Pahankanuwa Sermon #32

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Self-Enlightened One)

Pali Stanza:

Ayoghanahatasseva, jalato jātavedaso;

Anupubbūpasantassa, yathā na ñāyate gati.

Evaṁ sammā vimuttānaṁ, kāmabandhoghatārinaṁ;

Pattānaṁ acalaṁ sukhaṁ, gati na paññāyatīti.

From:

Sutta Nipāta

Dear Listeners,

That liberation from saṃsāra, which was discovered by the world-transcending Sammā Sambuddha, is known to all of us by the name of Nibbāna. On certain occasions, the Buddha made a special effort to explain to the world what kind of thing this liberation from saṃsāra is. The parinibbāna of the great Arahant Dabba Mallaputta is one such occasion. The two highly extraordinary verses uttered by the Buddha on that occasion are what we have chosen as our topic today.

The great Arahant Dabba Mallaputta is indeed a wonderful and miraculous monk in this Dispensation. The beginning of his life was extraordinary, and its end was also extraordinary. He was born after his mother passed away. That is to say, while he was in his mother's womb, his mother died suddenly of some illness. Or perhaps her life force had ceased. For whatever reason, when the relatives took the pregnant mother's body, placed it on a funeral pyre, and lit the fire, the heat hit the abdominal wall, causing it to rupture, and the baby was flung out and fell onto a wooden log. The relatives took this child and handed him over to his grandmother. It is said that the child was named 'Dabba' because his life was saved by falling onto that log. The word 'Dabba' refers to timber, wood, or material objects. So this Dabba Mallaputta—'Malla' means he belonged to the Malla dynasty, in the Malla country. When this

young boy was seven years old, the Buddha visited the Malla country. He arrived and resided in the Anupiya Mango Grove. At that time, this child saw the Buddha, gained faith in him, and obtained permission to ordain. At the time of ordination, as a matter of custom just like today, his preceptor gave him the meditation on the five skin-tactile parts (*taca-pañcaka kammaṭṭhāna*). This meditation topic (*kammaṭṭhāna*) consists of reflecting on the five impure parts of the body: hair of the head (*kesā*), hair of the body (*lomā*), nails (*nakhā*), teeth (*dantā*), and skin (*taco*). It is recorded that as soon as they began shaving his head, he attained the fruit of Stream-entry (*Sotāpanna*), and by the time they finished shaving his head, while still in the shaving-house, he attained Arahantship. Thus, he had already become an Arahant at the very moment of his ordination. The work of ordination was complete by the time his head was fully shaved.

Consequently, when he was in seclusion, a thought occurred to him: "The ultimate goal for which I ordained has already been realized. It would be good if I could perform some service for the Saṅgha." Thinking thus, he pondered: "I should request from the Buddha the duty of assigning lodgings (*Senāsana-paññāpaka*) and the duty of designating meal invitations (*Bhattuddesaka*) from the laity, selecting and appointing monks individually." When he expressed this wish to the Buddha, the Buddha praised him saying, "Sādhu! Sādhu!", gathered the Saṅgha, and by formal act of the Saṅgha (*Saṅgha-sammuti*), appointed him to those two positions. That is to say, assigning lodgings to visiting monks, and systematically sending monks to various places in response to meal invitations from the laity. He discharged these two duties exceptionally well. In particular, it is mentioned that regarding the assignment of lodgings, he was extremely attentive. It is stated that he assigned lodgings to the visiting monks who came to see the Buddha in a manner fitting their inclinations and temperaments. When monks who were Suttantikas—who preserved the Suttas by reciting and guarding them—arrived, he assigned them lodgings in the same place, thinking, "Let these Venerable Ones spend the night reciting the Suttas." When Vinayadharas (monks versed in the Vinaya) arrived, he assigned them lodgings in another separate place, thinking, "Let these Venerable Ones spend the night discussing questions of discipline." When Dhamma-preachers (*Dhammakathika* monks) arrived, he assigned them seats in yet another distinct place, thinking, "Let these spend the night discussing the Dhamma." When visiting monks arrived who had ordained merely for a livelihood and engaged in lowly talk (*tiracchāna-kathā*), he assigned them another separate place, thinking, "Let these people indulge in the gossip and lowly talk they are accustomed to." In this manner, not only did he assign lodgings in accordance with the nature of each individual, but when they arrived at untimely hours, late at night, even though there was no electric light like today, he would enter into the attainment of the fire-element (*tejo-dhātu samāpatti*) through the power of his meditative attainments to light the way and assign those lodgings. Thus, some monks would travel from afar just to witness the psychic power of this young Arahant, Dabba Mallaputta. They would deliberately arrive late at night. Having arrived, they would say, "Venerable Dabba, please assign us lodgings." Then

he would ask, "Which lodging do you prefer?" They would name far-off lodgings: "Assign us lodgings on Vulture's Peak (*Gijjhakūṭa*), on Isigili, on Mount Vebhāra, in the Maddakucchi Deer Park, in Jīvaka's Mango Grove—assign us lodgings in those places," they would request.

And how did this Venerable One lead that group there? By a single finger! Entering the fire-element attainment, he would extend his index finger forward and walk before them. Guiding the group by that light to those lodgings, he would point out: "Here are the beds, here are the chairs, here is the drinking water," and so forth, and then return to Veluvana Monastery. Because he assigned lodgings so skillfully in this manner, the Buddha placed him in the position of foremost eminence (*Etadagga*). The Buddha declared Arahant Dabba Mallaputta to be the foremost among the monks who were skillful in assigning lodgings.

Although he was such a noble monk, due to certain karmic causes, he did not live long. At a very young age, the time arrived for his parinibbāna. At that time, the Buddha was residing in the Veluvana Monastery in Rājagaha. He went to the Buddha and said, "O Sugata, the time has come for my parinibbāna." The Buddha said, "Dabba, if the time has come for something, do what must be done." As soon as this was said, the great Arahant Dabba Mallaputta rose from his seat, paid homage to the Buddha, circumambulated him, rose into the air, sat cross-legged, entered into the fire-element attainment, and emerging from it, attained parinibbāna. Through the power of that fire-element attainment, he cremated his own body. Thus, the cremation took place right in the sky. When it was over, there was neither ash nor soot. Indeed, no ash was left, nor was any soot left behind. He did not even leave behind bodily relics (*dhātu*) for us to worship.

Because this was an extremely special event, the Buddha uttered an inspired utterance (*udāna*), a declaration of joy, at that moment. Today, if such a thing happens, people express grief. But the Buddha uttered a statement of joy. What was it?

Abhedi kāyo, nirodhi saññā,

vedanā sītibhaviṁsu sabbā,

vūpasamiṁsu saṅkhārā,

viññāṇaṁ atthaṅgamā.

"The body broke up, perception ceased, all feelings (*vedanā*) cooled, preparations (*saṅkhāra*) became stilled, and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) went out (came to an end)."

"Abhedi kāyo"—the body broke up. "Nirodhi saññā"—perception ceased. "Vedanā sītibhaviṁsu sabbā"—all feelings became cool. Even though consumed by fire, they did not get hot; they cooled. "Vūpasamiṁsu saṅkhārā"—preparations became stilled. "Viññāṇaṁ atthaṅgamā"—consciousness went out, came to an end.

Not only was that inspired utterance (*udāna*) declared there, but that event was so exceptional that when the Buddha later visited Jetavana Monastery in Sāvatthī, he recalled that incident and said to the monks: "Monks, our Dabba has attained parinibbāna in this manner. At that time, when his body cremated, neither ashes remained, nor did any soot." Having explained this matter to the Saṅgha, he uttered the two highly extraordinary verses we have taken as our topic today:

Ayoghana-hatasseva,

jalato jātavedaso,

anupubbūpasantassa,

yathā na ñāyate gati.

"Ayoghana-hatasseva"—the commentators point out that this word is difficult to understand. As far as we can understand, what is meant here is a fire blazing like a glowing mass of iron. When one sees a flame, it appears thick and dense like a mass of iron when it is blazing. "Ayoghana-hatasseva jalato jātavedaso"—"Jātaveda" means fire. Therefore, it refers to a fire blazing intensely as a solid mass, like a glowing lump of iron. "Anupubbūpasantassa"—after it has gradually gone out, "yathā na ñāyate gati"—just as the destination to which that flame went cannot be known,

Evaṁ sammā vimuttānaṁ,

kāmabandhoghatārinaṁ,

pattānaṁ acalaṁ sukhaṁ,

gati na paññāpayatīti.

"Evaṁ sammā vimuttānaṁ"—even so, of those who are rightly liberated, "kāmabandhoghatārinaṁ"—who have crossed over the flood of the bonds of sensuality, "pattānaṁ acalaṁ sukhaṁ"—and who have attained unshakable happiness, there is no designating of their destination. That one cannot point out a path, saying they went by such-and-such a path—this is the point the Buddha expressed in the second verse.

Now, what we have before us is this question of parinibbāna. The parinibbāna of the great Arahant Dabba Mallaputta is, in a way, an exemplary parinibbāna. Why? Because he left nothing behind. There was no indication that he had kept anything for himself to take away, for form, feeling (*vedanā*), perception, preparations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) had all come to an end. He left nothing behind for us either—nothing to cremate, no relics to enshrine in a stupa. It was a complete parinibbāna. That is probably why the Buddha uttered these inspired utterances, these joyful statements, on two occasions regarding this event.

Now, when this is said, some people might feel afraid. Because we know, we often see announcements of death, saying: "May the deceased Upāsaka Siyadoris attain the bliss of Nibbāna." As we generally think, it is only after passing away to the next world that one receives the Nibbāna that was not attained in this world. Not only us, but to put it briefly, more than ninety-five percent of the people today who think, reflect, preach, speak, and argue about Nibbāna prioritize that very kind of "Appuhamy's Nibbāna." They believe that for the Buddhas and Arahants, or indeed anyone who has realized Nibbāna, the great city of the Deathless Nibbāna is a place one goes to after death. Do not ask where this great city of the Deathless Nibbāna is! But it exists after death, and everyone must go there. This is the story that remains.

Now we have to examine to what extent this is acceptable. Now, it is clear from these verses that the Buddha used the phrase "ayoghana-hatasseva jalato jātavedaso" here, which contains the word "ghana" (solid/dense). Actually, the reason for this delusion is that the world possesses a dogma of existence (*bhava-diṭṭhi*). There is a dogma of self-illusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). They take all these things, such as feeling (*vedanā*) and so on, as a self. Especially, they take consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which is unseen, as the self. Consequently, we want to end the suffering (*dukkha*) of saṃsāra, but we also want to remain in existence (*bhava*) in some form. We want to do both. It is like wanting to keep one's beard and drink porridge at the same time. To satisfy that, we try to present a great city of Deathless Nibbāna through logic. But here, the Buddha has spoken about the extinguished fire using the phrase "ayoghana-hatasseva"—indeed, when a flame blazes like a solid iron ball. An ordinary person would think that a solid ball of iron is blazing. In that, the view of the ordinary worldling (*puthujjana*) is shown. But once even a flame is extinguished in that manner, one cannot point to its path—where it went. It is through this very question—"Where did the fire go after it was extinguished?"—that the Buddha answered the questions asked by various people, such as heretics, Nigaṇṭhas, and debaters, regarding the state of an Arahant after death. To put it briefly, most people forget that Nibbāna means extinguishing/cooling.

In this extinguishing/cooling, as the Buddha shows, this becoming (*bhava*) is entirely distorted; it is like a fire. It is like a fire that burns because of grasping (*upādāna*). The place where this fire is extinguished is what is called Nibbāna. Even though we say "the place where it extinguished," it is the extinguishing itself. Therefore, what is spoken of here is not an extinguishment after death. It is not a Nibbāna that one goes to after death. To put it briefly, the Buddha has roared his lion's roar in the Sīhanāda Sutta:

So bhagavā bodhāya dhammaṁ deseti danto

so bhagavā damathāya dhammaṁ deseti santo

so bhagavā samathāya dhammaṁ deseti tiṇṇo

so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṁ deseti parinibbuto

so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṁ deseti

If we take "Buddha" to mean "awakened," the awakened Blessed One teaches the Dhamma for awakening. The tamed Blessed One teaches the Dhamma for taming. The stilled Blessed One, who has stilled the defilements and so forth, teaches the Dhamma for stilling. The Blessed One who has crossed over teaches the Dhamma for crossing over. But then there is: "parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṁ deseti"—the Blessed One, having attained parinibbāna, teaches the Dhamma for parinibbāna. This is a great problem. If we take parinibbāna to be a state after death, how could he teach the Dhamma after attaining parinibbāna? From this, we can see that the state of parinibbāna is something to be realized in this very life.

Even if we think of the Arahant Dabba Mallaputta whom we mentioned, when it is said that he entered the fire-element attainment, generated that power, and attained parinibbāna, it means he brought his mind to that liberated state. He separated his mind. It was like setting fire to a piece of clothing that had been removed from the body; that was how he set fire to his body. Instead of heat, what is expressed there is a cooling of sensations (*vedanā*). That cooling and so forth occurred through that parinibbāna. That is the state of parinibbāna.

Yet many people point out in such contexts that Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Arahants who attain parinibbāna go and gather in some place. As evidence for this, there is a certain sutta that many people bring up, called the Pahārāda Sutta. It is a discussion that the lord of Asuras, Pahārāda, had with the Buddha. There, it is first stated, in response to a question by the Buddha, that the Asuras find delight and satisfaction in the great ocean because they see eight wonderful and marvelous qualities in it. We will not discuss all eight qualities here, but only the fifth quality, as it is relevant to our topic. The lord of Asuras says that just as all the rivers in the world flow into the ocean and rain falls from the sky, yet the great ocean does not show any fullness or depletion (does not overflow). Because of this fact, the Asuras delight in the great ocean. In comparison, the Buddha then shows that just like the eight wonderful and marvelous qualities of the great ocean, there are eight wonderful and marvelous qualities in this Dhamma and Vinaya. Among them, the fifth quality is presented thus: just as the ocean does not become full despite all the rivers flowing into it, even so, though many monks attain parinibbāna in the Nibbāna-element without residue (*anupādisesa nibbāna-dhātu*), no decrease or increase is seen in the Nibbāna-element. No decrease or increase is seen. Based on this passage, many people imagine that Arahants go and gather in a place called "Anupādisesa parinibbāna," and no matter how many go there, it never becomes full. But that this reasoning is incorrect is clear from the very description of the eighth wonderful and marvelous quality.

Describing the eighth quality, the lord of Asuras says that in this great ocean, there are beings of immense bodies. In those days, instead of large animals like whales, it mentions beings with giant bodies like the Timiṅgala, Timira, Piṅgala, Asuras, Nāgas,

and Gandhabbas dwelling in the great ocean. This too is a wonderful and marvelous quality in which the Asuras delight. Drawing a parallel, the Buddha says that in this Dhamma and Vinaya, too, there are beings of great stature. Who are they? Those beings are designated as the Saṅgha of the eight noble individuals (*aṭṭha-ariya-puggalā*). The one who has attained the fruit of Stream-entry, the one practicing for that path, and likewise the Sakadāgāmī, the one on the path to Sakadāgāmī, up to the Arahant and the one on the path to Arahantship—as you devotees know. These are the eight noble individuals. It is these eight who are here. The Arahants who have attained parinibbāna are not included here. Now, this is a good opportunity to ask: when describing the great beings dwelling in the ocean, why is there no mention here of the Arahants who have attained parinibbāna? Then how are we to understand the first point mentioned?

Now, we must reflect: sometimes there are whirlpools in the ocean. Suppose those whirlpools exist, and at some point, they cease to exist. Then, there is neither decrease nor increase in the water of the ocean. Indeed, there is a very deep concept in this Dhamma. The Buddha shows that this active existence (becoming) is a distorted state. What we generally think of as the true state of affairs is false to the Buddhas. What the world calls truth is untruth to the Noble Ones, and what the Noble Ones call truth is untruth to the world. The Buddha declared this on one occasion. Here too, although the world makes a great deal of existence, the Buddha points to it as a distorted state. The Buddha explains that every concept of birth, death, and existence in this world is like a whirlpool swirling around consciousness (*viññāṇa*). The Buddha calls this *vaṭṭa* (the round). "Vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati, vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati paññāpanāya"—a whirlpool revolves in order to designate a certain place. So, one can point to "there" or "here" in the great ocean only when there are whirlpools. But this whirlpool is a distorted state. When a certain current tries to flow against the main body of water, and fails to do so, it spins in a circle, becomes compressed, gets thrown back, and finally hollows out an abyss. That is how a whirlpool is formed.

Similarly, forgetting the true nature of things in this world, due to ignorance (*avijjā*), and due to ignorance and craving (*taṇhā*), the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) of beings becomes active, searching for a permanent nature in an impermanent (*anicca*) world. Searching for what is beautiful in a loathsome world. Searching for pleasure in a world of suffering (*dukkha*). Searching for a self where there is only non-self (*anattā*). These are presented in the Dhamma as the four distortions (*vipallāsa*): regarding the impermanent (*anicca*) as permanent; regarding the foul as beautiful; regarding suffering (*dukkha*) as pleasure; regarding non-self (*anattā*) as self. Upon this distorted state, that whirlpool is formed. Everyone who is called an "individual" or a "being" is a whirlpool. Even if we speak of the Buddha, that too was a whirlpool that had spun for a long period of time. Even if we speak of a Paccekabuddha, that too is a whirlpool. In this manner, these whirlpools exist. The Arahants too, prior to attaining Arahantship, were whirlpools. In the final moment, they understand through wisdom this futile circling. Having understood the fruitlessness of this circling between consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (and name-and-form), seeing them as

void, the moment the mind is liberated from them—that is when the whirlpool ceases to exist. At that point, no matter how many whirlpools disappear, there is neither decrease nor increase in the water of the ocean. Therefore, it is through this analogy of the whirlpool that we must understand what happens to the Arahants.

It is just like saying that the fire has gone out. The feeling that the fire went somewhere after being extinguished is a foolish view, a foolish statement. If someone asks whether the fire, after going out, went to the east, west, north, south, up, or down, that is a foolish notion. Similarly, if something existed due to causes and conditions, the place where those causes and conditions are removed is cessation (*nirodha*). That is what the Buddha points to by saying, "bhava-nirodho nibbānaṁ"—the cessation of becoming (*bhava*) is itself Nibbāna. The cessation of becoming is itself Nibbāna. Other than that, there is no other strange Nibbāna. The Buddha shows that this Nibbāna is realized in this very life.

That is why it is stated in the Ratana Sutta, which you all chant so often:

Khayaṁ virāgaṁ amataṁ paṇītaṁ,

Sakyamunī samāhito;

Na tena dhammena samatthi kiñci.

In this verse, "khayaṁ" refers to the destruction of craving (*taṇhā*), "virāgaṁ" to dispassion, and "amataṁ" to the Deathless. These are all names for Nibbāna. "Amataṁ"—there is the Deathless. Therefore, the Deathless is attained in this very life. "Amataṁ paṇītaṁ"—that sublime Deathless, "sakyamunī samāhito"—the Sage of the Sakyas realized through concentration (*samādhī*). It is because of this that Arahants are said to experience the Deathless. It is not a Deathless that comes after death. Now, it was by directing the mind toward that Deathless that the Arahant Dabba Mallaputta did not experience the pain of death. The pain of death arises because of grasping (*upādāna*). Because of clinging. Because of attachment to the aggregates of form, feeling (*vedanā*), and so forth. Where these are removed, there is extinguishing/cooling. There, only extinguishing remains. It is due to grasping (*upādāna*) that follows the fire of craving (*taṇhā*) that a future birth arises, a future becoming (*bhava*) arises. Therefore, that becoming (*bhava*) exists because of grasping (*upādāna*). According to the Buddha's word, where grasping (*upādāna*) is absent, there is total extinguishment (parinibbāna). That is what is called "Anupādā-parinibbāna" (extinguishment without grasping). So, that is the situation. Therefore, we must understand this parinibbāna—this complete cooling.

As we mentioned earlier, it was said: "The Blessed One, having attained parinibbāna, teaches the Dhamma for parinibbāna." But today, when we speak of parinibbāna, we immediately think of the state of an Arahant after death. In reality, the mind that arises at the final moment of an Arahant is the fruit-mind (*phala-citta*). This is called the attainment of the fruit of Arahantship (*Arahattaphala-samāpatti*). This is a state

already attained earlier. It presents itself at the moment of death as well. It is by bringing this forward that Māra is conquered. This matter is mentioned not only in that verse but in other places too. It is mentioned in the Ratana Sutta:

Yam buddhaseṭṭho parivaṇṇayī suciṁ,

Samādhimānantarikaññamāhu;

Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati.

"That pure concentration which the supreme Buddha praised, and which the wise call 'immediate' (*ānantarika*), there is no concentration equal to that concentration." "Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati"—no mundane concentration can be compared to that concentration. There is no concentration that can surpass it. Such is the wonderful supramundane concentration spoken of there. "Idam pi dhamme ratanaṁ paṇītaṁ"—this is the sublime gem in the Dhamma.

Now, something must be said about what this "ānantarika-samādhī" (immediate concentration) is. Before arriving at the fruit of Arahantship—what is called the path-mind (*magga-citta*)—one develops insight-knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*), and at their peak, immediately after that, one falls into the fruit. That is why it is called "ānantarika-samādhī." The concentration which is immediately followed by the realization of the fruit is called the "immediate concentration." That is path-concentration, which is the supramundane path-concentration. To put it briefly, there is a moment when all eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path—such as Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) and so forth, which you often mention—arise powerfully in a single mind-moment. It is through this that one cuts through the defilements and crosses over from the world. This is what is known as supramundane concentration. That concentration is something highly extraordinary.

There is another valuable sutta that reveals this. At one time, a monk named Bhaddaji came to visit Ven. Ānanda while he was residing at the Ghositārāma in Kosambī. Ven. Ānanda asked Ven. Bhaddaji five questions: "Venerable Bhaddaji, what is the foremost of sights? What is the foremost of sounds (hearings)? What is the foremost of pleasures? What is the foremost of perceptions? What is the foremost of becomings (*bhava*)?"

When these five questions were asked, Ven. Bhaddaji answered as follows: "There is a Great Brahmā named Vasavatti. To see that Great Brahmā is the foremost of sights. Next, the foremost of hearings is explained as follows: there is a realm of devas called Ābhassara. The Ābhassara Brahmās are those who feed on joy in the Brahma world. These Ābhassara devas occasionally utter: 'Aho sukhaṁ! Aho sukhaṁ!' (Oh, what bliss! Oh, what bliss!). If someone hears that inspired utterance of the Ābhassara devas, that is the foremost of hearings. Next, the foremost of pleasures is: there is a realm of devas called Subhakiṇṇa. Those Subhakiṇṇa devas experience a wonderful bliss. The bliss they experience is the foremost among pleasures. Next, the foremost

of perceptions is: there is the formless attainment of the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), developed based on the object 'there is nothing.' The perception of those Ākiñcaññāyatana Brahmās is the foremost of perceptions. Next, the foremost of becomings, or the peak of existence, is: there are devas or Brahmās who have attained the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*), which is the highest state. Their state of Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana is the peak of becoming." When this was explained, Ven. Ānanda said: "Venerable Bhaddaji's explanation is indeed what most people have accepted. This explanation fits the views of the majority." Then Ven. Bhaddaji understood that this was not the true answer.

Thereupon, he invited Ven. Ānanda: "Venerable Ānanda is highly learned. May the correct answers to these questions occur to Venerable Ānanda himself." Thus he invited him to give the true answer. Then Ven. Ānanda said, "Then, Bhaddaji, listen carefully. I shall speak." The explanation given by Ven. Ānanda is this:

"How is the foremost of sights explained? If, while seeing in a certain way, there is immediately the destruction of the taints (*āsavas*)," as it is stated, 'yathā passato anantarā āsavānaṁ khayo hoti' (seeing in such a way that the destruction of taints immediately follows)—that is the foremost of sights. If, while hearing in a certain way, there is immediately the destruction of the taints—that is the foremost of hearings. If, immediately following a certain pleasant abiding, there is the destruction of the taints—that is the foremost of pleasures. Next, if, upon a certain perception, there is immediately the destruction of the taints—that is the foremost of perceptions. If, from a certain state, there is immediately the destruction of the taints—that is the peak of becoming (*bhava*), the highest point of existence."

Thus, from this last statement, we can reflect deeply. What was meant here by the "peak of becoming"? We know that according to the Buddha's analysis, "bhava-nirodho nibbānaṁ"—the cessation of becoming is itself Nibbāna. But this cessation of becoming is a direct realization. The aid that helps one fall into that direct realization is that very immediate concentration (*ānantarika-samādhī*) we mentioned. Then, immediately after that immediate concentration, one falls into Nibbāna, which is the cessation of becoming. This is a direct realization. Therefore, the state of the cessation of becoming itself is Nibbāna. It is a Nibbāna experienced in this very life. It is not that Nibbāna of Siyadoris in the next world. It is not "Siyadoris's Nibbāna." It is a total parinibbāna experienced completely in this very life. It helps at the final moment of death. Because it helps, as in a verse that you devotees also know from the Ratana Sutta:

Khīṇaṁ purāṇaṁ navaṁ natthi sambhavaṁ,

Virattacittā'yatike bhavasmiṁ;

Te khīṇabījā avirūḷhicchandā,

Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṁ padīpo.

"Khīṇaṁ purāṇaṁ"—whatever past kamma-forces existed have been completely destroyed. "Navaṁ natthi sambhavaṁ"—there is nothing to generate a new becoming (*bhava*). "Virattacittā āyatike bhavasmiṁ"—the mind is detached from any future becoming or rebirth. "Te khīṇabījā"—the consciousness-seed (*viññāṇa-bīja*) of those Arahants has been destroyed. If it were not destroyed, that consciousness-seed would sprout. The consciousness-seed of an ordinary person sprouts in the field of kamma as soon as it receives the water or moisture of craving (*taṇhā*). That is why the Buddha's word says: "Kammaṁ khettaṁ, viññāṇaṁ bījaṁ, taṇhā sineho" (Kamma is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving is the moisture). That undestroyed consciousness in the field of kamma is indeed that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) that is accompanied by name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*). Therefore, "te khīṇabījā"—the consciousness-seed of the Arahants has been destroyed. Because of this, there is no room for craving (*taṇhā*) to arise again. That seed has no power to grow again. Because of that, what happens next is stated: "nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṁ padīpo"—those steadfast, wise ones go out just like this lamp. This too goes out just like the fire that is extinguished. The question of where the lamp goes after it goes out is also a foolish question. The oil is finished, the wick is finished, the lamp went out. That is all. So, this cannot be found again. And there is nothing to fear about this. For it is the end of the suffering of saṃsāra, is it not?

The soul-theorist Brahmins often accused the Buddha of being an annihilationist (*ucchedavādī*). Today, it is not only soul-theorist Brahmins, but even Buddhists themselves accuse people of having such views. But what is the answer the Buddha gave to this? "They accuse me falsely of saying something I do not say. In the past as well as today, I declare only this: suffering (*dukkha*) and the cessation of suffering." "Pubbe cāhaṁ bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṁ"—in the past as well as today, this is all I show: suffering (*dukkha*) and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*). The teaching of the Four Noble Truths is a very wonderful teaching. It declares that the entire five aggregates of grasping (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*) are suffering (*dukkha*); there is nothing to be salvaged or left over from this. Therefore, these aggregates of grasping (*upādāna*)—that is what was called that distorted state. The whirlpool is like a distorted state arising in the great ocean. From the day the whirlpool is formed, if at any point this distorted state occurs, from then on, between that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*), "vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati" (the round revolves). As it is said there, "ettāvatā vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati" (thus far does the round revolve). Wherever dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is shown and analyzed, it is pointed out that there is a round (*vaṭṭa*) between consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*). It is upon the spinning of this saṃsāric round that the five aggregates of grasping (*upādāna*) are built up. Now, when a whirlpool spins, we know that at first, it tries to go forward. When it cannot do so, it spins backward, forming a circle or a wheel, and digs down into an abyss. Meanwhile, it draws into itself everything around it through

that force of attraction. Our body is just like that. From the day of conception in the mother's womb, it draws in the essence of the womb, the essence of the food taken by the mother, through the umbilical cord. As if that drawing-in were not enough, after coming out, this whirlpool draws in the essence of the entire world to build up these five aggregates of grasping (*upādāna*). Not only food, but other things too—neighbors' lands, wealth, all of these are drawn in by that whirlpool. So, it is this very personal whirlpool that is called an "individual." Including Bodhisattas. These are whirlpools that have come down the great ocean of time for so long. Even the Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Arahants must be understood by us in this way. Despite our great reverence for them, they too traveled for a long time in saṃsāra as these whirlpools, until at some point, they attained liberation through the realization of wisdom.

How did they attain liberation? They understood that instead of taking this name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*) as a self, it is a relationship of cause and condition—that if there is consciousness (*viññāṇa*), because of consciousness there is name-and-form, and not a single one of these arises on its own. The simile given by the Arahant Sāriputta for this is of two sheaves of reeds leaning against each other: if one is pulled away, the other falls; if the other is pulled away, the first falls. Such is their mutual conditionality (*aññamañña-paccayatā*). Only a Buddha introduces this mutual conditionality to the world. Until then, those yogis and others take something or other as a self. At the very least, they take even the attainment of Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana as a self. Only the Buddha pointed out that there is nothing here to be taken as a single unit. Even if we speak of a sense-base (*āyatana*), in all of them there is only a great friction, a turmoil. That itself is suffering (*dukkha*). Therefore, when this turmoil between consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*) is stilled at some point, then there is only the great ocean. To the great ocean, there was neither decrease nor increase. That is where the analogy of the great ocean fits. It is not some mystical, indescribable, hidden place where Arahants go and gather.

Now, this matter is made clearer by what we said earlier: that the consciousness-seed (*viññāṇa-bīja*) has been destroyed. The undestroyed consciousness-seed lies latent; it clings tightly to name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*) as a self. There is a term in the Dhamma for the destroyed/ceased consciousness: "anidassana-viññāṇa" (non-manifestative consciousness). In that consciousness, there is nothing; there is nothing to be pointed out. That very state was introduced by the Buddha to the world on certain occasions as a unique sphere (*āyatana*). The world knows only the six sense-bases (*āyatana*). These sense-bases, as you devotees have heard, are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These become sense-bases when they function together with their respective objects. There is a constant activity between the eye and forms, the ear and sounds, and so forth. It is within this sixfold sense-base (*saḷāyatana*), which functions like that whirlpool, that the entire world exists, as he declared. No matter what modern physics says, the Buddha shows that the world is

something that arises within these very six sense-bases and ceases within these very six sense-bases.

That is why the Buddha declared that within this very fathom-long body, endowed with perception and mind, he points out the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world. On certain occasions, the Buddha pointed to a state where these six sense-bases are ceased. He also described that as a sphere (*āyatana*) on certain occasions. The cessation of the six sense-bases, the cessation of the sense-bases, is something that can be directly realized. Pointing to that cessation, the Buddha says: "Monks, there is that sphere; what kind of sphere is it?" In that sphere, there is nothing related to the material elements we make much of, namely earth (*pathavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and air (*vāyo*); nor are there any of the formless attainments. Neither the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*) nor the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*) is there. Neither this world nor the next world is there; neither sun nor moon. There is no coming, no going, no standing, no passing away (*cuti*), and no birth (*jāti*). To put it briefly, the Buddha finally describes that state as "appatiṭṭhaṁ appavattaṁ anārammaṇaṁ"—without support, without occurrence, and without object. Meaning, there is no establishing, no continuation, and no object. What is shown by this list of negations? These are all bonds. All those bonds that existed in saṃsāra have been broken. Things that had been constructed as saṃsāric things. Now, we have created those things called material forms through grasping (*upādāna*) those four elements. Therefore, what is shown here is the removal of that grasping (*upādāna*). Indeed, this highly wonderful state of non-manifestative consciousness (*anidassana-viññāṇa*) is itself the attainment of the fruit of Arahantship experienced by the Arahants.

If we take a good illustration of this from the Buddha's life itself, which you devotees may have heard of, on one occasion in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, the Buddha relates a certain experience of his to the monks: "Monks, once when I was resting in a threshing-house at Ātumā, there was a great torrential downpour of rain. At that moment, two farming brothers and four oxen were killed by a lightning strike. Consequently, a large crowd of people gathered there. I came out of the threshing-house and asked someone in the crowd, 'Why is such a large crowd gathered here?' Then the person said, 'A great rain came, lightning struck, and two men and four oxen were killed. But, Blessed One, where were you?' 'I was right here.' 'But were you asleep, Blessed One?' 'No, I was awake.' 'Did you not hear it?' 'I did not hear it.' 'Did you not see it?' 'I did not see it.'" When the Buddha spoke thus, that person remarked, "This is truly wonderful! So, while awake and conscious, you did not see any of this?" "Yes," the Buddha replied. It was in that very state that he had been. At times when the mind is separated from the world, none of those sights and sounds of the world are felt by the Buddha.

Although many instances of Arahants abiding in the attainment of the fruit of Arahantship are mentioned in the Dhamma, those who hold that "Siyadoris view"

turn it into a world. That place they point to is a mystical, strange, indescribable world. They believe that is where the Arahants go. It is within this very notion that many Buddhists are trapped. We have to remind you that this is something related to that Brahminical view which nurtures the dogma of self-illusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and the craving for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*).

To resolve this, we must understand that this active existence (becoming) is a distorted thing according to the Buddha's word. The ordinary world makes a big deal out of existence. The Buddha says it is a distorted state. It is like a current trying to do the impossible in the great ocean. Though that current tries to go forward, it is forced to turn back. When it cannot go forward due to constant friction, it digs down and creates an abyss. But we can see one thing there: we can point to the place where there is a whirlpool. In the great ocean, there is nothing to point one's finger at. But if there is a whirlpool, one can say "there it is," or "here it is." One can say "this person" or "that person." Or, in the case of the Saṅgha, one can say "that place" or "this place." One is able to say so only because a whirlpool exists. But just because one can say so, it does not mean there is a self-nature there. What is there is only a great friction; it is not a single unit. The Buddha pointed out this fact to the world—that active existence is nothing but suffering (*dukkha*). No other non-Buddhist teacher or founder of a religion can accept this. Why can they not accept it? Because they are trapped within that dogma of self-illusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), grasping tightly to a view of self. The Buddha pointed this out through the teaching of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Because of ignorance (*avijjā*), many preparations (*saṅkhāra*) are constructed. A part of all those constructions is the division between consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*). And having divided these two, it is like playing a game of draughts on a board. If we want to play draughts, no matter how close two friends are, we must divide into two opposing sides. You devotees know that when there is a match or a competition nowadays, even friends must divide into two sides to compete.

This active existence is exactly like that. There is a constant game going on between consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*). It is a circular movement. It will never come to an end. The Buddha saw this state as a friction, as suffering (*dukkha*). This is exactly what is active within our own body as well. Having taken an breath in, can we just stop there? We are forced to breathe out. Having breathed out, can we stop? We are forced to breathe in again. We took food this morning; can we keep it as it is? Is there an end to it? Such is this body, the place we have taken as "myself." If we designate a "here," a "there" is also created. If we designate a "there," a "here" is also created. If we designate "this person," "that person" is created. If we designate "that person," "this person" is created. In this manner, the world is trapped within a duality. That is why the Buddha declared: "Monks, I speak to you of dyads. What is the dyad? The eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and odors... other than this dyad, there is no other dyad in the world." In that manner, within this entire body and within our active existence, such a transaction is constantly taking place. This transaction is never one that can be

resolved. Therefore, the Buddha shows that the entirety of active existence is suffering (*dukkha*). Nothing but the sheer five aggregates of grasping (*pañcupānakkhandha*). Now, when many people explain the truth of suffering (*dukkha-sacca*), they go on repeating: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, death is suffering, and so forth. But in the end, the Buddha shows that, in brief, the five aggregates of grasping (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*)—the five heaps of grasping—themselves are suffering (*dukkha*).

Now, next we have, as we mentioned earlier, that perception of solidity (*ghana-saññā*). There is a designation here that helps in insight meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*). The ordinary world abides within the perception of solidity. That is why they take the flame as a single unit. Even a small child, when seeing a flame, might try to touch it as if it were a solid wall. Thus, the world remains stuck in the perception of solidity. But when the meditator, with a concentrated mind, arouses radical attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) as shown by the Buddha, arouses mindfulness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*), and understands the phenomena of name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*), what appeared as a single unit is seen as a mere heap. What is there is the "perception of a heap" (*rāsi-saññā*). It is by bringing out this perception of a heap that one gradually enters the path of insight. By entering that, what follows next is disenchantment (*nibbidā*). When one sees things as they really are, disenchantment arises naturally. Seeing things as they really are through the knowledge of things as they are (*yathābhūta-ñāṇa*), one cannot help but become disenchanted. One cannot remain without disenchantment. Together with the knowledge and vision of things as they are (*yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana*), disenchantment arises. Through that disenchantment, next comes relinquishment/dispassion (*virāga*). It is when there is relinquishment (letting go) that that parinibbāna occurs. That letting go includes those very elements we make much of in the world: earth (*pathavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and air (*vāyo*).

Nowadays, as you devotees know, is an era in which views grow very strong. When speaking of this materialist view, we can once again recall the great Arahant Dabba Mallaputta. "Dabba," as we said, means matter or material object. "Dabba" means material object—not only wood, but what is referred to as "matter" today as well. Yet, because of the power of his merit, the fire on the funeral pyre could not burn the great Arahant Dabba Mallaputta's body even after his mother had died. Nevertheless, through his own power of determination and the attainment of the fire-kasiṇa (*tejo-kasiṇa samāpatti*), he cremated his own body in the final moment so that neither ashes nor soot remained. In that too, he threw a challenge to physical matter. That is why the Buddha declared that statement of joy so specially here. For within the Buddha's Dhamma, as you devotees all know: let us imagine this entire sublime Dhamma to be a library. This library opens in the Dhammapada with the two verses:

Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā,

manoseṭṭhā manomayā.

In both verses, that fact is mentioned. It is a natural law. What is shown there is "mano-pubbaṅgamā dhammā"—this Dhamma, the Buddha's Dhamma, is mind-led. It is not matter-led. Mind precedes all things. Mind is foremost. "Manomayā"—all these are made of mind, when one looks at it ultimately.

When viewed in accordance with that mind-led philosophy, the Buddha shows that even those things taken as "matter" do not hold sway due to that supramundane concentration. It is as if they do not exist. There are none of the elements of earth (*pathavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), or air (*vāyo*). The concepts that arise in association with them—coming, going, standing, birth (*jāti*), passing away—none of them are registered in that consciousness (*viññāṇa*). That is why that consciousness was called "khīṇa-bīja" (with seeds destroyed). It does not grow again in a mother's womb. It has been destroyed. That seed—the consciousness-seed of the Arahants—has been destroyed.

That is why, at the final moment, that incident of the Buddha at Ātumā which we mentioned is also exactly similar. If we take the Buddha's life itself as our exemplar, it is mentioned that on one occasion, when Devadatta rolled down a rock, even though the rock did not fall on the Buddha due to his Buddha-power, a splinter struck him, causing a serious injury to the Buddha's foot. A painful sensation (*vedanā*) also arose. In fact, Jīvaka the physician even had to treat it. But it is stated in the Dhamma that on one occasion, he overcame even that intense pain through the power of the fruit (*phala-shaktiya*). By directing his mind to that fruit-power. In that manner, the Arahants possessed a certain power. Whatever the case at other times, they bring this forward at the final moment, and it is through this that the Arahant sets fire to his own body, just like someone taking off and burning a worn-out piece of clothing.

Therefore, we can understand that this parinibbāna—this Nibbāna—is something right here. If one thinks of it as something that exists after death, one will never be motivated to make the effort required for it. There is nothing wrong with wishing: "May the merit performed by Siyadoris Appuhamy in this life, and the merit we share, be a supportive condition (*upanissaya*) for Nibbāna some day." But if one wishes: "May he be born in a strange world of Nibbāna after death," that is incorrect. It is the same regarding the Arahants and the Buddha. No matter how respectfully we speak of them, we must understand that they too were whirlpools that had spun in saṃsāra for a long time. Having understood those whirlpools as suffering (*dukkha*), it was said: "the cessation of suffering is Nibbāna." That is why the Buddha declared in the face of the Brahmins' accusations: "I do not say anything else. The world cries out about suffering (*dukkha*). It is the solution to that which I present here." "In the past as well as today, I declare only suffering (*dukkha*) and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*)." That is why, as you devotees know, the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*) is shown to be Nibbāna in the Four Noble Truths. Yet, that many scholars bring up some strange thing in addition to this is because they have

succumbed to that dogma of existence (*bhava-diṭṭhi*). They want to keep something back. But there is no such state in the Dhamma. This is a highly wonderful Dhamma.

This very state is what is mentioned in that passage shown as the reflection on peace (*upasamanussati*):

"Etaṁ santaṁ etaṁ paṇītaṁ yadidaṁ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṁ."

"This is peaceful, this is sublime, namely, the stilling of all preparations (*saṅkhāra*), the relinquishing of all assets (*upadhi*), the destruction of craving (*taṇhā*), dispassion (*virāga*), cessation (*nirodha*), extinguishing (Nibbāna."

Now, you devotees must reflect: if the target you aim at is wrong, your shooting will not be successful. Correcting the target, which is Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)—one must straighten one's view. If one holds a wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) under the name of Right View, one will not arrive at Nibbāna. Therefore, we wish that this Dhamma sermon delivered today may help you purify that view.

Thus, having undertaken some virtue (*sīla*) on this valuable day, practicing a meditation you are accustomed to, and using this sermon as an aid, may you complete your study of the Dhamma and meditation before the decline of the Buddha's Dispensation, and as quickly as possible, bring an end to this whirlpool of the terrifying saṃsāric journey, and find peace in the supreme, great Deathless Nibbāna! May you understand that this supreme, great Deathless Nibbāna is something right here! That is what we hope for. Wishing that whatever living beings from Avīci to Akaniṭṭha wish to receive merit may, through sharing in the merit of this Dhamma teaching and Dhamma hearing, as quickly as possible attain the supreme, great Deathless Nibbāna through whichever of the three Bodhi states they aspire to, please recite these verses:

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi.....*"