

BLUEPRINT OF FREE INQUIRY AND PERSONAL VERIFICATION

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Introduction

Thinkers of pre-Buddhist India fall mainly into three mutually inclusive classes:

- 1. The Traditionalists or revelationists (anussavikā), who believed in the scriptural tradition of revelation
- 2. The Rationalists and Metaphysicians (takki vīmamsī), who claimed knowledge from reasoning and speculation, and
- 3. The Experientialists (sāmam eva dhammam abhinīnāya), who depended upon direct personal knowledge and experience of varying degrees.

The Blueprint of Free Inquiry and Personal Verification is a review of the epoch-making short sermon of the Buddha called Kālāma Sutta, which advocates an infalliable criterion to excavate the feasibility of the divergent views forwarded by the above thinkers at the time of the Buddha. The scientific attitude displayed in the discourse is of contemporary relevance.

I am extremely grateful to all, including Tisarana Buddhist Association, who helped me in publishing this booklet.

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The discourse popularly known as the *Kālāma Sutta* is considered as one of the epoch-making discourses delivered by the Buddha. It is comparatively short but addresses to the point, revealing how one should exercise one's ability to critically investigate on practical grounds and to discover what is true and wholesome among the divergent religious and philosophical views. Personal verification recommended in the discourse does not require either hair-splitting intellectual arguments or traditional wisdom based on scriptural evidence. It succinctly lays out a blueprint to distinguish different views from one another from a pragmatic angle of vision.

Since the freedom of inquiry envisaged in the discourse is commended as the Buddhist Charter of Intellectual Freedom, which is a predominant theme in the teachings of the Buddha, it is acclaimed as the *Magna Carta* of Buddhist philosophical thought¹. Besides, the discourse serves the purpose of a sound basis for Buddhist social outlook. In the *Sālha Sutta*, Venerable

Nandaka elaborates the ethical aspect of the discourse². The discourse in question is found in the Anguttara-nikaya of the Pali canon³.

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Classification of Religions in the World

Sociologist Reece McGee has identified a certain conceptual order in each world religion in respect of its fundamental characteristics. According to him, all the religions of the world can be grouped into four types in relation to basic teachings found in them.

- 1. Simple supernaturalism, which speaks of supernaturl forces influencing human events for better or worse.
- 2. Animism, the belief of active animate spirits operating in the world.
- 3. *Theism*, which speaks of God or gods interested in human affairs.
- 4. Transcendental Idealism, which emphasises good conduct and self-culture directed to realise an ideal supernatural state⁴.

Therefore broadly speaking, a religion proper always has a dual duty to perform. One is to

¹ Magna Carta (1215) is the Great Charter sealed by King John of England in response to the baronial unrest that resulted from his disastrous foreign policy and arbitrary government. The Charter was subsequently said to have upheld as a statement of civil rights.

² A. I, p. 196

³ A. I, p. 188

⁴ Robertson Ian, Sociology, pp. 399-401

delineate the moral path of life based on its world-view for the sake of its followers. The other is to point out the value of arriving at the supernatural, transcendental goal for real and permanent happiness conceived in terms of its world-view. So Buddhism, as Reece McGee also has shown, comes with the sphere of the fourth type of religion.

Durkheim, one of the pioneer researchers in the field, approached the subject in a different way and viewed religion in a sociological perspective showing how social cohesion is maintained by religion. As elaborated by successive sociologists, religion's social role is fourfold:

- 1. maintenance of social solidarity
- 2. providing answers to problems of life by means of theodicy
- 3. inculcation of values and norms for society
- 4. providing psychological support to followers

When we confine ourselves to the social role of Buddhism, it can be defined as an ethical, spiritual and pragmatic training for producing a person of vision and discipline.

A Rational Approach to Diverse Views

According to the Pali canon, the Buddha in search of Enlightenment gave up all forms of

austere ascetic practices that he had been following over a period of six long years and thought out by himself a technique, a method by which he could achieve his objective. Reasoning out the Path by himself, eventually the Buddha attained Enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi tree at Gaya, India⁵.

Attaining self-mastery in this way, the Buddha showed the world how one should get rid of dogmatic beliefs and worthless age-old religious traditions which had no relative importance, whatsoever, either for successful living in this life or for gaining a better life hereafter. It was a time when people who held different religious views were in the habit of engaging in disputations on controversial philosophical and religious issues on the one hand, and superstitious beliefs abound with rites and rituals on the other. The situation was such that the majority of people could not discriminate or single out what was right among the divergent opinions since those views were forwarded and propounded with equal emphasis eloquence by exponents of respective faiths. There were preachers of high reputation and some of them hailed from respectable families. The philosophical theories propounded by some of them, though contradictory to one another, were logically sound and theoretically wellfounded. The Buddha wanted them to evaluate those views rationally on ethical grounds. The

⁵ Ariyapariyesanā Sutta - M.I, p. 167

Brahmajāla Sutta furnishes us with a record of no less than sixty-two such philosophical views found at the time of the Buddha⁶.

Once the Buddha visited Kesaputta, a township in North India inhabited by the people of Kalama clan. Coming to know that the Buddha had arrived in their township, they flocked to the Buddha and said that their township had become a hotbed of religious disputation. Since many religious disputants, who visited the place with the purpose of conversion proclaimed their views seemingly on a logical and rational basis. So the Kalamas being bewildered as to which was true among the divergent views that had been proclaimed before them, voiced their utter dissatisfaction before the Buddha. They asked him as to what criteria they should adopt in order to find out the plausible one out of those diverse philosophical views before them.

Scientific Attitude

In this regard, the Buddha addressing the Kalamas, preached *Kālāma Sutta* guaranteeing some fundamental rights and privileges of the Truth seeker. It was a remarkable event in the field of analytical investigation amounting to assurance of free inquiry, freedom of expression, autonomy of moral judgement, right to dissent, freewill and responsibility as well as

salvation without a saviour. For the first time in human history, the Buddha paved the way to think freely, without being bound by unverifiable propositions. One should not adhere on to any kind of dogma or view, merely because it has come down from generation to generation for some reason or other. He emphasised the fact that one should use one's critical faculty to discover by oneself what is good and wholesome to practise.

Evidently, both science and Buddhism are committed to discovering the truth about the world. Nevertheless, Buddhism applies a spiritual dimension to its approach; science, a phenomenal dimension. To all intents and purposes, science may differ from its objective of inquiry related to constitution and mechanism of the physical world. Therefore science focuses its attention on external world while the main concern of Buddhism is the inner world of personality. Science examines the objective world to acquire factual knowledge for correct understanding, but in Buddhism, factual knowledge is pursued subjective for transformation. While science can be considered as an intellectual discipline basing on mathematical quantifiable data involving calculations, Buddhism seeks inner perfection and wisdom through moral discipline where life is held sacred. Nevertheless, both rely on experience and follow the methodology of investigation and observation based on experimentation. Empiricist approach found in

⁶ Brahmajāla Sutta - D.I, p. 1 ff.

scientific research is different from Buddhist approach to life because Buddhism, not being a physical science, deals with life in a different magnitude. As it considers life is sacred, it is beyond the scope of measuring mass, shape, size or velocity in science. The salvic objective of Buddhist empiricism is marked with moral development for the attainment of perfection of wisdom. Incidentally, some of the findings in science have corroborated what Buddhism has said more than twenty-five centuries ago.

The Address to Kalamas

The address to the Kalamas could be considered very bold and daring in the context of the social and religious setting in which the Buddha preached. It is indeed a proclamation ahead of his time and clime. Presumably it was out of unlimited compassion and wisdom that the Buddha persuaded the Kalamas to get out of diametrically opposite views and irrational dogmas and encouraged them to cultivate a rational way of thinking based on ethical evaluation which can be called 'scientific' in modern phraseology. The Buddha, saying that their perplexity is legitimate, proclaimed ten propositions, which shed light on the basics of Buddhist social philosophy and according to which a view is not to be accepted due to:

1. revelation (mā anussavena)

- 2. tradition (mā paramparāya)
- 3. hearsay (mā itikirāya)
- 4. authority of sacred texts (mā piṭakasampadānena)
- 5. logical format (mā takkahetu)
- 6. merely on the view that seems rational $(m\bar{a} \ nayahetu)$
- 7. reflection on mere appearance (mā ākāraparivitakkena)
- 8. agreement with a considered view (mā diṭṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā)
- 9. considering the competence of a person (mā bhabbarūpatāya)
- 10. considering that the recluse is our teacher (mā samano no garu)

Further on questioning, when the Kalamas affirmed that greed, hatred and delusion are not conducive to one's happiness, the Buddha continued:

"On reflection, when you know for certain, O Kalamas; for youself, that any view is contributory to the arising of greed, hatred and delusion, you may then abandon that view as unwholesome. On reflection, when you know for certain, O Kalamas; for yourself, that any view is contributory to appeasement of greed, hatred and delusion, you may then accept that view as wholesome."

By analysing these ten propositions and the criteria that followed, with which the validity of

a view is to be measured, we are led to arrive at some negative and positive conclusions, which could be considered very remarkable in the religious history of the world. They reveal the underlying characteristics of Buddhist thought as the founder himself reasoned out as it should have been.

- 1. Propositions 1, 2 and 3 unequivocally deal with the authority of revelation transmitted in any form whatsoever, thereby rejecting the concept of an omnipotent, omniscient and all-compassionate creator.
- 2. Proposition 4 refers to textual citations and stresses the fact that being written down in the sacred texts alone is not sufficient to justify the feasibility of a view.
- 3. Propositions 5 and 6 point out the insufficiency of a mere format of a hypothesis to conclude that it is pragmatic.
- 4. Propositions 7 and 8 emphasise that one should not be convinced by mere superficial affinity of a hypothesis to one's own point of view.
- 5. Propositions 9 and 10 accentuate one should not be misguided by the reputation and the sense of honour towards a preacher and believe in, on that account alone, what he says.

The ten propositions in the *Kālāma Sutta* can be broadly divided into two groups: authority and logical reasoning. Authority is twofold, i.e. authority of revelation and holy writ, and bersonal authority. Among the propositions, 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10 belong to the former, and 5, 6, and 8 to the latter⁷.

On closer scrutiny, we will be able to discover from the discourse some of the important premises relevant to modern concepts of freedom and civil rights. Therefore, positively speaking, these ten propositions would seem to have been founded on some fundamental principles of the Buddha's teachings. Had there not been a positive way to approach problems involving man's potential ability to mould his own destiny, presumably the Buddha would never have delivered this discourse. Hence it must be stated that this epoch-making announcement of the Buddha is based on some of the positive doctrinal issues that distinguish Buddhism from contemporary Indian religious thought. They can be summarised as follows:

- 1. The Assurance of Free Inquiry
- 2. Salvation without a Saviour
- 3. The Freedom of Expression
- 4. The Autonomy of Moral Judgement
- 5. The Right to Dissent

⁷ For a further discussion on authority and logic, refer to author's *Essentials of Buddhism*, Chapter 13.

- 6. Free Will and Responsibility
- 7. Personal Verification

The Assurance of Free Inquiry

Throughout his missionary career of forty-five years, the Buddha's innate proclivity to address to reason, making the listener wise and rational in ethical and spiritual matters, is vividly manifested in the canonical dialogues of the Buddha. Here is a teacher *par excellence*, who saw the potential of each and every individual irrespective of his clan, caste, creed or social status and devoted a considerable part of his discourses to instill awareness of the bare facts of life.

Once Upali, the Jain householder, visited the Buddha with the hope of defeating him by refuting the Buddha's standpoint. But ultimately, at the end of the religious controversy, he was so thoroughly impressed that he apologised to the Buddha and announced that he would thenceforth take the Buddha as his refuge and become a follower. Thereupon the Buddha told Upali thrice not to be emotional and sentimental:

"Analytical reasoning is better for persons of your status. You are a person of good fame."

"tumhādisānam ñātamanussānam anu-viccakāro sādhu hoti"

In one of the discourses, the Buddha asked his disciples to examine whether the professed Enlightenment of the Buddha was factual and real⁹. This attitude of the Buddha is nicely summarised in a stanza found in a Buddhist Sanskrit text. It reads:

"Just as the quality of gold is determined by heating, cutting and rubbing on a whetstone by a wise one, even so, O monk; my word has to be accepted after examination and not out of honour to me."

"Tāpāt chedāt ca nikashāt Suvarnamiva panditaih Pariksya bhikshavo grāhyāh Madvaco na tu gauravāt"¹⁰

Salvation without a Saviour

Buddhism speaks of salvation without a personal saviour. The Buddha always stated emphatically that he was only a person showing the way:

⁸ Upali Sutta - M.I, p. 137 ff.

⁹ Vīmansaka Sutta - M.I, p. 317

¹⁰ Ñanasārasamuccaya 30

"Things have to be performed by yourselves, the Tathagatas are only showing the way (to emancipation)" 11.

"Be an island unto yourselves! Be a refuge unto yourselves! Do not depend upon others (for your emancipation)!"¹²

This was his advice to monks on the last day of his mortal existence. The Buddha discouraged his followers from creating a personality cult around him, a fact evident in the teachings as handed down to us. He always encouraged the faithful, who expressed their willingness to be saved, to go by the doctrine that he has preached. When a monk called Vakkali who was in the habit of looking from a certain distance at the face of the Buddha in admiration, the Buddha persuaded him to look for the doctrine and master it instead. The Buddha said:

"What good does it bring to you, Vakkali; by looking at this physical body of filth? He who sees the doctrine sees me. He who sees me, sees the doctrine."¹³ Each and every individual has to strive individually for one's own well being.

This attitude is graphically illustrated in the *Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta*. The Buddha was very pertinent in cultivating the habit of understanding in his disciples by "knowing" and "seeing". Addressing the monks the Buddha says:

"Monks, would you perhaps, when you know and see this, speak so: 'Our Teacher is venerable and we speak out of respect for our teacher'?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"Monks, would you perhaps, when you know and see this speak so: 'A recluse spoke so to us and also so do other recluses, but we do not speak thus'?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"Monks, would you perhaps, when you know and see this, look out for another teacher?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"Monks, would you perhaps, when you know and see this, return to observences, festivals and ceremonies of the ordinary

^{11 &}quot;Tumhehi kiccam ātapam akkhātāro tathāgatā"

⁻ Dbp 276

^{12 &}quot;Attadīpā viharatha attasaranā anaññasaranā"

⁻ D.II, p. 119

¹³ "Kim te vakkali iminā pūtikāyena diṭṭhena, yo dhammam passati so mam passati" - DhA IV, p. 118 ff. S. III, p. 119 ff.

recluses and brahmins, taking them as the core (of holy life)?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"Monks, do you speak only of what you have known, seen and understood for yourselves?"

"Yes, Venerable sir."

"Good, monks, you have been guided by me through this timeless Dhamma which can be realised and verified, leads to the goal and should be experienced by individually by the intelligent." 14

In this connection, attention could be drawn to the creation of the Buddha image. Until Kanishka, who reigned in India in the 1st century B. C., no images had been carved to represent the Buddha. Archaeologists as well as historians believe that the sculptors abstained from carving images of the Buddha, out of the inborn fear that they were not capable enough to carve all the delicate and intricate features found in the Buddha's physique. However, one can argue against this view by bringing in a considerable amount of substantial proof pertaining to what the Buddha said about himself. Although there was a process of accumulating docetic elements around the human person of the Buddha in the

subsequent ages, as revealed in the texts, the Buddha totally rejected any divine connection. Therefore it is plausible to think that the Buddhists in that contemporary society must have discouraged statuary lest the Buddha be taken as just one more god of the Hindu pantheon. This actually happened in a later stage of Indian religious history by representing the Buddha as one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, the god of protection in Hindu mythology.

The Buddha instructed the disciples to go by the doctrine and discipline that he taught and to regard the doctrine and discipline as teacher after his demise¹⁵. However, the doctrine is not to be dogmatised and worshipped. The pragmatic value of the teachings is stressed throughout. What the Buddha taught is not to be taken as a magical formula, the utterance of which requires many ritualistic performances and ceremonies. The doctrine is, therefore, to be mastered and practised. This utilitarian nature of the doctrine is brought forth in the parable of the raft where the Buddha says:

"O, monks, I will teach you the parable of the raft. The doctrine, comparable to a raft, is for crossing over, not for retaining. You, monks, by understanding the parable of the raft, should even get rid of

¹⁴ M. I, 265

 $^{^{15}}$ "Yo kho \bar{A} nanda may \bar{a} dhammo ca vinayo ca paññatto so vo mamaccayena satth \bar{a} " - D.II, p. 135

the doctrine (dhamma), all the more of the wrong doctrine (adhamma)."16

Once the purpose is served, there is no need to hang on to it. But, that objective is to be achieved through contemplative reasoning and analysis. In other words, the responsibility lies upon the individual himself. As there is no external agency acting as a saviour, prayer, sacrifice, worship and supplication are of no avail. The *Dhammapada* puts it thus:

"Oneself, indeed is one's saviour, for what other saviour would there be? With oneself well-controlled, one obtains a saviour difficult to find."

Attāhi attano nātho Ko hi nātho paro siyā Attanā va sudantena Nātham labhati dullabham¹⁷

It is reiterated:

"By oneself indeed is evil done, by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone, by oneself indeed is one purified. Purity and impurity depend upon oneself. No one purifies another."

Attanā va katam pāpam

"Kullūpamaň bhikkhave dhammaň desissami nittharanatthāya no gahanatthāya" - M.I, p. 135
¹⁷ Dhp 160

The Freedom of Expression

The freedom of expression is considered an essential phenomenon of personal liberty. To say that one is enjoying the freedom of expression amounts to a public announcement of one's independent personal thoughts or views, without any external constraints or domination whatsoever.

Of course, the exercise of the freedom to express is to be carried out within certain limits of legal binding. Today, in principle, this has been recognised as a civil right of each and every individual human being living on the globe. But very often than not, obviously in some countries, freedom of expression is denied by adopting very vulgar methods of extermination. Suppression of opposing views is usually carried out under the banner of authorised censorship.

The address to the Kalamas clearly shows that the Buddha had accepted the right of others to

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¹⁸ Dbp 165

express their views. But having been listened to. they are to be scrutinised and digested. What is considered essential is critical evaluation. The Buddha's discourse amounts to saving: "Let recluses from all directions come to Kesaputta and proclaim their views, but by cultivating awareness one must exercise one's freedom of rational choice." Devadatta publicly voiced his disagreement with the Buddha and the community of monks. He had once submitted four rules of strict discipline advocating austere asceticism. The Buddha rejected them on the grounds of freedom of choice. In that particular instance, the Buddha gave the monks the latitude to deviate if they so wished, from compulsory ascetic conduct. Even though the Buddha could, he would not seek the royal assistance to suppress the freedom enjoyed by Devadatta. Instead, he resorted to the democratic means of public proclamation. Ananda was asked to announce at a public place that thenceforth Devadatta was not a member of the community of monks, and that the Buddha and the monks were not in any way responsible for his behaviour thereafter.

The Autonomy of Moral Judgement

One of the salient features distinguishable in the discourse is the autonomy ascribed to moral evaluation. Morality being the sum total of Buddhist behaviour, an action or a proposition

is to be judged in accordance with the moral implications in that particular action or proposition. This is exclusively the Buddhist approach to be followed, for the betterment of the individual and society as a whole. Neither the end justifies the means nor the means justifies the end, but both the end and the means have to be critically examined and evaluated in relation to their moral implication.

The of moral iudgement autonomy recommended to the inquisitive Kalamas is basically autonomy of value judgement, because herein the criterion is formulated on the premise of moral value and fact. Factually speaking, greed, hatred and delusion are defilements or evils. They are detrimental to one's welfare, which is an empirically observable fact; an actuality that could be experienced in our daily life. If that is so, any theory that leads one to greed, hatred and delusion, that theory would not be conducive to one's happiness. Therefore as it is not capable of leading one to the ultimate spiritual goal, it must be discarded altogether.

As discussed in another context in the canon, the autonomy of moral judgement could be based on three alternative standpoints:

- 1. on one's conscience (attādhipateyya)
- 2. on the world opinion (lokādhipateyya)

3. on the doctrinal point of view (dhammādhipateyya)

Firstly, a person may judge the validity of a given proposition on one's conscience. That is, to evaluate anything on one's conscience of right and wrong. Conscience is a product of human civilisation, provided that one who has presence of mind is naturally believed to also have the ability to differentiate good from evil. As a consequence of resorting to a wrong or evil assumption or action, wilfully against his own conscience, he is reminded that his conscience would be reproached by that very conscience (attāpi attānam upavadati).

The second alternative has been recommended in making a value judgement, viewing it through the angle of public opinion. Reaction of the public is to be taken into consideration as a criterion of judgement. Disregarding the opinion of the wise would especially result in undesirable consequences. When the act is blamable in the eyes of the wise, it will tend to create a bad image of the person concerned (anuvicca viññū garaheyyum).

The application of the doctrinal standpoint is stated as the third alternative. Contemplation on the doctrine would lead one to reason out the welfare of this life and the life hereafter and to reflect as to whether one's action is in conformity with the doctrine. The adherence to

an evil action would result in rebirth in a woeful state (parammaranā duggatim pāṭikankhā)¹⁹.

In all the three instances, the autonomy of judging the moral value of an act rests upon the individual. While he is given the freedom of choice, his capacity to reason in terms of good and evil is taken for granted.

The Right to Dissent

The right to dissent highlighted in the discourse to the Kalamas is also a significant event in the history of Buddhist thought. The propounders of different religions were not obstructed from coming to Kesaputta for their missionary activities. As we understand from the sutta, the Kalamas were encouraged to listen to the moral feasibility of those views.

From very early times, India as a whole, seems to have had developed a sympathetic attitude towards diverse religious and philosophical views. Most of the towns in North India provided a kind of assembly halls called 'Halls for Religious Controversies' (samayappavādaka sālā) where different preachers could deliver lectures on their respective religious and philosophical systems²⁰. There they could freely

¹⁹ A.I, p. 57

²⁰ D.I, p. 178, II, p. 254

initiate debates to defend their own views or denounce another's views. It was a public platform where anyone could announce his theories without any obligation to anybody. Religious tolerance seems to have been practised to the very letter where divergent religious groups could meet one another in a very friendly atmosphere.

As found in the Buddhist canonical records, the religious leaders were in the habit of visiting one another from time to time. The Buddha, too, visited the monasteries of other religionists and had dialogues with them on doctrinal issues. They, too, used to visit the Buddha, with the intention of learning the Buddha's approach to problems related to their philosophical systems. In fact some of the important dialogues found in the Buddhist scriptures are discussions between the Buddha and the recluses professing different faiths, who approached the Buddha to get their doubts clarified.

Religious tolerance in this way is a concept not alien to ancient India. Asoka, the Buddhist emperor, in the 3rd century B. C. following the spirit of the Buddha's attitude to other religions inscribed on the rock Edict in Girnar, "He who disparages another's religion, virtually disparages his own religion."²¹

The free exchange of conflicting ideas clears the path to reality. Deliberation conducted in diverse perspectives within a real democratic framework broadens the horizon of vision. An attitudinal change towards the exercise of the right to dissent would, therefore, lead not only to encouraging friendship, but also to deepening the understanding between them.

As we know from the 13th to the 19th century, the Inquisition in Europe played a gruesome role in European religious history. Scientific discoveries were denounced, on religious authority, by the Inquisition and the scientists were harassed, tortured and made to reprobate their own scientific findings that had been achieved by lifelong research for the good of the entire human race.

Buddhism considers that the right to dissent is the prerogative of everyone. Wherever Buddhism went it embarked on a mission of awakening people to reality. In Buddhist history we do not come across proselytising campaigns in numerous guises just as we find in some of the religious histories of the world. Very often it is pointed out that never a drop of blood has been shed for the cause of the spread of Buddhism. It is because of the right to dissent, more and more scientific discoveries were made possible in numerous fields. As new theories, more effective than the existing ones, came to be formulated, the old ones became obsolete.

²¹ Asoka Edicts: Girnar 7

After the demise of the Buddha, dissenting views resulted in different doctrinal interpretations. Consequently many Buddhist sects came into existence, speeding up the diversification and the expansion of Buddhist thought.

Even within the monasteries themselves, nobody was obstructed from free discussion. In religious and philosophical discussions, the participants could enjoy the right to withhold assent or actively oppose others' views. Free and independent views were anticipated and no objections were raised for holding or declaring a contrary opinion. Later, from the 5th century onwards, when Buddhist universities such as Nalanda, Vikramasila, Jagaddala, etc. started in India, the spirit of free inquiry and right to dissent prevailing in the Buddhist universities at that time attracted academics as well as students from many Asian countries for study and research. The vast amount of Pali commentarial literature reveals to what extent freedom has been enjoyed by the elders in ancient Sri Lanka conceptualised who their different interpretations known as 'ācariya vāda'.

Free Will and Responsibility

In philosophy, free will and responsibility are interpreted in a very liberal but abstract way. The ambiguity of the concept has rendered it impossible to interpret it within the scope of the meaning that the words individually denote. The ambiguity apparently has led philosophers to argue and develop two different trains of thought related to some of the world religions. Some maintain that Christianity envisages free will and responsibility, yet others say it does not, all on the same Biblical authority.

In this discussion, we confine ourselves to the meaning they denote, not what they connote, in order to compare and contrast the Buddhist standpoint with these denotations. From this point of view, two important concepts of Buddhism are seen to emerge from the discourse to the Kalamas. They are nothing but the attitude to free will and responsibility in Buddhism.

Buddhism does not resort to determinism, either theistic or kammic, to solve the problems of man and his destiny. It advocates neither indeterminism (adhiccasamuppanavada) nor strict causal determinism (nivativada). Buddhism asserts that while transcendental reality is beyond causality or conditionality, the phenomenal world is causally conditioned, and the individual has the power of exercising his free will and the responsibility in selecting and following a moral behaviour, amicable to transcending the causal nexus that keeps him in bondage. In other words, Buddhism deals with a doctrine of emancipation from the vicious

circle of causal conditionality dominating the phenomenal world.

When we stand aloof from all the subtle arguments brought against or brought in favour of free will and responsibility, we understand that the concept of the supremacy of man is an essential constituent of Buddhist thought. Man is entrusted with the responsibility of choosing what is wholesome from alternative courses of action. As the freedom to will and the responsibility for subsequent actions rest upon the individual himself, he is, therefore, the moulder of his own fate. Hence the concepts of free will and responsibility are so central to without Buddhist philosophy, which Emancipation or Moral Perfection as expounded in Buddhism would be meaningless. If free will and responsibility are not guaranteed, man is helpless and he has to be ever in the cycle of existence under the tyranny of causality. The Buddha reiterated that in the causally conditioned world, man has the freedom, power and the responsibility of rising above the causal conditionality. As Tachibana puts it:

"Buddhism emphasises the freedom of the will, and that its morality is autonomy par excellence. Autonomy is a paramount characteristic of this religion."²²

In the context of supremacy ascribed to the individual, the assertion that "not only the so-called free will is not free but even the very idea of free will is not free from conditions" has to be understood as a meaning extended and appended to Buddhist theory of causality, implying that even the freedom of action and choice are traceable back to some kind of causal genesis.

Man is tradition-bound and he follows what is handed down from generation to generation without questioning the relative value of adhering to it. Some of the religious beliefs found at the time of Buddha were detrimental to the spiritual growth of man, therefore in his dialogues the Buddha insisted that the interlocutors be immunised from views which were morally unwholesome. In the discourse, the Kalamas were 'awakened' as it were, from their bewildering confusion by the Buddha appealing to their reason.

As to how a person would exercise his freedom of will and take the responsibility upon himself are clearly depicted in the scriptures.

Personal Verification

²² Tachibana, Ethics of Buddhism, p. 92

²³ Rahula W, What the Buddha Taught, p. 54

Personal verification is a dominant theme throughout the discourses of the Buddha. When a person comes to know from others about the Buddha and the doctrine, he develops a liking to see the Buddha and listen to what he says. So he inclines towards faith and confidence and goes to the Buddha. Now, twelve successive stages in the process of evaluation leading to realisation of truth have been shown, relying on the exercise of the freedom of willing and the corresponding responsibility of the person concerned. Addressing the monks the Buddha said:

"As to this monks;

- 1. He who has faith draws close (idha bhikkhave saddhājāto upasamkamati)
- 2. Drawing close, he sits down nearby (upasamkamitvā payirupāsati)
- 3. Sitting down nearby, he lends his ear (payirupāsanto sotam odahati)
- 4. Lending his ear, he hears the doctrine (odahita soto dhammam sunāti)
- 5. Having heard the doctrine, he remembers it (sutvā dhammam dhāreti)
- 6. He then tests the meaning of things he has borne in mind (dhatānaṁ dhammānaṁ atthaṁ upaparikkhati)
- 7. While testing the meaning, the things are approved of

- (attham upaparikkhanto dhammā nijjhānam khamanti)
- 8. There being approval of the things, desire is born (dhamma nijjhanakkhantiyā sati chando jāyati)
- 9. With desire born, he makes an effort (chandajāto ussahati)
- 10. Having made an effort, he weighs it up (ussahanto tuleti)
- 11. Having weighed it up, he strives (tulayanto vāyamati)
- 12. Finally, being self-resolute he realises with his person, the Highest Truth (padahitatto samāno kāyena ceva paramam saccam sacchi karoti)¹²⁴

Further, the Buddha points out that there are four expositions pertaining to the disciple who has thus followed the instructions faithfully and lives in unison with it.

- 1. He begins to realise: the Teacher is the Lord; a disciple am I; the Lord knows, I do not know.
- 2. He comprehends that the Teacher's instruction is a furthering in growth and a giving of strength.
- He puts his shoulder to the wheel and thinks: "Gladly would I be reduced to skin and sinews and bone and let my

²⁴ Kitagiri Sutta - M.I, p. 477 ff.

body's flesh and blood dry up, if there comes to be a vortex of energy, so that which is not yet won might be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving."

4. One of two fruits is to be expected by the disciple who adheres to the Teacher's instruction and lives in unison with it. Profound knowledge here and now, and if there is any basis for rebirth remaining, the state of no-return.

It is because of the place ascribed to personal verification that one is asked to repose confidence even in the Buddha only after thoughtfully reflecting on what he preaches. The distinguished character of verification highlighted at the end of the *Kālāma Sutta* is a unique teaching in the history of world religions.

Four Initiatives in Expositions (cattāro suttanikkbepā) 25

There are four initiatives in sponsoring a dhamma exposition. They are:

- 1. The Buddha on his own accord (attajjhāsaya)
- 2. By knowing the other's intention (parajjhāsaya)

- 3. By way of an explanation of a question (bucchāvasika)
- 4. In accordance with the circumstance (aṭṭhuppattika)

In this case, the Buddha delivered the discourse by way of an explanation to the question posed by the Kalamas. The discourse is significant in many respects. Unfortunately, many know only the ten propositions of the discourse, but not the ethical and moral implications of the propositions and the reasons that prompted the Buddha to set them.

The Buddha, the Efficient Communicator

When we analyze the discourse, it gives an insight into the communication skill displayed by the Buddha in establishing the thesis of ten propositions in the minds of the Kalamas. As an efficient educator, asserting that their doubt is reasonable and valid, the Buddha builds a rapport between him and the interlocutors at the beginning and continues the dialogue method of exposition until the end and convinces the Kalamas to approve what he expounds.

Criteria of Good and Evil: Greed, Hatred and Delusion

²⁵ AA. Nipāta II

The three roots of evil: greed, hatred and delusion are the criteria for deciding what is proper and improper. In the course of the dialogue, the Buddha points out that people being overwhelmed and motivated by them resort to killing living beings, stealing, committing adultery, telling lies and influencing others to do the same. Continuing the dialogue, the Buddha ascertains that, with the unanimous approval of the Kalamas, those tendencies are unwholesome, blameworthy, censured by the wise, and leading to harm and unhappiness. Then the Buddha gives the ten propositions and asks the Kalamas to evaluate them in the light of the above three roots of evil. Then he takes the case of the absence of those evils and gets the Kalamas' approval that they are wholesome, blameless, praiseworthy by the wise, and leading to a harmless and happy state.

Development of Four Noble Abodes

Now the thesis is forwarded again for the confirmation of the standpoint and shows how freedom from covetousness and freedom from hatred are instrumental in developing Four Noble Abodes: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

The climax of the ethical and moral evaluation of the different views ultimately leads to one's own consolation. Herein, the Buddha brings out a rational and practical árgument to delineate how the believing practitioner experiences consolation in four ways regarding this life as well as the life in the next world. This is an interesting remark, which evaluates the crux of the question under moral conduct involving individual and society.

Firstly, he experiences consolation in this life considering the fact that if there is good result for good deed, then freedom from covetousness and hatred and the cultivation of Noble Abodes would result in giving him birth in a heavenly world.

Secondly, if there were no afterlife and no result for good or evil deed, then at least, he would be safe and sound in this world.

Thirdly, if evil-doer is destined to get evil results, he is sure that he would not get evil results since he has abstained from doing evil deeds.

Fourthly, since he does not do evil, he is convinced that he is pure in this world and in the next.

Thus the discourse ends with the avowed declaration of the Kalamas to be followers of the Triple Gem as long as they live.

KĀLĀMA SUTTA

Evam me sutam. Ekam samayam Bhagavā 1. Kosalesu cārikam caramāno mahatā bhikkhusanghena saddhim yena Kesaputtam nāma Kālāmānam nigamo tadavasari. Assosum kho Kesaputtiyā Kālāmā samano khalu bho Gotamo Sakyakulā pabbajito Sakyaputto Kesaputtam anuppatto. Tam kho pana Bhagavantam Gotamam evam kalyāņo kittisaddo abbhuggato - iti pi so Bhagavā sammāsambuddho araham vijjā caranasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadamma sārathī satthā devamanussānam buddho Bhagavā'ti. Sādhu kho pana tathārūpānam arahatam dassanam hoti! ti.

> Kesaputtiyā Kālāmā yena Atha kho upasankamimsu. ten' Bhagavā Upasankamitvā appekacce Bhagavantam nisidimsu, abhivādetvā ekamantam saddhim appekacce Bhagavatā sammodaniyam katham sammodimsu sārāniyam vitisāretvā ekamantam nisidimsu, appekacce yene Bhagavā ten' añjalim panāmetvā ekamantam nisidimsu, appekacce nāmagottam sāvetvā appekacce nisidimsu. ekamantam nisidimsu. ekamantam tunhibhūtā

Ekamantam nisinnā kho Kesaputtiyā Kālāmā Bhagavantam etad avocum:

- 2. "Santi bhante eke samaṇabrāhmanā Kesaputtam āgacchanti. Te sakam yeva vādam dipenti jotenti, paravādam pana khumsenti vambhenti paribhavanti opapakkhim karonti. Apare pi bhante eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā Kesaputtam āgacchanti. Te pi sakam yeva vādam dipenti jotenti paravādam pana khumsenti vambhenti paribhavanti opapakkhim karonti. Tesam no bhante amhākam hot' eva kankhā hoti vicikicchā ko' si nāma imesam samaṇānam saccam āha ko musā" ti?
- 3. "Alam hi vo Kālāmā kankhitum alam vicikicchitum. Kankhāniye va pana vo thāne vicikkichā uppannā"

"Etha tumhe Kālāmā mā anussavena mā paramparāya mā itikirāya mā piṭakasampadānena mā takkahetu mā nayahetu mā ākāraparivitakkena mā diṭṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā mā bhavyarūpatāya mā samaṇo no garū' ti, yadā tumhe Kālāmā attanā va jāneyyātha— ime dhammā akusalā ime dhammā sāvajjā ime dhammā viñnugarahitā ime dhammā samattā samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya samvattanti' ti— atha tumhe Kālāmā pajaheyyātha"

4. "Tam kim maññatha Kālāmā – lobho purisassa ajjhattam uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā" ti?

"Ahitāya bhante"

5. "Luddho panāyam Kālāmā purisa-puggalo lobhena abhibhūto pariyādinnacitto pāṇam pi hanti adinnam pi ādiyati paradāram pi gacchati musā pi bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yam 'sa hoti digharattam ahitāya dukkhāyā" ti.

"Evam bhante"

6. "Tam kim maññatha Kālāmā - doso purisassa ajjhattam uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā" ti?

"Ahitāya bhante"

7. "Duṭṭho panāyam Kālāmā purisa-puggalo dosena abhibhūto pariyādinnacitto pānam pi hanti adinnam pi ādiyati paradāram pi gacchati musā pi bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yam 'sa hoti digharattam ahitāya dukkhāyā" ti.

"Evam bhante"

8. "Tam kim maññatha Kālāmā – moho purisassa ajjhattam uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā" ti?

"Ahitāya bhante"

9. "Mūļho panāyam Kālāmā purisa-puggalo mohena abhibhūto pariyādinnacitto pāṇam pi hanti adinnam pi ādiyati paradāram pi gacchati musā pi bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yam 'sa hoti digharattam ahitāya dukkhāyā" ti

"Evam bhante"

10. "Tam kim maññatha Kālāmā – ime dhammā kusalā vā akusalā vā" ti?

"Akusalā bhante"

"Sāvajjā vā anavajjā vā" ti?

"Sāvajjā bhante"

"Viñnugarahitā vā viñnuppasatthā vā" ti?

"Viññugarahitā bhante"

"Samattā samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya samvattanti no vā katham vā ettha hoti" ti?

"Samattā bhante samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya samvattanti evam no ettha hotī" ti

"Iti kho Kālāmā yam tam avocumha etha tumhe Kālāmā mā anussavena mā

mā itikirāya paramparāya mā pitakasampadanena mā takkahetu mā nayahetu mā ākāraparivitakkena mā ditthinijjhānakkhantiyā bhavyarūpatāya mā samaņo no garū ti, yadā tumhe Kālāmā attanā va jāneyyātha - ime dhammā akusalā ime dhammā sāvajjā ime dhammā viññugarahitā ime dhammā sammattā samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya samvattantī' ti -atha tumhe Kālāmā pajaheyyāthā' ti - iti yam tam vuttam idam etam paticca vuttam"

- "Etha tumhe Kālāmā mā anussavena mā 12. samano parampāraya...pe...mā garū'ti. yadā tumhe Kālāmā attanā va jāneyyātha - ime dhammā kusalā ime dhammā ime anavaijā dhammā viññuppasatthā ime dhammā samattā samādinnā hitāya sukhāya samvattantī ti upasampajja Kālāmā tumhe atha vihareyyātha"
- 13. "Tam kim maññatha Kālāmā -- alobho purisassa ajjhattam uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā" ti?

"Hitāya bhante"

"Aluddho panāyam Kālāmā purisapuggalo lobhena anabhibhūto apariyādinnacitto n'eva pāṇam hanti na adinnam ādiyati na paradāram gacchati na musā bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yam 'sa hoti dīgharattam hitāya sukhāyā" ti?

"Evam bhante"

"Tam kim mañnatha Kālāmā - adoso purisassa ajjhattam uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā" ti?

"Hitāya bhante"

"Aduṭṭho panāyam Kālāmā purisapuggalo dosena anabhibhūto apariyādinnacitto n' eva pāṇam hanti na adinnam ādiyati na paradāram gacchati na musā bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yam 'sa hoti dīgharattam hitāya sukhāyā" ti?

"Evam bhante"

"Tam kim maññatha Kälāmā - amoho purisassa ajjhattam uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā" ti?

"Hitāya bhante"

"Amūļho panāyam Kālāmā purisapuggalo mohena anabhibhūto apariyādinnacitto n'eva pāṇam hanti na adinnam ādiyati na paradāram gacchati na musā bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yam 'sa hoti digharattam hitāya sukhāyā" ti? "Evam bhante"

16. "Tam kim maññatha Kālāmā - ime dhammā kusalā vā akusalā vā" ti?

"Kusalā bhante"

"Sāvajjā vā anavajjā vā" ti?

"Anavajjā bhante"

"Viññugarahitā vā viññuppasatthā"? ti

"Viññuppasatthā bhante"

"Samattā samādinnā sukhāya samvattanti, no vā katham vā ettha hoti" ti?

"Samattā bhante samādinnā hitāya sukhāya samvattanti evam no ettha hoti" ti.

"Iti kho Kālāmā yam tam avocumha -17. etha tumhe Kālāmā mā anussavena mā paramparāya...pe... mā samaņo no garū' ti, yadā tumhe Kālāmā attanā va jāneyyātha - ime dhammā kusalā ime dhammā anavajiā ime dhammā viññuppasatthā ime dhammā samattā samādinnā hitāya sukhāya samvattanti' ti upasampajja Kālāmā tumhe atha vihareyyāthā' ti - iti yan tam vuttam idam etam pațicca vuttam"

"Sa kho so Kālāmā ariyasāvako evam vigatābhijiho vigatavyāpādo asammūļho sampajāno patissato mettāsahagatena cetasā ...pe... karuņāsahagatena cetasā ... pe...muditāsahagatena cetasā ...pe... upekhāsahagatena cetasā ekam disam pharitvā viharati tathā dutiyam tathā tatiyam tathā catuṭṭhim. Iti uddham adho tiriyam sabbhadhi sabbatthatāva sabbāvantam lokam upekhā-sahagatena mahaggatena vipulena cetasã appamānena averena avyāpajjhena Sa kho so Kālāmā pharityā viharati. arivasāvko averacitto evam evam avyāpajihacitto evam asankilittacitto evam visuddhacitto, tassa ditth' eva dhamme cattāro assāsā adhigatā honti.

Sace kho pana atthi paraloko atthi sukatadukkatānam kammānam phalam vipāko thānam aham kāyassa bhedā parammaranā sugatim saggam lokam uppajjissāmi ti. Ayam assa pathamo assaso adhigato hoti. Sace kho pana n'atthi paraloko n'atthi sukatadukkatānam kammānam phalam vipāko idhāham ditth' eva dhamme averam avyāpajjham anigham sukhim attānam pariharāmi' ti. Ayam assa dutiyo assaso adhigato hoti. Sace kho pana karoto kariyati papam na kho panāham kassaci pāpam cetemi akarontam kho pana mam papam kamman kuto dukkhan phusissati ti. Ayam assa tatiyo assāso adhigato hoti.

Sace kho pana karoto na kariyati pāpam idhāham ubhayen' eva visuddham attanām samanupassāmi ti. Ayam assa catuttho assāso adhigato hoti"

"Sa kho so ariyasāvako Kālāmā evam averacitto evam avyāpajjhacitto evam asankiliṭṭhacitto evam visuddhacitto tassa diṭṭh' eva dhamme ime cattāro assāsā adhigatā honti" ti

"Evam etam Bhagavā evam etam Sugata. 20. Sa kho so bhante ariyasāvako evam averacitto evam avyāpajjhacitto evam asankilitthacitto evam visuddhacitto tassa dițth' eva dhamme cattaro assasa adhigata honti. Sace kho pana atthi paraloko atthi sukaṭadukkaṭānam kammānam phalam vipāko thānam aham kāyassa bhedā parammaranā sugatim saggam lokam uppajjissāmi' ti. Ayam assa pathamo assāso adhigato hoti. Sace kho pana n' atthi paraloka n'atthi sukațadukkațānam kammānam phalam vipāko idhāham diṭṭh' eva dhamme averam avyāpajjham anigham sukhim attānam pariharāmi ti. Ayam assa dutiyo assāso adhigato hoti. Sace kho pana karoto kariyati pāpam na kho panāham kassaci pāpam cetemi akarontam kho pana mam pāpam kammam kuto dukkham phusissati' ti. Ayam assa tatiyo assāso adhigato hoti. Sace kho pana karoto na kariyati pāpam idhāham ubhaven' visuddham eva attanām samanupassāmi' ti. Ayam assa catuttho assāso adhigato hoti. Sa kho so bhante **ari**yasāvako evam averacitto evam avyāpajjhacitto evam asankilitthacitto **eva**m visuddhacitto ditth'eva tassa dhamme ime cattāro assāsā adhigatā honti" ti

abhikkantam "Abhikkantam bhante. bhante. Seyyathāpi, bhante, nikkujjitam yā ukkujjeyya paticchannam vā vivarevya mūlhassa vā maggam ācikkheyya andhakāre vā telapajjotam dhāreyya -¿Cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhinti'ti evamevam bhante anekapariyayena Dhammo pakāsito. mavam bhante Ete gacchāma Bhagavantam saranam dhammañ ca bhikkhusaṅghañ Upāsake no bhante Bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pānupete saranam gate" ti

Samattam

THE KALAMA DISCOURSE

Thus have I heard: On a certain occasion 1. the Exalted One, while going on his rounds among the Kosalans with a great company of monks, came to Kesaputta, a district of the Kosalans. Now, the Kalamas of Kesaputta heard that Gotama the recluse, the Sakyans' son who went forth as a recluse from the Sakyan clan, had reached Kesaputta. And this good report was noised about Gotama, that Exalted One: It is he, the Exalted One, Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One, Perfect in knowledge and practice, Wellfarer, World-Knower, Unsurpassed charioteer of men to be tamed, Teacher of devas and mankind, having himself come to know it thoroughly for himself, he teaches Dhamma that is lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely in the ending, both in letter and spirit; in all its fulness He preaches the holy life that is utterly pure. Well indeed for us if we could get the sight of arahants such as these.

> Then the Kalamas of Kesaputta went there where the Blessed One was. On arriving there, some paid homage to him and sat down on one side; some exhanged greetings with him and after a

cordial and memorable talk, sat down on one side; some saluted him raising their joined palms and sat down on one side; some announced their name and family and sat down on one side; some, without speaking, sat down on one side.

Seated there, the Kalamas said to the Blessed One:

"There are some monks and brahmins, Venerable Sir, who visit Kesaputta. They expound and explain only their own doctrines, they despise, revile, and pull to pieces the doctrines of others. (Likewise) some other monks and brahmins, Venerable Sir, come to Kesaputta. They also expound and explain only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. When we listen to them, Sir, we have doubt and wavering as to which of these worthy ones are speaking truth and which speak falsehood."

"It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; in a doubtful matter, wavering does arise."

"Come, Kalamas. Do not go by revelation; do not go by tradition; do not go by hearsay; do not go on the authority of sacred texts; do not go on the grounds of pure logics; do not go by a view that

seems rational; do not go by reflecting on mere appearances; do not go along with a considered view because you agree with it; do not go along on the ground that the person is competent; do not go along because (thinking) the recluse is our teacher. Kalamas, when you know things These yourselves: things are these unwholesome. blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; and when undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill, abandon them."

4. "What do you think, Kalamas? Does greed appear in a man for his benefit or harm?"

"For his harm, Venerable Sir."

5. "Kalamas, being given to greed, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by greed, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies; he prompts another to do likewise. Will that be for his harm and ill for a long time?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

6. "What do you think, Kalamas? Does hate appear in a man for his benefit or harm?"

"For his harm, Venerable Sir."

7. "Kalamas, being given to hate, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by hate, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies; he prompts another to do likewise. Will that be for his harm and ill for a long time?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

"What do you think, Kalamas? Does delusion appear in a man for his benefit or harm?"

"For his harm, Venerable Sir."

"Kalamas, being given to delusion, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by delusion, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies; he prompts another to do likewise. Will that be for his harm and ill for a long time?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

"What do you think, Kalamas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?"

"Unwholesome, Venerable Sir."

"Blameworthy or not?"

"Blameworthy, Venerable Sir."

"Censured or praised by the wise?"

"Censured, Venerable Sir."

"When undertaken and observed, do these things lead to harm and ill or not? Or how does it strike you?"

"Undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill. It is just so, Sir."

- "This is why I said, Kalamas: Come, 11. Kalamas. Do not go by revelation; do not go by tradition; do not go by hearsay; do not go on the authority of sacred texts; do not go on the grounds of pure logics; do not go by a view that seems rational; do not go by reflecting on mere appearances; do not go along with considered view because you agree with it; do not go along on the ground that the person is competent; do not go along (thinking) because the recluse is our Kalamas, when you know teacher. things are these yourselves: things are these unwholesome: blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; and when undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill; abandon them. Such was my reason for uttering those words."
 - 12. "Come, Kalamas. Do not go by revelation; do not go by tradition; ... When you know yourselves: these things are wholesome; these things are not

blameworthy; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness; having undertaken them, abide in them."

13. "What do you think, Kalamas? Does absence of greed appear in a man for his benefit or harm?"

"For his benefit, Venerable Sir."

"Kalamas, being not given to greed, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by greed, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another to do likewise. Will that be for his benefit and happiness for a long time?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

14. "What do you think, Kalamas? Does absence of hate appear in a man for his benefit or harm?"

"For his benefit, Venerable Sir."

"Kalamas, being not given to hate, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by hate, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another to do likewise. Will that be for his benefit and happiness for a long time?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

15. "What do you think, Kalamas? Does absence of delusion appear in a man for his benefit or harm?"

"For his benefit, Venerable Sir."

"Kalamas, being not given to delusion, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by delusion, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another to do likewise. Will that be for his benefit and happiness for a long time?"

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

16. "What do you think, Kalamas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?"

"Wholesome, Venerable Sir."

"Blameworthy or not blameworthy?"

"Not blameworthy, Venerable Sir."

"Censured or praised by the wise?"

"Praised, Venerable Sir."

"Undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness."

"It is just so, Venerable Sir."

- 17. "Therefore, this is why I said: Come, Kalamas. Do not go by revelation; do not go by tradition; ... do not go along (thinking) because the recluse is our teacher. Kalamas, when you know for yourselves: these things are wholesome; these things are not blameworthy; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness; having undertaken them, abide in them."
- "The Noble Disciple, Kalamas, who in 18. this way is devoid of coveting, devoid of ill-will, undeluded, clearly comprehending and mindful, dwells pervading, with thoughts of lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, towards one quarter (of the world), likewise the second, the third and the fourth. And in like manner above, below, across, everywhere, for all sorts and conditions, he abides suffusing the whole world with a heart possessed thoughts of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic jov and equanimity that is widespread, grown great and boundless, free from enmity and oppression. By that, the Ariyan

disciple, whose heart is thus free from enmity, free from oppression, untainted and made pure, in this very life four consolations are attained."

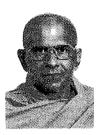
- 19. "Suppose there is a hereafter and there is a fruit, a result, of deeds done well or ill then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall be reborn in the heavenly world, which is possessed of the state of bliss; this is his first consolation. Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, no result of deeds done well or ill, then in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound and happy, I keep myself; this is his second consolation. Suppose evil (results) befall an evil-doer, if I think of doing evil to none, then how can suffering affect me who do no evil deed; this is his third consolation. Suppose I do no evil, both in this world and in the next, I shall see that I am pure; this is his fourth consolation. Thus Kalamas, that Ariyan disciple whose heart is free from enmity, free from oppression, untainted and made pure, in this very life attains these four consolations."
- 20. "So it is, Blessed One. So it is, Well-Farer. The Noble Disciple, Venerable Sir, whose heart is free from enmity, free from oppression, untainted and made

pure, in this very life attains these four consolations. Suppose there is hereafter and there is a fruit, a result, of deeds done well or ill, then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall be reborn in the heavenly world. which is possessed of the state of bliss. This is his first consolation. Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, no result of deeds done well or ill then in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound and happy, I keep myself. This is his second consolation. Suppose evil (results) befall an evil-doer, if I do not think of doing evil to none, then, how can suffering affect me who do no evil deed. This is his third consolation. Suppose I do not evil, both in this world and the next, I shall see that I am pure. This is his fourth consolation."

"Marvellous, Venerable Sir! Marvellous, Venerable Sir! It is as if, Venerable Sir, a person turns upwards what was upside down, or reveals what was concealed, or points the way to one who was lost, or holds up a light in the darkness thinking - those who have eyes will see visible objects, even so, in diverse ways has Dhamma been set forth by the Blessed One. We, Venerable Sir, go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma for refuge, and to the Order of Monks for

refuge. Venerable Sir, may the Blessed One accept us as followers, who have gone for refuge, from this day forth while life lasts."

END



The Buddha's address to the Kalamas advocates observation and investigation. It is very modern and appeals to the scientific mind. It vouchsafes a pragmatic criterion for judging what is plausible

from the divergent religious and philosophical views. It also admonishes the Kalamas to abstain from unfounded faith and sentimentality that obstruct clear vision of things as they really are. Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama, while reviewing the discourse, has deduced more doctrinal themes that are important and upheld by the Buddha for forty-five years.

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama is a graduate of both University of Ceylon and University of London and also holds two postgraduate degrees from Sri Jayawardhanapura University of Sri Lanka and University of Magadh, India. He has taught at University of Kelaniya and Sri Jayawardhanapura University and is currently the Principal of Buddhist and Pali College of Singapore.

He has authored several works in English as well as Sinhala. An Approach to Buddhist Social Philosophy, The Mission Accomplished, Aspects of Early Buddhist Sociological Thought and Essentials of Buddhism are few of the several books.

With bad advisors forever left behind, From paths of evil he departs for eternity, Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.

May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of
Limitless Light!

~The Vows of Samantabhadra~

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land, I will perfect and completely fulfill Without exception these Great Vows, To delight and benefit all beings.

> ~The Vows of Samantabhadra Avatamsaka Sutra~

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts generate Bodhi-mind, spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma, and finally be reborn together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA 南無阿彌陀佛

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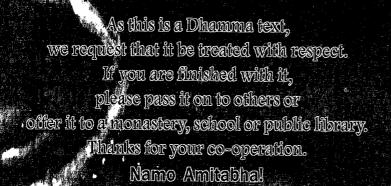
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