

Passion...?

Where There Is

Passion.

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Today we are going to discuss an important discourse of Lord Buddha in the *Samutta Nikaya* of Pali canon. The name of this discourse is *Atti Raga Sutta*. The meaning of the name is where there is passion...?. In this discourse Lord Buddha explains the causes for the continuation of life from one existence to another or the life through *samsara*.

The Blessed One said;

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"Monks, there are four kinds of nourishments. They are essential survival and the continuation of life in our journey through samsara – respected existence"

What is meant by food or nourishments? Food is that which provide nourishments; it is required for growth and sustains. This food is the nourishment for the continuation of life. From existence to existence, that is for the continuation of the process of birth, aging, sickness and death.

Four nourishments...!

There are four kinds of nourishments. One is mental or physical, while the other three are mental nourishments. We were born because we had these four nourishments and as long as we are nourish by the nourishments, life will continue in countless number of various existence.

What are the four kinds of nutriments?

1. *Kabalinkara Ahara* Nourishment of physical food gross or refined. It is the food we consume daily for nourishment, growth and sustain.

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2. *Phassa Ahara*

Nourishment of contact or sense impression. Contact means the combination of the organ of sense, the object of sense and sense consciousness.

3. *Manosanchetana Ahara*

Nourishment of intellectual intention this consist of mental formation and intentions (volition) which the mind craves and with which it becomes involved in regard to the object with which it comes into contact. When the eye sees form, the nose smells odours, the tongue tastes, the body contacts tangible objects, volition and intention arise in the mind. This too is a nutriment which results in respected births.

4. *Vinnana Ahara*

Nourishment of consciousness there are six classes of consciousness. When eye and

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forms are both present, eye consciousness arise dependent on them. Similarly when ear and sounds are presents ear consciousness arise dependent on them; Nose and smells are present, nose consciousness arise dependent on them; tongue and taste are presents, tongue consciousness arise dependent on them; body and tactile objects are presents, body consciousness arise dependent on them; mind mental objects are presents, mind consciousness arise dependent on them,. This too is a cause which results the cycle existence.

We must remember these four nourishments clearly to understand how they nourish us resulting in breath.

It is easy to understand how physical food nourishes us. We could see our physical growth. But can we see our mental state or mental growth?

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No, we cannot.

The nourishment of contact (*Passa Ahara*), the nourishment of intellectual intention (*Manosanchetana Ahara*), and the nourishment of consciousness (*Vinnana Ahara*), they all nourish us resulting our mental state. It was none other than the Buddha who was able to realize this and explain to us. In our society many do not understand that once mental state is nourished by these factors.

Foods...! Foods...!! Foods...!!!

The nourishment of physical food:

The Buddha said,

"Monks, when there is passion, pleasure or delight and craving for the food one consumes, consciousness gets established."

That is, it binds the associated mental factors to the subject. When consciousness is established its growths, it becomes prolific. It grows like a tree. There for the reason for the proliferation of consciousness were the passion, the delight, and the craving for the food one consumes.

To understand this factor, I will explain in this manner. Our consciousness is with the physical food we consume. For

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example, do we have a desire for food? Yes, we have. Do we not derive pleasure from what we eat? Yes, we do. Do we have a passion for what we eat? Yes, we do. Thus, our mind is attached to the food. When our mind is attached, consciousness arises and grows. It grows like a tree. Therefore the cause for the growth of consciousness is passion, delight or pleasure and craving.

Yum...! Yum...!! What a taste it is...!!!

When consciousness arises, mentality-materiality (***Nama Rupa***) alights. We will try to understand what this means in the following manner. For example, we see some tasty food. Then what happens in our mind? The food was something that we saw from our eyes. What happens next? We develop a desire to consume it. Therefore desire for taste has arisen. Then what happens? We feel like buying it, to cook it, to taste its flavour. What has grown is consciousness. When consciousness arises, mentality-materiality is established. When we see some taste food think of food, there is secretion of saliva. What does it mean? It is a reaction in our body – contact and feelings have arisen automatically. There are six factors that manifest itself. The four elements that constitute our body – the material phenomena (***rupa***); contact (***phassa***); feeling (***vedanana***);

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perception (*sanna*); volition (*chentana*) and attentiveness (*manasikara*)

Foods...! Will make you suffering...!!

If you think carefully you would realize this happens when our thoughts are with food. As we think of food, before we could flutter an eyelid, desire for food arises and consciousness is established. Then mentality-materiality alights. Where mentality-materiality alights, there is the growth of fabrications resulting in the '*kamma*' process, and thus renewed becoming and rebirth results. Birth results in ageing, sickness and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

The Buddha said;

"If there is birth, there is decay and death with sorrow, affliction and despair".

Do we realize that even the food we consume results in the *kamma* process of rebirth? Therefore, the Blessed One explained the way one should react towards food with simile.

It is like eating your only one Baby....!

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Suppose a mother, father and their only baby had to travel together through a desert. Half way through their journey all the food they had taken with them was used up. They realized that they would survive long as there was still a stretch of the desert yet to be crossed. The thought occurred to the parents that “If we were to kill the only baby of ours, on the flesh of our only baby at least the two of us would survive to cross this desert, and then we can have another baby in the future. Otherwise all three of us would die”.

They decided to kill the baby. The mother asked to father to kill the baby and the father asked to mother to kill the baby, but they could not do it. After some time, the baby died due to the lack of food. The parents were very sad, they were crying, but they ate their only one baby’s flesh for survival. They consumed the flesh of their only son not with any passion, delight, or desire. They ate that flesh simply for the sake of making it through that desert.

The nutriment of physical food should be regarded in the same way said the Tathagatha. It should be for sustenance and not for it passion, delight or desire. To cultivate one’s mind in this manner is difficult but not impossible. In the modern world we are often misled by the propaganda to promote the sale of various kinds of food. The mentality of our society is to satisfy man’s senses and desires. Food advertisements often arises our desire and

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they do not show reality. That is why the Buddha said when one consumes food one should not think that the food consumed is to gain strength, sensual desire or to be athletic. We should consume food with the thought that it is for sustenance. This would help in our moral training and would also help in the development of mindfulness. We should think that food is subject to change, is impermanent, it gets spoiled and perishes. Then the desire, craving for food will not arise. Then we would learn to be mindful that all conditioned things are impermanent (*Anicca*).

Fried Fish and Bread....!

I remember a story I heard when I was a child. A granddaughter told her grandmother that when she is a big girl she would bring her fried fish and bread. Years passed by, the grandmother was old. She remembered her granddaughter's promises. She often spoke of the fried fish and bread her granddaughter promised to bring her. What had grown in her mind? It was desire for food. I think her granddaughter was unable to fulfil her promise. Desires are the cause of *kamma*.

We must be prepared to face death without any desire. If we are to die of thirst or hunger we must learn to accept with equanimity. If we have to eat food we dislike, we should

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not be angry, we should realize the reason why we have to do so and learn to accept without any ill will.

All of you listening to me today are laymen. I know you have to make a variety of food. For example, during the New Year celebrations many kinds of tasty food are made. What should you do? You should eat, but without no attachment, delight or craving. That is the wisdom we have to acquire, always remembering that when there is no desire *kamma* does not accumulate.

Nutriments of contact....

The second kind of nutriment is the Nutriment of contact or sense impressions (*Phassa Ahara*).

What is contact? When we say that the eye sees objects, it means the eye, the visible object and consciousness comes in contact with each other. When the ear hears sounds, it means the ear, sounds and consciousness comes in contact with each other. When the nose smells odours, it means the nose, odours and consciousness comes in contact with each other. When the tongue tastes, it means the tongue, taste and consciousness comes in each other. When the body touches tangibles, the body, tangible and consciousness comes in contact with each

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other. When the mind thinks, the mind, mental objects, and consciousness comes in contact with each other. Accordingly, contact means the combination of the organ of sense, the object of sense, and sense consciousness. As started, sense objects can never be cognized by the particular sensitivity. Without the appropriate kind of consciousness, but when these three factors come together, there arises contact. Hence, with the arising of consciousness, simultaneously there arises contact.

Flayed cow was released...!

We cannot escape from contact, and consciousness. It is invisible. Therefore what we have to eradicate is not contact and consciousness, but desire for what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think. The Buddha explained this by a simile. Suppose a flayed cow was released. To escape suffering, it jumps into water, and then the creatures living in the water would attack it. If it were to stand leaning against a tree, the insect on the tree would attack it. If it were to stand exposed to the air, the creatures living in the air would attack it. In the same way, we cannot escape from the nutriment of contact. One cannot run away from reality. We should be mindful and

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realize the truth it is only by eradication desire that we could eradicate unwholesome mental factors.

What is the real Liberation and Freedom.?

Once a celestial deity spoke to the Buddha and said, if one prevents the manifestation of mental factors, will suffering be eradicated? The Buddha answered in the negative. The Lord said it is not possible to eradicate thoughts, or the arising of mental factors. The Buddha said what one should do is to prevent the arising of unwholesome mental factors and one should accumulate wholesome mental factors. If one eradicate lust, hatred and delusion and is mindful, liberation can be achieved. Nibbana is freedom, it is liberation.

Liberation is from what? Liberation is from desire, from greed, hatred and delusion. It is the eradication from *kamma*, the eradication of becoming rebirth. Thus the Buddha explained that contact (*phassa*) nourished by passion, delight and craving results in the arising of consciousness. Then mentally-materially (*nama-rupa*) alights and then there is the growth of fabrications. Where there is the growth of fabrications, there is the production of renewed becoming and where there is the production of renewed becoming, there is the future birth...!

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Do you like to drop into glowing embers..?

Next is the nourishment of intellectual intention. The arising of volition (*chetana*) is the result of mental factors. They may be wholesome or unwholesome intentions. Mental factors are not permanent, they constantly change. They are the result of desire. If we are mindful we could realize this and understand the nourishment of intellectual intention in this manner. If someone binds your hands and legs together and tries to throw you into a pit of glowing embers, what would you do? You would try to run away and escape. This is how the nutriment of intellectual intention should be regarded.

If one has unwholesome intentions one should realize that they are not profitable. One should prevent the establishment of unwholesome intention. Where there is passion, delight and craving for the nourishment of intellectual intention, consciousness arises. Then mentally-materiality (*nama-rupa*) alights and then there is the growth of fabrications, there is the production of renewed becoming and where there is the production of renewed becoming, there in the future birth.

Fourth nutriment of consciousness....

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The fourth nourishment is nutriment of consciousness. Consciousness arises depending on the sense. Faculties and that are contacted stimulated.

Dependent on the eye and forms, there arises consciousness at the eye.

Dependent on the ear and sound, there arises consciousness at the ear.

Dependent on the nose and aromas, there arises consciousness at the nose.

Dependent on the tongue and flavours, there arises consciousness at the tongue.

Dependent on the body and tactile sensations, there arises consciousness at the body.

Dependent on the mind and ideas, there arises consciousness at the mind.

When consciousness is established, desire arises. Thus passion, delight and craving arise, resulting in greed, hatred and delusion.

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Three hundred spears a day....!

The Blessed One explains this by a simile. Suppose a thief is arrested and they were to show him to the king to impose on him a punishment. The king would say “shoot him in the morning with a hundred spears”. So the men would shoot him in the morning with a hundred spears. Then the king would find out that the thief is still alive, and would order the men to shoot the thief at noon with a hundred spears. The king would find out in the evening that the thief is still alive. So he would order the men to shoot the thief in the evening with a hundred spears. So they would shoot him in the evening with a hundred spears. This man being shot with three hundred spears a day, would experience pain and distress. Lord Buddha proclaims to regard the nutriment consciousness in the same way.

The loss of your loved ones...!

If one is to be liberated, all defilements should be eradicated. As children we did not realize, that we would face suffering, that there would be times we would cry perhaps for the loss of loved once, we would grieve that we could not achieve what we desired and that there would be remorse. Therefore if we learn to see things as they really

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are. There would be no repentance and would not resulting sorrow, lamentation, despair, pain and grief. We would then learn to accept the truth, the reality.

This discourse teaches us that existence is nourished by these four nourishments. All human beings, all beings in the animal world, all beings in the lower worlds or hell, deities in the celestial world, brahmas in the Brahma world, they are the result of the nourishment by the four nourishments. Therefore if we are to be liberated we should eradicate the desire for the four nourishments.

Do you like to be born again...?

If I am to ask you the question “Do you like to be born again?” all of you would say “No..!” But it is no value. What should we do? We have to eradicate the cause. If we eradicate the cause, the result would be eradicated automatically. Therefore one should establish wisdom instead of ignorance, and instead of desire. This is Nibbana. Nibbana cannot be achieved by mere aspiration or prayer. We have to realize the truth, the truth the Buddha expounded, that is if one does not derive passion, delight and craving for the four nourishments, consciousness will not be established. Then the mentality- materiality does not alight. When mentality- materiality does not alight, there is

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no growth of fabrications. Where there is no growth of fabrications, there is no renewed becoming in the future produced. Where there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth. If there is no future birth, there is no decay, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

In our journey '*samsara*', if we are to be liberated, we should see things as they really are by the proper understanding of the *Dhamma*. If we dwell in the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipattana*) we would be able to realize that all component things are impermanent, suffering and no-self. Then we would be able to proceed on the correct path to liberation. We all should strive for this end....

