorance to ignorance, darkness to darkness, unrest to unrest and discontentment to discontentment. There is a tiny light between two darkneses, like the dim light we see in a cinema hall during the short interval. Similarly, **one may experience little happiness for a moment in life when journeying from discontentment to discontentment.** At the time of experiencing that little happiness, one may feel that it isn't little but enormous. However, **no happiness is big compared to discontentment or the feeling of insufficiency, which grows past every happiness, victory and success. The shadow known as insufficiency grows covering all happinesses.**

One may see some light between two darkneses. One may experience happiness between two unhappy experiences. One may experience luxury between two pains. We call these short intervals happiness and comfort. These intervals are always short. The working hours are always longer than these intervals. It would be so good if the question **“have I worked long hours simply for this short interval?”** crops up in one’s mind. However, it is so sad that such a question doesn’t arise. We ought to question ourselves. **“Do we work hard simply to experience this insignificant happiness? Is this the purpose of life? Is this called human life?”** Were we born as humans, at a time when the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha prevails, to experience a life which has been running continuously after happiness till panting?”

7. Two rare incidences

Dear Dhamma Friends, we have heard that human life is very rare. Having to live at a time when Buddhism prevails is also very rare. See how valuable this moment is when these two rare incidences have met. See how meaningful this combination is. It is our duty to make this combination meaningful. Living

according to Buddhism offers a new meaning to life. Writing books on Buddhism doesn't make your life meaningful. **Leading a life according to the Dhamma sheds light on the Dhamma and the Dhamma sheds light on life.** Why do we suffer in darkness at a time and place where it is possible to acquire this light?

8. The truth about happiness

We think that everything is all right when we acquire all the little things that we highly consider as essential to bring happiness. *“Is thinking in that way life? Is that a true ecstasy? Is that a true elation?”* The Lord Buddha poses those questions to us. Accomplishing something makes us happy. Meeting an expectation or reaching a target makes us overwhelmingly happy. A smile may show such happiness. In a situation like that, the Lord Buddha questions *“Is that a true smile? Is that happiness real, when a blazing fire is surrounding someone from all four directions, North, East, South and West, leaving no room for escaping?”* However, a person is probably enjoying while laughing and giggling as s/he has no clue about such a fire.

A person who sees that fire may question “Are you laughing happily knowing the truth, knowing what would happen to you in the next moment? **When a blazing fire is spreading around you, isn’t that smile going to end up in tears?** How long is that smile going to last? Isn’t that ecstasy going to end up in a lament? Is it a true ecstasy if it is going to end up in a lament?” At that point, the Lord Buddha poses the following questions, which isn’t based on a law or a stipulation or an order or a rule. If the answer is “yes” we may simply say so. **“Do you know that a blazing fire is surrounding you?** *Without knowing about it, you are laughing over something. How long is that laugh going to last? How long is that happiness going to last? Are you aware of that?*” Knowing that happiness is going to transform into an unbearable lament is more important than its time span. However, **a person who is in pitch darkness can’t see that transformation, as happiness experienced by him/her covers the truth.**

9. Clueless sleeper

The Lord Buddha poses the next questions. *“Why are you in darkness more and more? Why are you sunk in darkness more and more? Why do you go to the darkness more and more?”*

Would it be better if you find a light?" Those four questions are like a bang on the head. A person is probably in a deep sleep while dreaming of something beautiful, although the house is on fire. A fire which started from the kitchen has reached the dining and living rooms. Now the fire is spreading around. However, a person is enjoying a beautiful dream. At that moment, his/her face may show some happiness. However, a person who is awake knows what is happening here. The whole house is on fire, but the person who is dreaming has no clue about it. That person is in a slumber of ignorance. **Sleep always goes together with ignorance. There is no conscious sleep and wakeful ignorance.** A person who is sleeping doesn't know what is happening.

Similarly, if a person is awake, there is no ignorance. A person who is awake can see and hear. Therefore, s/he can decide on a course of action. A person who is awake can see the fire and what the fire has burnt, and guess what would happen in the next moment. However, a person in a dream is enjoying a dream of winning a lottery, buying a vehicle, getting a promotion, getting a house built, eating a delicious meal, and so on. Therefore, a person who is dreaming, often smiles. However, a wakeful

person thinks “What type of a smile is this? Is this a moment for smiling? Is this a moment for being happy? What are we smiling for? What are we happy about? The fire is surrounding us.” However, as we are in pitch darkness, we can’t see that fire. We are going to dream more and more. **Wouldn’t it be better if you open your eyes and see what is happening?**

10. Surrounded by two walls

Dear Dhamma friends, all those questions can wake us up. Those questions posed by the Lord Buddha can wake up a person who is willing to wake up. Everybody can’t be woken up anyway. Most of the time, we are far away from an awakable sleep as we are in a deep sleep. A person in a deep sleep can’t hear an ordinary sound and doesn’t feel an ordinary touch. A person who is in a dream doesn’t hear at all. Such a person hears, sees and feels only that dream. **When a person dreams while sleeping, s/he is behind two walls. One wall is the sleep and the other is the dream.** When these two walls surround a person, s/he is far away from wakefulness. That person can’t hear and feel when tapped at one of the two walls. Only one wall is there surrounding a person who is asleep without dreaming. When such a person keeps his/her ear against that

wall, s/he can hear even a tiny tap at the wall. S/he feels the tiny vibration caused by tapping. **Such a person may wake up with the help of a tap.**

11. The most difficult achievement

When the Lord Buddha posed those questions, there were people who woke up. However, the entire India didn't wake up. The entire three worlds didn't wake up either, but, there were some who woke up. Such an individual is called "Anubudu"- a person who woke up with the help of a tap or a call from somebody who has already woken up. Sammāsambuddha or the Lord Buddha refers to the One who woke up through His own efforts and wisdom with no help from another. **Waking up without any help from another is the most difficult thing to achieve.** You can ask someone else to wake you up. You can wake up with the help of an alarm clock. Waking up with some help is so easy. It would be so difficult to wake up without an alarm or a person who has already woken up.

At the time of descent of the Lord Buddha, everybody in the human world was asleep. Even everybody in the heaven was asleep. There is no point in talking about the four realms of hell.

Everybody was asleep and was dreaming. Who can wake such people up? **Only a person who is awake can wake another person up. Only a person who has blossomed can make another person blossom.**

Everybody was in a deep sleep known as the slumber of ignorance. The one who was destined to be the Buddha found out that everybody was asleep like him. *“Nobody was awake. Therefore, how can I be woken up?”* Afterwards, he gave up the sleepy world. This happened not on the day he left Queen Yasodara, Stepmother Prajapathi Gothami and King Suddodana, but on the day he gave up the teachers who he thought could help him. He gave up at least the little expectation he had of meeting a person in this world who could teach the path for awakening. There was nobody who had woken up. There was no Buddha or a person who had blossomed. Everybody had withered. There may have been flower buds, which didn’t know how to blossom and didn’t get enough sunlight for blossoming. As many walls had been constructed by the flower buds around them, the sunlight couldn’t reach.

In the end, the one who was destined to be the Buddha gave up all the hopes for meeting a person who could wake him up. You can't wake up by being hungry. You can't wake up by not taking showers. You can't wake up by not falling asleep. He tried out every form of self-mortification but couldn't wake up. In a world where not even a single woken person lived, he gave up the beautiful hope for being woken up by somebody, because that hope was just a dream, not a reality. He gave up the hope for having saved as there was no saviour. Everybody was caught up in dreams. **Therefore, he woke up on his own.** As such, we call Him Sammāsambuddha, referring to the One who woke up on His own, which was the most difficult thing to accomplish. Those who woke up with the help of **Sammāsambuddha** are called the Arahants or Anubudu, referring to those who woke up as a result of a call from someone who had already woken up. Such awaking is easy, though we find it difficult.

12. Wake-up calls

In any case, we have a very good opportunity to wake up because the Dhamma still prevails. We would have had to wake up on our own if we were born at a time when the Dhamma didn't prevail. How can we wake up on our own at a time like

that if we can't wake up at a time when we receive so many wake-up calls from all directions? A human being is a person who is in an awakable sleep. All living beings are asleep. However, all of them can't wake up. **Every living being can't accomplish spiritual awakening or spiritual blossoming. A particular fragment of living beings who can accomplish spiritual awakening is called human beings.** It is indeed an immense merit and fortune to be born at a time when we are in an awakable sleep and are being tapped from here and there. If we were born as a person who was in an unawakable sleep, we wouldn't have had any hope for being woken up. Further, if we were born at a time when there were no awakened persons or everybody was asleep and only the value of sleep was talked about, we wouldn't have had any hope for being woken up.

13. A light for a moment

Dear Dhamma Friends, you'd better recognize your value. You are so valuable to the Dhamma. **All human beings are so valuable to the Dhamma.** It is immaterial for how long you have suffered. It isn't important for how long you have been asleep. Don't regret and repent over such things. Don't measure the history of sleep in hours. It is impossible to measure because

a sleep is so long. **Nothing on this Earth has a longer history than the slumber of ignorance.** We don't know the age of the Earth. It isn't easy to measure the age either. However, the history of the slumber of ignorance is the longest. For how long you have slept isn't a problem. **Be awake! Awakening takes only one second.** For how long you have been in darkness isn't important. The darkness may have a long history. However, no sooner you use a match-stick or light a candle, the darkness which has been there for eons disappears. The darkness can't say "I have been there for eons and got the ownership." Ignorance has no ownership. Anger has no ownership. Don't regret having been angry for so long. This present moment isn't for regretting about it. This moment isn't for repenting. Just close the story and legend-how long you have cried, been restless, suffered and been angry. You have had that legend, chronicle and history long enough. **Just one second is enough for you to change.** One moment is enough for a person who wants to change to change himself/herself. **A light for a moment is more than enough to get rid of eons of darkness.** A split-second tap is enough to wake up from hours of sleep.

14. Incapable sleep

This is what is important. **Do you like to wake up? Do you want to wake up? Instead, do you like to dream continuously?** It is very difficult to let go of our desire to dream, our desire to sleep. One may think that waking up is a suffering as one has to face responsibilities when woken up, such as attending to many needs, going somewhere, making money, paying debts, and so on. A person who is asleep doesn't have to face those problems. Therefore, we think that there is no problem, when a person is asleep. That is why we like to sleep. **However, a sleep can't make a person blossom. A sleep can't make a sufferer a non-sufferer.** A sleep isn't something capable of performing such wonders and miracles. A sleep didn't change you. Instead, a sleep always protected you by preventing you from changing. A sleep didn't let you change. A sleep can't change. A sleep doesn't want to change either. If you are cautious about a change, a transformation, a conversion, an evolution and becoming blossomed, you need to wake up. One can change oneself only by waking up.

A wakeful person hears. Only a wakeful person hears the truth. A person asleep listens to the untruth. One may hear while

dreaming. Everything one hears while sleeping is a lie. One starts to hear the truth and the reality only when awake. Therefore, mindfulness wakes you up. **You hear only when you are mindful.** You can listen only when you are mindful. All these noises are there even when you aren't mindful. All the sound waves come in contact with your ears. Even the perceptions might reach the brain. However, you can't hear when you aren't mindful. You wouldn't even know that you have heard something.

15. From the stale past to the unborn future

Dear Dhamma friends, **even though we think that we are awake, if the past engrosses us, we don't hear the present. If we are making plans and dreaming about the future, we don't hear the present.** Most of the time, we are living in one of those two worlds, jumping from the stale past to the unborn future. A person who lives in one of those two worlds can't hear the present. Only a person who is mindful can hear the present. **The first duty of mindfulness is to make you aware of what is happening at this moment. Therefore, mindfulness is the basis of meditation.**

16. Mindfulness vs one-pointedness

The basis of meditation is mindfulness, not the one-pointedness. This point is presented over and over. It is very much important to know what is happening at this moment. No matter how many times we talk about the importance of mindfulness, we look for the one-pointed mind no sooner we close our eyes for meditation. We often say that it is difficult to meditate as the mind wanders. Let go of the desire for one-pointedness. Meditation and one-pointedness aren't the same. **One-pointedness is one of the by-products of meditation.** It isn't the major product, but a by-product. Anyhow, meditation isn't one-pointedness. One gets to experience one-pointedness as an incidence of meditation. Therefore, one-pointedness is an incidence. Being mindful is what we need to do.

We must understand the difference between mindfulness and one-pointedness. If not, we mistake meditation from the beginning. We try our best to stop the mind from wandering. We start meditation with a desire for a one-pointed mind. As one-pointedness is an incidence, it will happen. What we need to do is to know what is happening. **What do we need to know? Just know this present moment. Just know the present.**

17. Knowing vs knowledge

What does “the present” mean? It is what you are experiencing now, not something strange. There was something called the past. The past is inside all memories. **There is nothing called the present. It is what we are experiencing at this moment.** What are we experiencing? We are experiencing a world of sounds. When you experience sounds, just know that you are experiencing sounds. In other words, when you hear, just know that you are hearing. In devoid of mindfulness, we hear but we don't know that we are hearing, because we are asleep. Just know that we are hearing. The breath comes and goes. When the breath comes, just know that the breath is entering. Using the breath to know the present moment is Anapanasati Meditation (Mindfulness of Breathing). We have no relationship with inhaling and exhaling. Our relationship is with mindfulness. Therefore, we don't call this meditation Anapana Meditation but Anapanasati Meditation. This is not breathing meditation, but mindfulness on the breathing meditation. **The meditator transacts with mindfulness, not with the breath. Be a person who knows what is happening, not a person with knowledge!**

We are knowledgeable about a lot of things-the Four Nobel Truths, the Nobel Eightfold Path, Dependent Origination and many more. **What we don't know is this moment. We don't know what is happening at this moment. When you say "I know", it shows some association with the past, because you may have read or heard about it. Therefore, the knowledge associates with the past. However, knowing something associates with the present.** We don't transact with knowledge, but with knowing. Just recognize this difference. **Let go of knowledge. Don't get tangled with knowledge.** Pay attention to knowing. What is happening? It doesn't matter what happens. You can't meditate by imposing laws and conditions, expecting only certain things to happen, nothing else. The foremost aim of meditation is about learning how to be fully mindful and fully comprehensive. **We need full mindfulness about the present. What is the state of the mind at this moment? What does the mind do at this moment? It isn't about what you do with the mind.**

18. Spitting up and eating again

We did a lot of things with the mind. We tumbled in the past with the mind. That is over. What we did in the past is stale, like

the stale food. We have already thrown the stale food away, but we spit them up and eat again. **What does it mean by remembering the past and living there? It means spitting up and tasting over and over the food we ate in the past.** It might be tasteful. Otherwise, you wouldn't enjoy while remembering the past. However, that taste is stale. **The past taste is stale compared to the present taste.** You feel with the mind the taste of stale food, which you thought was there in the past. That is all. It is not a reality. However, it seems true for us, as if any dream is true for a person who is asleep. **What does a human spend most of the time on? That is for living in the past-what we said, what we did, what we heard, what we saw, what we felt and so on.** What do we do? We keep on remembering the past. We keep on living in the past and enjoying. What a crime it is. A person who doesn't experience peaceful joy in the present enjoys by spiting up and tasting the happiness felt and used up in the past. To repeat; **a person who doesn't experience peaceful joy in the present, makes him/her happy by spitting up and eating again a tasty food already tasted, felt and used up in the past.** This is what is happening. We truly enjoyed that food in the past. Do we truly enjoy that same food in the present? That taste felt in the past is

no longer in the present. But we cheat ourselves by remembering it.

19. The trickery

Dear Dhamma Friends, devoid of mindfulness tricks us in a big way. Ignorance tricks us in a big way. We get caught in that trickery. As we don't see it as trickery, we enjoy while spitting up and eating the past again and again. We think that it is the happiness of life. There were things in the past that we couldn't enjoy. We also had unsuccessful experiences. We make plans on how to re-experience things enjoyed in the past and to rectify things that we couldn't enjoy. We keep on thinking about such expectations and hopes. **We are happy in that world of thoughts. We spend one half of the time in enjoying while spitting up and eating again the tasty food we ate in the past. We spend the other half of the time in making plans on how to eat the foods we couldn't eat in the past.** As both those ways of spending time make us happy, we call them happiness. The present passes by. Each moment in the present leaves us. We can't save time. Time leaves us. We can't save the night. We can't save the afternoon. It is impossible to save time, as it always leaves us. We are left only with age.

Dear Dhamma Friends, devoid of mindfulness deceives us every day by **showing something and giving something else**. But we think that we got what we needed. However, after a couple of days, we realize that we didn't get what we needed. Devoid of mindfulness comes and deceives us again saying "this is what you need now." We get deceived again. We think we got the right thing this time, but we later realize that we got deceived again. We again get advice from devoid of mindfulness or ignorance.

20. One and only path

A person who took refuge in devoid of mindfulness starts, for the first time in life, to take refuge in mindfulness through meditation. We have only mindfulness to help up. Therefore, the Lord Buddha praises about the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (mindfulness on body, feeling, mind and Dhamma). **Mindfulness is the only path, if you need to be free, be liberated.** This is a beautiful praise. **The Four Foundations of Mindfulness is the only path to purify you.** Devoid of mindfulness made us dirty every day. In devoid of mindfulness, our mind was dirty and impure. Devoid of mindfulness opens the door for any defilement to enter. See clearly. You weren't

mindful just before any defilement entered. Whenever you are mindful, no defilement can enter into your mind. **When you are mindful, no defilement can taint your mind, even if it enters.** Devoid of mindfulness tainted and dirtied us every day. **Mindfulness completely cleanses your mind without leaving a single spot.**

Often we sigh within, but nobody may know. We may smile while sighing within. We can bear up our sorrow for some time. However, once that time period passes by, as we have no control over, we start lamenting. Our sorrows overflow, breaking all the boundaries. **A person who wants to put a full stop to sighs and laments has only one path. That is the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.** Mindfulness is the only path. There is no other path. Mindfulness is a miracle. Devoid of mindfulness made us cry every day. Whenever a person felt sad and unhappy, sighed, cried and lamented, s/he wasn't mindful.

However, we have grasped devoid of mindfulness. We like to kill time in devoid of mindfulness, not to meditate. Unending suffering sets in sorrows such as disappointments, lack of enthusiasm or apathy, feeling of lagging behind and so on. As

sorrows develop soon after sufferings, a person lags behind. **There is no energy to run around as the suffering absorbs all our energy.** It is the same with sorrows. It is only mindfulness that can go beyond suffering and sorrows to end them. **The only path for surpassing sighs and ending suffering and sorrows is mindfulness. This shows that devoid of mindfulness creates sufferings and sorrows.** A person suffers and sorrows when s/he is not mindful. Devoid of mindfulness made us cry all the time while promising that its intention was to make us happy. Devoid of mindfulness doesn't know anything else to do. Devoid of mindfulness first makes us smile. Afterwards, it makes us cry. Devoid of mindfulness initiates a journey while making us happy and ends it while making us sorrowful. Devoid of mindfulness can do only that. Devoid of mindfulness leaves us stranded at suffering. Devoid of mindfulness accompanies us saying that it is taking us to meet the comfort. But it stops us at suffering. We work so hard to make money. We spend money expecting happiness. We think that we are going to the valley of elation. Instead, we are approaching the desert of suffering. However, when devoid of mindfulness leaves us stranded at the desert of suffering, we feel helpless. Devoid of mindfulness isn't there to help us.

At a time like that, the Lord Buddha recommends us to be mindful. **Mindfulness is the only way out. Mindfulness can take you from the desert of suffering to the oasis of true peaceful joy.** Only mindfulness can do this. This isn't about taking refuge in a person. This isn't about being saved by a god or a person. **If you are mindful, you can overcome suffering, you can live without crying and feeling sad.** You have cried all this time. Don't repent of that. Don't try to read the legend about suffering you had in the past. There is no point in reading the past over and over-how long have I suffered? How long have I been angry? How long have I cried?

Can you change that long history within just a day? Yes, you can. One can wake up within just a second no matter how long the sleep has been. Waking up is possible if someone wants to wake up and if there is a good tap. **This feeling of wanting to wake up has to come from within. An external tap is also needed for such a person to wake up.** Both these resources are available during a time when the Dhamma preached by the Lord Buddha is prevailing. There are human beings who can wake up. Also, there are enough taps.

21. Removing scars/taints

Devoid of mindfulness dirties the mind and mindfulness fully purifies the mind. Mindfulness can make you see a pure mind never seen before. In devoid of mindfulness, you saw a dirty mind all this time. There were multi-layers of scars/stains. You thought that it was the nature of the mind. Often we say, as an excuse, that it is the nature of the mind to have scars/stains. Further, that is the nature of Saṃsāra and worldlings.

What shall we do? There is something we can do. **Be mindful!** When we are mindful we can see those layers of scars/stains in the mind being removed one by one. If not, new layers of scars/stains form in every moment. Therefore, the term aggregate of mental formations is used. **In devoid of mindfulness, layers and layer of scars/stains pile up. When you are mindful, all these layers or aggregate of mental formations peel off one by one.** Therefore, you can see a pure inner nature never seen before. You can surpass the past life, which was full of suffering. You can go over the past life, which

was full of laments. You can end the suffering and sorrows. You can acquire wisdom instead of foolishness.

22. A fool dressed in cloths of a wise

Devoid of mindfulness always made us fools. Devoid of mindfulness made us fools while deceiving us saying that we were so wise, intelligent, discerning and educated. Devoid of mindfulness made us think that we were knowledgeable, educated, intelligent and wise. All those impressions are futile, if a small incidence can make us angry. What kind of wisdom is there? What kind of intelligence is there? Is getting angry over a small incidence a characteristic of intelligence? Is getting angry over something or crying over a little word a characteristic of wisdom? No. **Devoid of mindfulness always takes us for a ride. A fool is dressed in cloths of a wise.**

23. Escaping from fire

Mindfulness provides us an axiom, not merely some words, about the truth behind all incidences. Mindfulness doesn't stop at that point. Mindfulness makes extinction very obvious, which is the last result. It isn't merely a word or a wish anymore.

Mindfulness makes extinction a witness of you. If only you experience extinction within, you can become a witness. We talk about extinction based on information acquired through listening. **You become an extinctive person when you are mindful.** Though a burning fire is surrounding you, no fire can burn you as you are fully awake. As you are absolutely mindful, nobody can make you angry. **If you are inside the cover or the shelter of mindfulness, nobody can burn you down to ashes.** Further, nobody can make you scared. Nobody can entice you by showing something, giving something and making promises. You are free from all those things. **No fire can get close to you. You are fully extinct.** It is impossible to set fire, even using gasoline and straw, to a place where no spark of fire is left. If sparks of fire are left, even a single straw can set fire. If no sparks of fire are left, no matter what you use, fire-wood or straw or gasoline, any destruction won't be there. Mindfulness is also like that. Just see. **Mindfulness is the meditation. This is the one and only path.** There is no other path. **Be mindful! There is no particular time for being mindful-from 9 to 10 or from 2 to 3 or from 6 to 7. A fire may set in at any time. A fire of anger can crop up at any time. A fire of desire can crop up at any time.** Those fires don't give prior notices before

coming. Therefore, **be mindful in every moment while looking at your mind!**

24. The first priority

Be watchful to know what is happening in the mind at this moment! Who has come to the mind? Where has the mind gone? That is your sole responsibility, nothing else. Don't take the other responsibilities seriously. You can try to fulfil those responsibilities as much as possible. Don't try to stay away from responsibilities. **Give the first priority to mindfulness.** All the other responsibilities are secondary. Don't give the first priority to anything else. Don't give the first priority to money. If you need to give some importance to money, make it the second or the third or the fourth or the fifth priority. **Give the first priority of life to mindfulness. A person who has given the first priority to mindfulness can become a witness to extinction and peaceful joy. Giving the first priority to mindfulness is meditation.**

May the Triple Gem Bless You!!!