

Saturday, 14th April, 1982.

The world of Sri Ariya (Mettraya) is just at the tip of our nose.

Good people, all those interested in the Dhamma, this talk given during the visakhapuja season is the second in the series devoted to ‘those important things we tend to overlook.’ At this time we’ll take as subject: ‘The world of Sri Ariya (Mettraya) is right at the tip of our nose.’

Saying this is likely to cause feelings of unease in the minds of some, because nobody approaches this subject in this particular way, the tendency being to say that we must wait for many more thousands, or tens of thousands of years to pass before the religion of Mettraya can manifest. I say that the world of Mettraya is right at the tip of our noses. The response to that is to say that I’m joking, or talking irresponsibly.

Be assured that I’m speaking responsibly, honestly, with the intent of letting people see for themselves that the world of Sri Ariya Mettraya really is just at the tip of our collective nose. The majority however, won’t get that at all.

To begin with we should talk about what the ‘world of Mettraya’ actually is. Be aware that, in general, every religion has, in their own way, the tradition of Sri Ariya Mettraya, every nationality, speaking whatever language and following whatever religion will have this tradition which will accord with the form and character of their religion, just the name they use being different.

In Asia there are the Hindu, the Buddhist, and the Christian religions. In Hinduism they speak of the tenth avatar of Narayan called ‘kalki-avatar.’ The Hindus count the Buddha as the ninth Narayan avatar and await the appearance of the tenth. They describe this tenth avatar as being a person who’ll ride on a white horse and arrange all matters so that peace and tranquility reigns.

When this tenth avatar arrives this world will become the world of Mettraya, and will be a world of peace and happiness, a world without dukkha. But they do say that there are still many tens of thousands of years to go before this can happen, that it’s not imminent, it’s not at all just at the tip of our nose.

Buddhists know Mettraya as the future Buddha, the Buddha-to-come, at which time this world will have a religion more stable and stronger than any today, and people will experience peace and contentment. At that time there won’t be anything capable of causing anxiety, agitation, people will be satisfied with their lot in life, there won’t be any violence, and, therefore, no need to live behind locked doors, so that when building a house there’ll be no need to include locks. People being universally good there’ll be no need to fear thieves or malefactors, and no need to discriminate between the various people one meets with when outside the home, although one will still recognize one’s wife, husband, children, friends, etc. on the street one won’t discriminate one person from another, everyone we meet with being good, decent human beings. Everything will be as it should be.

There are many details involved but it's not necessary get into too many of them, that would be in vain, however, we can sum it all up by simply saying that here won't be any dukkha, that everything will be as it ought to be.

We'll need, however, to feel a lot of desire if the religion of Mettraya is to make its appearance, and we'll need to be willing and able to follow instructions: to do this, do that, in order to be born into such a world.

Now, the Christian religion, which is much respected by people in the world, and which also has its version of the Mettraya legend but rendered in the Hebrew tongue as 'messiah,' a word which is somewhat close to the word 'Mettraya,' although whether it's a transliteration isn't certain: 'messiah,' 'mettraya,' certainly they're similar.

The Jewish religion, which the Christians to some extent adhere to, relates that this 'messiah' will arise into the world and will deliver people from their problems, that is, from all the forms of dukkha, the details being set out in their scriptures.

Now, when Jesus appeared and was proclaimed to be the messiah some didn't accept him, they accused him of being a fraud, accused him of deception, of extreme profanity. Some didn't accept him so looked for a way to get rid of him, finally arresting and crucifying him, that is, they put him to death. The declared messiah may have been so, but some of those adhering to the religion of that time took him and put him to death, hence he didn't succeed in his mission. The Christians, however, generally believe that Jesus was the messiah and that he gave his life to help those who didn't believe in him to accept that he really was the son of God, was the messiah.

We can see that all religions have this Mettraya tradition. Now, I say that the world of Mettraya is right at the tip of our noses, but that we fail to recognize it.

What does its recognition rely on? It relies on the development of a Dhamma principle which forms the deep heart of all religions. If there's the sort of practise which can reach the heart of any religious system, then the world of Mettraya will immediately arise from that. What is the heart of religion? Specifically, it's the ability to feel love for other people. Whenever the heart of any system is properly practised then the world of Mettraya immediately manifests, right there and then.

But there'll probably be those who'll object and deny that everyone in the world can love everyone else. I didn't say that it could or it couldn't happen, only that the world of Mettraya, or the religion of Mettraya, would appear when everyone *could* love everyone else. Think about it: after all, any and all religions do teach metta and karuna, do teach love for others.

The word 'mettraya' means 'love' or 'one who loves' or is related to love. We like to leave the word 'metta' untranslated, even so 'metta' is love, but not love of the sensual sort, rather it's that purified, Dhammic kind of love. 'Sri' means beautiful in the purified, Dhammic sense, 'ariya' means noble in the same way, while 'Sri ariya Mettraya' is the manifestation of that pure, Dhammic form of love for all beings. 'Sri Ariya Mettraya' has no other meaning than that. Whenever there's the arising of that highest form of love, right there and then the world of Mettraya manifests.

In this initial stage we should get a proper understanding of the words 'loving others.' Feeling love for children, our wife, our husband, our nephews and nieces, our grandchildren, etc. isn't loving others in the true sense, because such affection tends to create division, and as regards our children, our wife, husband, etc. it's a matter of loving selfishly, which is divisive. Wife, husband, etc. don't have the meaning of 'others' in the true sense, rather they're 'others' in the 'me' and 'mine' way, hence the love we normally feel for our children, our wife, our husband, etc. doesn't add up to metta, to loving others in the pure, Dhammic sense.

Now we like our drinking companions, our gambling friends, and so on - our corrupt companions, but this isn't metta because it still involves that 'self' which selects certain people as being those we love, hence it's still a matter of 'me' and 'mine.' When we can love our neighbours, not because they have any meaning for us, or because they're useful to us, but with a pure, unselfish mind, that would be called loving others. So understand the words 'loving others' properly.

Now, seek out that feeling of love for others - where is it? Try, right now, to find the feeling of love for others within oneself. Have we ever felt love for other people? That pure, unselfish love of others in general, do we have that? We may not be able to find it. In fact finding real love for other people in this world right now is almost impossible, because the world is full of exploitation, of violence of every kind. There's no real love for others at all. We should be able to see and accept this, if we can't accept such a statement then go, try to find someone somewhere who has real love for other people.

Why don't we feel love for others? Sometimes it's because they're better looking than us, we don't like them because they're better looking than us, or because they look smarter than us, or because they're richer, then we don't love them, rather we'll be jealous of them. Perhaps we see them as our equals, or as more skilful than we are, so we feel jealousy. Our thoughts incline in that way. Hence we don't feel love for others. It's clearly been the case everywhere and throughout the ages that people don't feel love for each other, unless, that is, someone happens to be of use to somebody else. This problem becomes us, becomes a part of what we are. Hence religion on the primary, moral level involves teaching, explaining, encouraging people to feel love for others.

The first religion to arise in the world had this problem to deal with. The wise, those who were leaders, understood that people didn't feel amity towards each other, and that, as a consequence, there was killing, fighting, etc.

When there's no love between people there's robbery, embezzlement, deception, sexual promiscuity, fornication, wrong speech, deception in every which way - there's carelessness, the doing of bodily harm, and so on because of the lack of mindfulness and clear awareness, plus there's indulgence in intoxicants which can cause a complete loss of mental balance.

Thus it's taught that loving others is important. It's smart to teach just one precept - love of others - from which the five silas, the five moral requirements will arise and spread out.

At this time it can be seen that because people don't feel love for each other the human world is full of killing, thievery, adultery, deception, and harmfulness of every sort. This tells us that, in some former time, the sila practise arose, or grew out of people practicing love for others

as a protection against the five forms of wrong conduct. Now that love is hard to come by, that love they began from so long ago is no longer extant. But it will have to be encouraged if Mettraya is to manifest.

We can create the world of Mettraya by feeling love for one another. If everyone in the world at this time could feel real love for everyone else this world would, in the blinking of an eye, or in the time it takes to throw a switch, become the world of Mettraya. So, is this right at the tip of our noses? Think about it. This is something we can have, but whether we do anything about it or not is up to us. The fact is that it is right at the tip of our nose, it's that close, but we, generally, won't do anything to encourage it.

Therefore, if we want this world to become the world of Mettraya we need to help by making love for others appear - that's all, then it will happen, and in not too long a time love for others will cover the world.

At this time world organizations, like the United Nations, don't think, don't even dream in this way, instead they're concerned more with creating disunity, separation, aversion, with gaining advantage, and so on, and not at all with creating amity between people and nations. Governments don't think about encouraging people to love each other, that would be too good, too much morality. They try to rectify national problems through economics, politics, and force of arms, or whatever, and not through right moral behaviour. They don't see that sila can help solve national problems.

I say that if there's no siladhamma, and especially no love for others, then any economy will be in dire straits, which will be very dangerous for mankind. Politics becoming debased will fill the world with trouble and strife, with confusion, with chaos. Whatever path is chosen, if it's not connected to right moral behavior, to siladhamma, it will prove ultimately destructive. Hence economics, politics, military matters, or whatever, anything at all which is now much revered in the world, are they based in morality, in sila? If so it will certainly be beneficial, being allied to the religion of Mettraya, but if it isn't so it will become an enemy. Hence we need to think about loving others.

At present economies, local, national, or global can't improve because there's no love for other people, so economic liberties are being taken. Politics can't get better in this world, no matter which country we look at, because there's no love between people - they seek advantage, and, in a manner of speaking, suck the blood, the essence of others.

Note this: siladhamma, which is rooted in the love of others, will help this human world to become a peaceful, cool, and contented place, to soon become the world of Mettraya once we, all of us, can feel love for others.

Now, sometimes we're among our blood relatives, among those we love: mother, father, etc. When we're among such people how secure, how content do we feel? With the manifestation of the religion of Mettraya we'll experience feelings of happiness, contentment, akin to the times when we're with those we love. This will be the case once it's been understood, once it's seen that the world of Mettraya is right at the tip of our nose. If we can love other people it will be as if everyone is related. Similarly: if everyone felt love for us in the same way that our mother did, how would that be? If people in the world loved each other, and therefore loved us too, in the

same way that our mother loved us, how would that be. Here we mean a normal mother of course, not one who kills her children, or anything like that. If everyone loved us in the way our mother did how would the human world be? There'd be certainty, trust, contentment, that is, happiness in accord with the meaning of the word 'Mettraya.'

'Mettraya' means 'love,' or it can mean 'friendliness,' or even 'dwelling together in friendliness.' The Mettraya religion is about people living together in an atmosphere of the most elevated friendliness. This we can liken to a world where there are only people who feel love for each other, where we live amongst those who love us in the same way our mother loved us.

Hence, we might help build the religion of Mettraya by practising metta, just that one thing. However, some will shake their heads at that, saying that it's difficult and won't accept the practice. I would ask that we, at this time, have the intention - that we vow to do just one thing, that is, to love one another - are there any takers? I believe that of those sitting here there probably won't be many with the necessary courage, because they won't have faith in it so won't believe that they can do it, and because they'll see it as being exceedingly difficult. But if we want the religion of Mettraya we must help make it happen. We can do that through discussion, by talking about love for others, by pointing out its great value, by coaxing, by persuading, we can help create understanding and satisfaction with metta. Is such possible? We leave it with you to find out for yourselves. It might come about through persuasion, through explanation, through education, this would be one way, another way would be through enforcement, through some form of control, such as occurred during an era close to the Buddha's time, the era of Ashoka the great. Ashoka required people to have love of other people, including animals, as is evidenced by stone carvings, edicts from that time. This would be the enforcement of love for others, which is still an option, however, in this day and age when democracy is preferred, such can't be applied, there has to be freedom of choice.

I'll consider this 'love for others' in some detail, and ask four questions: What is it? Where does it come from? What is it for? How can it be acquired? A methodology which follows the form of the four noble truths of Buddhism.

When it's asked: 'what is loving others?' We can say that 'loving others' is an ability of the fully developed mind. The mind which isn't developed at all hasn't any way of really feeling love for others, while the mind which is partially developed can somewhat create this ability, but it's only the completely developed mind, the mind which has been released from jail, that can have that love for others which is full and complete. The mind of the worldly person is imprisoned, is always in jail, so can't easily come out and love freely - that prison is our selfishness.

Basic selfishness is instinctual, but has been augmented almost from birth up to the present, so that now the mind is full with it. The mind is caged, imprisoned by selfishness and isn't free to come out and love others. Hence there's no metta for the mind which is imprisoned. Only the Arahant mind can be said to be free, to have escaped from that particular jail. For the Arahant loving others is effortless, immediate and automatic, without the need for intention. We might intend to feel love for others but cannot because there's something binding the mind. But if we destroy the binding agent we'll escape and the love of others will arise immediately and

automatically: 'self'- love, 'selfishness,' having been completely destroyed the mind will be free, ready to experience real love. Hence, in truth the ability to love others represents freedom, liberation: becoming free, having escaped from jail. Right now it's about effort, about preparation, about preparing the ability to feel love others.

We have a duty to help ourselves to escape, to find safety, then we'll feel love for other people so can help them too. Hence the duty of human beings is to save themselves and then to help save others, something which has to be done with that love for all beings in mind, that love which comes from the final destruction of selfishness.

To sum up: love of others is a characteristic of the fully developed mind, the mind which is released, which is freed from the kilesa, from the defilements which bind. To use an analogy: it's as if the mind has escaped from the prison of selfishness, so that now there's automatically the feeling of love for other people.

If it's asked: this love of others where does it come from? Well, the conditions underpinning it are both external and internal. Externally, our environment, our surroundings, as well as our training, teaching etc. would provide the necessary conditions. There's also coercion, compulsion, which could be employed to make people feel love for others. Like in Children's schools where there could be persuasion blended with control so that the children could come to love others, come to help each other, come to avoid quarreling. Children wouldn't then fight with each other because they'd have love of others ingrained, hence they'd tend towards generosity, towards helping each other. There'd be a little control, or persuasion, which would encourage children to acquire the habit of loving others.

Now, the internal conditions necessary would involve the development of satipanna, mindfulness and right knowledge, in that one would need to observe with satipanna the benefit of loving others, that is, we come to know the feeling of security, of safety involved, and so have love expand, spread outwards into the world until those 'others' disappears. It may be strange to hear that we increasingly spread love around, expand it outwards, so that we can get rid of the notion of 'others' completely, and come together as 'one,' which is a basic religious principle. People need to see something most profound here, that if we, because of developing metta, can come to live together as one people without any concept of others, that then would be the condition for the arising of that love which is really profound.

It's taught as a principle that we can't live in this world all alone, that we must live with people, hence we need to love each other, so recognition of this fact is a good place to start, to begin letting real love for each other arise. Just avoiding violence, not being a danger, not doing harm, won't be enough, non-violence isn't loving others, it isn't as elevated as metta, we need to go further.

At present the doctrine of non-violence is much praised as being the ultimate. Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed this teaching. In today's world there's siladhamma, morality, and there's the doctrine of non-violence. However, the doctrine of non-violence doesn't emphasize love for others so might cause one to deviate into something different. We're not satisfied with it and prefer to emphasize metta. But, when we can feel love for others what will happen? Well, it will

produce more than non-violence would, will go further, will help, support, sustain us in every way.

It's said that a characteristic of the Mettraya age will be that there'll be 'wishing trees' in every corner of a city and anyone who wants anything can go and take it, there being no lack, no shortage. This means that with the emergence of that universal love and the consequent breaking down of the 'self' and 'others' scenario, there won't be any discrimination between individuals, no ownership, so no locked doors, metta, love for others, replacing our locks and keys.

It's clear to see that the religion of Mettraya must arise at a time when the world is developing materially. At present there's much development of materialism, illustrated by us going to the moon, and so on, and by the invention of wonderful labour-saving devices, etc. But there still being a shortage of metta those wonderful devices often get used against other people. The inventions of this age, the creations of human intelligence, are used to destroy because there's a lack of love. When the age of Mettraya arrives there'll be full love for others, hence these inventions, these devices will be used accordingly so that peace and contentment will rule both within us and without in the external world. The mind being with the Dhamma then any devices, any inventions of ours will get used in a way which isn't harmful.

The religion of Mettraya, how will it arise, and from where will it come? It will come from the perfection of the mental and material worlds. As regards the mental, ultimately it's just about loving others, nothing more - we'll explain why that is so a little later. As for the material, we need to be sure that any material progress won't be used for evil, for harmful purposes. Thus, in the religion of Mettraya, in the world of Mettraya both the mental and the material will reach perfection.

Now materialism has developed markedly, there's been too much development, it's become inflated, while there's a shortfall as regards mental development, in that there's no love for others. If we could resolve this one problem by just making love for others arise the world would then become the world of Mettraya in the blinking of an eye. Is this right at the end of our noses? Think about it. Am I talking irresponsible nonsense? Consider.

Unfortunately people aren't real, genuine human beings anymore. There's this problem, in that human beings aren't really human, our humanity is lacking, the human world is engaged in getting rid of humanity because we aren't brave enough to practise loving others.

If we could become human beings happy to practise metta there wouldn't be that problem. We might then create the world of Mettraya in the blinking of an eye, hence we say it's right at the end of our noses. But do we want this or not?

Now, the third question: what is its benefit? Loving others, what benefit does it bring? It brings a desired result, that is, we dwell happily, much as we would if we were surrounded by our relatives, or by people who love us just as our own mother did. How good would that be?

The benefit divides into two kinds, that of the individual, and that of the whole, of society at large.

Now, if we practise loving others then we practise the heart of all religions. We become one who feels love for others, our religion delivers, and we get the best thing we could get. Be it Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam, the heart of our religion comes to be in us, we get this benefit.

When metta is continuously practised our selfishness gradually melts away until, one day, there's nothing left, it's all gone, and with that one is, in the religious sense, 'ennobled.'

This is how it works; it's not me making this up, or fooling around: try to do away with selfishness, reduce selfishness to such and such an extent and the defilements will be reduced accordingly, lobha, greed, dosa, aversion, and moha, delusion, will be reduced. Selfishness decreases by so much, the defilements decrease accordingly, so our ability to feel love for others increases as the defilements decrease: selfishness being reduced by so much, the defilements are similarly reduced; the two being related.

Hence simply live feeling love for others and, one day, selfishness will be gone and we'll be Arahant experiencing the fullest feeling of love, just as the Buddha did.

For ordinary people it's difficult to feel love for others, even a noble individual who's yet to attain the Arahant level mightn't love fully. It's only those who've truly put an end to selfishness who are Arahant, who can feel love for other people fully and completely. The most expanded, most wide-ranging love for others is that of a Buddha, because of what they are their kindness is boundless, their metta full and complete.

This is the final Buddhist question: how, or by what method do we develop love for others? We do it using Buddhist methodology, that is, by developing sammaditthi, right understanding, or, more fully, by developing the fourth noble truth called dukkhanirodhagaminipatipada, that is, the 'path.'

Dukkha, samudaya, nirodha, magga; the fourth of these, magga, or dukkhanirodhagaminipatipada, is the path of practice which puts an end to dukkha. The 'path' is generally referred to in the Buddhist scriptures as the 'noble eightfold path' and consists in the aforementioned sammaditthi, right understanding, plus sammasamkappo, right intention; sammavaca, right speech; sammakammanto, right physical activity; samma-ajjivo, right livelihood; sammavayamo, right effort; sammasati, right mindfulness; and sammasamadhi, right concentration, which we, here, understand as being factors of the magga, the path.

Now, can we use this principle to create love for others? I say we can. But we'll need to expand the meaning of sammaditthi, hence, just as not loving others is michaditthi, and is very much a wrong understanding, so loving others now becomes sammaditthi, which is very much a right understanding. We create sammaditthi first and the rest will follow along. Therefore, develop sammaditthi as love for others to the utmost degree, and sammasankappo, right intention, sammavaca, right speech, etc. will follow along in its wake.

In this way we use a Buddhist principle to create something new so that we can solve the problem of evil, that is, of dukkha. We say that the right way to solve our various problems, to quench dukkha, is, as the Buddha said, the noble eightfold path. However, in some suttas when talking about the eightfold path, or dukkhanirodhagaminipatipada, the Buddha did mention two other things - samatha and vipassana. I can still remember reading this: 'What is the path?' and the answer: 'The path is samatha and vipassana.' The Buddha, it seems, taught in this way too. If the path changes form to become samatha and vipassana it means that we need to make use of samadhi and panna. The first, samatha, method requires that we concentrate, we develop samadhi along with metta in order to, eventually, become a comrade in dukkha, in birth, ageing,

sickness, and death. We develop and then project metta all around: the mind being trained to love, that love is then projected out in all directions: to the north, south, east, west, above, below. This is the samatha method: controlling the mind as desired and causing love for others to arise in conjunction with samadhi. The second method is vipassana, this is the 'clear-seeing' of satipanna. We need to comprehend clearly what love for others is, how it is, what its benefit is, etc. until clear-seeing arises to the extent of being vipassana, or panna. If one goes by the vipassana, or panna route then it's not difficult, and will make it possible for us to see what's at the tip of our nose. It's been said that it's hard for anyone to see that, so, develop vipassana and it can be experienced, and more than that can be experienced: if there's panna, knowledge, and vipassana, clear-seeing, then nibbana can be experienced right there.

Hence, develop wisdom so that we can come to see the value of loving others, then expand this metta, this loving mind, using the samatha technique. We'll have samatha and vipassana working in combination, like a pair of horses pulling the car of the mind to its destination – metta, love for others.

Thinking about how one trains the mind so that it can be clear as regards love for others would be a good thing, and how one would have to control it so that love for others arises.

Even now we aren't into loving others: because someone is prettier than us we're jealous, envious, we don't feel love towards them, but that will be changed by the power of wisdom, of vipassana. That we think like that isn't right, isn't correct anyway, we need thought patterns which are the opposite of that, which are right, are proper. Now we meet with small things and feel envious, there's no love in that. This is just too childish, we need to think like an adult, to see in a more profound, broader manner, then we'll put an end to jealousy and envy, we'll understand the benefits of loving others and the mind will gradually incline towards it.

Start practising love of others from today, and, if we've yet to make a start in taking care of the mind in this way, then today means today.

I call this 'loving others.' We've looked at it using Buddhist principles, that is, we've asked: What is it? Where does it come from? What is its purpose? What method do we use to get it? It's to be hoped that you'll remember and make use of this technique. We've talked for some time and in some detail, perhaps you should review what's been said so as not to forget.

This important thing that we tend to overlook has formed the subject of a discourse in this place. The world of Ariya Mettraya is right there at the tip of our collective nose but we tend to overlook it so don't get any benefit from it either.