The Sufferings of the Pleasure Syndrome

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 49:32

Namo tassa bhagavato hara-hatto samma-sambuddhassa Namo tassa bhagavato hara-hatto samma-sambuddhassa Namo tassa bhagavato hara-hatto samma-sambuddhassa

Homage to the Buddha, the Blessed, Noble and Fully Self-Enlightened One.

So yesterday evening we went through the various techniques and reminded ourselves that there's nothing mystical about these techniques, they're just skillful means, that's how they're referred to, *upāya*, skillful means to bring ourselves into the present moment. And just like all skills, you've got to work at them. And slowly they work for you. They start working for you, slowing down, getting in the habit of just noting. These two especially are really quite powerful in terms of centering that attention on what it is you're actually experiencing in this present moment.

So tonight we can have a look at these hindrances. That's the Buddha's word for them. They're more hindrances in the sense of stopping us from concentration. They drag us away from the moment because that's what they do, that's their job. Their job is to keep us occupied on something else. But when we're doing *vipassanā* as such, then we can see them really as ways to get to know ourselves. And it's often the case that when we begin to meditate we get in touch with emotions that we might not have fully accepted about ourselves before. Often our family history has forbidden us to feel things - crying, being angry, being jealous. All these things in your family history, depending on the situation, have taught you to push things away, not to really look at them. But unfortunately, of course, they remain at that subliminal level and affect our actions. It puts a pressure on what we're doing.

So, for instance, in jealousy, if we're jealous of somebody, but we've never looked at it, and we've pushed it away, and we've felt this subliminal guilt about that, we might be over-praising. We compensate for it. All these things, I think, were very well understood by Freud, actually. He captured all that very well.

So one of the things about our meditation is really to open up to ourselves and to receive whatever we have been suppressing. Often when you come to Eastern teachers - in fact I've just received an email - if you ever work with Eastern teachers, they tend to push effort and concentration. And this often means that the meditator ends up suppressing stuff. In this particular email that I've just received, the instructions from the Burmese teacher was: if an emotion comes you note it like anger or happiness and then you immediately go back to the breath. And the aim of that really is to center the whole attention on the three characteristics, but especially the idea of impermanence. And in this way a person can be pushed towards some sort of deep insight, but it's at the expense really of not purifying the heart. And in the Buddha's teaching, the purification of the heart has to go hand in hand with insight. You can't leapfrog

into liberation.

There has to be a complete clearance of the heart. We say the path is *sīla-samādhi-paññā*. *Sīla* is your conduct, is your behaviour. And this manifests your attitude, this manifests your virtue or lack of it. The *samādhi* is the training of the mind to be still, which is just part and parcel of the *vipassanā* process. And the *paññā* is the insight which liberates. So, whether we like it or not, we have to go to hell before we get to heaven. It's just one of those things. There has to be a process of purification.

And what we discover is that the only way to purify the heart is to let it speak, is to let it manifest its feelings. And that's painful for us, we don't like doing that. It's hard to be with depression, anger, the whole gamut of human suffering, which everybody has to some degree or other, I think.

So when the Buddha delineated these emotional attitudinal states he just called them the hindrances. And the first one, not surprisingly, had all those things to do with desire. And looking at the process of desire, we find that when something comes up that we like, that we want - you see, when we like it we want it. Very simple. You like it so you want it.

You see that in little children, don't you? When they see something like a toy, they want it. It's quite natural. So that never leaves us, the wanting because, you know, liking something. Now why do we do that? It's because when we get what we want, we're happy. It makes us feel happy. It gives us a certain gratification. And what happens is then that there's an underlying belief, you see, that if only you can get what you want, you'll always be happy. And you're into the great consumerist society.

And of course adverts play on that to the nth degree, don't they? And they stick desires together. So you always get these beautiful men and women standing next to the car you want. The suggestion of erotic and romantic happiness which goes with a Jaguar. So these desires that we have are not just simple - I want something. They're part of a root theology. They're part of a way that we look at life. It's our relationship to our lives.

Happiness, for heaven's sake. I mean, what do you want if it's not happiness? If you ask somebody, what do you want to be? They want to be happy. And they'll define that - good job, nice relationship, etc., etc., a big list of things. But basically, everybody wants to be happy. And the mistake, the great mistake, is to believe that the world, the sensual world, which is all we experience, is what can deliver that happiness.

As far as the world exists out there is in a sense irrelevant. It's how we experience it which is relevant. And it comes through our senses. Therefore we live in a sensual world from the inner point of view. And when the senses deliver those very pleasant feelings, pleasant states of mind, then we're happy. And the confusion, of course, lies in the fact that happiness is an emotional state. So therefore we're always chasing the next emotional state, the next high.

And in our society that's become a disease. It leads to compulsive action, addiction. The whole of life is about what are you going to do this Saturday? Where are you going to do this Sunday? Where are you

going to go for your holiday? Have you seen this film? Have you read that book? It's always, what's the next thing which is going to bring me this little high?

And the downside of that, of course, is when there isn't one. So because we like living on these little highs, on these - what's the next thing to be done - and they're not there, there's that disappointment, there's a sense of loss, a grief. Like, what am I going to do? Worse than that, because of the inbuilt obsolescence of these pleasures, the fact that they can't maintain that same buzz that you got the first time, they lead to an easy boredom.

I read this article where this woman described the first go at crack, as she called it, "riding the dragon." And then she said, after that, you're always chasing that primary experience, but you never get it. And that's the problem with addiction. You're always trying to get the primary wow experience you had. And of course, when it comes to things like drugs and whatnot, the body becomes immune to it, it becomes hardened to it, it finds a way of absorbing the shock.

And when a person comes off drugs they often - they sometimes forget how resistant the body was to the drug they were taking. And often when they slip back into the old habit for one reason or another - they could be rejoicing - they kill themselves. They overdose. Now in a little way, in a less dramatic way, that's what we're doing all the time.

All the time we're seeking happiness in sensual pleasure and we're getting to a point where we're bored. So boredom says, seek, seek more pleasure. Variety is the spice of life. Off you go. And there's incessant search. We don't want to feel boredom. Boredom is not a very pleasant state to be in. And if it gets too much, if it gets really bored, you lose the purpose of living. It moves towards despair.

It can be on a professional level. If your work has always been very interesting and it disappears, what are you left with? You're left with this hole. What are you going to do now? Because you can't gain that same intensity of experience, life becomes boring, becomes empty, meaningless. And it's only because we've defined life as being something which is exciting, something which is always going to deliver this very pleasant state. So there's a real heavy consequence from indulgence.

Indulgence here, by the way, is referring to all types of attachments. So we're not just talking about missing your tea in the morning. I mean, that's pretty disastrous. But we talk about heavy stuff like the loss of your job if you enjoyed your work, the loss of a relationship, the death of somebody close. All these are very extraordinarily painful experiences for us. And the pain is the measure of the attachment. Pain is the measure of the attachment.

So when somebody dies, for instance, there's this - we call it grief. But it's like a huge sore in your heart. It's extraordinarily painful and a real lack. And we like to think of it as our love. This is how much I really love the person. I miss them so much. That's the confusion, you see, because we've confused love with this attachment. But the grief is the measure of attachment.

And if we don't see that, then the grief becomes chronic, because every time the grief begins to lessen, you think you're losing the love of the person. You've got to re-grieve to make sure you're still really loving them. And it's only when you begin to realize that grief - in this sense grief of loss - is actually a measure of attachment that you can let it go. And you begin to realize that love is something of a higher nature. Love allows things to be. If it was the time for the person to die, one is easy with it. You don't indulge in the grief. You see it as something which is unwholesome. It's a product of that attachment.

At a lesser level, you see, objects that we own - it could be something quite costly, like a car, or a computer, a laptop, or something that's not so costly, like your mobile. Somebody thieves it. You feel angry about it. Bloody thief. And there might be some grief. And you go around saying, do you know what? Somebody stole my phone, my mobile. It isn't your mobile anymore. It belongs to the thief. They're using it. They're the ones who have the mobile. But there's still this figment in the imagination that it's still mine.

Which is a social construct. It's a legal arrangement that we've come with each other, that if I say this is mine, it belongs to me. And there's somehow a feeling that it belongs to me in a deep - like it's attached to me in a visceral, emotional way. Whereas when we look at something like a clock or something, or a mobile, actually all you can do with objects is use them. To own them is a painful thing, emotionally I mean. We might legally own it, fine, that's not a problem. I mean if you own something which you actually want to get rid of and you get compensation if somebody does thieve it, you leave it in obvious places. That's not a problem. Put your four and a half year old computer, which is guaranteed for five years, and leave it out in the park somewhere. Oh, fiddle these poor companies.

So, one of the first things is to begin to see that psychology within ourselves. That's why I'm so intent on this business of eating and when we drink something, because right there we can see it. I mean, supposing tomorrow, for instance, when it came to five o'clock, you said to yourself, well, I won't have any tea. I won't even have the whiskey. I'll have a cup of cold water and I'll sit here and watch the pain.

And what we're watching is the attachment. Now the great thing about these attachments is that once you stop indulging them they actually do die away. There's a whole process there of deconditioning. And very quickly you become accustomed to a new order once you've set your heart to it. So here for instance, you've come into a very strange sort of regime. You get up at 3:30, breakfast, lunch, sit here, walk. Crazy, really, when you think about it. If you describe it to a person who knows nothing about meditation, they think, well, they must be a bit off. Must have gone off. But I think you'll see that even within three or four days, you just get up, you just do it. You just re-habituate to something.

And really that's the trick when it comes to habits that we find difficult for ourselves is to know that actually all you have to do is go through the pain of detoxing. And replace it of course with something which is more wholesome. Because unfortunately we have time, we keep moving from one moment to the next. You've got to fill it up with something. And if you can find something more skillful than what you were doing, then of course that is going to have a psychological effect. It's going to create a certain

contentment.

And contentment is a big word in the spiritual world. Contentment is the mind without desire. The mind without desire. When we say desire here, remember, we're translating this one word, *taṇhā*. There is another word in Pali, *chanda*, which can be either wrong or right, can be a good desire or a bad desire. So that if we want to sit, that's a good desire, and we should reinforce it. The desire that we're talking about in terms of what causes problems is the desire whereby we believe that something sensual, something of this world, this phenomenal world, is going to deliver perfect happiness.

So when we're eating, you see, we're trying to make that distinction. So we're not seeking happiness in food, but we find that when we eat food, a certain appreciative joy arises. And that's natural to that process. It's natural for the body to feel good when you feed it something, and it's natural for the mind to resonate that goodness.

Even at a level, should we say, of just relationships, there's a case where the Buddha is asked, when people listen to your dharma and they don't receive it, they walk away from it, how do you feel? He says, fine, I don't feel unhappy or anything. And the reason for that is this understanding of *kamma*. The person isn't ready to move that way. And it's no skin off his nose. The Buddha's all right. He's got his food and he's under a tree and he's happy. His personal happiness is not dependent on somebody believing or following his instructions or not. But when somebody actually accepts the teaching and begins to train, he's filled with joy. And that's that sympathetic resonance.

I think some people think that when the Buddha was liberated, he turned into this hardened blob. He no longer related to the world. He walked around as an automaton who spoke the Dharma and didn't have an emotional life. But it's quite plain that he did. He was quite charismatic. And we talk about the four illimitables, which we can go into more detail towards the end of the week. In a sense all beautiful emotions, beautiful mental states are illimitable, but the four of them as it were capture a great deal of them: love, compassion, joy and peace. So it's not as though we're trying to get rid of the joy of life.

It's very important to grasp that, because if we make that mistake, if we make the mistake of thinking that it's the body which is the problem - if I didn't eat, then I wouldn't get attached. That's the mistake of the self-mortifier, of the great ascetic who looks like a famine victim. They don't eat, they don't go anywhere near something that's lovely or beautiful.

Again, the Buddha, you see, when he is on alms round, he comes away, he's got his food, and he's with Ananda, his attendant, and he says to Ananda, let's go...

to this shrine to this beautiful shrine and eat our food. Why doesn't he eat just down there on the side of the road in the dust, or find a donkey and be a real ascetic? He doesn't. He wants to go somewhere beautiful. When he goes off to meditate by himself into the forest, leaves the crowds, and they say to him, "Why do you do that now that you're fully liberated?"

And he says, "I do it for my own quiet abiding, and for the benefit of others, as a good example to others." But you notice, it's the quiet abiding that comes first. He doesn't say, "I do it for the benefit of others, oh, and for my own quiet abiding." He says, "No, I do it for my own quiet abiding." So one can imagine that there were times when there were just constant visitors. He was of that caste, the Kshatriya caste, the warrior caste, whereby he knew all these kings, he knew them as children. His father was a local ruler, subordinate to the local king—Kosala, king of Kosala, I think I'm right, doesn't sound right, but I think I am—Pasenadi, who was a great supporter of the Buddha. And the other king, Bimbisara, who was down in Magadha, where now you get Benares, Varanasi on the Ganges there. So all that was another kingdom.

And the Buddha moved around the whole area. Wherever he went, he knew these rulers. And where he went, he would be offered great food sometimes. Even monks in the East, you know, if somebody has a birthday and wants to create great merit, or a marriage or something like that, and they always feed the monks very well, and you get a few dishes. And of course then, if you're an ascetic, you don't want to really enjoy it, you see. So there becomes this negative feeling about your life, that this isn't to be enjoyed.

So it's really important for us to make that distinction very clear to ourselves, that the pleasures of life, the sensual pleasures, and the pleasures of relationship, of art, even the joys that come up in meditation, are not the problem. The problem is coming from a deeper part of ourselves—this consciousness, this awareness which is misunderstanding and attaching to it as a way of creating this internal happiness which we call an emotional state, and thinking that that's it, that's me.

So all these things that come up around pleasure are really quite important. And a lot of this stuff that we get from misbehaviour of youth is to do, I think, with that frustration of really not finding anything which is truly engaging. So they're always being taught—even at school when I was leaving the profession in FE—there was all this talk about making education more entertaining. It's painful, you see. The teacher then becomes a performer. You've got to perform. And the children expect to be entertained, always to be on this lovely high.

So they forget—it's completely forgotten—that education, the word discipline, is about work. It's about learning your timetables. I know they don't do that anymore. And it gives children the wrong idea of what life's about. And when they hit the reality of work, and for the most part it's not the sort of work they had imagined themselves doing, like fitting tyres onto cars, it's just boring. There's not an acceptance of it.

So a lot of these things that we see in our society is to do with this consumerism. And if we look into ourselves, we'll see the same syndromes, the same psychological states that are arising because of that wrong understanding. So this is a real opportunity, you see, to engage with that and to keep letting go of desire.

When I say letting go, you're not pushing it away. It means to allow it to arise and pass away. You have to be very careful on that. Sometimes this noting technique is used to sort of bat things out of the mind. Like greed—get out, poke in the eye. So be careful, because aversion is very subtle. Not wanting is very, very

subtle sometimes. But it's not. The idea, this phrase that you get in meditation circles, this "letting go, letting go," is allowing something to arise and pass away.

So this is an opportunity to do that. And the important thing is to sometimes wait until that desire has completely and utterly passed away, and then just taste that moment that comes after that, where the mind just hasn't got that energy in it, hasn't got that slight turbulence in it which makes it always move towards what it wants. And what we're experiencing there is contentment.

And the distinction between gratification and contentment is very difficult. So every time we indulge a desire, there's always a point of gratification, there's always a point of feeling "oh great!" But unfortunately, all it's done is reinforce that cycle, is reinforce that habit. And then we're off again seeking, seeking, searching.

So when we're working with hindrances here, this is something you can take directly into your daily life. And it's about strengthening the will—the will that is called *dhammachetanā*—the will for spiritual practice, the will for spiritual development. And it has to be exercised, it has to grow. And you do it by the process of renunciation.

So renunciation isn't this self-accusation and self-mortification. It's allowing some desire to rise and pass away. So you're renouncing it in order to see how attached you are to it. And you keep letting that rise and pass away until there's no pain. And then the renunciation has done its job. And then one tries to re-engage with that in a more skilful way.

So one exercise that I always set to people, and probably you've heard it from me before, is to get yourself a nice cup of tea, or if you prefer coffee, and a biscuit, and just sit in front of your TV when your favourite programme's on. And don't turn it on. Just watch the blank screen and feel the pain. And that pain of letting go of Coronation Street and Match of the Day—oh my God—just sitting there with that and knowing that it's on is a wonderful exercise. And if you do that every week until it's completely gone, you see, then you think, "What the hell was that about? What was I getting so upset about a stupid program for?"

Years and years ago I watched this program. It was an Australian series. It was a storyline, three episodes. And it was about these young women who were travelling in Spain and in Morocco. And there they got fiddled by these two rather handsome men to get into drugs. And they didn't realise they were carriers for these drugs. And when they landed in Spain, they were caught by the police and stuck in jail, you see. And the whole drama is about that predicament.

Well, of course, I missed the third program. And still in my mind, I still get like, "Cripes, what happened? What happened?" And this is a total fantasy. It's a total fantasy. It didn't happen. It's somebody's head. But so often when I think about it, I think, "Oh, one day, one day." I must say, it doesn't cause so much pain these days.

So really work on that and just, and after you leave the course and take into daily life, just find something,

one point of the day, or one habit that you have which you know you can do without, and just sit with the desire and let it fade away. And there are two things that when we do that, there's always two things happening: we're letting go of something which is unwholesome for us, but we're also growing in that will for the *Dhamma*, the *dhammachetanā*, which is your spiritual empowerment.

And it's the same when you practice the meditation. So when it comes to doing a morning sitting and hopefully an evening sit, sometime in the evening, there are always a hundred thousand excuses, a hundred thousand reasons, very good reasons why you shouldn't be doing it. There's always something more important. And it's really, and it's sort of catching that, the sort of negativity of the desire of wanting to do something which is more pleasant, you see. It's not just that you don't want to sit, it's that you want to do something which is more exciting, there's something more capturing than just sitting here watching the painful emotions coming up all the time. And it's the ability to let go of that, you see, which is creating this will.

And will in Buddhism is that which is your power. Power means to be able to do something. Like when you walk, there's a power, there's an ability to walk—we call it an ability, but it's a power, it's an ability. And so when we empower ourselves through these exercises, we're becoming stronger within ourselves. And the strength grows, you see, the strength grows to let go, to let go. So that when you get to the, when we get to this point where we're just going to approach the final liberation, we should be as strong as the Buddha, you see.

So remember when the Buddha had finally had got this inkling of perhaps this was what was going to make the break, what was going to bring about liberation from suffering? Remember, he'd been through a bit of despairing there when he gave up the ascetic practices. So he was despairing, he didn't know what to do. And suddenly a memory of childhood comes and it sort of inspires him. And on reflection he says, he thinks, "Well, this is it. If this doesn't work, then nothing will." And he has enough of this *chetanā*, he has enough of this willpower—willpower isn't bad in itself, it's what you put it towards. He has enough willpower to say, "I'm going to sit under this tree and I'm going to sit here, and either I will make this insight, I'll actually understand things and come to the end of suffering, or I'll die."

Now, of course, that wasn't tested because he actually did make a break. But it took him six hours. He sat there for six hours. That's what the scripture tells us.

And so when we use this renunciation, when we actually practice renunciation, it has this added quality of building up this inner strength within us. And we see that in people. We see that in strong people, in people whom we really admire. People like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, people like that. Mother Teresa. These people have a deep inner power which comes from that place where they've lost a lot of attachment to life. They don't care anymore about their life. They're there for another purpose beyond themselves.

I always remember this case where in that dreadful time in Lebanon—I can't remember, but I remember all that stuff about the camps and the shootings and the killings and all that. And it would seem that right

in the two firing lines, which weren't that far apart as far as I remember, there was a school, and it was full of children, but also handicapped children, or children with disabilities, as we say these days. And nobody knew what to do. It was very strange from what I could see, that this school was stuck. Nobody had the guts to go in and do anything. And they didn't know what to do. It was in a firing line.

And they brought Mother Teresa to this point. And what the clip of the film showed you was them explaining to her that there were all these children here and they didn't know what to do about it. They were stuck in these firing lines. And after explanation, seemingly without second thought, she just walked over to the school and let all the kids out. I mean, like nobody had thought of that. Nobody had thought, "Well, I'll just go over there and bring them all out." Why? Because they're afraid of being shot. They're afraid of being in the firing line.

But this, I believe, diminutive little woman, just this enormous strength of the power of her spiritual practice. If she was shot, I don't think she would care. So that's the sort of strength that comes to us when we begin to practice this renunciation.

And as a sort of another way in which that willpower of renunciation is expressed is through generosity. Because every time we're generous, we give something away which we ourselves could have enjoyed for ourselves for the benefit of somebody else. I'm not here talking about social bargaining, you know, where at Christmas you give a piece of cheese and they send you a piece of cheese. You know, and "Yes, I'll come and help you decorate" with an underlying text which says, "Well, I'm going to do my gardening next week."

But that generosity where you actually give for the benefit of others completely, not expecting any return. I mean, that's what we try and practice here, isn't it? This is the idea here that when we come here to do a retreat, everything is already received. It's already paid for. What are you paying for? It's already here. So that when it comes to making a donation, it's always done in the spirit of entirely for somebody else. So what we're doing is saying, "Well look, this little bit of wealth that I have, I could have enjoyed this. I could have gone to the Costa del Sol and drunk a bit of sangria and enjoyed myself. But instead I've sent it off to this charity for the benefit of somebody whom I don't even know."

So that's a letting go of desire, you see. That's your renunciation. Same with time. You know, just helping somebody out, helping somebody, doing some charitable work, not for any reason apart from just helping. So that time you could have spent yourself, could have been watching a decent film, or going out with a friend. Who knows what could have been, we might have enjoyed that time, but instead we've given it. And we might not be doing something we particularly like doing. It might not be something that we particularly want to do, but we do it for the benefit of somebody else.

And in that way, this self, which is always self-centred, you see, it's always looking after itself, understandably so, is slowly being undermined, slowly being undermined. So when we get to this doctrine of not-self, see, what does it mean, not-self, you see? Does it mean that there's no personality, there's a sort

of breakdown, sort of schizophrenic, sort of an amorphous block? You end up with no self, no personality, nothing?

No, not at all. All this self that the Buddha is talking about, he's describing, is the relationship we have to the world, to this body. "This is me." All we've got to recognise slowly is that it's not me, and then we have a different relationship to it. So every time I look at "my wealth, my wealth," then it becomes painful. But if I look at it as wealth, then I can do something with it. I can do something for myself, something for others. And I can make a distinction towards myself between that which is selfish and that which is self-care.

So going back to eating, there's a great difference between preparing ourselves a nice meal, which is with the attitude of self-caring, rather than getting in there and just eating for the sake of enjoying ourselves and becoming a glutton. That's a word you don't hear these days very much. With all this obesity about, it's a no-no word, isn't it? Nobody's a glutton, they're all suffering from obesity. They're all just obese. Nobody will actually say, "You greedy pig." You know what I mean? I mean, it's not quite done, you see. It's not politically correct anymore to call a spade a spade. It has to be an illness.

Not to say that some people don't put weight on because of metabolic reasons and whatnot. But most people — I mean, I was shocked myself. I found I had put on half a stone. It was a great shock, I can tell you. And then it got worse. I thought, oh, there's something wrong here. But I put it down to age, you see. How easy it is to be obese and self-forgiving and all that.

So this evening we've just looked at just one of these hindrances. We'll be at it all week, I think, just centring on this business of desire, because I think it's very crucial in our day and age. Tomorrow I'll do the rest of them. I won't hang about so much, but just as a general attitude.

There are those states of mind which are agitated, and they're caused by these sorts of desires — all the negative desires, hatreds and angers and irritations, all that sort of stuff. There are things that cause agitation in the mind that make it restless: anxiety, guilt, shame, all those sorts of things.

And there's doubt, and we'll go into that a bit more deeply, which creates a sort of disturbance in the mind. Doubt makes a person constantly think about it, think about things, and be worried.

So whenever we come across the mind being like that, remember, you always come off the thought pattern. The narrative is irrelevant. In here it's irrelevant. Out there it may be relevant. In other words, if I doubt whether this is the job I ought to take or not, out there it's relevant. Here it's not relevant, because here you can't do anything about it anyway. You're not supposed to be using your mobiles. You're not supposed to be on the phone. You're not supposed to be writing. So here it's irrelevant. That's the point.

So by making all this mental agitation irrelevant and just keeping it to the side, we can go into the actual mental state that's driving these states — the attitude, the emotional state that's driving it — and we can begin to feel it and get a hang of it and see how it works.

And the other one is, the other side is when the energy begins to fall. And that's what we call dullness and lethargy. And over the next couple of days, I hope that the business of sleep imbalance will have been sorted and you'll be very clear to yourself that any sleepiness that comes during the day is in fact dullness and lethargy and is not tiredness. One can be quite strict about that.

And there, of course, the attitude is simply to stay awake and to be with it, to feel it. Remember, it is an energy. It doesn't feel like an energy because it's a sort of collapse into nothingness. Something's dragging us down. It's a dullness, dull, heavy feeling. So the attitude there is basically to stay awake as best one can. That's why you open your eyes, you stand up. And if in a sitting it just becomes ridiculous and you just find yourself nodding and banging your head on the floor, then go for a gentle walk.

And none of this stuff do you fight. You're not trying to annihilate it. You're not trying to get rid of it. You're not trying to overcome it. You're not trying to beat it. You're not trying to be better than it. You're just trying to attend. See them all as patients. They're all little illnesses. And they just need attending to, that's all.

And that's the quality of awareness. Attention. And you can flavour the attention with kindness. You can look upon these things with compassion. And that often softens the process, by the way. It undermines a negativity towards them by seeing that these are little illnesses, little dis-eases. And that's, I think, a very skilful way to look at it.

Are there any questions? Anything come up? Sounds as though I've perfectly described the problem of desire. May my words be of assistance. May you be liberated sooner rather than later. Thank you.

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