Self love and love without self

Online one-day retreat April 24, 2022

By Upul Gamage, Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

A. Transcript in Prose (see Verbatim line-by-line transcript in Part B below)

A king asked his queen: who's the most loved? The queen answered, "myself, I love myself the most".
The king is so upset he went to see the Buddha and the Buddha said she's telling the truth.

The 7 aspects of love

1. Say good morning to ourself

Can we say good morning to ourself whenever we wake up?
I am happy to see myself awake.
When we are awake, we want to sleep more, we are not happy to be awake, we thought sleeping is more happy than awake.
Something is wrong/missing if we do not wish ourself awake.
The first activity of the day is to be awake.
If I am not awake, I cannot do anything, it's good to be awake.

2. Say good night to ourself

Can we say good night to ourself? The last thing of the day?
Can we allow ourself to sleep, to have a rest, to withdraw ourself from all kinds of activity? Detach from all kinds of activity, physical and mental. We usually hand over this activity to sleep, rather than ourself. I can't stop watching the movie, the talking… I can't even stop my mind. If we cannot allow ourself to sleep, there is no inner connection. I allow myself to physical, mental, and emotional rest, all kinds of activity. I'm not abusing myself, misusing myself. When we say good night, we don't say anything anymore. It's the last thing we do.

3. Appreciate whatever we are doing

Between the good morning and the good night, we do a lot of activities. Can we appreciate what we're doing? Even it's a small thing, sweeping, cleaning, working in the office. Can we start our duty or job with happiness? It's good to do something, it's good to work. It gives meaning to our life. If we don't do anything, life is empty, there is no value and importance. Can we appreciate what we're doing for ourself and others, for the job, it doesn't matter. Yes, we work for a salary, for money, but can we appreciate what we are doing, with a positive mind? If we love ourself, then we can. If we can do this, this is a way to begin to love ourself.

4. Enjoy and appreciate being alone

When we are alone, doing nothing. sometimes we're alone and have nothing to do. Then the feeling is not so nice. When we're tired we want to relax ourself, but not that. For whatever reason, we have to be alone. Can we enjoy it? How nice, I'm with myself, I'm being with myself. Usually, it's a boring experience, even a small booklet, or with a cat, is more exciting than staying with oneself. That means we don't love ourself. Why we cannot enjoy being with ourself, be happy that we are with ourself? If we really love ourself, then it's not a boring experience at all. If we enjoy being ourself, it opens a door, it's self-love.

5. When the mind is suffering, be present and support ourself

when the mind is suffering, when we are in pain, when we are in a trouble, how do we think about it, and what we are doing? Can we say "I am suffering, I have to help myself, I need my support my help more than anything anytime? I need my presence in support." If you love somebody, when they suffer, that's what we do. Especially when we're lost. We should not say there is nothing to do. This is not the first time, not the last time either, this is my karma. But thinking in this way, we create new karma. This is not karma. If something in our life is deeply expecting ourself, the life need deep support, the life is in our hands, so we should not ignore it. We should give it to ourself. We give to others when things are joyful and beautiful, but when things turn the other way, then we the usual reaction is escaping ignoring, if you really want to love ourself then we should not ignore ourself, escape ourself, especially when we are in trouble, when we are suffering.

6. Forgive ourself

Because of whatever reason, if we do or we have done mistakes, physical, verbal, emotional, official, personal mistakes, if we have made mistakes, how do we look at them? They're passed now, it's over, done. Do we hate ourself because of our past errors? Are we disliking ourself because of our past mistakes? Do we want to punish ourself because we were wrong? We were not right, not good, we were bad. And if somebody's bad, wrong, not right, then the automatical normal mental action is to punish, to want to punish in whatever way, violent way, so the same thing happens, we want to punish ourself. I've met many people who are punishing themselves. Not the person in the present, but they have done something wrong in the past, maybe one time in their whole life, many years ago, childhood time, but they are punishing themselves for the entire life, only for one single mistake. Can we say we love ourself if we punish ourself again and again and again?
If we really love ourself, then we can forgive ourself. By forgiving, we can cultivate self-love. One is supporting the other. By forgiving we can cultivate self-love, by loving ourself we can forgive ourself.

7. Do not identify ourself with mistakes but identify with beautiful qualities and behaviours

whenever we are going to do any mistake. Now it's in the present, not in the past. When we are doing an unpleasant thing to ourself or others, something mistakes, wrong. We have to help ourself stop it, immediately stop it. We have to help ourself, it does not happen automatically. We need support. Because mistakes happen repeatedly. Because once we

made mistake, we made a circuit, a path, the second time it's a bit easier to repeat the mistakes, the third time even easier, if we repeat enough it becomes our quality and it happens automatically. Then we said it's my nature. Please do not identify yourself with those things. Do not identify yourself with wrong things, negative behavior. No need to tide yourself with negative quality, negative, psychological elements. "This is my nature", no, they are not our nature. We can identify ourself with beautiful things. To do this first we have to let go of our identification, we have to help ourself to let go of those negative identification.

These are the 7 thoughts. If you meditate you may discover more than 7. What I discover is these 7 is easier to act, they are applications. 7 applications to plant and cultivate self love.

The last thing, love is the most beautiful word in all human languages. This is an English word but in whatever language this is the most beautiful and touching word. Everybody likes it. Some people say they hate this word. They don't hate this word, they hate the things they experienced because of love. And they think they suffered because of the words. But we are suffering, of course, it's unbearable suffering and we think we like to deposit all our suffering into the account of love. And poor love, poor love, it is so innocent but why we are suffering because of love. We are suffering not because of love but because we are abusing it, misusing it, and misunderstanding this beautiful nature of phenomena.

Usually, it's a business. Love and relationship are a business. May be finance and business but everyone become a money business now, even meditation, religion, so love too. It doesn't become business but we are using it as a business. We expect something, we invest and expect a profit. We invest some amount and we expect multiple in return. It is the same kind of business. and we're doing the same thing called love, the other person also does the same, they expect to get more than they give us, and we expect to get more than we give them. It doesn't make anybody satisfied, no satisfaction at all, no love. In the beginning, it was love, but when it becomes a business love is not there. So we have to work with our expectations, how much we expect from the other person, and be aware of what the other person expects. Because expectation comes from the ego, ego is free to create expectations. No one can control the ego to create expectations. You can't say you are only allowed three expectations. So one after another and another and thousands of expectations. The other person is not aware, doesn't know, what we expect from him/her, we think the other person should know because I love him/her. Of course, everybody can feel love and something we can feel, but not a matter of love, it's about expectation. So we have to speak directly about what we expect of you. And at the same time ask, what do you expect from me? How many things do you expect from me? And this kind of communication and dialogue is not easy. It looks official and we think no need to discuss these things, it's common sense. No, my friend, it's not common sense. We have to open ourself to come out from ourself, we have to help the other person understand ourself, what we think, what we expect. To understand ourself.

We create frames and models for everybody. We create. I love you therefore you have to be like this. I love you because you are like this therefore you have to always be like this. This frame is not physical or material, but they are most strong than iron or metal, like we make cages for dogs/birds, and put them in and feed them. We put everybody in cages, we create psychological cages in different sizes or shapes, and we expect other to always live inside the

cage, and this attitude comes from a deep place of selfishness. We say it for love, but there is no love, utterly selfishness. It's like a prison. But we also put ourself inside this prison. Because we manipulate others, we blackmail others. By doing that we put ourself in those cages. We made the cages for others and we become prisoners. We.

It is difficult to love others having a model, having a frame. Because if we go with the ego, then it's the nature of ego to make a model and frame, and if somebody fits into that model, the ego said, I find the right person. Dear friend, maybe it's true, somebody fitting in that cage, for how long? Maybe for one movement, for a period of time. Because it's not somebody else's fault because humans are changing and transforming from moment to moment, more than anything. It's a beauty of human mind, changing from moment to moment. Within one second it can be completely upside-down, within one moment. It can be completely somebody else. Even he/she we cannot believe what happens to us. This is the nature of humans. Everybody is changing, dogs cats, but very slow, slow motion, but humans, different. So we cannot put anyone in a cage for a long period of time. It doesn't happen, it doesn't work. We need to love from the freedom, not from the prison. Not from the ego, not from selfishness.

Dear friends the true love come from selflessness. Selflessness comes from true love. We can start from either. We can start from true love, or we can start from selflessness. Thank you.

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B. Verbatim line-by-line transcript

2022-4-24
Self-love and love without self
By Upul Gamage, Nilambe Buddhist Meditation Centre

Guided Meditation

Once again we are sitting together
to continue our meditation practice
let us stay with the hearts
Can we make friends
whatever we hear whatever we feel
and whatever we remember
all these present experiences
can we feel them as our friends
can we make friends with them
can we be the friend to whatever we experience
can we make friends with the present moment
Can we see this

because of whatever reasons
if we are unable to make friends with whatsoever
can we see this it's okay it's okay
no problem
Can we accept it
let's see how far how far we can accept
our abilities and disabilities what we can and what we cannot
if we cannot make friends with whomever whatsoever
can we accept it
can we make friends with that difficulty
can we ask this question
from ourself with a heart
from the bottom of our heart
am I happy, am I happy do I love myself truly
is it true that I love myself
and I am happy about myself
Is it true
the answer yes or no is not so important
the importance is can we really feel the happiness
and self love

Talk begins

Dear friends
your friends who are participating into this program physically
and from
from your own places
it's so nice to meet again
and again and meditate again and again and walk on this path again and again
together time to time we all need friendships
we all need others supports even though
theoretically we know everything about the practice and meditation and techniques and the path
that theoretical knowledge is useful
but not enough not enough
we need some practical examples live examples
we all need
and that's why we organized
kind of workshops and meditation retreats
time to time with help of

the Nilambe organizer team
now you hope that this brings some light
onto your path

The King asked his wife: Who is most loved?

dear friends
once a king asked this question
from his queen his wife
who is most loved who is most loved
and of course when we ask this kind of questions from others
we already knew the answer oh we already expect
the answer the other person should say you
you are the most loved one
so the king is same ordinary man
but because whatever reasons the queen said
I myself
who is most loved
I love myself most more than anybody else
so when a husband hear this kind of answers
we can imagine what a disappointment or even a wife a girlfriend
heard from his partner
that I love myself more than I love you
so he was so disappointed
and he couldn't control his emotions his pain it hurts a lot
it makes wound in his heart he didn't expect such a direct and
straightforward answer from his beloved wife queen
so days and days he was suffering and
suffering and suffering
and he couldn't find a way to overcome this pain finally he went to see the buddha
and then he explained
the whole story with the buddha he asked this question from my wife from my queen
who is most loved and she said herself not me
and it hurts lot if she asked this question from me I definitely say or said
you I must love you you are the most loved one for me
but she's not same
I can't get back in return what I have given
I think dear friends this is an eternal conflict

since the beginning of human world till now
very common and eternal conflict between two
it doesn't matter whether partners or parents and children doesn't matter
the thought is very common and ordinary what we give
others what we give others is more than what we
gain return from them always we see a gap
in between what we are giving and what we are receiving
and everybody feels same
so when you hear when you do counselling and when you hear some family or relationship conflicts both parties say same
no one says that I give less than what I receive only
very few but mostly everybody says I give more than what I receive the other person is giving less
Everybody love themselves
so the buddha said
what your wife said is true that's very true
she's very honest she doesn't want to hurt you but
at the same time she doesn't want to lie

so this is true everybody love
themselves more than anybody else
so this is the very basic psychology we like ourself more than anybody else
we attach to ourself more than we attach to anything else so anyone else that's very clear very obvious
if we do not attach to ourself then we do not attach to anyone else
Love is another thing
but the attachment is one thing and love is
another thing so what the dhamma meditation is trying
to do is giving beautiful meanings into this word -- love
it has multiple meanings and we are using it for
many different and opposite meanings and experiences
and we always be always concerned about the quantity
of love how much you love me this much I love you
volume but the meditation is interested
in the qualities of love not the quantity
the quality or qualities

7 aspects of self-love

when I was reflecting on this topic self-love

a couple of aspects came to my mind
kind of criterias at the same time
to check do we really love ourself or if we really love ourself then
can we do these things
so I think you can discover more than what I have discovered but a couple
of I think seven aspects came to my mind
and they are very simple not very philosophical or complicated or very spiritual
no, very simple thing

1. **Say good morning to ourself**

the first thing can we say good morning to ourself
whenever we get up whenever we wake up
soon after we wake up whenever we realize that we are awake now
after sleep the first thing what we can do is can we
say good morning good morning
we say good morning to everybody we send messages emails phone calls and
face to face verbally we say good morning
but before that whenever we get up wake up
awake the very first thing what we have to do
is to say good morning. I'm happy you are awake now
not to anyone to our own self. I am happy to see that you are awake
I am happy to see myself awake how nice
and when I say this thing I think
it's so not simple thing it's nothing but try to do try to do
because we want to sleep whenever we get up
we think of better to sleep more a bit more we are not happy
about to get up to awake we think sleeping is more peaceful than awaking
if we cannot appreciate whenever we get up awake that means we do not love
ourself
something is wrong something is missing
if we cannot wish ourself as a first activity in the day of the day
then something is missing
just try this and see the difference
oh how nice I awake now good morning
good morning I am happy that I can awake
I can get up if I am in sleep I cannot feel myself
I cannot help myself I cannot meditate
I cannot do anything good

2. **Say good night to ourself**

the second thing it's very connected to the first thing
can we say good night to ourself good night
the last thing of the day good night
can we allow ourself to sleep good night means allowing ourself to sleep
allowing ourself to have rest allowing ourself to withdraw all kinds of activities
it's a meditation
detached from all kinds of activities physical verbal and mental
before the sleep usually we hand over this responsibility onto the
sleep oh you can do it I can't do it I can't stop my working
I can't stop to watch a movie or work with a smartphone oh watch
television or whatever I can't stop my
communications even I can't stop my thinking
I can't therefore dear sleep help me it's your duty it's your responsibility
so that means we are not connected no inner connection
but we can re-establish this inner connection good night
good night it is not just the two words not just two words
I am allowing myself to rest, rest physical and mental and
emotional rest I am stopping all kinds of my activities
whenever whenever I have to sleep
I am not abusing myself I am not misusing myself
so when we say good night then we are not speaking anymore anything else
that's the last word of the day

3. **Appreciate whatever we are doing**

the third thing in between good morning and good night
we are working we are doing many things
activities in the home and the job social activities
many and can we appreciate what we are doing
can we really appreciate what we are doing
even though it's small thing maybe sweeping maybe
cleaning maybe doing laundry
maybe making some snack whatever
or working in the office can we start a duty or job whatever
with happiness with the happiness
it's good to do something good to work something it gives
the meaning to our life if we don't work if we don't do anything
then no meaning. is empty life is empty
no value no importance

so can we appreciate whatever we are doing for ourself
or for others even for the job
doesn't matter yes we work for salary for money but it's
something else can we appreciate what we are doing
can we start whatever with positive mind
if we love ourself then yes we can
and if we can that's the way to begin
to love ourself

4. **Enjoy and appreciate being alone with ourself**

the fourth thing when we are alone doing nothing
yeah not always working and working and working and being together with others
for most of the time so for sometimes but some other times we are alone
we are alone and usually when we are alone
and doing nothing or nothing to do then
the feeling is not so nice of course when we are tired then we want
to have a rest and not being with anybody we want to
relax ourself but I'm not speaking about that
because of whatever reasons we have to be alone
can we enjoy it can we enjoy it
oh how nice how nice I am with myself I am being with myself
Boring Experience
usually it's so boring experience so boring
even a small booklet is more interest more interesting than being with oneself
or even with the cat is more interesting than
staying with oneself or smartphone is more interesting than
own self so that means somehow we don't like ourself
alone means we are being with ourself
so why we can't enjoy it why we cannot appreciate it
why we are not happy about it something is wrong and something is missing
if we really love ourself then
is not a boring experience at all
it's not a negative experience at all and on the other hand if you start to enjoy aloneness that's the door
for self-love so it's a mutual relationship
between self-love and what I am describing
one two three four

5. **When the mind is suffering, be present and support ourself**

the fifth one is
when we are when the mind is suffering
when we are in pain
when we are in a trouble how do we think about it
and what we are doing
I am suffering
can we say ah I am I'm suffering I have to help myself I need my support I need my help
more than anything else more than any other time
I need my presence and support
if we love somebody and that person is suffering
so how we how we behave what we do
same thing we have to do for ourself especially
when we are lost
we should not give up ourself we should not say nothing to do nothing to do no hope this is my life
this is my life I born to suffer
this is not the first time and this is not the last time either
this is my karma, no, my dear friends
by thinking in this way we create new karma
this is not a karma
this something our life is deeply expecting
a health from our self the life needs a deep support
the life is requesting our hands
so we should not ignore we have to be with ourself
we usually we like to be with ourself or somebody else when everything is nice and pleasant and
comfortable and joyful and beautiful but
if everything turns other way
then we the usual reaction is
escaping ignoring
so my dear friends if we really want to love ourself then
we should not ignore ourself and we should not escape ourself specially
when we are in a trouble when we are suffering

6. **Forgive ourself**

and the sixth one. Past mistakes
because of whatever reasons

if we do or if we have done mistakes
physical mistakes verbal mistakes emotional mistakes official mistakes
personal mistakes whatever because of whatever reasons if we have
made any mistakes and how do we
look at them so they are past now they are part of
the past we have done it it's already done over
do we hate ourself because of our past errors
are we disliking ourself because of our past mistakes
and further do we want to punish ourself
because of what because we were wrong
we were not right we were not good we were bad
and if if somebody is bad somebody is wrong somebody's
not right then the automatical ordinary mental reaction is punishing
wants to punish in whatever innocent way or violent way
so same thing happens to us we want to punish ourself
and I have met many people who are punishing themselves
not because of the present in the present they are okay they don't do
anything wrong they don't do anything bad but
they have done something wrong in the past maybe only one time for one time
in their whole life
maybe five years ago ten years ago seven years ago maybe in childhood time
but they are they are punishing themselves again and again and again for entire
life
only for one single mistake and can we say that we love ourself
self-love is there if we are punishing ourself again and again and again
for our past mistakes
if we really love ourself then we can forgive ourself
we can forgive ourself
and by forgiving we can cultivate self love so this each aspect
has a strong connection with self-love one is feeding to the other
one is support into the other
by forgiving we can cultivate self-love
and by loving ourself we can forgive ourself

7. **Do not identify ourself with mistakes but identify with beautiful qualities and behaviours**

the last one the seventh one is
whenever we are we are going to do any mistake
so now it's present not the past whenever we are in whatever reasons
whenever we are trying to do any unpleasant thing for ourself or for

others so-called mistake or mistakes something wrong
we had to help ourself to stop it immediately stop it
we had to help ourself it doesn't happen automatically
we need support we need some strength because
mistakes are happening again and again habitually
habitually and mechanically easier to repeat mistakes
because once we did a mistake it makes some kind of circuit
inside of us, somewhere in a system
a circuit a path and for the second time it is a bit easier to repeat the same
mistake and third time more easy and if we repeat it for a couple of
times then it becomes part of our life a characteristic quality
then it is happening automatically
and then we say this is my nature this is my nature
my dear friends please do not identify yourself with those things if you really
love yourself please do not
identify yourself with mistakes
wrong things bad things negative qualities and negative behaviors
if you really love yourself
no need to fight with them but do not identify yourself with them
especially with negative quality negative
psychological elements I am like this this is my nature
no they are not our natures they are not our natures
we can identify ourself with beautiful things
to identify with beautiful things first we had to let go of our
old identifications
so we had to help ourself to let go of those unhealthy identifications
this is the seventh one

so if you meditate on this topic you can discover more
more than seven more than these seven aspects but
but what I feel what I realize is
these seven aspects are very simple and easier to apply
easier means we have to make an effort but not so difficult
to apply their applications seven applications
to plant and cultivate self-love

Love is the most beautiful word

the last thing dear friends

love is one of the most beautiful word
in all human languages this is an English word but in whatever
language the meaning whatever word is the most beautiful and touching word
love
everybody likes and of course some people said I hate
this word they say they hate this word they don't hate this word
they hate they hate the pain what they have experienced because
of love and they think they are suffering because of this word - love
no nobody is suffering because of love
but we are suffering of course
the most big suffer that's true
unbearable suffering
and we think we we like to
deposit all our suffering into this account of love
we think that's the most dangerous suffering and poor love
poor love it is so innocent
it is so innocent but then why we are suffering because of love
not because of love because we are abusing it and we are misusing it
and we are misunderstanding this beautiful nature of phenomena
usually it's a business
love and relationship is a business
maybe financial business more and more it becomes a financial business now
everything becomes the money business everything
even meditation religions everything so then
love too
it doesn't become business but we are using it for business
that means we invest something and we expect profit
this is the nature of business we invest
some amount and then we expect multiple double or triple in return
that is the nature of any kind of business and we are doing same thing with this
with love and the other person the other party is
same they also expect more than what they
are giving us and we say we expect more than what we are giving them
then it doesn't make anybody satisfied no satisfaction
no satisfaction at all no love at all after that maybe in the
beginning a bit love but when everything becomes a business
not only money business whatever business then the love is not there
it is not there
so we have to work with our expectations

how much we expect from the other person and we had to be aware at the same time
on other person's expectation because expectations
are coming from the self from the ego expectations
the ego is free to create expectations there is no limit for the ego
to make expectations no one can control it
I mean no one can say or you have only
three options three possibilities you can make three
maximum three expectations no there is no limit for the ego to make
expectations so one after the other one after the other one after the other thousand of
expectations are coming from the self and
the other person even doesn't know what we expect from him or her
really the other person is not aware doesn't know
what we expect from him or her
we think that the other person should know because I love him I love her
no need to say no need to speak yes of course everybody can feel love no need to say
that we love you oh I love you it is something we can feel that's true but this is not the matter of love it's about
expectations so we had to speak honestly and directly
what I expect from you
and at the same time we had to ask this question from the other person
what do you expect from me may I know what do you expect from me
how many things you expect from me and this kind of
communication and conversation and dialogues are not easy
not easy because it looks like very official
and we think no need to discuss about these things is common sense
now my dear friends it's not a common sense we had to open ourself
we had to come out from ourself
we had to help to the other person to understand
ourself what we think what we expect
to understand ourself

The real love comes from the freedom not from a prison

also we create frames
models for everybody for everybody we makes
creates we create frames
I love you therefore you had to be like this

I love you because you are like this therefore you have to always be like this
these frames are not physical not materialistic but they are more strong than iron or metal
like we make cages, a cage for dog or bird
and then we put a dog and bird inside of the cage and we feed
and every day we talk to that bird or dog
so something like that we put everybody in different cages we create psychological and emotional cages for
everybody different sizes different shapes
different frames and then we expect the other person
should be always inside of this cage should we always live inside of this cage
and this this attitude this expectation comes from
the deep place of selfishness
still we say love we say this for love
no love at all
this utterly selfishness
is like a prison and we all lie inside of this person
not only the other one we ourself are also inside of this prison
because we make rules and regulations conditions
and then we try to manipulate others and blackmail others
and by all by doing all those things dear friends we ourself
become a prisoner of our own cage but we make those cages
for others but finally we are inside of them
we are we become prisoners
it is difficult to love others without
having a model having a frame [Music]
because if we go with the ego then
this the nature of ego first ego make makes a frame model
how should be this person how should be that person if somebody is fit into that frame and then the ego is happy ah I find the right person right one
dear friends maybe it's true
somebody is fit into that frame somebody is fit into that cage
to model for how long maybe only for one moment
only for short period of time
because it's not a is not somebody else's fault
because humans are changing
and transforming from moment to moment from moment to moment
more than any other being and more than anything else
human mind is this a beauty of human mind it is changing

from moment to moment only human mind can change
fully within one second it can be completely upside down
within one moment
it can be completely somebody else somebody else
even she cannot believe
we cannot believe what happens to us now we are different
this is the nature of humans
everybody is changing dogs cats but
very slow slow motion and very small changes
but humans different so we cannot put anybody in a cage
for long period of time for a long period of time it is not happening
it doesn't work
the real love comes from the freedom not from a prison
from the freedom
not from the ego not from this selfishness

Dear friends
the true love comes from selflessness
it comes from the selflessness and the selflessness
comes from the true love
we can start from either
from the selflessness or from true love
thank you very much