

SD 64.9

Atta,hita Sutta 2

Dutiya Atta,hita Sutta

The 2nd Discourse on Self-benefit

A 4.97

Ce **Khippa,nisanti Sutta**, the discourse on the quick-witted
(Catukka) Atta,hita Sutta 4, the (fours) 4th discourse on self-benefit

Theme: Personal and social benefits of Dharma learning

Translated and annotated by Piya Tan 2009, ©2026

1 Sutta summary

The **Atta,hita Sutta 2** speaks of 4 kinds of people in terms of self-help and helping others in the following ways:

- (1) one who practises **for his own welfare** but *not* for that of others:
 he listens to Dharma, remembers it, and examines its meaning, but does not teach it to others.
- (2) one who practises **for others' welfare** but *not* for his own:
 he is slow in hearing Dharma, neither remembers Dharma nor examines its meaning,
 but he is a good speaker and effectively instructs others.
- (3) one who practises **neither** for his own welfare nor for others' welfare:
 he is slow in hearing Dharma, neither remembers Dharma nor examines its meaning,
 and he is neither a good speaker nor instructs others.
- (4) one who practises **for his own welfare** and **for others' welfare**:
 he listens to Dharma, remembers it, and examines its meaning, and effectively teaches it to others.

2 The 6 karmic roots**2.1 ROOTS, UNWHOLESOME AND WHOLESOME**2.1.1 The language of morality

2.1.1.1 Early Buddhism speaks of humans as being basically composed of **body and mind**. The body-mind dynamics—the body-mind interaction—comprises **the 3 doors** (*dvāra*) of action. The body comprises the 2 doors, that is, the physical body (action) and speech. The physical body is composed of **the 5 sense-faculties**, namely, *the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body*, that is, the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, respectively.

In an infant, and often in adults, too, these acts of sensing occur involuntarily (*kiriya*) or without intention (*asañcetanika*).¹

¹ **Kiriya** is here both n and adj, “(being) mere action, mere activity (not producing any effect, not involving karma or not produced by karma); Abh 877 (*kriya, citte ca karane ~arā*); Dhs 566 (*yasmim samaye mano, dhātu uppannā hoti -ā neva kusālā nākusālā na ca kamma, vipākā*; DhsA 293, n: *-ā ti karaṇa, mattarā*) = Vbh 182,2; Dhs 577 (*jhānaṃ bhāveti -arā n'eva kusalarā ...*) = Vbh 183,4; Dhs 983 (*ye ca dhammā -ā n'eva kusālā nākusālā...*) ≠ Vbh 107,29; Kvu 421,2 (*upapattesiye pañca-k, khandhe aniruddhe -ā panca, khandhā, uppajjantī ti*); Vism 454,29 (*[viññāṇaṃ] avyākataṃ jāti, bhedato duvidharā vipākāṃ -arā ca*); 456,28 (*-arā pana bhūmi, bhedato ti, vidharā*); 457,18 (*eka, vīsati kusālāni dvā, dasā, kusālāni cha-t, tiṃsa vipākāni visati -arā ti sabbāni pi ekūna, navuti, vinnānāni honti*); PmA 301,23 (*vipākā, bhāvato kiriya, mattā ti ~ā*).

2.1.1.2 The waking moments of humans, other than of babies and those with diminished mental capacity, are filled with voluntary actions, that is, actions of karmic significance, or their karmic fruits. **Karma** (*kamma*) is deliberate action—bodily, verbal and mental—that is done knowingly (*sampajāna*) and intentionally (*cetanā*), and it forms personal habits that attract similar effects leading to the repetition of similar habitual karmic actions, which may be done unknowingly or unconsciously.² In this sense, good begets good, bad begets bad.³

2.1.1.3 While actions [2.1.1.1] done unintentionally are “neutral” (*avyākata*), without any karmic effect, intentional actions (*kamma*) have either wholesome fruits or unwholesome fruits. **Wholesome karma** includes the keeping to the 5 precepts, that is, abstaining from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from falsehood and from intoxication. This is the basis of the Buddhist moral training. By avoiding the unwholesome roots of greed, hatred and delusion, we are able to abstain from breaking the 5 precepts.

Put positively, when we cultivate **love** (*mettā*), we easily suppress *greed and hatred*, the first 2 unwholesome roots. Love, then, is a shorthand for *non-greed and non-hatred*. In addition, it helps to cultivate wisdom to suppress delusion, so that we are not deluded into breaking any of the precepts. A vital strategy for effectively keeping the precepts is to cultivate love and wisdom expressed as understanding and respect for **the 5 values** that underpin the 5 precepts.

We should reflect that just as we love life and fear pain and death, so do all living beings value **life**. To live, we need to work for food, clothing, shelter, and health, and to own these supports, and to enjoy comfort and leisure; we need to **have** these things, and we should not take them when not given. Everyone values their body and privacy; we should respect this **freedom** of others. We should respect all these values and practices because they are rooted in **truth**; and with all these valuable benefits, humans are able to develop their **minds**; thus we should keep the mind calm and clear. This is what we should value and we should inspire others to value, too, for our common good and a wholesome society.

2.1.1.4 The 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*) arise at the preconscious moment, just before we are driven to act, speak or think, rooting each act in *greed, hatred or delusion*. These unwholesome roots are themselves deeply rooted in the unconscious latent tendencies (*anusaya*), that is, **lust** (*kāma, rāgānusaya*), **aversion** (*paṭighānusaya*) and **ignorance** (*avijjānusaya*) respectively.⁴

Psychologically, any of these unwholesome roots will arise through **unwise attention** (*ayoniso manasikāra*):

- When we perceive a mind-object as attractive or pleasant and *like* it, due to our attention or intention to being rooted in **greed**. A mind rooted in greed further feeds the latent tendency of **lust**. The unwholesome action is regarded as tainted with greed.
- When we perceive a mind-object as unattractive or unpleasant and *hate* it, due to the attention or intention being rooted in **hatred**. A mind rooted in hatred further feeds the latent tendency of **aversion**. The unwholesome action is regarded as tainted with hatred.
- When we perceive a mind-object as neither attractive nor unattractive and *ignore* it, due to the attention or intention being rooted in **delusion**. A mind rooted in delusion further feeds the latent tendency of **ignorance**. The unwholesome action is regarded as tainted with delusion.

² On how karma can occur unknowingly or unconsciously, ie, habitually, see **The unconscious mind**, SD 17.8b.

³ On the saying, “as we sow, so we shall reap,” see **Isayo Samuddaka S** (S 903*) + SD 39.2 (2). It should not be taken literally, but that we may experience a similar fruit under similar conditions, but related conditions may mitigate the result, too. See **Loṇa, phala S** (A 3.99), SD 3.5 (1.1); SD 4.16 (2.5); SD 63.12 (3.2.3.3).

⁴ See **Sammā Ditṭhi S** (M 9,65-67), SD 11.14; **Anusaya**, SD 31.3 (8.2).

Further, instead of liking or disliking the mind-object, we **fear** it or feel **insecure** about it. This is often a strong reaction to a sense of lack (not having), a feeling of personal inadequacy, or a need for control, causing one to hoard things, or to cling to something, or to project dominance over others.

A vital understanding here is that although karma is often understood as **conscious** (*cittaka*) action, it actually occurs more often **unconsciously** (*acittaka*). Since karmic drives are very deeply ingrained habits, we often act karmically with unconscious intentions. However, upon careful review and honest reflection, we will notice that much of our *greed or hatred or delusion* has arisen without us being aware of it. In a way, they seem to act on their own, unless we **deliberately** reject that root and apply its anti-thesis, that is, *non-greed, non-hatred or non-delusion*. [2.2]

2.1.1.5 A very powerful reactive drive is the desire for **control over others**. The most powerful and pernicious of such drives is the projection of the **God-delusion**, the claim that one has knowledge of an All-powerful Almighty Creator-God to whom all should submit, seek forgiveness from or believe in. Such a personal, supernatural God is a delusion because it lacks empirical evidence (is not rooted in true reality) and contradicts scientific or natural understanding.

The early Buddhist teaching on **causes and effects** (*hetu, paccaya*) without a perceivable beginning (time has no beginning) rejects any need for a first cause or a God-idea. Scientific reasoning further provides a clear explanation for the complexity of life and the universe, rendering the “God hypothesis” unnecessary.

Richard Dawkins, in his book, *The God Delusion* (2006), argues that religious belief is often harmful, promoting intolerance, violence, and, in his view, presents an immoral, capricious depiction of God. Dawkins proposes that religion is an outdated byproduct of evolution, akin to a “meme”⁵ that persists despite not being the most beneficial strategy for humanity.

Dawkins argues that **a moral and fulfilling life** is entirely possible, even better so, without any need for religious belief, advocating for secular humanism. Early Buddhism, without its later religious accretions, hierarchical dogmas and supernatural beliefs, based merely on **the trainings** in *moral conduct, mental training and insight wisdom*, may be regarded as a secular humanistic system.

2.2 NON-GREED, CHARITY AND RENUNCIATION

2.2.1 Non-greed

2.2.1.1 The opposite of the unwholesome roots are **the wholesome roots** (*kusala, mūla*), that is, non-greed (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*) and non-delusion (*amoha*). These wholesome roots are formulated in negative or apophatic⁶ terms because they are the antitheses of greed, hatred and delusion. Like the 5 precepts—indulging in not killing, not stealing, not committing sexual misconduct, not communicating falsehood and not getting intoxicated—the wholesome roots are said to be removing greed, removing hatred, removing delusion, so that we habitually cultivate *non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion*.

This negative language reminds us of the primacy and deep roots of unwholesomeness. Greed, hatred and delusion have been with us since the earliest days of our evolution. An infant cries in need when it is hungry, cold, uncomfortable or sick; since our mind first evolved, we craved for food, clothing, shelter and health. Since prehistoric times, we had to fend off anyone or anything that threatens what we regard as the supports of our life.

⁵ A **meme** is “an element of a culture that may be considered to be passed on by non-genetic means, esp[ecially] imitation” (OED). See **Memes**, SD 26.3. A meme is similar to **the Borg** or science fiction hive-mind: SD 7.9 (4.5.3.4).

⁶ **Apophatic** (adj), the use of negative language or apophasis (such as when discussing nirvana): SD 40a.1 (6.3).

2.2.1.2 These primordial drives to have and to hold our life's supports are biologically ingrained in us to this day as greed (*taṇhā*), an insatiable thirst for basic means of support, and these means have grown more complicated, and often become ends in themselves; we enjoy collecting them. This is **greed**.

We dislike any hindrance or threat to the sources of our greed. We are willing and driven to resort to any kind of means, strategy, or subterfuge to destroy such hindrance or threat. This is the will to dominate, even to destroy. This is called **hatred**.

We continue to be greedy and hateful even when we have sufficient means of support; often we become more greedy and more hateful even when we have *more* than we need to support our lives. We simply have no idea why but go with the samsaric flow. This is called **delusion**.

2.2.1.3 Our social evolution began when we first paired up and started families, which was possible because we learned to share the supports of life and to take care of one another. We understood the nature and need for **propinquity**, the state of being close to people and things that we need. Being close to one another, we gave what we could and took what we needed; we learned to share the supports of life. This is called non-greed or **giving** (*dāna*), the opposite of greed. Giving makes us whole individually, whole as a family, as tribe, as a community. Giving is wholesome.

As we learned to live together, we noticed the feelings of familiarity that kept us together, strengthened us, comforted us—we learned to be happy and felt good. We enjoyed even greater giving and sharing; and we extended this openness and magnanimity to others; we became cultured by non-hatred or **love**.

As we became more cultured, living together in safe numbers, with giving and love, we began to benefit from more than the totality of what we had or could have. Within its safety and creativity, we were able to pass the culture down so that the culture became more refined and diverse over time. We noticed the ways of the land and the wild, the changes in nature. We learned to read signs from around us, from the skies and the heavens.

We looked at our bodies, we saw bodily differences and changes; we noticed our strength and abilities; we benefitted from work and cooperation; we learned to heal and be healthy; we loved and shared; we celebrated together and yet loved solitude.

Above all, we learned to communicate with **language** and knew things. What we knew made us masters of ourselves so that we became masters of what we survey. This is called **wisdom**.⁷

This was also the beginning of civilization. This, briefly, is a cameo retold in an imaginative and mythical way—in the spirit of the more sophisticated story of cosmic and human evolution told in **the Aggañña Sutta** (D 27).⁸

2.2.2 Giving, charity, renunciation

2.2.2.1 Before we commit any act of body, speech or mind, we should determine that we do not have any intention (*cetanā*) rooted in greed [2.2], in hatred [2.3] or in delusion [2.4]. Thus, we should first ensure that we have **non-greed**, the absence of selfish desire, clinging or grasping. The simplest level of non-greed is **not taking**, that is, *not taking the not-given*, which is the keeping to the 2nd precept.

Giving is the foundational virtue of generosity, which is a primary means for reducing greed and clinging through moral conduct, for overcoming craving and lust through mental cultivation, and for removing ignorance and suffering—by attaining wisdom. Giving is thus the very foundation of the path

⁷ On the wholesome roots, see **Mūla S** (A 3.69,6-10), SD 18.2; **Sammā Ditṭhi S** (M 9,7), SD 11.14; **Mahā Vaccha-gotta S** (M 73,4), SD 27.4.

⁸ D 27/3:80-97 (SD 2.19).

to awakening. When giving is made with a vision of the path, that is, the letting go of attachment to worldliness, it is called **renunciation** (*nekkhamma*) [2.2.2.4].

2.2.2.2 While **giving** is, in practice, the act of freely offering material gifts (*āmisā, dāna* or *vatthu, -dāna*)—especially the 4 basic supports of life, that is, food, clothing, shelter and health—**charity** (*cāga*) includes various forms of immaterial giving. This includes the giving of fearlessness (*abhaya, dāna*), that is, comforting others when they are in mental pain or physical pain, making them feel safe when they are fearful, guiding them when they are doubtful or lost, uplifting them when they are down. A simple but integral part of wholesome giving also involves the gift of one's **time**, which is one's presence at the right time for the happiness and benefit of others in Dharma-spirited fellowship.

The highest form of giving is **the gift of Dharma**, that is, sharing one's Dharma learning and wisdom to comfort and benefit others—"The gift of Dharma surpasses all giving" (*sabba, dānaṃ dhamma, dānaṃ jināti*, Dh 354a).⁹ This includes skillfully guiding people from wrong actions, speech and thinking (that is from wrong views), to understand and practise self-reliance to be emotionally independent, that is, to be happy for oneself and generate happiness wherever one is. [2.2.2.4]

2.2.2.3 In order to practise true giving and charity, it must be done in a Dharma-spirited manner in **3 ways**, that is, one should prepare the giving with love and joy, the giving should be done with love and joy, and one should be filled with love and joy after the giving. This is said to be full and wholesome giving. In principle, the giver should give with a mind of joy, with one's own hand and with respect to the recipient, especially when giving to the sangha.

Then there are **the 3 rightnesses** of giving, that is, the purity of *the gift, of the recipient and of the time*. The rightness of the gift refers to the appropriateness of the gift itself; it should be a gift that is rightfully obtained, allowable and useful for the recipient. The rightness of the recipient refers to the fact that the recipient wholesomely benefits from the giving, or, ideally, that they are virtuous and wise practitioners. The rightness of time is when the recipient is in need of such a gift, or when the giving would benefit the recipient the most.

There is an early Buddhist tradition called **an invitation** (*pavāraṇā*) to ask for a gift. As a rule, monastics are not allowed to ask anything from the laity, but they may ask for any of the 4 supports (food, robes, shelter or health care) from relatives. A lay follower, on the other hand, may extend an invitation to a particular monk or nun or a number of them to ask for any of the 4 supports and other allowable things or services (like provision of transportation). Such invitations are, as a rule, limited by the gift (eg, robes), by the time (during certain times, when sick, or any time) or by location (when in the locality of the giver).¹⁰ In modern Thailand, lay donors sometimes offer the invitation on written or printed slips.¹¹

2.2.2.4 The greatest gift, it is said, is the gift of Dharma [2.2.2.2], that is, teaching the Dharma for the benefit of others so that they gain self-reliance, see the true reality of suffering and gain awakening. However, the ultimate giving for oneself is that of "giving up" of the self, letting go of worldliness, that is, of "renouncing the world."

Renunciation is the physical, mental and spiritual act of detaching oneself from material possessions, social status and obligations, and worldly desires; one then seeks inner peace and wisdom. It is a move-

⁹ **Kim, dada S** (S 1.42), SD 2.9; **Paññā Bala S** (A 9.5,6(1)), SD 2.21; SD 45.3 (2.1.1).

¹⁰ V 1:157,10. See Ariyesako, *The Bhikkhus' Rules: A guide for laypeople*, Kallista, Sanghaloka Forest Hermitage, 1998:53-55 (or 67-72), refs 146-148 (or 164-166), 14 Feb 2026. See also SD 42.16 (4.3(1)) n; SD 46.19 (3.2.4) n.

¹¹ In modern Thailand, a person may offer support by giving a ใบปวารณา (bai.pawaaranaa), a formal written or printed slip, which may read: "I invite you with the 4 requisites amounting to the value of 'x' that has been handed over already to the steward. When you have need of it, please request it from the steward."

ment beyond a self-centred, materialistic life to cultivate spiritual growth, by living a simple and celibate life of training in *moral virtue, meditation and insight wisdom* leading to the path of awakening.

In the case of the Buddha, when still a bodhisattva, he saw **the 4 sights**, that is, of an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a recluse. The first 3 sights are visions of *decay, disease and death*, highlighting the sufferings of the unawakened world. The 4th sight represents the way out of the world of suffering by renouncing it and gaining awakening. This was the path taken by the bodhisattva which brought him **buddhahood**.

2.2.2.5 When we speak of giving, it is an appreciation of the being of others by supplying them with things and means of living a life of comfort, happiness and wisdom. **Renunciation** is the assertion of self-effort in “giving up” the self and what is not ours in the first place, that is, worldliness in the sense of being attached to and limited by our body and mind.

The Alaggadūpama Sutta (M 22), in its section on “not yours” (*na tumhākaṃ*),¹² the Buddha teaches us, the unawakened, on the higher meaning of the training rule against taking the not-given:

Therefore, bhikshus, give up what is not yours.¹³ When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

What is it that is not yours?

Form is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Feeling is not yours. Give them up. When you have given them up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Perception is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Formations are not yours. Give them up. When you have given them up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Consciousness is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.¹⁴ (M 22,40/1:140 f), SD 3.13¹⁵

Especially relevant here is the admonition, “**Feeling is not yours. Give it up.**” If the non-arhat is admonished not to be attached to feelings, surely the quality would be perfected in an arhat.

This teaching is then followed by **the Jeta,vana metaphor** (M 22,41), where the Buddha says that although people keep taking away “grass, sticks, branches and leaves” from Jeta,vana and destroying them, we (even those residing in Jetavana) do not harbour the notion that “People are carrying us off, or burning us, or doing what they like with us.”¹⁶ The meaning of the metaphor is that we lose nothing by letting

¹² *Na tumhākaṃ*. This section [40] forms a sutta of its own—(**Kāya**) **Na Tumha S** (S 12.37/2:64 f). The following 2 sections [40-41]—text and simile—form, in practically identical words, 4 suttas of similar names: the 2 (**Khandha**) **Na Tumha Ss** (S 22.33-34/3:33 f), but in the 2 (**Dhātu**) **Na Tumha Ss** (S 35.101-102/4:81 f) its theme is the 18 elements (6 internal sense-organs, 6 external sense-fields, 6 sense-consciousnesses). In all these 5 suttas, the word *dīgha,rattarū* is omitted in the closing stock phrase.

¹³ Comy: It is the *attachment to or desire for* (*chanda,rāga*) the 5 aggregates, not the aggregates in themselves, that should be given up: they “cannot be torn apart or pulled out.” I have rendered *yaṃ* as “what” (which has a general sense) rather than as “whatever” which connotes that there are certain things that we do “own,” which would go against the teaching of *anattā*.

¹⁴ Comy: Only an aggregate (form, etc) is the basis for the wrong concept of a self, since apart from them there is nothing else to crave for.

¹⁵ See also SD 18.7 (8.3.5 f).

¹⁶ M 22.41/1:141 (SD 3.13).

go of our attachment to the aggregates (that is, the body and mind): indeed, we have more to gain, namely, liberation.

2.2.2.6 On a simple daily level, we can practise moments of renunciation by identifying when we have felt self-centred or have some kind of self-view. Then we should reflect on letting go of such views and notions. We should see such wrong ideas like raindrops falling on a lotus leaf and at once running off the leaf. Such a reflection prepares us to quickly identify any process of selfishness that may arise in us. Since we are unawakened, it is unlikely we will be able to fend off, much less remove, all such thoughts of self. However, we should use such moments for reflection so that our resolve will become stronger and our mind clearer and quicker in freeing itself from selfishness.

A **new year resolution** may also be regarded as a “resolution in renunciation” of what is not helpful for our personal development so that we have less mental baggage and hindrance for a happier life. Our new year resolution in renunciation—or simply **new year renunciation**—may be done in this manner, in the spirit of the 4 noble truths (using short clear sentences easy for us to remember):

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (1) What suffering or its sign have I noticed in me so far? | ... |
| (2) What is likely to be the cause of this suffering? | ... |
| (3) How can I end or delay such suffering from arising? | ... |
| (4) With faith in my self-effort [or in Dharma] I hereby resolve to end | ... |

2.3 NON-HATRED AND LOVE

2.3.1 Non-hatred

2.3.1.1 The 2nd wholesome root is that of **non-hatred**. Since hatred is a root-cause for an unwholesome act—such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, falsehood or intoxication—by rejecting hatred, there is *non-hatred*. This is nipping the bud of the act before it flowers and fruits into bad karma. But there are numerous other buds that are ready to flower and fruit.

In a sense, “non-hatred” removes the immediate arising of hatred, removing it before it can manifest itself as a bad thought, bad speech or bad action (that is, as bad karma). To prevent other arisings of *hatred*, we need to totally displace hatred with **love** (*mettā*). By “displace” here is meant that the idea of hatred is removed from the mind. Love itself becomes the wholesome root for the thought, speech or action, which is then wholesome.

2.3.1.2 For various reasons, it is not always easy for us to show love as taught in the suttas. For example, we are taught to cultivate the thought, “May all beings be well and happy!” But most beings continue to suffer all the same. One way to explain this asseveration¹⁷ or reflection is that we should will for ourselves: “Let me not see anyone suffering.” This thought should generate the feeling of love that moves one to act with compassion for the common good.

An inspiring story is told in **the Magha Vatthu** (DhA 2.7) about how Sakra, as Magha, and his 33 companions, built their “path to heaven” in their past lives together. First, Magha cleared a comfortable space for them to assemble in. When it was cold, he kindled fires to keep them warm. They levelled the road surface, and trimmed overhanging branches for the ease and safety of travellers. Then, they built a safe and strong resthouse at the crossroads for travellers.

¹⁷ Or emphatic declaration.

Of the 4 women in Magha's life—Sujā,¹⁸ Sudhammā, Nandā, and Cittā—the last 3 contributed to his public works. The lady Sudhammā donated the main pillar of the resthouse. The lady Nandā had a lotus-lake for bathing and drinking water constructed. The lady Cittā built a beautiful spacious garden with numerous flower plants and fruit trees. When they were reborn in Tāvātimsa, there arose respectively the Sudhammā Hall (*sudhammā, sabhā*, the celestial moot hall), the Nandā lotus pool (*nandā, pokkhara-ṇī*), and the Cittā flower-park (*citta, latā, vana*).¹⁹

Magha himself was heedful and diligent in his efforts in public works and in the challenges he and his band had to face. He showed remarkable patience and humility; he was public-spirited, determined in good, non-violent, loving, truthful, dedicated, amenable to good advice and wisely practical. The stories of Magha/Sakra also contain some of the most beautiful love stories for the inspiration of the pleasure-loving laymen and laywomen.²⁰

2.3.2 Love

2.3.2.1 Non-hatred positively stated is **love** or lovingkindness (*mettā*), which moves us to accept people as they are, and to act in a wholesome manner towards them. Love can also arise from or with sadness—when we are troubled by others' lack and pain. Love is a positive desire (*chanda*) for the good and happiness of others. It is usually accompanied with joy since we rejoice in the goodness, benefits, attainments and happiness of loved ones.

In spiritual terms, love is an intense and embracing feeling towards others in a wholesome way that we would want for ourself. In practical terms, love is cultivated or expressed as:

- (1) respect for life (by neither killing nor harming another);
- (2) respect for another's property (by not taking the not-given);
- (3) respect for another's person (by not exploiting another sexually);
- (4) respect for truth (by sharing the wholesome truth in a timely manner); and
- (5) respect for the mind (by keeping the mind free from intoxicants).

In other words, we relate to others joyfully in terms of **the 5 values** of the wholesome life.

2.3.2.2 Everyone suffers in some way, maybe not physically but surely mentally, since, being un-awakened, we are still rooted in greed, hatred and delusion. Both humans and animals suffer, too, whether we know it or not. When we care for such people and beings, we feel sad or concerned at their lack and pain. We are then moved to act to remove or lessen that suffering. This is called **ruth** or compassion; that is, love in wholesome action.

Erich Fromm, in his classic work, *The Art of Loving* (1956), defines love not as a fleeting emotion or a passive feeling of "falling" in love, but as an active, conscious art that requires knowledge, effort, and discipline. It is an action, a "giving" rather than a receiving, characterized by an active concern for the life, growth and happiness of the loved. We only have love by giving it.

Love is empowering in that it arises with one's **will** (*chanda*, the will) to accept others as they are. This will, in turn, move us to **actively** or surely express that love (*virīya*, energy). One cultivates this joy of love in both **heart and mind** (*citta*). To love is to be constantly aware of others, to have **an active concern**

¹⁸ Sujā, claiming kinship with Magha (as his maternal cousin), spent her time mostly adorning herself. On Sakra's 4 wives, see SD 54.8 (6.3); on Sujā, see (6.3.5).

¹⁹ See **Magha Vatthu** (DhA 2.7,33-49), SD 54.22.

²⁰ DhA 2.7/1:263-281 (SD 54.22).

for them (*vīmaṃsā*, investigation). These are **the 4 ways of empowering** (*iddhi, pāda*) ourselves and our loved ones.²¹

Thus, love should not be merely a passive transaction of receiving it. By giving love in this way, we are empowering others to show love, too. We are then cultivating a sense of selflessness, a powerful feeling that can help us to better understand the profound nature of **nonself**. We should love one another because of the precious space called life; that this life should be happy and free; a love that is true and wise. For nothing abides beyond the moment; we must cultivate this love this very moment. Then that love is forever.

2.3.2.3 True love or lovingkindness has 5 core qualities: care, responsibility, respect, communication and mindfulness. **Care** is to see meaning in life, that it is filled with imperfections and challenges which give meaning to our life. **Responsibility** is the appropriate and active response towards the needs of others in addressing those challenges and difficulties. **Respect** means to accept others just as they are, and to allow them to grow at their own pace. **Communication** is a constant reaching out and acceptance of that person as a whole being so that we learn and better understand their mind and heart by way of **mindfulness**, which becomes wisdom over time and with right effort.

Love must begin as a conscious mental act of will that moves with joy, is expressed in speech, and is strengthened by active commitment. To love means to face challenges; it includes overcoming feelings of separateness and loneliness in both self and in others.

Love is not love unless we have it. Hence, we must first love ourselves in a wholesome manner—by joyfully forgiving and accepting ourselves just as we are—and showing that love to others, too. Or we could observe how others feel happy when we show them love, and we cultivate that love within ourselves, too.

Showing wholesome love is thus the highest form of giving, a gift of Dharma, because we accept another as they are. It is more than just giving; it is *how* we give. We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving. We give with that positive emotion; we give love, and work to better the lives of others and to create a joyful space for ourselves, the loving and the loved.

2.4 NON-DELUSION AND WISDOM

2.4.1 Non-delusion

2.4.1.1 Non-delusion is what guides our effort and ability in mindfully “seeing” and examining our experiences as arising through *the eye* (lights, colours and forms), *the ear* (sounds and language), *the nose* (smells), *the tongue* (tastes), *the body* (touches and temperature), and the mind (thoughts). We reflect on how this sensing and thinking occurs when the faculty, its object and its consciousness coincide in contact, from which arises feeling and so on.

We then notice how when we perceive the mind-object as being *pleasant* or *attractive*, we feel a liking for it; we then feed our **greed**, rooted in the unconscious inclination of sensual lust.

We then notice how when we perceive the mind-object as being *unpleasant* or *unattractive*, we feel a disliking for it; we then feed our **hatred**, rooted in the unconscious inclination of aversion.

We then learn how when we perceive the mind-object as *neither pleasant nor unpleasant*—we have no memory of a similar experience to relate to—we feel bored or *ignore* it; we then feed our **delusion**, rooted in the unconscious inclination of ignorance.

²¹ See *Cattāro Iddhi, pāda* (S 51), SD 10.3; *Iddhi, pāda Vibhaṅga S* (S 51.20), SD 28.14.

2.4.1.2 Non-delusion is positively stated as **wisdom** (*paññā*), which entails learning and seeing things as they really are. For most people, this vision does not arise at once or suddenly, but needs constant and proper cultivation of seeing true reality, that is, how things really are. Wisdom means learning to read the signs of true reality, clearly understanding their meaning or significance, that is, we lessen suffering, even end it, when we see things as they really are.

The basic training here is to regard all sense-objects, all experiences, as being **impermanent**. Every moment of sense-experience arises and passes away. These moments of change, of becoming other, play on differences, contrasts and interaction of cognitive moments. This can easily be seen right this moment as you read these lines.

Slow down your reading and carefully notice how you read the words (which implies you must know the alphabet and are able to read). Then you form ideas from the phrases, sentences, paragraphs and so on. Then you may find some other people agreeing with you over what you think about what you have read; or they may be those who come to different conclusions. Furthermore, over time you may change your own opinion regarding all this; or perhaps you may better understand beyond what is written here, and arrive at some new insights and joy. This is **wisdom**, positive change and growth through learning.

2.4.2 Wisdom

2.4.2.1 **Wisdom** may be described as “seeing” into the rise and fall of things (physical and mental), and the benefits of this vision. What do we see that runs through all things and all states as they *rise and fall*? When we observe the “**rise**” of the moment, we do not see its “fall”; when we observe the “**fall**” of the moment, we do not see its “rise.” Thus, *rise and fall* may be seen to be like the 1’s and 0’s in what are called “binary digits” or “bits” in computer language. They represent the fundamental, two-state system (on/off or high/low voltage) that forms the basis of all digital technology, known as the binary system or binary code. The “rise and fall” of perception and mental states is thus the basic binary language of insight into true reality.²²

“Rise and fall” also signify causes and their effects respectively (notice the plural); they constitute a process of change, where a number of causes bring about a number of effects, which in turn become causes with new effects, *ad infinitum*. Further, it should be noted that these processes are occurring through the eye even now as we read or hear this passage, our ear may hear something, our nose may smell something, our tongue may taste something, and our body may feel the seat supporting us or feel the ambient temperature. However, we only perceive the sense-experience that we direct our attention to. We will notice this radar-like sweep of our mind or attention even now as we mindfully observe what is going on before our senses. In this case, we choose to focus on seeing (reading) or hearing (the text being read).

2.4.2.2 The state of things and our experiences entail 3 universal characteristics (*ti,lakkhaṇa*).

Firstly, since all that are happening around us and inside us are **processes** of causes and effects (*pac-cayākāra*), they all occur in time, which is change with neither beginning nor end; in other words, time is without beginning or end. The physical manifestations of existence—in terms of *earth, water, fire and wind*—may seem to have a beginning and an ending, but the cycle of rise and fall of events keeps happening with neither perceivable beginning nor ending.

²² A classic geek pun runs: “There are 10 types of people in the world: those who understand binary, and those who don’t.” In the binary number system used by computers, the number 10 actually represents the value 2 ($1 \times 2^1 + 0 \times 2^0 = 2$). By making the punchline “10,” the joke cleverly proves its own point: the people who get it see the number “2,” and others see the number “10.” It’s the ultimate programmers’ double-cross!

This is the reality that is **impermanence**. On account of impermanence—changes and becoming other—we are able to “make sense” of things. We notice changes in things: we give them names relative to one another: sunrise, sunset; hot, cold; here, there; and so on. We know different letters or symbols, how they represent sounds or form words; we give them meanings, and we have language. Similarly, with numbers: we know 1 and 0, something and nothing, and give names to more than 1, as 2, 3, 4 and so on. These are all concepts that arise on account of impermanence and our perception of impermanence.

2.4.2.3 Since we experience impermanence, change and becoming other of all existence, none of these states abide for more than a moment, that is, in the present when we sense or perceive. There is no abiding entity we can hold on to. When we want any such experience to be something (*kiñcana*) (in the case of the eternalist view, *sassata, diṭṭhi*) or we want it or “us” to be nothing (*akiñcana*) (in the case of the annihilationist view), we will find it to be **unsatisfactory**, that is, there is suffering.

We may imagine these interconnections between causes and effects to be permanent or abiding because of our **memory** of the event or process. It is as if we link up the dots of causes and effects, or arising and passing away, and imagine them to be “something,” perhaps as a God-idea or the notion of an immortal Soul. These are but mind-made ideas and views. There is nothing separate between the mind and the body that the mind experiences; there is “no ghost in the machine”;²³ only arising and ending of phenomena.

There is only suffering, no entity suffering. There are verbs in action; adverbs describe how we act or are acted upon; nouns are but memories; adjectives modify our memories. These are the sentences of life.

2.4.2.4 When we carefully try to list **all** that exists and all that we are experiencing (and can experience), we can only speak of **the seen, heard, sensed and known** (*diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññāta*).²⁴ This phrase forms the 5th of the wrong views that are self-centred (that is, in place of the consciousness aggregate), as stated in **the Alagaddūpama Sutta** (M 22), comprising the 6 grounds for wrong views, thus:

Here, bhikshus, an ignorant ordinary person, who has no regard for noble ones²⁵ and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma, who has no regard for the true individuals²⁶ and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma,

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) regards <u>form</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ ²⁷ |
| (2) He regards <u>feeling</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (3) He regards <u>perception</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (4) He regards <u>formations</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (5) He regards what is <u>seen, heard, sensed, and known</u> , ²⁸ found, sought after, mentally pursued , ²⁹ thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |

²³ This term comes from “Descartes’ myth,” in G Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (1949: index); it is used as a metaphor for rejecting the notion that there is “something” other than the body or the mind. The phrase is used differently nowadays by different scholars. See also “Ryle, Gilbert” in *Macmillan Ency of Philosophy*, 2006:580-584 (esp 581). For refs, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_in_the_machine#cite_ref-Ryle_1949_1-0. 17 Feb 2026.

²⁴ See *Diṭṭha suta muta viññāta*, SD 53.5 (2 f); SD 3.13 (5.2).

²⁵ “The noble ones” (*ariya*) clearly refers to those on the path: the arhat, the nonreturner, the once-returner and the streamwinner.

²⁶ “True individuals” (*sappurisa*) here prob refers to morally virtuous and wise individuals who have yet to attain the path. For def, see *Sappurisa S* (M 113), SD 23.7 (3).

²⁷ These are the threefold grasping (*ti, vidha gāha*): see §15 ad loc.

²⁸ SD 3.1.3 (5.2.1.2).

- (6) And this ground for views, namely, ‘The world is the self; after death I³⁰ will be permanent, everlasting, eternal, unchanging in nature, eternally the same;³¹ I will endure for eternity’—this, too, he regards thus, ‘*This is mine; this I am; this is my self.*’
(M 22,15/1:136 f), SD 3.13

2.4.2.5 The Saṃyutta Commentary explains the “seen” formula in this way:³²

<u>the seen</u>	(<i>diṭṭha</i>)	is the visible-form base (<i>rūp’āyatana</i>);
<u>the heard</u>	(<i>suta</i>)	is the sound-base (<i>sadd’āyatana</i>);
<u>the sensed</u>	(<i>muta</i>)	is the objects of the 3 physical bases of the nose-object (smell), the tongue-object (taste) and the body-object (touch), ³³ and
<u>the known</u>	(<i>viññāta</i>)	is the thought-base (or mind-base, <i>dharm’āyatana</i>) ³⁴ and the remaining 6 internal sense-bases (<i>ajjhāṭṭika āyatana</i>).

“The known” is sometimes followed by the phrase, “found, sought after, mentally pursued” (*pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā*).³⁵ The phrase simply qualifies or elaborates “the known.” This refers to the arising of views and how they are consolidated and elaborated:

The ignorant ordinary person regards any or each of the above as “mine; I am this; this is my self.”

The well-taught noble disciple sees all these as “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.”

(M 22,15 f/1:135 f), SD 3.13

2.4.2.6 The 6 sense-spheres and the 5 aggregates

On a basic level, we each comprise **body and mind**. The body is made up of the 5 sense-faculties and with the mind as the 6th sense-faculty, they constitute the 6 internal sense-bases (*ajjh’āyatana*). All the 6 internal sense-bases are incorporated in the 5 aggregates; the 5 sense-faculties make up **form** (*rūpa*); the mind is made up of **feeling** (*vedanā*), **perception** (*saññā*), **formations** (*saṅkhārā*) and **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*). The term “consciousness” is used here in a broad way to reflect special functions of the cognitive components and their relationship.

Hence, there are exceptions to this classification, especially in regard to the 6 external sense-objects (*bahiddh’āyatana*): form, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought.³⁶ The first 5 pairs of bases (*āyatana*)³⁷—that is, eye/form (*cakkhu-rūpa*), ear/sound (*sota-sadda*), nose/smell (*ghāna-gandha*), tongue/taste (*jivhā-rasa*), and body/touch (*kāya-phoṭṭhabba*)—are part of **the form aggregate** (*rūpa-k,khandha*).

The 6th internal base, the mind (*mano*), is part of **the consciousness aggregate** (*viññāṇa-k,khandha*).

²⁹ SD 3.13 (5.2.3).

³⁰ “After death I will be,” *so pecca bhavissāmi*. Comy so = so *aham*.

³¹ “Eternally the same” (*sassati,sama*), a term from Bṛhad Araṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.10 (*sāsvatīḥ samāḥ*) (Nyanapon-ika, *The Discourse on the Snake Simile: Alagaddūpama Sutta* [1962], Kandy, 1974:42 n21).

³² This section is based on **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,25) + SD 3.13 (5.2) which should be studied in full for a better understanding of the above.

³³ SD 3.13 (5.2.2.2).

³⁴ “The mind” (*mano*) or “mind-base” itself, as a sense-faculty, is termed *dharm’āyatana*. Its objects are termed simply as *dharmā*. See SD 33.8 (2.2). On the internal and the external sense-bases, see SD 13.1 (3.7.7).

³⁵ See SD 65.2 (3.2).

³⁶ “External” refers to the state of an object of experience in contrast to the faculty which is said to be “internal.”

³⁷ *Āyatana* is a generic term for each of the 6 internal sense-faculties and the 6 external sense-objects.

The 6th external base(s) (*dharm'āyatana*) or mind-object(s) (*dhamma*) are part of **the 4 mental aggregates** (*nāma-k,khandha*), that is, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*) and refined aspects of the form aggregate (*rūpa-k,khandha*), in particular, the 16 kinds of refined material forms (*sukhuma,rūpa*), for example, the element of space (*ākāsa,dhātu*), femininity, masculinity, lightness, malleability, continuity, decay, and impermanence.³⁸

The exception here is **nirvana** (*nibbāna*), which transcends all the 5 aggregates (*khandha,vinimutta*).³⁹ In simple terms, nirvana is total freedom from all these bases and qualities; we can say that nirvana neither exists nor does not exist, nor both exists and does not exist, nor neither exists nor does not exist. It's like fire that has been extinguished; we cannot really say anything regarding where it has gone.⁴⁰

2.4.2.7 From all the above regarding the sense-spheres and the aggregates, we can say that there are at least 2 ways of classifying knowledge—the *memory* of our experiences and the *usage* of those memories—that is, (1) as the 7 sense-based knowledges or, simply, the 7 bases, and (2) as 5 mind-based knowledges. This breakdown in the kinds of knowledges may be of interest to the specialist or student or modern psychology to conduct research on.

(1) Firstly, **the 7 bases** comprise the 5 internal senses—the *eye-base*, *ear-base*, *nose-base*, *tongue-base*, and *body-base*—and *the thought-base* (or *mind-base*) and *the mind-object base*.⁴¹ The thought-base or mind-base refers to “the mind” as a sense-faculty; “the mind-object base” refers to the mind, that is, the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) behind each of the physical sense-experiences. These 7 bases refer to the rudimentary knowledge that arises through the 6 senses (the 5 sense-faculties and the mind).

(2) Secondly, according to the Abhidhamma, there are 5 kinds of **mind-based knowledge**, which are also called “mind-elements” (*mano,dhātu*),⁴² since they are experienced or known by the mind, as follows:⁴³

(1) **feeling aggregate** (*vedanā,khandha*), that is, feeling as something known by the mind.

The following 4 factors should be understood in the same way:

(2) **perception aggregate** (*saññā,khandha*);

(3) **formations aggregate** (*saṅkhārā,khandha*);

(4) **subtle intangible forms** (*anidassana,appaṭigha,rūpa*), invisible forms found in the mind-object class; simply referred to as “refined form” (*sukhuma,rūpa*), and comprises 16 kinds [2.4.2.6]; and

(5) **the unconditioned element** (*asaṅkhata,dhātu*), that is, knowledge of nirvana.⁴⁴ [2.4.2.6]

³⁸ For the full list, see 60.1e (10.2.2 (4)). Cf **upādāya,rūpa** – (older form of *upādā,rūpa*) derived form(s): (**Upādāna**) **Parivaṭṭa S** (S 22.56,7), SD 3.7; SD 17.13 (3.3.2.2).

³⁹ Vbh 70-72; see also Payutto, *Buddha,dhamma*, 2021:96 (2.9 Appendix 3).

⁴⁰ See **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72,19) SD 6.15.

⁴¹ **Vibhaṅga** defines **the mind-base** (*man'āyatana*) as encompassing *all* classes of consciousness (depending on the sense-faculty they arise from), and the mind-state base (*dharm'āyatana*), as incl the other 3 mental aggregates (feeling, perception, formations), non-sensuous or non-material forms, and even nirvana as an “element” (*nibbāna,dhātu*) (Vbh 70-73). See SD 57.39 Table 2.2; also SD 3.13 (5.2.2).

⁴² Vbh 71 f (VbhA 80 f); Dhs §455/91 (DhsA 263, 29 f), §1418/241; Vism 15.14/483 f. On mind-element, see Table 1.7.4; SD 29.9 (1.2).

⁴³ On the functions of *citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa* in the cognitive process, see Table 12.5 (SD 17.8a).

⁴⁴ See 60.1e (10.2.2): **mano,dhātu**.

2.4.2.8 Thirdly, there is the reality that is **nonself**.

In the **(Arahatta) Māluṅkya,putta Sutta** (S 35.95), the Buddha explains how with meditative insight or wisdom, we will be able to end suffering (that is, with the uprooting of greed, hatred and delusion) by rejecting the self-view, thus:⁴⁵

“When, Māluṅkya,putta, in things to be seen, heard, sensed and known by you,
 in the seen there will only be the seen; *diṭṭha*
 in the heard there will only be the heard; *suta*
 in the sensed there will only be the sensed; *muta*
 in the known there will only be the known, *viññāta*
 then, Māluṅkya,putta, you are ‘not by that.’⁴⁶
 When Māluṅkya,putta, you are ‘not by that,’ then, you will ‘not be therein.’⁴⁷
 When Māluṅkya,putta, you are ‘not therein,’
 then, you will ‘be neither here nor beyond nor between the two.’⁴⁸
 Just this is the ending of suffering.⁴⁹ (S 35.95,13/4:73), SD 5.9

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Atta,hita Sutta 2

The 2nd Discourse on Self-benefit

A 4.97

1 Bhikshus, there are these 4 kinds of persons found in the world.

What are the four?

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| (1) One who is practising | for <u>his own</u> welfare | but not for the welfare of others; ⁵⁰ |
| (2) one who is practising | for the welfare of <u>others</u> | but not for his own welfare; ⁵¹ |
| (3) one who is practising | <u>neither</u> for his own welfare | nor for the welfare of others; ⁵² and |
| (4) one who is practising | <u>both</u> for his own welfare | and for the welfare of others. ⁵³ |

2 (1) And how, bhikshus, is a person **practising for his own welfare but not for the welfare of others?**

Here, a certain person is quick in attending to wholesome teachings,
 is able to retain in mind the teachings he has heard, and
examines the meaning of the teachings he has retained.

⁴⁵ This teaching is also given to the ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriya (**Bāhiya S**, U 1.10/8), SD 33.7. See SD 5.9 (3).

⁴⁶ *Na tena*, ie, one would not be aroused “by that” lust, etc. See SD 5.9 (3.2.2).

⁴⁷ *Na tattha*, ie, one would not be “therein,” ie, in the seen, etc. See 5.9 (3.2.3).

⁴⁸ “Be neither here ... nor in between the two,” *n’ev’idha na hurarī na ubhayam antarena*, meaning that one would not be reborn anywhere. See 5.9 (3.2.4).

⁴⁹ On this enigmatic koan-like teaching, see **The taming of the bull**, SD 8.2 (10).

⁵⁰ *Atta, hitāya paṭipanno no para, hitāya*.

⁵¹ *Para, hitāya paṭipanno no atta, hitāya*.

⁵² *N’ev’atta, hitāya paṭipanno no para, hitāya*.

⁵³ *Atta, hitāya c’eva paṭipanno para, hitāya ca*.

Having understood the meaning and the Dharma, he practises in accordance with the Dharma.
 However, he is not a good speaker with a good delivery;
 he is *not* gifted with speech that is polished, clear, articulate, expressive of the meaning;
 and he does *not* instruct, encourage, inspire, and gladden his fellow monks.
 It is in this way that a person is *practising for his own welfare but not for the welfare of others*.

3 (2) And how is a person practising for the welfare of others but not for his own welfare?

Here, a certain person is *not* quick in attending to wholesome teachings,
 is *unable* to retain in mind the teachings he has heard, and
 does *not* examine the meaning of the teachings he has retained.

Having *no* understanding of the meaning and the Dharma,
 he does *not* practise in accordance with the Dharma.

However, he is a good speaker with a good delivery;
 he is gifted with speech that is polished, clear, articulate, expressive of the meaning;
 and he instructs, encourages, inspires, and gladdens his fellow monks.

It is in this way that a person is *practising for the welfare of others* but not for his own welfare. [98]

4 (3) And how is a person practising neither for his own welfare nor for the welfare of others?

Here, a certain person is not quick in attending to wholesome teachings,
 is unable to retain in mind the teachings he has heard, and
 does not examine the meaning of the teachings he has retained.

Having *no* understanding of the meaning and the Dharma, he does not practise in accordance with the Dharma.

Moreover, he is not a good speaker with a good delivery;
 he is not gifted with speech that is polished, clear, articulate, expressive of the meaning;
 and he does not instruct, encourage, inspire, and gladden his fellow monks.

It is in this way that a person is practising neither for his own welfare *nor* for the welfare of others.

5 (4) And how is a person practising both for his own welfare and for the welfare of others?

Here, a certain person is quick in attending to wholesome teachings,
 is able to retain in mind the teachings he has heard, and
examines the meaning of the teachings he has retained.

Having understood the meaning and the Dharma, he practises in accordance with the Dharma.

Moreover, he is a good speaker with a good delivery;
 he is gifted with speech that is polished, clear, articulate, expressive of the meaning;
 and he instructs, encourages, inspires, and gladdens his fellow monks.

It is in this way that a person is *practising both for his own welfare and for the welfare of others*.

These, bhikshus, are the 4 kinds of persons found in the world.

—evam—

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