

Defilements & The End of Defilements

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on xx June 1986

In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

Today I'm going to speak about 'the defilements and the end of defilements.'

You'll be hearing the word *kilesa* very often tonight. The usual translation for that is 'defilement' or 'defilements,' but I'll be using the Pāli word *kilesa* or the Thai word *gileet* (*gi-leet*).

The reason we're talking about this subject is because all of the various problems that arise in human activities are a problem of the *kilesa*. These *kilesa* are the largest problem that we have and for this reason it is necessary that we talk about them. So tonight we will discuss the *kilesa* and the end of *kilesa*.

As individuals our personal *kilesa* cause *dukkha* for us. Collectively the *kilesa* of all the people in the world cause *dukkha* for everyone and for the world. The collective *kilesa* of different people lead to very many problems in the world. And so this is an important topic or matter which we must study.

The Pāli word *kilesa* literally means 'unclean thing' or 'dirty thing' or 'things that lead to dirtiness, filthiness, uncleanness.' The meaning of *kilesa* is things that take the mind from its original ordinary state or interfere with that state. The *kilesa* are things that disturb and disrupt the mind, that lead to wrongness or incorrectness of the mind and in the things that the mind does.

The *kilesa* in the fact that they . . . in this taking the mind out of its original ordinariness, and in leading the mind into wrongness, and leading to wrong actions and wrong thinking – this causes *dukkha*.

Now most of us don't like dukkha and want to get rid of it, but we don't give much attention to the origin of dukkha – the cause of dukkha – which are the kilesa. And so we are not very successful at eliminating dukkha. So we need to take a good look at the kilesa.

Vipassanā is a way to study and see the kilesa clearly. This is what vipassanā is for. Through the practice of vipassanā, the kilesa – and how they act and the problems they cause – are seen very clearly.

If there are no kilesa causing problems, then there is no need to practice vipassanā. So this has to be understood correctly if one is going to practice any form of vipassanā.

If there is no problem of dukkha, then there is no point in practicing vipassanā. The only reason for practicing vipassanā is to cut off or dig out the root cause of dukkha. So understand this very clearly – the reason for practicing vipassanā.

We should look on a very deep level in order to see the origin of the kilesa, in order to be able to deal with them and thereby eradicate dukkha. So on this level I'd like you to look more deeply until you see the causes or the roots from where the kilesa come from. And these we call the instincts. So look very deeply at the instincts which is where the kilesa arise.

In Pāli there is the word *sanchattayan* [Thai] or *sañjāta-ñāṇa* [??] which we translate 'instinct.' *Sañjāta* means 'self-arisen' or 'born of themselves' and *ñāṇa* means 'knowledge.' So *sanchattayan* is knowledge that is self born or born of itself – meaning this is a kind of knowledge that arise independently of teachers or of any instruction. It is knowledge which arises on its own. So this is what we mean when we use the English word 'instincts' – knowledge that arises on its own.

All living things – all animals and plants – must be accompanied by these instincts. Without the instincts, nothing could maintain itself – nothing could keep itself alive. The instincts are absolutely necessary for all forms of life. This must be understood from the beginning. No one should misunderstand that we are trying to get rid of or eliminate the instincts.

The fundamental instincts, we do not hold these to be good or bad. All they are are types of awareness or sensitivity that are necessary to maintain life. So we don't call them either good or bad.

These basic fundamental instincts – which are neither good nor bad – are only concerned with continuing life. All that this basic level of knowledge is

concerned with – protecting the self. There is a basic instinctual awareness of a self and then these instincts do what must be done to maintain this self as a living thing.

That means that when it is necessary to feed this living thing, the instincts act in a way to bring about feeding. When there is a danger, the instincts have the knowledge necessary to flee from that danger or to cope with it in some way. And these are knowledge that arise naturally within this self – this basic entity.

Even plants, even trees, have a kind of awareness or sensitivity or knowledge of some kind of self – where there is some identification with itself as a separate entity. Then plants, trees do what is necessary to maintain the continuation of this self.

And so the roots spread out in search of nutrients, and the branches and foliage develop in order to capture the sun's rays, and there are escape mechanisms which plants have. And then there is also the ability to reproduce. All of these are natural arising types of knowledge – instincts of the living things, even of plants.

Then the animals have this basic level of knowledge also. There is the knowledge of some kind of self – of a self, of an individual entity – and then the knowledge of how to maintain and protect this self. And this knowledge takes the forms of finding food, shelter, fleeing danger, fighting when it's necessary, and then the reproduction or breeding instinct. All are designed to protect and maintain the self. And none of this knowledge needs to be trained or taught. It naturally is present in this self.

Then we come to people and in people there is this self instinct. There is the 'I,' the 'me.' And so people also have this instinctual, basic fundamental knowledge related to the protection, the maintenance, and the development of this self.

So there is the need for food, and then the looking for food, and then finding and eating the food. Struggles . . . the instinct to struggle or fight, the instinct to flee . . . And then the reproductive instinct which is to continue the self so that the breed or the self doesn't disappear.

So in plants, animals, and people these basic instincts are present and they're fundamentally the same. They have the same meaning. The only difference is they work and function on different levels.

So this basic self instinct that is present in all living things . . . Realize that at this level that we've talked so far it is only just the instinct. It is neither good nor bad. And it is not kilesa nor is it *bodhi* (enlightenment) or a factor leading towards enlightenment. It is neither enlightened nor defiled. It's just basic fundamental knowledge that arises in all living things.

The fundamental meaning of these instincts – this knowledge that arises by itself – is that it's knowledge. It's the instincts have to know. There must be some knowing. There is something that is known. But this doesn't say whether what is known is right or wrong – whether it is correct knowledge or incorrect knowledge. But there's just some kind of knowing.

And so in the instincts there is knowing or knowledge, but we haven't got to the point where we separate it into defiled knowing or enlightened knowing.

In the newborn infant these fundamental instincts are completely present. And so what we need to consider is whether this complete set of instincts that is present in the newborn infant – whether or not they will develop in a defiled way or an enlightened way. The question is: what's going to happen to these things? Where are they going to go once the newborn infant is born?

The newborn infant has no kilesa. There is no defilement in the newborn infant. And there is no knowledge in that infant. All there are is the instincts to know – that is all that's present, the instincts to know. But once it's born, then these instincts to know can develop one way or the other.

Just two or three days after birth the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind – i.e., the sense-organs, the sensory apparatus – of that infant begin to work and function. And as they begin to work, then they will make contact with external sense-objects. And then there begins to be knowledge of these external sense-objects.

Through this contact that arises, then there is feeling about that contact. And then the knowledge – the basic instinct toward knowledge – starts to develop into knowledge of things such as the feelings.

For example probably the first feelings that arise are the infant's feelings towards mother's milk. As the infant is drinking the milk, there arises the pleasant feelings of tasting good, feeling good, deliciousness, whatever.

And from this nice pleasant feeling, the infant has the knowledge of that feeling, and then there arises the wanting for more of that feeling – the desire or craving for more of that feeling. And so this is how in the very young infant

kilesa begins to arise – this ignorant wanting. This is a kind of desire in the positive sense of wanting to get something.

What can also happen is that in the infant there will be certain kinds of experiences or sensory contact from which arise unpleasant feelings – painful or uncomfortable feelings – which . . . And from the knowledge of these feelings there arises the desire to get rid of. So there are the negative desires and this is also kilesa.

There is the kilesa of craving and the kilesa of wanting to get rid of. Then there's also the kilesa of being (a very hard word to translate) undecided or just fence straddling towards whatever the experience is. This is how the fundamental instinct toward knowledge – which is neither good nor bad – can develop in a defiled way, can develop in the way of the kilesa.

Please observe that the way these kilesa started to happen was because there was no knowledge of Dhamma in the infant. At these sensory contacts – because there is no knowing of Dhamma, because there is no right knowledge or wisdom – the infant's mind is influenced by the sense-object. And so these feelings of being satisfied with certain contacts and unsatisfied with other contacts arise under the influence of these sense-objects and the sensory contacts. This is because, rather than there being knowing, there is non-knowing or ignorance.

And so the kilesa arise in the infant because of the lack of knowledge of the way things work. If the infant's mind already understood the way things work, then this process would not be allowed to happen. But because this knowledge of how things are is not yet present, then the pull of sensory objects and the influence of those sense-contacts pull the instincts into this defiled development which gives rise eventually to dukkha. And this all happens because there is unknowing or wrong knowing of the way things are.

Now what we just spoke about is how through unknowing the kilesa develop. On the other hand there is also a different kind of knowledge developing which is knowledge of how to prevent dukkha. And so the infant learns very quickly of ways to lay down and sleep that are not painful. Through experimenting it learns that certain positions are painful and others are not. And so it avoids the painful ones.

And the infant learns that certain kinds of behavior will encourage the mother and parents or whoever is looking after it to take good care of it. Where certain kinds of behavior doesn't encourage being well looked after.

And so in the infant, from the beginning there is also development of right knowledge – knowledge that does not lead to dukkha. However this is not very deep, this kind of knowledge is not yet strong enough to stand up to the wrong knowledge that is also developing. And so this wrong knowledge that leads to dukkha grows and begins to outweigh the right knowledge.

Both kinds of knowledge are being developed side by side, but the unknowing that leads to defilement and dukkha begins to predominate. And as life progresses, there is more and more kilesa. However all this time there is also right knowledge being developed as well.

If we look, we'll see that this evolutionary process which is going on tends towards kilesa because this kind of development is easier. And the evolution in the way of enlightenment or bodhi happens to a lesser degree because it's more difficult. So this evolution in a defiled way happens more often because it happens more easily. And so in the infant there is more development of kilesa than bodhi.

It's an interesting fact that when there is strong desire – when this wanting arises in a strong way through the power of ignorance or the influence of ignorance . . . Once there is the wanting – the desire, the craving – then there follows the thought or feeling that there is some kind of 'I.'

It's interesting that the 'I' who wants arises after the wanting. But because of the strong wanting, then there arises the feeling of an 'I' – that there is an 'I' who desires. And then this feeling develops into the birth of a 'self.'

If you look deeply at this matter, you'll see that this arising of this feeling of some I who desires, that this happens in the mind. It is a mental phenomenon. It has not physical basis. There's no physical reality to it. It only happens in the mind. So the feeling of I and then the birth of a self that happens, this all happens in the mind and there is no true reality to it.

If we understand this, this shows the truth of *anattā* (non-self; selflessness), shows that this 'I' that we all believe in is purely an illusion because it only happens in the mind. It's not really there or anywhere.

So we have to see that whenever ignorant wanting – whenever ignorant craving – arises, that then this feeling of an 'I' follows. Whenever there is ignorant wanting, there is the ignorant wanter – the 'I' that craves. This happens every time – whether in the infant or the developing child, up to now in all of us adults. It works the same way. First there is ignorant wanting, then there is the 'I' who wants. So we need to see this.

So once this process of craving – of ignorant wanting – develops into the ‘I’ that wants, then there is the self. And from the self arises selfishness. And this is where our real problems really begin with this selfishness that arises out of the self. And this selfishness is the true cause of the kilesa.

In the young infant where there was just the basic instincts and there was no attachment and grasping after pleasant feelings, or running away – of trying to avoid – unpleasant feelings, or confusion about uncertain feelings, then there was none of this unwise ignorant wanting arising. And so then there was none of that idea of a self and then the birth of a self.

So this thing . . . These weren’t happening. There was no selfishness. But as this process begins to happen more frequently, then the self is happening more and more often. And then there is more and more selfishness. And once there is selfishness, there is all sorts of defiled activity.

There’s an easy way to recognize the different kinds of kilesa. When there is a satisfying or lovely or pleasant feeling, there arises the kilesa of lust or greed towards that pleasant *vedanā* – that pleasant, lovely, satisfying likeable feeling. When there is an unpleasant, unsatisfying, dislikeable, ugly feeling, there arises the kilesa of hatred or anger.

The first kind of kilesa – greed and lust – is a kind of pulling of these things. It’s trying to grab on and pull these things towards us. The second kind of kilesa – of hatred or ill-will, aversion – is to push those feelings away, push the things away from us. So there are two kinds – the one is pulling toward and the other is pushing away.

Then there is a third kind of kilesa that when the feeling is uncertain, then the mind circles around and around that feeling and wonders ‘maybe there’s something there that I want.’ Or maybe there’s something to get rid of but it’s not sure so the mind just kind of circles round and round wondering what to do with this feeling – whether to grab on to it or whether to try and push it away.

So there are these three kinds. There’s the first kind of *lobha* (greed) and *rāga* (lust) for pleasant, satisfying likeable feelings. And then there is aversion or anger (*dosa*) for the unpleasant dislikeable feelings. And then *moha* (delusion; confusion) about what to do with the uncertain feeling. One is a pulling towards us, one is a pushing away, and one is this circling around trying to figure out what to do.

In these three kinds of kilesa there is equally present clinging or attachment. So there are three kinds of kilesa but they’re all the same as far as having clinging or attachment within them. So in the first kind of . . . there is the

clinging to pull things toward us. In the second there is the clinging of a self trying to get rid of these things. And in the third there is the confused clinging. And so each of these are basically the same as far as that there is clinging or attachment within them even though that there are three different kinds of kilesa.

Don't misunderstand and think that only that the desire to get something is clinging or attachment. That's only one aspect of attachment. Trying to get rid of things – aversion towards things – is also attachment just as much.

So we need to see that attachment is not only trying to get things, but trying to get rid of things is also attachment. And the confusion about what to do with things is also a form of attachment. So all of these are attachment. And to understand attachment you need to see it working in different ways – not just in the one form of greed. And see that attachment arises with aversion and delusion also.

It's important to understand the word *upādāna* completely. This Pāli word is usually translated 'attachment' or 'clinging.' And when we hear attachment we just think of the trying to get and the clinging – the grasping – at things. And so we may tend to think only in terms of greed and lust – the wanting of things, the claiming them as our own. And so often we only see this form of attachment.

But we have to see that in aversion there is also the attachment of 'this is *my* enemy. *I* want to destroy it. *I* want to get rid of it.' So that is also a kind of attachment. Not just wanting to have something and claiming it as our own, but claiming that something is other than ours or undesirable for me or an enemy or dangerous or whatever. That is also a kind of attachment.

And then there's also this third kind that arises with *moha* (delusion). It's the attachment of not being able to properly deal with something because there is confusion. There is neither the attachment of claiming it for one's own or of trying to destroy it because it's an enemy. But there's just the kind of hanging around it – following it – unable to go either way. But still being attached to it in the confusion.

So to understand attachment properly, it has to be seen in these three different ways. And this makes the study of attachment and Dhamma much easier to see it completely.

Now let's see how it is that attachment causes dukkha.

If the hand grabs on to something and holds it, this is heavy for the hand and the hand gets tired. So there is dukkha for the hand. It is physical dukkha. So there is a heavy hand. This is when the hand grabs onto something.

When the mind attaches or grabs or clings to something, then that is heavy for the mind. So it's a heavy mind. And that is dukkha.

So on the one hand there's the physical heavy hand which is dukkha. And for the mind there is the mental dukkha of when the mind grabs onto something and has that weight or burden. With possessions, fame, our reputation, all of these, as soon as mind goes and attaches to them, they're instantly heavy – they're instantly burdensome for the mind.

And so even the body – if it's attached to – becomes a burden. Or anything that we own – as soon as we attach to it – it becomes a burden. And even the self – this idea of a self, that instinctual idea of a self that is originally neutral – as soon as the mind attaches to that, then that becomes a burden. So even the instincts can become burdensome when there is attachment to these things.

So every time the mind grabs onto something, then there is heaviness which is dukkha.

So whether it's a hand grabbing onto something or the mind grabbing onto something – whenever there is grabbing, claspings, clinging, or attachment – there is heaviness. And heaviness is always dukkha.

We can see that some of the time there is attachment to things that we oughtn't attach to – that there's no reason for clinging to them. So this is completely ignorant attachment.

And a good example of this is birth, old age, illness, and death. There's no reason to go and attach to these things. They're just natural processes which arise. So they just happen.

But when the ignorant mind goes and attaches to them as 'I' or 'mine' – as my birth, my old age, my illness, and my death – then there is heaviness. These things become burdens for the mind, though there's no need for them to be burdens. But when the mind grabs on they become burdens. And so there is this useless dukkha – dukkha that serves no purpose whatsoever – just because there is ignorance, ignorant clinging onto things where there is no necessity to do that.

Those original neutral instincts in the infant have no dukkha. They don't cause dukkha nor lead to dukkha. But as soon as there are the desires arising towards feelings – the lust or greed toward some kinds of feelings, aversion and

anger/hatred towards others, or confusion and ignorance, whatever these kilesa that arise towards the feeling – this is where dukkha begins through these kilesa. The kilesa are heavy. They're burdens for the mind and so they cause dukkha in this way.

The kilesa – greed, lust, hatred, anger, ignorance, delusion – these are fires. These burn the mind. And so they are dukkha in this way. And also these kilesa – lust, aversion, and delusion – they bind or tie the mind. They wrap up the mind and are dukkha in this way also.

So the kilesa are dukkha in that they are burdens for the mind. Because of their heaviness they're weights upon the mind. They're fires that burn and singe the mind. And then they tie up – they bind up – the mind and destroy its freedom. And so the kilesa are dukkha in these three ways.

When we have the question 'What causes dukkha?' we can give three answers. What is the cause of dukkha? If we take the answer that is closest to dukkha, we can say that attachment causes dukkha. We've just explained how when the mind grabs on – clutches, clings – to something in these three different ways, then there's heaviness. There is fire. There is a binding up of the mind. And that's dukkha. So the closest response or answer is attachment, *upādāna*, causes dukkha.

Or we can be . . . a cause that's just a little bit farther away and see that desire – ignorant want, craving – is what causes dukkha. It's because of this craving – of wanting to get, wanting to get rid of, or wanting to figure out whether to grab at or get rid of, these three kinds of wanting – which give rise to the attachment of the 'I,' the one who wants.

These three kinds of craving which give rise to attachment are also causes of dukkha. So we can see that ignorant desire – ignorant want – causes dukkha.

Or we can take this other one, where the whole process begins – which is not knowing – and we can say that's the cause of dukkha. This is just as true as the other two causes.

That infant that started grabbing after those pleasant feelings and running away from those unpleasant feelings – that happened because of not knowing or because of ignorance. And so we can see that ignorance is the cause of dukkha.

We've got these three causes. All of them lead to dukkha. In this process that begins with ignorance and ends with dukkha, attachment is the closest to the arising of dukkha. Desire is just a little bit farther away. And ignorance is

there at the beginning. All three are equally valid answers to the question, ‘What causes dukkha?’

To understand this is to have a very full understanding of the cause of dukkha instead of just hanging on to one of these causes. See that we can say that all three of these things cause dukkha.

Now we’ve talked about kilesa enough. We’ve said what we need to say about it. So next we can go on and talk about the end of kilesa.

So in that infant – because of not knowing – there was ignorant want and then there was attachment and then it ends in dukkha. And as this process happens over and over, and the dukkha keeps arising and piling up for the infant and the infant grows into a child and this child keeps experiencing dukkha because of ignorance, craving and then attachment, boom there’s dukkha and dukkha and dukkha over and over.

And as the child experiences this dukkha and learns about dukkha and begins to see it, then it begins to realize ‘I can’t take it anymore. I can’t stand this dukkha. I can’t put up with it. It’s too much.’ And when there is this realization that all this dukkha which keeps happening, that it’s too much – it’s unbearable when it’s really seen on this level. Then there arises the belief and the faith that there’s got to be a way out. There just has to be a way out from this dukkha.

So as the dukkha piles up and it finally begins to be seen clearly, there is the realization that it is too much. And then the child – or maybe the teenager or adult, whatever – begins to believe there’s a way out. And then once there arises the belief – the faith – that there is a way out from dukkha, then that mind begins to look for the way out. It begins to experiment – it begins to struggle – to find a way out from this dukkha which has been piling up.

So that child begins its study with the study of dukkha. It studies dukkha more and more until it sees the cause of dukkha. So the child sees that attachment (*upādāna*) causes dukkha, sees that craving or ignorant desire (*taṇhā*) causes dukkha, and sees that *avijjā* (not-knowing; ignorance) causes dukkha.

And then when the child sees these causes of dukkha, it realizes the way to be free of dukkha is to get rid of these – to destroy these causes of dukkha. And so then the child continues to study in search of a way to destroy these causes of dukkha. And through this deeper and deeper study into dukkha and its causes, there comes the understanding of the Wheel of Life, of this process beginning with ignorance that leads to dukkha.

And as this is understood . . . or we can also say . . . Through the understanding of *idappaccayatā* – the law of *because this is, this is; because this becomes, this becomes; because this goes out, this goes out* . . . When the Wheel of Life and the law of *idappaccayatā* are understood, then there arises the knowledge: okay, there was dukkha and then the causes of dukkha, and then this knowledge of a way out of or a way of ending dukkha – a way of destroying the causes – this is by seeing the Wheel of Life and finding a way to stop . . . to keep that wheel from spinning.

And so there arises this knowledge. And then there is the practice of applying that knowledge to stop the Wheel of Life from spinning. And this is to stop those ignorant contacts that contact when there is the contact between sense-organ, sense-object, and sense-consciousness. When those three come together there is contact.

Now in the infant where there is no wisdom or knowledge at that contact, that contact grew into feeling and then craving, attachment and dukkha. But now through the study of all these processes of dukkha – its causes, its end – and the Wheel of Life, then it's seen that if there is wisdom at that contact – if there is knowledge rather than not knowing at that contact – then the spinning of this wheel can be stopped. And this is the way to end dukkha.

And so the practice begins of bringing knowledge to every contact. Every time there is sense contact or sense experience, knowledge is brought to that. This is the way to stop dukkha. This is the practice that ends dukkha.

And then when there is this practice, then that child becomes Buddha – becomes one more Buddha. There is Buddha when there is this understanding and that understanding is practiced. When dukkha is stopped, there is Buddha.

We may not be as clever or skillful or talented as that child, but we're still fortunate in that we've had the opportunity to come across the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha has taught this process of the Wheel of Life which the Buddha himself called *paṭicca-samuppāda*.

He talked about *paṭicca-samuppāda* in two ways. There is *paṭicca-samuppāda* in the way that leads to dukkha. Ignorance causes this . . . all the way up to dukkha. There's also *paṭicca-samuppāda* which ends dukkha which is through the non-arising of ignorance. This doesn't arise and this doesn't arise and this doesn't arise. Desire doesn't arise. Attachment doesn't arise. Dukkha doesn't arise.

So there's the two kinds of the Wheel of Life or . . . you were . . . This *paṭicca-samuppāda* that causes *dukkha* was called the Wheel of Life. There's also a counterpart to the Wheel of Life where there is no *dukkha*.

So the Buddha has taught this. And we've been fortunate enough to come across this teaching and can use it for our study of life, and for uncovering the way things work, and then for practicing or living life in a way that is in line with this truth of how things work.

So we may not be as sharp and clever as that child that was able to figure it out on its own but we can still take these teachings and – in our own lives – learn how to extinguish *dukkha*.

The *paṭicca-samuppāda* (all these various links that lead to *dukkha*) or *idappaccayatā* (the law of: *because this is, this is*) – they're the same thing.

Now we can talk about these on the theoretical level and go into these explanations forever. We can just keep doing it and it will never end. But when we bring it to the level of practice – and are talking and thinking about practice, which is the place where we really ought to be – then all these teachings come to one thing. And what they come to is 'don't be stupid in the moment of contact.' That's all. Just don't be stupid when there is this sensory-contact.

To make that a bit clearer, what we meant when we said 'don't be stupid in the moment of contact,' to explain this a bit . . . When the internal sense apparatus comes into contact or comes into some kind of relationship with an external object – for example, when the eye comes into contact with a form – then there arises eye consciousness, the basic mental component necessary for sense experience.

So there is the inner sense space, the external sense-object, coming together. Then eye consciousness arises. The coming together or the meeting of these three things we call *phassa* (p-h-a-s-s-a) which is usually translated 'contact.' So when we say 'the moment of contact,' we mean that *phassa* – the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object, and sense consciousness, depending on which of the sense doors is appropriate . . . So there is that contact.

If there is wisdom or knowledge at that contact, everything's okay. But if there isn't wisdom or knowledge, then there is ignorance. There's either wisdom or ignorance. If there's ignorance, then the process of conditioning that leads to *dukkha* will just go on its way and there will be *dukkha*. But if that contact is governed by wisdom – there is wisdom there to keep it under control, to keep it in line – then there is no *dukkha*.

So this is what we meant by saying ‘don’t be stupid at the moment of contact.’

Now the way to not be stupid in the moment of contact and the ability to not be stupid, can be developed through *vipassanā*, through clear-seeing – in particular, through the development of the practice of mindfulness of breathing. This is because mindfulness of breathing develops the mental skills and abilities which allow one to not be stupid at that moment of contact.

These are . . . that through the training of mindfulness, whenever there is a contact, mindfulness is there. Mindfulness is with the contact. And then not only has mindfulness been developed, but wisdom has also been developed.

So there is mindfulness at the contact and then it can draw on the wisdom which has been developed and bring wisdom to that contact. So now we have contact that is both mindful and wise.

Now the wisdom that has been stored up is incredibly large. But this is just one specific contact. And so only wisdom that is specific to that contact need be applied. And so of the wisdom which has been developed, a small portion of it is used and applied in this very specific instance. And that we call *sampajañña* (‘wisdom in action’).

Because of mindfulness, wisdom is drawn upon and applied as *sampajañña*, wisdom in action. And then if this application of wisdom doesn’t have enough energy, strength, or power, then *samādhi* – which we’re also developing through mindfulness of breathing – that *samādhi* provides the necessary energy or power or strength to allow the wisdom to do its job.

So these four things – *sati* (mindfulness), *paññā* (wisdom), *sampajañña* (wisdom in action), and *samādhi* – are developed through the practice of mindfulness of breathing. And then through these four things – these four abilities of the mind – these skills are brought into play at each sense-contact. And that’s how we can be not stupid at the moment of contact.

So when there is wise contact through the working of these four *dhammas* – these four things – then there’s no way that *dukkha* can arise. Because when there is wisdom at the moment of contact, then there doesn’t arise the ignorant feelings of not liking this, or of liking that, or of being confused.

And when there is no ignorant feeling, then there is no greed for this kind of feeling – for pleasant feeling – or aversion towards unpleasant feeling. Then no attachment arises. And when there’s no attachment, there’s no way that *dukkha* can arise.

So by being wise at that moment of contact, all the causes of dukkha are eliminated. And so there's no dukkha. This is how to practice in a way that ends dukkha.

If you understand this, then you understand the heart of Buddhism. This is what it's all about – ending dukkha, stopping the arising of the causes of dukkha. And this is how it's done. This is the heart of Buddhism both in theory and in practice.

If we can practice like this at every contact – at every moment of contact – then there's no way that the kilesa will arise. So this is – when we said we would talk about 'the end of kilesa' – this is it. By being wise through the application of mindfulness, wisdom, wisdom in action, using the strength of samādhi, then all these contacts will be governed by wisdom. And then the kilesa have no way of arising. So this is the end of kilesa by the application and practice of this knowledge.

The fruits of vipassanā are that the kilesa end. The fruits of vipassanā are that sati, wisdom, wisdom in action, and samādhi are sufficiently developed – are developed to a high enough level – that they can govern, that they can oversee, control, master, the moments of contact.

And when they are able to control that contact so that it is wise rather than ignorant, then there's no way that the kilesa can arise. And so the fruit of vipassanā is the development of these four factors which in turn provides the fruit of the end of kilesa.

So we've spoken about the kilesa and the end of kilesa. And we've used up enough time in doing so. And we don't want to go over too much like we did the other night. So this is a good time to end for tonight's talk.

We will speak one more time about some secrets about the kilesa – some details and secrets about them. So in two more nights you'll hear about those secrets. But for tonight, this is enough.

Thank you for coming and goodnight.

• • • • •

Transcribed by Arthur Brown in Feb. 2016

Audio file: 860699 (2) BDB_Defilements & the End of Defilements [translation].mp3

© Liberation Park, 2016

