

# Āsava-Taints, Ogha-Floods, Yoga-Yokes

Bhante Bodhidhamma · DhammaBytes · 8:13

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*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa Namō Tassa Bhagavato Arahato  
Sammāsambuddhassa Namō Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa*

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

I want to look at this word *āsava*, A-S-A-V-A. The V is always pronounced with a W. Let me start off by giving you the Pali Text Society dictionary definitions, and it gives you an idea of what they are.

The first is an intoxicating extract or secretion from a tree or flower, a bit like opium or whatever. That's an *āsava*. The second is it's used to describe the discharge of a sore. It gives you another feel for the word. In psychology, it used to befuddle—I came across another word I'd never seen before: to befoozle. Befoozles the mind. And it's normally translated in terms of the Buddhadhamma as cankers, taints, corruptions, intoxicants, biases. That's what they are.

Later on, just to give us another idea of what they are, it seems that the word *ogha* was used, O-G-H-A, which means a flood, floods. And even *yoga*, yoking, something that yokes you. So you've got a couple of images there. You've got things that are corruptions, intoxicants, that are outflows. Sometimes they're an influx, but I don't quite understand that. It's either an outflow or an influx, but anyway, maybe both. They flood the whole psychophysical organism. They yoke us, they tie us down, enslave us. They're corruptions. They're horrible.

So what are they? Well, they won't come as a surprise. The first one is *kāma*. That's not the same as *kamma* with a double M. That's sensual desire. Remember, it's not sensual desire in itself. It's always this relationship we have with sensual desire and seeking happiness there. That's the first one.

The second one is *bhava*. So that's this becoming. Whereas sensual desire brings us into the present moment of wrong relationships—and we can also include in that sensual desire, remember, those things that we don't like. Normally this is translated as things that you do like, but I don't see why we can't also include things we don't like, because that brings out a negative desire, not wanting. But the *bhava* gives us this sensual desire of what happens to us in terms of time, passage of time, becoming.

The third one is *avijjā*. This is basic not knowing. Later on, it would seem, it was added, *diṭṭhi* was added. This is in the scriptures. It seems as though the three that we've mentioned—the sensual desire, the becoming and the ignorance—were the original. Then, as the Buddha began to explain it more, he brought in this added *diṭṭhi*, which is wrong view.

And wrong views, of course, are the product of this avijjā, this ignorance. Ignorance—another word that we come across is *moha*, remember, this is that delusion. So the delusion is a consequence of ignorance. Often that's confused, but the one is prior to the other. Not so much prior in time, but the delusion arises out of an ignorance, and it produces these wrong views. So these wrong views are not to understand the Four Noble Truths. That is basic understanding.

So that's what these āsava are: āsava-kāma, which is sensual desire; bhava, becoming; avijjā, ignorance; and diṭṭhi, wrong views. And the reason that I've done them now is because of their connection to dependent origination, which is all about liberation.

So this actually connects us to the paths and fruits. The first path and fruit, the *sotāpatti*, the *sotāpanna*, the one who's attained first path and fruit. In the second path and fruit of the once-returner, the sensual desire is lessened. It connects us with the non-returner and it connects us with the Arahant.

So once we enter into the sotāpanna, the wrong views disappear, just the wrong views, misunderstanding, and there are three of them: this personality as a self, sceptical doubt—meaning that no doubt in the Buddha remains, the Buddhadhamma remains—and clinging to wrong rites and rituals, which is basically thinking that rites and rituals will help you become liberated. That's the clinging to wrong rites and rituals. Not that rites and rituals are wrong in themselves, they have their place, but it's when you think that they are material or essential for the process of liberation, that's when you've got a wrong view.

When we get to the non-returner, the one that goes is kāma, the sensual desire, seeking happiness in the sensual world. And the other two, the avijjā, the ignorance, and the becoming, don't disappear until right at the end. So the self is always there. The becoming, remember, and the idea of self are synonymous. They mean the same thing. Self, in a way, doesn't get across the idea that it's continually changing. Our identities are continually changing. So often you'll hear writers or people use the word "selfing" to get across the idea that in fact we're constantly in this state of bhava, this state of becoming, which is a state of continuously renewing the idea of who we are. It's identity.

So that concludes my little talk on the āsava, the outflows, the influxes, the cankers, the taints, the corruptions, the intoxicants and the biases. Oh, that's something else I should mention, by the way. That whenever they're describing an Arahant, when somebody makes the full liberation, at the end of the sutta describing it, you'll read the scriptures and say something to the effect of: while listening, the hearts of the bhikkhus, or the hearts of those listening, were freed from the cankers through clinging no more. And that's one of the definitions of an Arahant. He's a *khīṇāsava*, somebody who destroyed the cankers.

May I hope that my words have been of some assistance and that you are liberated from all the āsava sooner rather than later.