

Saddhā: Confidence and Trust

Bhante Bodhidhamma · YouTube Talks · 8:50

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.

So because it's spring and because the next moon day is celebrating the Buddha himself, I thought it would be a nice thing to do the seven factors of enlightenment and the five spiritual faculties. They double over on certain ones, so what we have is *saddhā*, which translates as confidence, and that matches with insight, with wisdom. Then we have effort, which supports concentration or focus. Then we have calmness, which twins with interest. And then finally equanimity, which twins with investigation of the Dhamma or the insight. And holding all that together is, of course, awareness.

So I've mixed these five spiritual faculties with the seven factors of enlightenment there.

Now, what I want to centre on is this whole quality of *saddhā*, which translates—the two words I prefer rather than faith—as confidence and trust. When I use the word confidence, I have confidence in... it seems to centre upon my relationship to what it is I'm confident in. But when I use the word "I trust," I trust the Dhamma, I trust the teaching, it seems to centre more upon what it is that I'm putting my confidence in. So it's just me with words. So it's confidence and trust, I think, gets close to the idea of this *saddhā*, translating the Pali word.

Now this is twinned with the word *paññā*, and there are three levels of this wisdom. The first one is when we come to hear something—so our initial interest in what we hear. Now that will actually give us some confidence. If it doesn't, then of course we don't take it any further. And the more confidence we have, the more we'll want to read about the Dhamma. And the more you do that, the more of course you find the opportunity to think about it, and it becomes your own bit of intellectual knowledge. And then finally, that leads us into the actual practice, the *vipassanā*, which is the final stage of this process of insight. And it's through *vipassanā* that these things are realised by us—they become our own personal experience.

So that is all supported with this confidence, this trust. And if that begins to fade, then of course you find yourself losing interest.

Now what is the enemy of that? Of course, it's doubt. And this is a skeptical doubt—it's not the doubt that the Buddha wants us to have, which raises up that interest, a sense of wonder. Is the Buddha right about this? This skeptical doubt is what stops you doing things. And it's often because of fear of failure, or it could be because you're fearful of it undermining your treasured opinions.

So for instance, if you are committed to scientific materialism, and it turns out that there is a transcendence, then of course that does undermine your position a bit. And that's always fearful for us because we identify ourselves with our opinions and our views. So sometimes this skeptical doubt will just stop us mid-tracks. It'll just stop us from doing something.

Now, the other doubt that we can have is in the Buddha himself, and of course in the teacher—heaven forbid. But that doesn't mean that we should lose our critical faculties of the teacher. We're not supposed to be enslaved to our teachers.

And often we lose certain confidence in the practice. And I think that comes because we have some idea of progress. And if it doesn't fit our idea of progress, then you think, "Oh well, the teaching doesn't work." And often it turns back into us: "It works for some, but not for me. I'm no good. I'm useless at this."

So there's also a doubt in oneself, and that comes often about by comparison. You see somebody who started with you and they're fully liberated, and you're still hanging around being depressed and anxious. So you tend to think, "Well, I can't do it. Everybody else can, but I can't."

So these types of doubts have to be undermined by recognising the wrong view, the wrong reason as to why doubt has arisen. And of course that doubt will be completely undermined really through the practice. And no matter how little the insight is, that insight is supporting our confidence.

So that final point about the self: the whole teaching of the Buddha leads to the conclusion that everybody must become liberated. It's not possible for anybody not to become liberated, no matter how long it takes, because that which is trying to understand why it is suffering and seeking the end of suffering is what is actually liberated by that process. So we can say that it's a categorical imperative. It's an absolute must that whether you want to or not, like it or not, we will be driven towards full liberation and awakening. So there's a bit of hope there for us all.

So just finally, this confidence—we can develop it. We can develop a confidence in the Buddha, for instance. Now that's if you've got a devotional heart. So you read about the Buddha. You can imagine yourself listening to the Buddha when you're reading the scriptures. Actually now, a lot of the scriptures are on YouTube, just delivered by somebody. There's a couple of websites that do it too. So there are certain ways in which you can develop a relationship with the historical Buddha.

With the developing in the Dhamma, of course, is really just not expecting great progress—just keep at it little by little. And the Sangha—that's our other commitment, should we say—is recognising that there are people who are progressing, there are people who are fully liberated even now. There's somebody in Thailand called Ajahn... dear, come on memory... there is an Ajahn in Thailand—Ganha, that's his name—Ajahn Ganha, who is recognised as fully liberated, and he is a nephew of Ajahn Chah, for those of you who know Ajahn Chah.

So I can only hope my words have been of some assistance and they have not caused even greater

confusion, and that by your commitment to the practice, you will be liberated from all suffering sooner rather than later.

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