

21b Overcoming the Taints by Removing 2

Bhante Bodhidhamma · YouTube Talks · 10:12

Okay now, the important thing is that thinking is developing a mental state, and when the Buddha talks about annihilating the thinking he's not talking about annihilating the emotion or the desire that's actually motivating it. In the discourse on how to establish right mindfulness, he asks us to go in there, to feel it and to allow it to exhaust itself. And that's the process of healing, of course.

Then he says, so this is the more positive, then he gives us a lovely, his usual metaphor. "Just as in the last month of the rainy season, in the autumn, when the crops thicken, a cowherd would guard his cows by constantly tapping and poking them on this side and that with a stick to check and curb them. Why is that? Because he sees that he could be flogged, imprisoned, fined or blamed if he let them stray into the crops. So too I saw in unwholesome states danger, degradation and defilement, and in wholesome states the blessings of renunciation and the aspect of cleansing."

"Now, as I abided thus diligent, ardent and resolute, a thought of renunciation arose in me, and I understood this thought of renunciation has arisen in me. This does not lead to my affliction, to others' affliction or to the affliction of both. It aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties and leads to *Nibbāna*."

Now here, this is obviously that person who thinks a great deal. "If I think and ponder this thought even for a night, even for a day, even for a night and day, I see nothing to fear from it. But with excessive thinking and pondering, I might tire my body. And when the body is tired, the mind becomes strained. And when the mind becomes strained, it is far from concentration. So I steadied my mind internally, quieted it, brought it to a singleness and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind should not be strained." In other words, don't think too much.

So then he goes on, he repeats that with non-ill will, *mettā*, and non-cruelty, compassion. And then, of course, he repeats this understanding that a bhikkhu who frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will be the inclination of his mind. That will be the inclination of our minds, wherever we continue to think and ponder upon. But remember, when we're pondering upon things, not to ponder too much, because it strains the mind.

And then, when we're developing the better side of ourselves, "just as in the last month of the hot season when all the crops have been brought inside the villages a cowherd would guard his cows while staying at the root of a tree or out in the open, since he needs only to be mindful that the cows are there, so too there was need for me only to be mindful that these states were there." So in other words, once we've established these better ways of thinking, it's just a matter of keeping an eye on them, that's all, and they'll just keep coming. The work is letting go of the stuff which we don't want, because often that's quite

delicious.

And then he says, "tireless energy was aroused in me and unremitting mindfulness was established, my body was tranquil untroubled, my mind concentrated and unified." And in this way, he works through the purification and he finally comes upon the moment of awakening.

And this is one of these lovely phrases that you get throughout the scriptures. He realizes that birth is destroyed, becoming is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of becoming. That lovely phrase: what had to be done has been done. You can imagine the sense of relief, the sense of joy at having finally reached the end of all this stuff.

This was the third knowledge. The first, excuse me, this was the third true knowledge attained by me in the third watch of the night. "Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose. Darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent and resolute." This was the third knowledge. Remember the first two was recollection of all his lives and how he came to this point. And the motivation through all those lives was his moral conduct. And then he saw beings moving from one place to another, one rebirth to another, driven also by their moral decisions. So what had been a personal law when he realized that his life was, the movement from life to life, and even in this life, is driven by our ethical decisions, became a universal law when he saw that all beings behave in the same way. And the third one was the realization that his heart was completely purified of these taints, these defilements.

I've got a bit of time. I'll go over time a little bit. "Suppose because there was a wooded range there. In a wooded range, there was a great low-lying marsh near which a large herd of deer lived. Then a man appeared desiring their ruin, harm and bondage. And he closed off the safe and good path that led to their happiness. And he opened up a false path and he put out a decoy and he set up a dummy so that the large herd of deer might later come upon calamity, disaster and loss.

But another man came desiring their good, welfare and protection and he reopened the safe and good path that led to their happiness and he closed off the false path and he removed the decoy and destroyed the dummy so that the large herd of deer might later come to growth, increase and fulfillment. I have given this simile in order to convey a meaning. This is the meaning: the great low-lying marsh is a term for sensual pleasure. The large herd of deer is a term for beings. A man desiring their ruin, harm and bondage is the term for Mara, the evil one. The false path is a term for the wrong eightfold path: wrong view, wrong intention and so on. The decoy is a term for delight and lust. Well, better say indulgence and lust. The dummy is a term for ignorance. The man desiring their good and welfare and protection is a term for the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened. The safe and good path that led to their happiness is a term for the noble eightfold path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

The safe and good path that leads to happiness has been reopened by me. The wrong path has been closed off, the dummy removed and the decoy destroyed. What should be done for his disciples out of

compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them, I have done for you. There are these roots of trees, these empty huts, these meditation centres and corners of bedrooms where you can sit. Meditate bhikkhus. Do not delay or else you will regret it later. This is my instruction to you."

I don't know about you, but I find this an extraordinarily moving little piece here where he says, "What should be done for his disciples out of compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them? I have done for you." Remember, he spent 45 years, the rest of his life trying to get us out of a mess. And then he tells us that we must find a place to meditate and do not delay or else you regret it later. This is our instruction to you.

"And what the Blessed One said and the bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words."

Very good. I hope that you've also been inspired by this discourse. And I think it's time now to do a little sitting.

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