Subliminal Inclinations, Defilements and Hindrances

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 55:00

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-enlightened one.

This evening I thought to try and answer one of the things that we touched upon yesterday: how does *vipa ssanā* work, or what is it that vipassanā does to help us to get rid of our unwholesome conditioning? In other words, what's its therapy at a mental level?

There are three ways in which the Buddha categorises these unfortunate conditionings. The first he calls the *anusaya*, which is translated as proclivities. They're basically inclinations or tendencies. The next one is the *kilesa*, which is translated as defilements. And the third one is the five hindrances that we deal with when we're meditating. So they're just ways of looking at the same problem, although they have different accents.

When he's talking about *anusaya*, these tendencies, I think it gets very close to our idea of things being repressed or suppressed. Just as in our understanding we ignore, we don't want to see certain parts of ourselves - painful parts, fears, griefs, all that sort of stuff. And we push it out of consciousness, turn away from it, just ignore it. Sometimes we keep it down with fear, not wanting to go there, and aversion - we just don't like being in that state. Those things that are suppressed like that, I think equate to the word *anu saya*, these inclinations or tendencies.

So they're there within the system, and there's no way of knowing what's in the system until it manifests, until something triggers, until the button's pressed and then you realise, "Oh, I've got that, have I?" This word *anusaya*, as I understand it, was later categorised into seven types. But in the actual discourses, the Buddha uses it quite loosely as meaning the tendencies, hidden tendencies, things that we're not aware of at all. And as you know, sometimes we're not aware of characteristics, but other people are. And you wonder why everybody's crossing the street when you're coming down.

These proclivities became categorised - it does actually say it's in there. It comes from the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the long discourses. So I don't know when that categorisation came, but there's a feeling sometimes that *an usaya* just means tendencies, your unwholesome tendencies. I don't think any of them will come as a

surprise.

The first one is sensuous greed. So it's greed for the pleasures that the sense bases give us. That's pretty straightforward - indulgence, greed. So that's always there as a potential. That's the point - it's always there as a potential.

The next one is grudge, which you could put down to aversion really, but holding on to something, a grudge. That's what it's translated as.

The other three are more to do with mental states, the way we think about things rather than feel about things. Speculative opinions - holding on to views and opinions. "I'm right, everybody else is wrong." It's that sort of thing.

The other one is sceptical doubt, and we'll come to that in more detail when we do the hindrances. And just very quickly, that's not the same as questioning something, wondering whether something's right or wrong. That's the sort of mind the Buddha would have us develop, actually. That makes us investigate. What sceptical doubt does is it stops you from investigating, stops you from even going near it, because well, you don't believe it. It's a lot of rubbish.

I was once leading a retreat, and somebody was a biology student, and he'd come to the very firm view that there was only the body - that emotions, thoughts, consciousness and all that were simply effects of the brain, neurons and stuff like that. And as I began teaching, and one of the teachings, of course, is to separate the body and mind, with the suggestion that there's even another quality that we refer to as *Nibb āna*. He couldn't hack it. He'd come to meditate, which I think what he meant was to cool out, chill out, calm. And so that was it. And I saw him again. He left. That was after a day or two. So I thought, well, that's the way it is. Wrong speculative opinions, sceptical doubt.

And this conceit. So the conceit is normally split into three types. "I am better than you." That's what normally people think of as conceit. But the obverse is true - "I'm worse than you." Even that's a conceit. It might feel good about that. "I am worthless." It's a sort of downing oneself, isn't it? But it's to do with comparing, constantly comparing who we are.

And the other one is more subtle: "I'm equal to you." Now, we're only equal to people who think like us. So it's a sort of subtle conceit. Because I have you as an equal to me, it means that all the people who aren't equal to us must be either better than us or worse. It's just a group identity. And that happens all the time, doesn't it? That's why people join groups, religious groups, political groups, and they say, "We've got it right, everybody else got it wrong." So that's the conceit business.

The next one is this continuing, this craving for continued existence. In other words, we want to keep living. We don't want to die. It's as simple as that. We want to just keep going and going. And that's, of course, a very deep desire within us. That's a real obsessive thing. As you know, when illness, any serious illness approaches, or a hint of death, even somebody we know can put the fear of God in us. Somebody

who died and you think, "All right," especially when they're your age group, or your age - that's even worse. And so you get that craving, the desire for continued existence.

And the final one is the usual basis upon which all this is built on. It's ignorance. This word *avidyā* is a bit strange because it literally means not knowing. Not knowing. It's not really ignorance in the sense of "you should have known" or "you're stupid." It's a very neutral state. I did find a word actually which translates it rather well: nescience. But nobody knows it. And I didn't know it until I found it in the Oxford English Dictionary. So there was no point in going around calling it nescience. Everybody else said, "What's that?" And I said, "Well, it's a sort of ignorance." So what's the point?

Anyway, these are listed, the seven. So you see there, there's something to do with attitude - the greed and the hatred. It's the usual split, greed and aversion. It's just put slightly different. There are three to do with the way we think, which rebounds back onto this final one, ignorance. The wrong views, the sceptical doubt, and the conceit. The sceptical doubt is also based on a fear. Most of these will be based on some sort of attitude, but you can see that they're more mental attitudes than anything else. And the craving for continued existence is a projection of craving really, just another form of craving. The Buddha in the Four Noble Truths talks of three cravings: the sensual desire, the craving for existence, continued existence, and the craving for non-existence.

That sometimes puzzles people, but suicide is craving for non-existence, you see. And in our own little way, every time we use sleep to get rid of a certain down feeling or go for a sleep or something, that is also a form of getting rid of yourself. And again, we'll come to that when we come to the five hindrances.

The reason I mention this is to let you know that in the Buddhist teaching there's also these potentials that lie within the mind which to me is akin to something which is suppressed or repressed or something like that. But the Buddhist teaching always has an ethical bias, whereas our modern way of thinking of it is more like diseases, mental dis-eases, mental health. So in a sense it's more neutral.

But the Buddha would really bring us back down to the fact that a lot of our problems are created by unwholesome decisions. But you can't say all of them are. Fear, you know, if somebody frightens you a great deal when you're a child, you can't really call that an ethical thing. But later on, when you become aware of your fear, when you become more self-reflexive from about the age of 16 or 18 onwards, then in a sense you have to take responsibility for it and do something about it. And in that sense it becomes an ethical problem - ethical in the widest sense of that term, not to be confused with evil. So for instance, an attachment that a mother has for the child, a child has for the mother, you can't call that evil, but the attachment is actually causing problems, especially when it's confused with love.

So when these begin to rise into consciousness, then there is this other category which is called the *kilesa*. And when you read Eastern writers, I'm thinking especially somebody like Mahāboowa, he'll use things like "kill the *kilesa*." Really sort of heavy. But I'm not so sure that's a skilful way for us anyway, urging people to kill the *kilesa*. And these are defilements.

So there are ten of these. And again, you won't be surprised by any of them. And some of them, of course, mirror these underlying tendencies. The first one is greed and the second one hatred. So you've always got that split. And the third one is delusion.

Now, this not knowing - and we're talking about consciousness here, we're talking about that which knows. Unfortunately, the word consciousness these days is getting really confused because they've decided to study it. Before it was just meant "to know," but now they... To me, when I read some of the writers, they seem to confuse it with the mind in terms of content. But in the Buddha's teaching, it's just a knowing, just an act of cognition, which really is a discriminative consciousness. It's being able to tell this from that. That's that.

When we talk about the five aggregates, which some of you may know, the body, perceptions, feelings, all our emotions and thought patterns, and consciousness. This consciousness at the end of the line is that part of us which is able to discriminate, to know the difference, to discern, and it's part of the intellect.

So that's deluded, you see. There's a delusion at a deeper level which we call this not knowing, and that's referring to this real deeper intelligence, this intuitive intelligence which we are contacting when we do vipassanā, when you become the observer and thought has stopped. So that there's something about that intelligence which sees clearly, sees directly, doesn't have to go through thought or anything like that. So there's something about the way it's looking which isn't quite right, and what it forms is a fundamental delusion.

And that fundamental delusion is to believe we are this body and mind. In other words, humans. It's a big delusion. Conventionally speaking, of course, we are human. But when we look deeper and you try and define what a human being is, you don't come up with much. Or you come up with little bits and pieces that are tacked on to each other and that always splits into a relationship. So we're seeking happiness. So where we see happiness we greed for it, where we see unhappiness we try to get rid of it, annihilate it. So there's always this basic split that we're working with.

And then if you put it the other way around, there's conceit, speculative views and sceptical doubt, depending how you want to list them. So that's the way it manifests in our thought patterns - conceit, thinking I'm right, nobody else is wrong, and sceptical doubt.

When people approached the Buddha and asked him questions such as, "What's your understanding of *ka mma*?" He was sort of clever enough to ask them, "Well, what do you understand by it?" Sort of throw the question back at them. And of course, they'd be very happy to tell him what they thought. And then, as they would explain what they thought, he would then point out to them some wrong thinking, some wrong understanding, you see. And it was only when they were able to drop their view that their minds were malleable and easy to receive, and that's when he would offer them his teaching.

It's like if you went to the Buddha and said, "What do you think of *kamma*?" He'd say, "Well, this is what I

think," and he'd sort of tap you on the nose with all his thoughts. So he's very clever to, first of all, ask the person and sort of play on their conceit, really. "I'm right, you're wrong." And then to undermine their position by showing its illogicality or the fact it doesn't work or something. And then when they were just ripe, he'd hit them with the Four Noble Truths.

Didn't work all the time. Some went away clicking their tongues. There's a fellow called, he's called Dantapāda, we described him. He's "stick in hand." And he says, "What do you teach?" And the Buddha gives him a cryptic reply, I can't remember. And he goes away clicking his tongue. So he obviously didn't particularly like that.

The next are more to do with what we come across in the five hindrances: mental torpor and restlessness. Mental torpor and restlessness, and we'll come to that in a bit.

Then there's two things which are rather interesting because we tend not to think quite this way: shamelessness and lack of moral dread or unconscientiousness. So in other words, a big defilement would be not to have shame or dread of consequences, which we could just say guilt for that, although guilt has other meanings.

Generally speaking one would talk about shame and guilt as being unwholesome things people shouldn't have, and a lot of therapy books seem to say that all our problems are because of the shame that was poured upon us when we were children and stuff like that. Now I'm not saying that there isn't neurotic guilt and shame, shame that really is just perhaps inbred from childhood and what not, but in the Buddha's teaching shame and dread are actually guardians. Because when we do something which is unwholesome, we're letting the side down, we're letting ourselves down.

And that letting ourselves down, that loss of self-esteem, especially in other people's eyes, is what we call shame. And it's not a very pleasant feeling. And a more lesser intense feeling, although it need not be, is embarrassment.

I always like to tell the story about Sir Walter Raleigh. He was at the court of Queen Elizabeth. And presumably as he was bowing, he unfortunately let off a rather loud fart. Do you know this? And he was so embarrassed, can you imagine, to the queen, that he did not return to court for a year. And when he did, the queen, Elizabeth, greeted him as, "We welcome you to our court. We're glad to see you, Sir Walter. We have forgot the fart." I think that would be brilliant.

So these sorts of embarrassments can be almost as embarrassing as being caught shoplifting or something which is actually unwholesome, a social gaffe. So I'm not so sure that the Buddha is referring to that sort of thing, but he's definitely referring to things which are unwholesome.

And the lack of moral dread, which we can loosely call guilt, is that if you don't see that there's going to be consequences to unwholesome actions, then of course, why would you not do them?

Once I was at the Goenka retreat in India, his big place there, Dhamma Giri. And after the retreat, I was sitting on the grass and this man sort of joined me. And I just said to him, "What work do you do?" He said, "Well, I'm a theologian." Well, I haven't met a theologian before. So I said, he's a Catholic theologian. It's amazing, isn't it? A theologian. So I said to him, I asked him, "What do you think, in terms of Buddhist teaching, what about God and evil and sending to eternal hell and things?" And he was of the opinion that no matter what harm you did, once you saw the beatific vision, once you actually were in the presence of God, God's compassion would forgive everything. Which is a beautiful idea.

But it occurred to me afterwards - I didn't say this at the time - but it occurred to me: why would anybody stop doing evil if you believe that?

You know, you mess everybody up, make your million, kick everybody in the teeth, and then God says, all right, you know what, you come in here and stay forever. So I think he was probably a little bit confused about it. But that sort of person who doesn't have any dread of consequences, or any shame, moves towards criminality and at worst it can be a sign of mental illness.

It's a funny thing about paranoia. You hate the person—this is, I understand it, you'll have to check it out—you hate the person and you project your hatred onto them. Seeing their hatred for you, which they might not have, you're full of fear and therefore you have to kill the person who hates you. It's a sort of peculiar thing that happens. Very strange.

So these two things the Buddha actually calls guardians of society. Because when we actually feel shameful about what we've done, or dread the consequences, then the next time that temptation comes up, they come up and you say, well, I don't want to go down that road again.

So one of the exercises that I say to people is, you know, when you're eating and you've taken too much food, there you've got a moral dilemma. Are you going to throw it away and waste food, or are you going to eat it and do your body harm? So my normal advice in a circumstance like that is to eat it and to know you're doing your body harm. And then when you come to the next load of food—I don't want to harm myself. It sometimes works.

So there's your two things which are, I think, of interest to it—actually calling shame and dread guardians of society. Interesting.

So if I just read through those again then you can compare it and then we can actually see how we deal with things in a meditation. So you've got these proclivities, these inclinations—greed and grudge hatred, delusions, greed and hatred, speculative opinions, skeptical doubts, conceit. So here it's turned around—conceit, speculative views and skeptical doubt. And then you have this craving for continued existence which in a sense produces everything else, that craving, and there's the ignorance, conceit. On this side you have much the same. Added to that is the mental torpor, restlessness, shamelessness, lack of moral dread. And the ignorance in the *anusaya* as a potential manifests—the ignorance in the *anusaya* as

a proclivity manifests in the *kilesa*, defilement, as a delusion.

So those are your—that gives you a sort of idea as to the basic conditionings that we have within us. On the dark side. We'll do the light side another time.

So now what we come across in our meditation is a different way of categorizing all this, which are the five hindrances. The first one—I mean they're very straightforward—there's all to do with greed and wanting and craving, there's all to do with hatred, aversion and things like that. There's the dullness and lethargy, there's this restlessness and remorse, where I think you can count in things like guilt and shame, and finally skeptical doubt.

As each of these come up they will always manifest as a thought pattern—either a thought pattern or what you're doing. So when you're eating these things manifest. When you're sitting in meditation in the quietness there's nowhere for these to go except up into the head. You can't express them anymore outwardly because you're keeping the silence and the stillness and so they create these dreams. So that's the first thing to recognize—that these mental defilements develop themselves through the mind, and not only in meditation but also in daily life.

So that's why we might be thinking about getting into an argument with somebody and we'll do that before we actually get into an argument with them. There'll be some mentation before we do it. So everything in the Buddha's understanding begins at the mind level, and from the mind you get that expression out into words and actions.

So here when we come out of a fantasy, come out of a dream sequence, that noting of it is so important because that's a recognition. And as I say, it's nice to do two notes—it's like you're reinforcing it with an acknowledgement—this is what the mind is doing. And by turning away from that—and this is what's so important—we're no longer developing that state because the mental state can only develop itself through thought and imagination. So when you're turning away from something that the mind is producing, that's not a suppression, that's not a repression. You see?

But it's only not a suppression and not a repression if you then contact the actual feeling which is empowering it, and it's getting in contact with that and allowing it as a feeling, as an emotion to express itself—that's where the therapy lies.

The next thing to understand is that the history which lies behind a particular mental state is not the actual cause of that mental state. And therefore, dealing with that mental state does not mean we have to seek history.

The Buddha puts it as an image of the person who gets shot with an arrow. And they come to heal, they come to take the arrow out and do something with the wound, and he says to leave it alone until he knows who shot it, why he shot it, who made the arrow, and of course he's dead before they can come. So here we are, we're angry and we're thinking, why am I angry? Was it because my mother hit me with a banana

when I was three? And you keep going back and you keep going back and of course it's all wanting to know things that are absolutely irrelevant to the actual mental state.

And the reason why it's not connected is because all these mental states are reactions to a given situation by an attitude. So it's coming from the heart itself. That's why some people enrage at a little insult where others can just palm it off. Our differences lie within the heart, you see.

So when an emotion comes up, and a mental state comes up, it doesn't matter what it is, on the whole gamut of human misery, when that comes up, we have to remind ourselves that this has been created by me. It's not that the other person or whatever caused it, inverted commas, whatever caused it, didn't have a role to play. Of course it did. But the actual way we reacted to it or responded to it is dependent on us.

So if somebody is cruel to somebody, that cruelty can't get through, can't get beyond the body or what's actually being heard at the eardrum or felt at the surface of the heart. So if somebody is shouting at us, we can hear it, we can hear the voice, like me with that chicken today. The chicken heard the voice—get out of this room—and the feeling, you see, so I gave it a real, you know, get out, and the chicken knew it was not wanted, so he got this. So you've got this hearing, so the hearing is telling you, you know, this is anger, and you get the feeling of the person, they're angry.

And that you can call the catalyst, that's actually pressing certain buttons within us. If those buttons didn't exist, then the anger and the feel of the anger would stay just at the doors of perception, stay where we actually receive it. But because we have a conditioning to react to anger, then anger arises in us, out of us, out of an attitude towards that person's anger. So the anger we're left with when they're gone is completely self-made. It is rooted within our own hearts.

That means that we cannot blame others for our mental states. And it releases us from wanting to blame them. That doesn't mean to say they get away scot-free. Because remember, in their anger they're developing a state of mind, they're developing a conditioning which burns within them. It's not as though they get away with it or something. They've got their own mental state and of course they'll come across somebody who really can't handle their anger and they get punched on the nose or something.

I mean, you know, it's like we're in the world, we're in a world of reaction and responses, and at some point we'll do something which for us has become habitual, which rebounds back on us. So we're not letting somebody off by describing this sort of psychology, by saying, well, you know, my anger is not their problem, my anger is my problem.

So when we come off any type of dream, any type of fantasy and we come back into the heart to actually feel the emotional content, what we're experiencing is a product of an attitude within a given situation. So it's all ours. It's all ours. And it is disappointing at first, you know, to recognize that you can't blame somebody else. It's always nice to find somebody to blame. But on the other hand, suddenly we're liberated.

Because if other people actually cause my suffering, I'm going to have to get rid of them. I'm going to have to, you know, if another person really does cause my suffering and they cause it, then I've no option. I've got to annihilate them. It's the only way I'm going to attain my own personal happiness. And of course, that's unfortunately the way most people, most human beings think, isn't it?

So it liberates us from that and it also liberates us now completely to do something with it. Because when I recognize that it's me that's developed these mental states then it's me that can undo them. And of course the whole process of mental purification, specifically through *vipassanā*, but also just through not indulging these things in daily life and acting from goodwill, we undermine them anyway. So we can change our personality, we can change our characters. That's not a problem. And we'll do it the quicker, the more we take responsibility for us, for what we've engendered in our own hearts.

So when it comes to these first two, the greed and the hatred, whenever you see a fantasy in the mind, a story in the mind, you should be quick enough to say, well, that's greed. Even though it's very enticing, even though you want to get into it, even though you want to develop it, just really cut into it and say, no. And know you're not doing yourself any harm. And then you come into the body and you feel that state.

And sometimes they're very loud, they're very painful, you know, really. But the longer you can stay with it, the more the heart's actually healing. You can think of it as a sore in the heart, as a postulating sore, and it needs to get rid of the poison before it can heal itself. So that has to be born, you have to be able to bear with it, to sit amidst the flames. And that's one of the reasons the Buddha calls patience, patience endurance, the highest form of ascetic practice. It's more difficult to sit with our own burning than to sit on a bed of nails. That's external. You can do all the ascetic practices you want but the worst one that we have to do is sit in the bonfire within us.

So these two—opening all everything to do with anything to do with that we crave for, wish for in that wrong way, and anything we hate, dislike—even depression is a form of aversion, boredom, you know, they're all there within aversion—have to be felt, see, have to be felt. And sometimes it's difficult because they're so loud and they're so constant that sometimes you think, well, this is never going to end. You get that feeling that this is forever.

But if you hang on in there and you begin to see it sort of release, you begin to see it sort of die away a bit, then that gives you the confidence that, yeah, this is the path of healing, you know. And occasionally, with a bit of luck, you might see that energy turn and present its opposite.

One might be something like loneliness. So loneliness has all these little things about nobody loves me and I'm hateful and why should anybody love me? All that sort of rubbish. And it's painful to be lonely. It's not a pleasant place to be at all. And instead of rushing out and calling your friend and saying, look, I'm really lonely tonight, instead of seeking that sort of escape in that way, to just stay with the feelings of that unlovability, you know, unwantedness, you know, orphaned. If you just stay with that feeling in the heart, you don't let the mind wander—in the heart—it might just be that as it passes away, as it sort of dissolves,

there comes this lovely moment of just being happy with being on your own.

And that's solitude. And then you're seeing that actually loneliness is a lie because you're never less alone, never less lonely than when you're happy with being by yourself. It just doesn't occur. And one of the advice that the Buddha gives is to fare lonely as a rhinoceros.

Now I don't know much about rhinoceros or rhinoceri—I don't know which one to use—but I was once on safari. It was only one time I just happened to be in the right place and we did see a rhinoceros I remember and it was actually alone. There was nobody around. Like, I mean, it's a huge beast. You don't want to get near one. And I remember the driver, because I remember somebody said, come on, let's go and have a look at it. You know, big clothes. Whoa, he said. Once that thing moves, you know, it's like a tank. Anyway, that's his advice—to fare lonely as a rhinoceros.

The next one is all this dullness and lethargy that everybody has, a huge dollop of. And that's not to be confused with tiredness, with real tiredness. And we need sleep, everybody knows that. But this dullness, this sort of stupor in the mind, you know, it feels like porridge, you know, sort of a soupy mix in the head, and the heaviness of the body, see? So one is to do with the brain and the mind, the way that you sort of can't think anymore, and the other one is to do with the body, which is sort of a lethargy. And you can have the one or the other, and most times you have both. It's all a general state.

And that's, of course, a consequence of seeking happiness in oblivion. As we said at the beginning of the talk, it's a form of annihilation. So when you're a bit fed up, when you're tired, off you go to sleep. But it's not only that. Being asleep is, in a paradoxical way, rather pleasant. We seek sleep.

Now we wouldn't do that if we thought that we wouldn't wake up. There's a presumption that I'm going to bed tonight and tomorrow I'll wake up. If the doctor said you fall asleep and you're never going to wake up, that would be a real pain. You'd put pins in your eyes. So there's something about sleep which is delightful, especially that falling asleep, you see. You know, the way we actually say it—falling asleep, you know, like falling in love, like falling, you know, just sort of letting go, you know, it's lovely, you see.

So there's something very pleasant about it, one feels refreshed. But if one actually does it also to escape some unpleasant state, then it's being used as a suppression. And this stuff always comes up as a heaviness in the body later on as a feeling of depression itself.

So dullness and lethargy, after two or three days on a retreat, definitely the fourth day, if you're feeling tired during the day and you've had a good sleep, then really name it for what it is. And the way we counter that is by always doing the opposite. So if you get it heavy, lift the spine, open the eyes, look straight into the light of the window. If it gets to stand up and even then you might be so heavy that you just go for a walk. Now, whatever you're doing, you're accompanying it. You're not trying to get rid of it.

As soon as you try and get rid of something, you're putting aggression back into the system. So you're walking with it and it's a real mental state. It's as important as anxiety, depression and everything else.

And you just take the big fat dog for a walk. You just keep going. Come on, come on. You keep one step after the other. Just keep going up and down, up and down, up and down. And of course, just like all these things, it begins to evaporate, begins to loosen up.

And it can hit you hard. All these *kilesas*, all these hindrances and defilements can hit you very hard at various times in your life. And everybody has their own particular constellation of it. Some people suffer horribly from sceptical doubt. Especially the "me." Everybody else can do it, but not me. I'm not good enough or something. But from my experience with meditators and myself, doubt, lethargy is definitely there. It goes back a long way.

The next one is the opposite, the restlessness. So that's the mind. Sometimes the mind can be so restless you think you're going berserk. Absolutely berserk. It's absolutely terrible. But you have to be patient with it because that's the energy of thinking. And sometimes the dullness and lethargy just flips and you find yourself running around like a chicken. And sometimes the restlessness is in the body. You're sitting there, the mind's all right, but you just get this tremendous feeling of wanting to move.

So there it's good to move up and down the body. Just move around the body. Move around the body. Just feeling where the restlessness is. And that draws a bit of energy back into the observing. And the same you can do with the dullness and lethargy. You can move around the brain, around the head part here. You can move around the body. And that keeps you awake.

And by moving around restlessness, especially if you move, if you go the opposite way. So for dullness and lethargy, if you go up the body, wherever the attention is, there's always energy. So if you move up the body, it actually lifts a bit of energy. Go from the toes up to the top of the head. If you're feeling restless, go down from the top of the head down to the toes. So it has a way of bringing energy with it, attention.

And don't move. That's basically it. So with dullness and lethargy you move and with restlessness you don't. It's as simple as that. Very simple instruction. And just hang on in there. Wait for it to give. And if you don't, fine, okay. It's going to come back. You'll have plenty of opportunity to work with this stuff. It's not as though you failed. Like you say, oh my god, I failed.

And running with that is remorse, guilt, shame you can put all that in and that makes you very fidgety - guilt, shame and all that. And when those things come up, you have to sit with it. Sit with it. And if something comes up which you feel you can put right - perhaps something comes in your mind where you've said something sharp to somebody and upset them - so you make a decision to, as it were, close off that karmic line by just apologising. As simple as that. Whether they accept the apology or not doesn't matter. You've actually cleared it within your own heart. That's what's important.

And then finally there's this sceptical doubt. So that sceptical doubt is the inability to believe anything. And it's a stopper, it's a killer. You just won't do anything if you don't have some sort of confidence in it. And it can be fear or aversion, fear I think mainly. If you're of a very scientific frame of mind, and

everything has to be measurable. So even though, like an alternative medicine like homeopathy, they can't understand it. They can't understand it. There's nothing in the medicine. So it's like, it's all hocus-pocus.

And even though you say, well, if it's true medicine, I mean, if it really is true medicine, it'll work whether you believe it or not. It's like an aspirin. Whether you believe it or not, it'll work. So I say, have a go. No, no, don't go near it. It's like there's a block. Just don't go near it.

So there are three things that you obviously can be sceptical of. It's the actual teaching of the Buddha. So when we feel sceptical about that, always remember that the Buddha never put it to us as some sort of belief statement. It was always something for us to investigate, to make our own knowledge. That's why we have these three levels of knowledge or of understanding. The understanding we get when we hear something, the understanding when we think about what we've heard, and it becomes our own intellectual knowledge. And the third one is this understanding through insight meditation, through insight, through direct understanding.

So in the Buddha's understanding, that is the process of liberation. Belief is a stopper. You just, like, you don't investigate, you just bow to the Buddha-rupa, and that's the end of that. But he'll still end up with you. He's not going to do much for your hindrances or insight.

And then there's, well, there's doubt in the teacher, heaven forbid. I can't imagine it, but there can be. And it's like it's a healthy thing to always question what the teacher actually is saying. Again, it's not to be taken as, but one tries it. One tries it.

I remember one of my teachers, the main teacher, he said to me, what meditation did you do before? And I said, Zen. He said, well, they don't meditate. And I said, they don't meditate, Sayadaw? I said, why is that? He said, because they keep their eyes open. And I said, hmm. I said, well, we keep our ears open. There's dead silence. It's like, it's prejudiced. So, I mean, you don't have to believe what a teacher says to you. But it's good to try things out. And if it doesn't work, well, yeah. If you find that there isn't that connection, that isn't, well, yeah.

But the one I think that's most pernicious is oneself. One begins to lose confidence in oneself. Often, when a person's been doing meditation for a long time, and they don't see much progress, you get this coming up. But usually they've taken a very short-term view, and when you actually ask them to look back over the years to where they were when they first started, they can normally see the progress. Everybody that's happened to them, I've talked to, sees progress. It's just it's never progressive enough, that's all. We're not expected to be fully liberated by now. So it's like just see what our presumptions are really.

And remember that the path isn't this one direct upward slope. It's up and down, up and down, up and down. It's just every so often you get to a hill, you can look back and see that the hills that you've actually climbed are actually lower than where you are. You haven't gone down. So it's a case of when you feel that lack of confidence - getting nowhere, what's the point, all that sort of stuff - again just name it. Give it its

true name, the sceptical doubt.

So that's our task anyway. That's what we're working with on the negative side. And everything that we've been talking about of course is what therapy tries to deal with. So in a sense the way we're dealing with this not only brings us this spiritual understanding which are the true liberation, it's also helping the heart to purify itself.

Sometimes when you listen to certain teachers actually you get the impression that Vipassana isn't enough. You've got to have therapy. In fact, I know certain teachers who say that. And I dare say there are people for whom walking into meditation would be just too much. But I think the main reason for that is lack of faith. It's not our culture to be Buddhist. It's not our culture to have that absolute faith in the teacher like that. And if you don't, of course, then that undermines everything you do. I think that's one reason anyway.

In the East, people who are brought up Buddhists, they have just this natural faith. So when the teacher says, you've got to go through this pain, they go through it. Not everybody, of course, but I mean, I'm just saying there's that natural faith in things.

And I dare say that there are certain things which Buddhism doesn't tackle really in a particularly - I mean, like madness. There's not much in Buddhism, at least in Theravāda Buddhism, how to deal with madness. Frankly, that's done by local shamans, by the local culture. The ancient culture, they're usually better at dealing with that than Buddhist monks anyway.

But for the ordinary person, the ordinary person with our usual little neuroses and stuff, it's not that therapy won't help - it does, I think some of them are very skillful - but it's not necessary. And just in my own personal practice, I mean, I never had any therapy. Childhood traumas came up. Two childhood traumas cleared out the heart. And this is exactly what Freud talks about, that these traumas, deeply hidden within the psyche, they're causing all these whirlpools around here, which you're dealing with, not recognising that there's some deeper disease underneath.

But it wasn't easy that's all. It's not easy to really squeeze a boil. Get your thumbs into the side and give it a real squeeze till it pops. But what I'm saying is that yes you don't actually need therapy. A lot of these modern therapies I think are very skillful, very helpful. And complementary. Most of them are complementary.

So, that's it. That's what you're tackling with and it's up to us to just develop our skills. This is one side of the skills of meditation that we're developing. So I can only hope my words have been of some assistance.

May you, in your wise tackling of the hindrances, overcome them, allow them to dissipate and achieve a full purification of the heart and liberation sooner rather than later.

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