

**FOUR VERSES
ON**

Samvega



Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

**For
Free Distribution
As
Dhamma Dana**

Four Verses On *Samvega*

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

Veneration to Him, the Most Exalted, the Purified, the Supremely Enlightened Buddha



The Venerable Mahāthera Ledi Sayadaw,
Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, D. Litt.

Samvega means a spiritual urgency or zeal. The Sayadaw addressed these verses to a wealthy minister, **Kinwun Mingyi**, a devout traditional Buddhist, who was addicted to **sensual pleasures, status, and wealth**. Modern Buddhists who are equally heedless of the true Dhamma would do well to ponder on these profound verses

**1. Due to the darkness without any light,
the deathless upper land is out of sight.
In time, you can't struggle on in any way,
drifting in the whirlpool in this bay all day.**

**2. Now, it's the most favorable chance,
five rare attainments to enhance,
oh! You're a man of international fame,
and you've plenty of affairs all the same.**

**They seem important and real,
but they are neither worthy nor essential.
Your viewpoint is neither clear nor right,
in charcoal-room at dark cloudy midnight.**

**You perform good actions occasionally,
according to your whims, traditionally.
Time is steadily passing without stopping,
as to death, the leveler, you're approaching;
as a gift or fee for the executioner,
with various foods, to present or to offer,
resting in the aggregates of wealthy chamber,
you are waiting to die with satisfaction
enjoying the worldly assumed perfection**

**3. Though they're causes of grief and despair,
you fancy them to be a pleasant affair,
with unseen starting point of life,
in the process of existences that strike,
always you're in perpetual hunger,
without quenching the thirst of desire.
You're seeking taste in objects as in reality,
but they're just a pile of ash in fragility.
Hoisting the banner of self-centered 'I',
you live like a villager's swine in sty.
That pig will become fatter and fatter
for food; its danger is nearer and nearer.
You're haughty and proud in society,
lofty with status and without anxiety;
you're happy and pragmatic
just like that villager's pig.
Screened by custom, pride, society, and glory,
far from seeing any truth or reality,
you have to face the total loss at last,
to mingle with common ash and earth.**

**4. The empire of 'I' is very large,
in three eras from sky to earth.
Fire of death is blazing down ever and anon,
that won't leave even a tiny atom,
shaking the whole universe
death, the murderer, is at large.
The existences or lives are only fuel.
Appearance and disappearance are perpetual;
death is the only monarch,
in cycles of world after world.
You can't have the knowledge of reality,
on conditional materiality and mentality;
when will you be able to extinguish the fire
that's very dangerous, ferocious and dire?**

Explanation of the Four Stanzas

1. First Stanza

The four kinds of ignorance (*avijja*) that conceal four kinds of truth. These four kinds of ignorance are called “darkness without any light.” In other words truth cannot be realized because the darkness of ignorance conceals it.

The four kinds of truth are as follows:

- 1. The five aggregates** of materiality and mentality are the truth of suffering;
- 2. Greed or craving** is the truth of the cause of suffering;
- 3. The peace of nibbana** is the truth of the end of suffering, and
- 4. The eightfold noble path** starting from right view is the truth of the way to the end of suffering, **nibbana**.

There are four kinds of ignorance that hide the aforesaid four kinds of truth. There are also four kinds of wisdom or knowledge (*vijja*) that reveal them.

The “deathless” is nibbana, which is free from death. Moreover, nibbana is not associated with the condition things (*sankhara*) so it is called deathless. Nibbana is also called “the upper land” because it is attained by struggling against the current of samsara, the eternal cycle of birth and death.

“In time, you can't struggle on in any way” means Kinwun Mingyi is not able to practice the noble path to attain nibbana.

“This bay” means the flood of samsara.

“Whirlpool” means a vicious circle (*vatta*) spinning around in samsara without being liberated. There are three kinds of vicious circles relating to good existences:

1. **Desire for pleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, sensations, and thoughts** (*kilesa-vatta*).
2. **The volitional activities of donation, morality, mental development, etc.,** (*kamma-vatta*).
3. **The resultant of life as a human or celestial being** (*vipaka-vatta*).

The circulation of these three cycles is the whirlpool of samsara. Kamma, the volitional activities such as donation arises due to defilements such as ignorance.

Volitional activities like donation give rise to resultants such as human existence, which again give rise to defilements including ignorance. Due to defilements, kamma produces resultants, which gives rise to defilements. So it is endless like the orbit of a spinning-wheel. That is why *vatta* is called “the whirlpool.”

2. Second Stanza

“Five rare attainments” refers to:

- i. **The very rare appearance of a Buddha and his teaching** (*buddhuppada dullabha*).
- ii. **The very rare and precious human rebirth** (*manussatta dullabha*).
- iii. **The very rare opportunity to be a Buddhist monk or novice** (*pabbajjita dullabha*).
- iv. **The very rare attainment of faith or confidence in Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, and the law of kamma** (*saddhasampatti dullabha*).
- v. **The very rare opportunity of hearing the Dhamma leading to nibbana** (*saddhammasavana dullabha*).

“They aren’t worthy or essential” refers to worldly or political affairs, which are not concerned with morality, concentration, and insight. It means that Kinwun Mingyi was fully occupied with those unimportant affairs until his old age, so his life was in vain. He was preoccupied with futile anxiety, delusion, and restlessness.

“They seem to be important or real” means that Kinwun Mingyi was sincerely trying his best for those affairs, but they were in vain.

“Your view-point is neither clear nor right” means that you cannot see the true nature of **the five aggregates of materiality and mentality**. If you think that they are not your own, it is a right view. If you regard them as yours, that view is not right. **Right view means seeing things as they really are** (*yathabhuta*). **Wrong view is personality view** (*sakkaya-ditthi*) or belief in a soul (*atta-ditthi*).

You do not try to follow the right way so you are going astray. That is why there is no chance for your accumulated perfections (*parami*) to appear. They are hidden like embers covered with wet mud. Therefore, your viewpoint is neither clear nor right.

“At dark cloudy midnight.” Means in your younger days, you had few detrimental affairs. When you heard of the Buddha, Dhamma, or Sangha your confidence could shine. With the growth of wealth and property, your detrimental works are increasing day by day. You are not a stranger to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, but **your confidence is fading with age**. Despite the repeated echoes of the noble qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, your confidence is no longer radiant. You perform good deeds in the traditional way merely to gain the high regard of others. So you are at dark cloudy midnight.

“In charcoal-room” refers to the worldly affairs to support your family that encourage you to darken your view.

“**You perform good actions occasionally according to your whims, traditionally.**” Now that you have reached a mature age, you have fallen into the charcoal-room of worldly affairs for the welfare of your family, and cannot get out of it. **Then you put the blame on your lack of accumulated perfections.** With weak confidence and wisdom, **you occasionally accomplish the traditional meritorious deeds of charity and meditation.** However, you take solace in meditation with weak expectations. You sometimes contemplate impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self, or the noble qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, but your insight and confidence are far from clear. **You only carry out these noble deeds with the hope of cultivating a good habit.**

“Time” is a being’s life-span for meditation on death. If a being is expected to live for a hundred years the life-span is a hundred years. According to the Burmese way of calculation, it is six hundred seasons or 2,400 lunar fortnights. When a train is moving, trees and bushes are left behind as if they were in a circle beside the railway. In the course of a life-span, hours and days are left behind in the same way. Therefore, **“time is passing steadily without stopping.”**

The “executioner” means death. Sentient beings are wandering in the innumerable universes of infinite samsara, the starting-point of which cannot be seen. All these existences are only the “various foods” of death. They are waiting for the time of death to collect the “fee.” They are waiting with healthy bodies, houses, land, furniture, and family. Therefore, “you are waiting to die with satisfaction enjoying the worldly assumed perfection.”

“You are waiting to die with satisfaction” means you are feeding or trying to satisfy the defilements until the arrival of death. You are treating defilements with various objects so they never become wearied. Thus, you are waiting for death. The duty for death is to be alive before its advent. The responsibility for the defilements is

endless. The defilements must be served with better and better objects. Blind world lings are passing life after life, carrying out these duties and responsibilities, which are not for their own benefit. Ignoring the responsibility for defilements and being dutiful to death, **the good world lings try their best to be free from death.**

3. Third Stanza

“Causes of grief and despair.” Not only the present affairs but also the deeds of charity and morality for the future achievement of good existences and wealth are causes of defilements. Therefore, they are called causes of grief and despair. They are also causes of worry and suffering. Various achievements are the causes of failure or destruction. Those affairs are prolonging samsara. The cause of suffering, craving is the cause of grief. The truth of suffering is the cause of despair. These two truths are the important parts of samsara. Their affairs seem to be important.

The cycle of defilements (*kilesa-vatta*), which includes ignorance, craving and attachment, is the cause of grief. The cycle of volitional activities (*kamma-vatta*), consisting of ten wholesome deeds and ten unwholesome deeds, arises due to the cycle of defilements. They are important. The cycle of resultants (*vipaka-vatta*), existences obtained due to volitional activities, is destined to destruction and decay, so it is the cause of despair.

The eye, the faculty of seeing, is the slave of the defilements and cause of grief. Being the fuel of the fire of aging and death, it is the cause of despair. It is just a part of the building of the mundane imperialists, craving, conceit, and wrong view. Similarly, the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are also the slaves of the defilements and causes of grief. As they are the fuels of aging-fire and death-fire they are causes of despair. They are the assets of craving, conceit, and wrong view, the three mundane imperialists.

“**Unseen starting-point of life**” means the starting point of existence cannot be seen or known. That is called the beginningless round of rebirth. “In perpetual hunger” means you always want to have, to be, to see, to hear, etc. Without eradicating craving, you will never be satisfied. Even if you become a universal monarch or Sakka, the king of gods, you will still suffer from the hunger of desire. **You will still be in perpetual hunger like a hungry ghost (*peta*).**

“Without quenching the thirst of desire” is craving for pleasing forms, sounds, fragrances, flavors, touches, and thoughts.

“**They’re just a pile of ash in fragility**” means **the eleven kinds of fire are scorching the bodies of humans, devas, and brahmas.** Those bodies are only piles of ash. There is no hard core and they are fragile. They are in fragility as they have no essence. A lunatic chooses and picks up things he likes from a rubbish heap abandoned outside the village gate. He finds many things that he thinks are good and enjoyable,

collecting them with pleasure. Similarly, **the luxury and wealth of men, devas, and brahmas are only a pile of ash or rubbish forsaken by the Noble Ones.**

“A villager’s swine in sty.” The fatter a pig becomes due to abundant food, the more the villager thinks to sell it for slaughter. The pig does not know that it will be displayed on the butcher’s stall in the market tomorrow, so it enjoys happiness for the moment as the leader of a brood of pigs. Similarly, the achievement of wealth and social status are prone to destruction, but you cannot see the reality, though you will definitely be on the stall of the cemetery market for the dinner of death before your hundredth birthday. That is why you can enjoy official status and society without any anxiety until now. You are like General Bandoola, who could not see the weapon aimed at him from a tree. **You do not see the destructive weapon of death aimed at you because you are screened by friends and enjoyable property.** Being tied to a post, you think it is better to die with your face covered, so that you cannot see the weapon aimed at you. Likewise, people fear to face the weapon of death aimed at them, and think it better to die without noticing, so they cover their faces.

Giving no chance for mindful trepidation (*samvega*) to arise, they collect and enjoy sensual objects and companions, concealing their fear with them. The screen is so good that they are not alarmed by the impending repeated deaths. They are not afraid of death in the present life. They meekly accept it as a natural solace. Since they are not afraid of death, there is no chance for them to be free from samsara. If the fear of death is only slight due to the good screen they do not think of final liberation. This is the meaning of “screened.”

“The truth or reality” is the true nature of death and destruction.

“Society” is association with relatives, friends, and society. “Pride, society and glory” are the various forms of delusion that cover and conceal the truth. “Custom” means the polite manners and customs in society, which also conceal the truth or reality.

A powerful deva can see five signs of death a week in advance. Then, he is shaken and afraid, so the other devas take him to the Nandavana garden, which is so pleasant that the frightened deva forgets his fear and anxiety. The screens for devas and brahmas are very good and powerful.

“The total loss” means that in the endless round of rebirth, sentient beings try their best to get the best screens. The screen is to forget the good deeds. Forgetful of doing good deeds, they do not dare to think of final liberation from death. The duration of seeking screens for each portion of a day, month, year, or life-span is “total loss at last.”

“To mingle with common ash and earth” means the bodies of beings in the eleven sensual realms and sixteen realms of form are like earth. The bodies of devas and

brahmas are composed of subtle earth elements and the heat guarding them is very powerful. The body of a deva or brahma disappears totally at death like an extinguished flame with the expiration of the earth elements produced by consciousness and nutrition. There is no corpse after death. **The devas and brahmas are beings of spontaneous birth and death.** There is no chance of treatment — they expire suddenly as if vaporized. However, the bodies of men and animals remain after death and the disappearance of earth elements generated by kamma. Their dead bodies add to the earth and ash in the cemetery. Thus, the living bodies of men are going “to mingle with common ash and earth.”

4. Fourth Stanza

“The empire of ‘I’ is very large” means that there is the wide sphere where the conceptual ‘I’ wanders. That concept is the banner of craving, the true cause of suffering. It is like saying “there’s no smoke without fire.” The aggregates of the eleven planes of desire are created and governed by sensual craving. The aggregates of the sixteen planes of form are made and governed by craving for form. Similarly, the aggregates of the four formless planes are created and governed by the craving for formlessness.

If you tease or test someone the word ‘I’ will always arise. A king or government will not tolerate any insult or invasion by another because of that egocentric pride. **Thirty-one existences, the sensual plane, the plane of form and the formless plane are included in the empire of “I”.**

“That won’t leave even a tiny atom” — Billions of universes from the past no longer exist. Not even a tiny atom remains from the insentient oceans, rivers, forests, and mountains, or the sentient devas, human beings and animals. Contemplate each portion of a year, month, day, or hour that is consumed. Nothing remains forever. Contemplate the impermanent things that you have met during your lifetime.

“Perpetual” means that if you point your finger in any direction there will be countless dying beings there.

“Only fuel” — throughout the thirty-one planes of existence in the three eras of the past, present, and future, sentient and insentient aggregates are only fuel for the eleven kinds of fire. These eleven fires are the fires of greed, hatred, delusion, birth, aging, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair.

The sentient aggregates are divided into the three cycles of defilements, volitional activities, and resultants. Ignorance, craving, and attachment are included in defilements. **Volitional activities includes mental formations (*sankhara*), which are past activities, and becoming (*kammabhava*), which are present volitional activities or becoming for future existences.** The five resultants are: rebirth-consciousness, psychophysical phenomena, six senses, contact, and feeling.

Because of ignorance, craving, and attachment, there are mental formations and becoming — good and bad actions that create resultants in the next existence as a human being or deva, which again produces defilements. Thoughts such as: **“It is me,” “It is mine,” “I am,” “This is my soul,” “I am a king,” “I am a brahmin,” “I am rich,” “I am Sakka,” “I am Brahma,” “I am a woman,” “I am a man,”** etc., appear in the minds of blind world lings because of craving and attachment. Defilements cause kamma, which produces the resultant of another existence, which leads to more defilement. That vicious circle, called **“vatta,”** will continue eternally until the realization of things as they really are.

“Appearance and disappearance.” Beings and things in all universes are always permeated by appearance and disappearance.

“Death is the only monarch” means that although conditioned things and beings may be increasing, they cannot overcome death. Hence death is the universal monarch that cannot be conquered by any of them. Those conditional things and beings are destined to end in destruction, and none can remain forever.

“In cycles of world after world” means that at every cycle of the world system, conditioned things are seen to be only the fuel of death, which will consume them all, not leaving a single atom.

“You can’t have the knowledge of reality” — A king thought that an ogress was the most beautiful princess and took her to the royal palace, appointing her as his chief queen. The king was tricked and dominated by the pretentious princess until he got the power of clairvoyance that helped him to see the ugly and fearful appearance of the ogress. When he saw the truth he executed her and regained his power.

Similarly, beings will be deceived and controlled by conditioned things as long as they cannot see things as they really are. Psychophysical phenomena are not a person, a being, a man, or a woman. They beguile beings who regard them as persons, beings, men, or women. **Blind world lings love and adore the pretty, beautiful, and handsome persons because of attachment.** Love and adoration are the strong iron fetters and chains of Mara and the king of hell. World lings cannot escape from the clutches of Mara and the king of hell because they are tightly bound by those fetters. Thus they are dominated and controlled by conditioned things.

When knowledge of things as they really are is attained by virtuous world lings and lesser Stream-winners, they begin to escape from the control of conditioned things, which **they can contemplate as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self.** They can realize that psychophysical phenomena are not a person, a being, a man or a woman. The defect, harm, and danger of psychophysical phenomena can be known by seeing things as they truly are. This is the victory of virtuous world lings and lesser Stream-winners over psychophysical phenomena. However, Kinwun Mingyi has not found the escape from bondage by gaining that knowledge.

“When will you be able to extinguish the fire?” refers to the fire of death and the other ten kinds of fire that are consuming all the planes of existences. When and in which Buddha’s dispensation will Kinwun Mingyi gain final liberation from samsara?

A Biographical Sketch

The Ven. Ledi Sayadaw was born in 1846 in northern Burma. He attended the monastery school, and ordained as a novice at fifteen, taking the name Ñānadhaja (banner of knowledge). His education included a study of the Abhidhammatthasangaha, on which he later wrote a controversial commentary — the Paramattha Dīpanī — in which he corrected certain mistakes in the widely accepted commentary. His corrections were eventually accepted by the bhikkhus and his work became the standard reference.

At the age of twenty, on 20 April 1866, he took the higher ordination and continued his studies in Mandalay. There, an examination of twenty questions was set for two thousand students. Ñānadhaja was the only one to answer all the questions satisfactorily. His answers were published in 1880, as the Pāramī Dīpanī (Manual of Perfections).

In 1886, Ven. Ñānadhaja went into retreat in Ledi forest, just to the north of Monywa. After a while many bhikkhus started coming to learn meditation. The **Ledi-tawya monastery** was built, whence the Sayadaw became known as Ledi Sayadaw.

Though Ledi Sayadaw was based at the Ledi-tawya monastery, he traveled Appendix - A throughout Burma at times, teaching both meditation and scriptural courses. He was a rare bhikkhu who excelled in both the theory and practice of Dhamma. During these trips many of his books were written. For example, he wrote the Paticcasamuppada Dīpani in two days while traveling by boat from Mandalay to Prome.

The Venerable Ledi Sayadaw was the outstanding Buddhist figure of his age. All who have come into contact with the Dhamma in recent years owe a great debt of gratitude to this scholarly, saintly monk who was instrumental in re-enlivening the traditional practice of Vipassana, making it more accessible to both monks and lay people. His concise, clear and extensive writings served to clarify the experiential aspect of the Dhamma.

Appendix – A
Thirty-One Planes
Buddhist Cosmology

No.	Description	Life Span	Comments	Cause of Rebirth	
Immaterial World (Arupa-loka)					
31	Neither Perception nor non-Perception (nevasannasannayatanupaga deva)	84,000 MK	Inhabitants possessed d mind with no physical body	4 th Formless Jhanas	
30	Nothingness – (akincannayatanupaga deva)	60,000 MK		3 rd . Formless Jhana	
29	Infinite Consciousness – (vinnanancayatatanupaga deva)	40,000 MK		2 nd Formless Jhana	
28	Infinite Space (Akasanancayatatanupaga deva)	20,000 MK		1 st Formless Jhana	
The Fine Material World (Rupa-Loka)					
27	Peerless Deva (Akanitha deva)	16,000 MK	The Five Pure Abode only to Non-returner – (Anagami) and Arahants . Being reborn here from another plane they could attain arahantship.	4 th Jhana	
26	Clear-sighted Deva (Sudassi Deva)	8,000 MK			
25	Beautiful Deva (Sudassa Deva)	4,000 MK			
24	Untroubled Deva (Atappa deva)	2,000 MK			
23	Deva not falling away (aviha Deva)	1,000 MK			
22	Unconscious Devas – Mindless being (Asannasatta Deva)	500 MK	Pure Abode		
21	Very Fruitful Deva (Vahapphala deva)	500 MK	Mindless body		
20	Devas of Refulgent Glory (vehapphala deva)	64 MK			
19	The realm of Infinite Aura (Appamanasubha Deva)	32 MK		Pure Abode	3 rd Jhana Highest degree
18	The Realm of Minor Aura (Parittasubha Deva)	16 MK		Beings in these realms enjoy varying degree of bliss	3 rd Jhana Medium degree
17	The Realm of radiant Luster (Abhasara Deva)	8 MK			3 rd Jhana minor degree
16	Devas of unbounded radiance (Appamanabha deva)	4 MK			2 nd jhana of highest degree
15	The Realm of minor Luster (Parittabha Deva)	2 MK			2 nd Jhana of medium degree
14	The Maha Brahma Realm (Mahabrahma)	1 AK	The Great Brahma, creator (4- faces Brahma) of Universe. Brahma Sahampati beg Buddha to teach Dhamma to the world. – Sarawasti – Ganapati , Vishnu	2 nd Jhana of minor degree	
13	Minister of Brahma (brahma-purohita deva)	0.5 AK		1 st Jhana of highest degree	
12	Retinue of Brahma (brahma-parisajja deva)	0.3 AK		1 st Jhana of medium degree	
			Beings here enjoy varying degree of Jhana bliss	1 st Jhana of minor degree	

The Sensuous World - **Kamma Loka**

11	Devas wielding power over creation of others (paranimitta vasavati deva)	16,000 CY	Deva enjoy sense pleasures created by others for them. Here lives Mara	Ten wholesome action – generosity Happy destination
10	Deva delighting in creation (Nimmanariti deva)	8,000 CY	Deva delight in the sense objects of their own creation	
9	Contented Deva (Tusita Deva)	4,000 CY	A Realm of pure delight and gaiety. Bodhisattas abide here prior to human rebirth, Mettreye Bodhisatta dwells here.	
8	Yama Deva (yama deva)	2,000 CY	Devas live in the air free of all difficulties	
7.	The Thirty Three Gods (Tavatimsa deva)	1,000 CY	Sakka – who was assigned by Buddha to lead the dispensation through 5,000 years.	
6	Devas of the Four Kings (catumaharajika deva) (Lokapala Devas)	500 CY	Dhatarattha – Rules East - gandhabbas Virulhaka – Rules South – kumbandas Virupakkha - Rules west – Nagas Kuvera – Rules North - Yakkas	Ten wholesome action – generosity Happy destination
5	Human beings (Manussa loka)	Not specified	We are here – to sense the develop virtue and good morality – Sila, Samadhi & Panna	Work hard to gain – Sotapanna, Sedagami, Anagami, and Arahan t

States of Deprivation (**Apaya**)

4	Asura (asura)	Not specified	Demons, Titans – they are engaged in relentless conflicts Non-visible spirits Guardian – fallen angels	Ten unwholesome action
3	Hungry – shades-Ghosts (peta loka)	Not specified	Unhappy spirits and Ghosts hopelessly in search of fulfillment – non visible spirits	
2	Animals (Tiracchana yoni)	Not specified	Visible non-human form of life. All animals and insects	Ten unwholesome actions – animal behaviors
1	Hell (Niraya)	Not specified	Realms of sufferings	Ten unwholesome actions – killing – parents, arahants, or injuring Buddha or creating schism in Sangha community Quarrelsome annoying to others

Estimated Years in Buddhist Cosmology

MK – Maha kappa –

AK – Asankheyya Kappa

CY – Celestial year

Antara Kapp – period between human life span increase from ten years to infinite years and then down to ten years again.

Asankheyya kappa – twenty antara kappa – is equal to one asankheyya kappa.

Celestial year – 50 human years is equal to 1 celestial year.

Gotama Sasana – 5,000 years life span – at the end of 5,000 years – all Buddha Relics will gather together to form Buddha Image for all Devas to revered. (See Anagatavamsa Desana)

1. Why do we wander in samsara?

"It's because of not understanding and not penetrating four things that we have wandered & transmigrated on such a long, long time, you & I. Which four?

"It's because of not understanding and not penetrating noble virtue that we have wandered & transmigrated on such a long, long time, you & I.

"It's because of not understanding and not penetrating noble concentration that we have wandered & transmigrated on such a long, long time, you & I.

"It's because of not understanding and not penetrating noble discernment that we have wandered & transmigrated on such a long, long time, you & I.

"It's because of not understanding and not penetrating noble release that we have wandered & transmigrated on such a long, long time, you & I.

"But when noble virtue is understood & penetrated, when noble concentration... noble discernment... noble release is understood & penetrated, then **craving** for becoming is destroyed, the guide to becoming (craving & attachment) is ended, there is now no further becoming."

-- [AN IV.1](#)

2. Five pleasant things to be gained by acting skillfully

"These five things are welcome, agreeable, pleasant, and hard to obtain in the world.

Which five?

- Long life...
- Beauty...
- Pleasure...
- Status...
- Rebirth in heaven...

Now, I tell you, these five things are not to be obtained by reason of prayers or wishes. If they were to be obtained by reason of prayers or wishes, who here would lack them? It's not fitting for the disciple of the noble ones who desires long life to pray for it or to delight in doing so. Instead, the disciple of the noble ones who desires long life should follow the path of practice leading to long life. In so doing, he will attain long life, either human or divine...(Similarly with beauty, pleasure, status, and rebirth in heaven)..."

-- [AN V.43](#)

3. The most noble kamma of all: the ending of kamma

"Monks, these four types of kamma have been directly realized, verified, & made known by me. Which four?

- There is kamma that is dark with dark result.
- There is kamma that is bright with bright result.
- There is kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result.
- There is kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma.

"And what is kamma that is dark with dark result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates an injurious bodily fabrication, fabricates an injurious verbal fabrication, fabricates an injurious mental fabrication. Having fabricated an injurious bodily fabrication, having fabricated an injurious verbal fabrication, having fabricated an injurious mental fabrication, he rearises in an injurious world. On rearising in an injurious world, he is there touched by injurious contacts. Touched by injurious contacts, he experiences feelings that are exclusively painful, like those of the beings in hell. This is called kamma that is dark with dark result.

"And what is kamma that is bright with bright result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates a non-injurious bodily fabrication ... a non-injurious verbal fabrication ... a non-injurious mental fabrication ... He rearises in a non-injurious world ... There he is touched by non-injurious contacts ... He experiences feelings that are exclusively pleasant, like those of the Ever-radiant Devas. This is called kamma that is bright with bright result.

"And what is kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates a bodily fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious ... a verbal fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious ... a mental fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious ... He rearises in an injurious & non-injurious world ... There he is touched by injurious & non-injurious contacts ... He experiences injurious & non-injurious feelings, pleasure mingled with pain, like those of human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower realms. This is called kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result.

"And what is kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma? [Noble Eightfold Path](#)

The Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya-atthangika-magga)		
a. Right Understanding (Samma-ditthi)	Group III	Wisdom (Panna)
b. Right Thought (Samma-sankappa)		
Right Speech (Samma Vaca)	Group - I	Morality (Sila)
Right Actions (Samma Kammanta)		
Right Livelihood (Samma-Ajiva)		
Right Effort (Samma-vayama)	Group II	Mental Development (Samadhi)
Right mindfulness (Samma-sati)		
Right Concentration (Samma-Samadhi)		

This is called kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma."

-- [AN IV.235](#)

4. A rare rebirth

Blinded this world --
 how few here see clearly!
 Just as birds who've escaped
 from a net are
 few, few
 are the people
 who make it to heaven.
 -- [Dhp 174](#)

References :

1. Teacher of the Devas by Susan Elbaum Jootla
2. 31 Planes of existence by U Tin Htut
3. <http://www.kmspks.org/activities/bbc/bbc1.htm>