



www.dhammadstream.org

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa

Published by

Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia.

A.C.N. 005 701 806 A.B.N. 42 611 496 488

33 Brooking Street, Upwey, Victoria 3158, Australia

Email: wbu@bdcu.org.au

Website: www.bdcu.org.au

May You Be Well And Happy

Copyright - Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd
Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University

Summary

The article provides a detailed explanation of the dangers and difficulties associated with the unwholesome mind state called *dosa* in the Pali language, or in English, the state of anger and hatred.

Quoted in the article are the Buddha's words which describe the mind of anger and its resultants with extra-ordinary clarity and show that a person can easily be lost in this state as "for a person overcome with anger, nothing gives light".

Several anecdotes are provided in the words of Ajarn Brahm which help us avoid some of the traps that aversion lays for us in our everyday lives.

The path from anger to *adosa* (non-hate) or loving kindness and goodwill to ourselves first and then others is explained.

This teaching was first broadcast on Hillside Radio on Sunday the 30th November 2003. Script No. 1045.

Is the door of your heart open to yourself?

That the mental health of Australians is poor, as measured by suicide rates, is well established. Buddha Dhamma can improve mental wellness and reduce suicidal tendencies, thus increasing longevity.

Suicide is an act of self-destruction, having as causes the following:

- lack of courage to live and to cope with difficulties
- defeat by life and loss of all hope
- desire for non-existence (*abhava*)

This self-destruction is considered in Buddha Dhamma as one of the most serious crimes.

We must send loving kindness into the world.

Of course, for most of us this cannot be achieved in a day, or even this life, but it will be a fruit in the future when the time is right. The tendency towards humanistic thought, religious feelings and mind nurturing among young persons is not as widely spread as you may think.

When the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, began teaching in the west, students would ask him about self-hatred and low self-esteem. He was unable to understand what they were talking about as these concepts are not part of Tibetan culture.

Some students explained to the Dalai Lama what they were talking about. It is said that when he finally understood it, he wept in compassion for the students.

It is said that even the most scurrilous Tibetan rogue, at least likes himself. Self-hate can give rise to: perfectionism, harshness, judgement, rejection

and exclusion.

'Freedom from Perfection' was the title of a public talk given by SharTseChoe-Je Lobsand Tenzin Rinpoche, Former Abbot of the Gyuto Tantric University and Vice Chancellor, from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Gelug-Pa Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, on Friday 24 October 2003, at Moorabbin Town Hall in Melbourne.

Because the world we live in is not a perfect world, our desire for our lives to be perfect, for others to be perfect, leads only to frustration, anger and unhappiness.

One of our Members recently acknowledged her strong intolerance for people who are poor spellers. When she examined this intolerance, and recognized it as hate, she saw the unreasonableness, the harshness, of turning an intolerance of imperfection into hate for a person.

She is endeavoring to become more tolerant, although has retained her preference for accurate spelling.

In his talk, the Rinpoche talked about the fact that most of us have negative minds most of the time. He went on to say that the ultimate reason for those negative minds lies in self-hate. The Rinpoche explained by saying that if we did not hate ourselves, we would not subject ourselves endlessly to the unhappiness of having to experience such minds.

How can we be free from hating ourselves ?

One way is through wisdom. The Atthasalini (I, Book I, Part IV, Chapter 1, p.127) defines non-aversion (adosa), as follows:

“... Absence of hate has the characteristic of freedom from churlishness or resentment, like an agreeable friend; the function of destroying vexation, or dispelling distress, like sandalwood: the manifestation of being pleasing, like the full moon...” The Visuddhi Magga XIV, 143, page 525 reads:

“Non-hate has the characteristic of lack of savagery, or the characteristic of non-opposing, like a gentle friend. Its function is to remove annoyance, or its function is to remove fever, as sandalwood does. It is manifested as agreeableness, like the full moon”. (Buddhaghosa, Bhadantacariya)

Whenever there is non-aversion there has to be non-attachment, alooha, as well as several other sobhana cetasikas which each perform their own function while they assist the kusala (wholesome) citta.

There are many forms and degrees of adosa; when it is directed towards living beings, adosa takes the form of metta, loving-kindness. Adosa directed towards objects can be described as patience, for example, non-aversion or patience with regard to heat, cold, bodily pain or other unpleasant objects.

Dana is an act of kindness. When we are giving a gift with kusala citta we show kindness. When there is non-aversion there must also be non-attachment that performs its function of detachment from the object.

When we observe sila there is adosa accompanying the kusala citta. When

we abstain from akusala kamma that harms both ourselves and others, we show an act of kindness.”

The Atthasalini I, Book I, Part IV, Chapter I, p129 (cited in Van Gorkom, 1999) states:

"Goodwill is that which does not ruin one's own or another's bodily or mental happiness, worldly or future advantage and good report."

"Adosa is agreeable both for oneself and for others, it conduces to harmonious living among people. Through aversion or hate a person loses his or her friends, and through non-aversion he or she acquires friends."

“... Absence of hate is the cause of the production of friends for through love friends are obtained, not lost...”

When non-aversion arises we endure what is unpleasant. The Buddha exhorted the monks to endure unpleasant objects. In the Middle Length Sayings, I, no.2, Discourse on All the Cankers [cited in Van Gorkom, 1999], the Buddha spoke about different ways of getting rid of the cankers and explained that one of these ways is endurance. It is to be understood that the cankers cannot be eradicated unless right understanding is developed:

“And what, monks, are the cankers to be got rid of by endurance? In this teaching, monks, a monk wisely reflective is one who bears cold, heat, hunger, thirst, the touch of gadfly, mosquito, wind and sun, creeping things, ways of speech that are irksome, unwelcome: he is of a character to bear bodily feelings which, arising, are painful, acute, sharp, shooting, disagreeable, miserable, deadly.

Whereas, monks, if he lacked endurance, the cankers which are destructive and consuming might arise. But because he endures, therefore these cankers which are destructive and consuming are not. These, monks, are called the cankers to be got rid of by endurance.

When we feel sick or when we experience another unpleasant object through one of the senses we may feel sorry for ourselves and complain about it. We give in to aversion and we are apt to put off the development of kusala until we are in more favourable conditions.

Then we overlook the opportunities for the development of kusala which are right at hand: when there are unpleasant objects there is an opportunity to cultivate patience. We all are bound to suffer from hunger and thirst, heat and cold; these things occur in our daily life time and again.

The experience of an unpleasant object through one of the senses is vipaka, the result of kamma, and we cannot avoid vipaka. After the moments of vipaka have fallen away, there are kusala cittas or akusala cittas, depending on whether there is 'wise attention' or 'unwise attention' to the object. If we see the benefit of patience in all circumstances there are conditions for non-aversion instead of aversion.

When there is mindfulness of aversion it can be known as only a type of nama (mind) that has arisen because of its appropriate conditions. At the moment of mindfulness there is non-aversion, adosa, instead of aversion, dosa.

The Dhammapada says:

Hatred is not overcome by hatred

It is overcome by Love

This is the eternal Law.

(Dhammapada 5, cited in Sujiva, 1998)

As the Buddha taught, it is right now, in this life, that suffering comes to those who are angry:

"These are the seven things, pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim, that come to a man or woman who is angry.

An angry person is ugly and sleeps poorly.

Gaining a profit, he turns it into a loss, having done damage with word and deed.

A person overwhelmed with anger destroys his wealth.

Maddened with anger, he destroys his status.

Relatives, friends, and colleagues avoid him.

Anger brings loss.

Anger inflames the mind.

He doesn't realize that his danger is born from within.

An angry person doesn't know his own benefit.

An angry person doesn't see the Dhamma.

A man conquered by anger is in a mass of darkness.

He takes pleasure in bad deeds as if they were good, but later, when his anger is gone, he suffers as if burned with fire.

He is spoiled, blotted out, like fire enveloped in smoke.

When anger spreads, when a man becomes angry, he has no shame, no fear of evil, is not respectful in speech.

For a person overcome with anger, nothing gives light.

I'll list the deeds that bring remorse, that are far from the teachings.

Listen!

An angry person kills his father, kills his mother, kills Brahmans and people run-of-the-mill.

It's because of a mother's devotion that one sees the world, yet an angry run-of-the-mill person can kill this giver of life.

Like oneself, all beings hold themselves most dear, yet an angry person, deranged, can kill himself in many ways: with a sword, taking poison, hanging himself by a rope in a mountain glen.

Doing these deeds that kill beings and do violence to himself, the angry person doesn't realize that he's ruined.

This snare of Mara, in the form of anger, dwelling in the cave of the heart: cut it out with self-control, discernment, persistence, right view.

The wise man would cut out each and every form of unskillfulness.

Train yourselves:

'May we not be blotted out.'

Free from anger and untroubled, free from greed, without longing, tamed, your anger abandoned, free from fermentation, you will be unbound."

If we are subject to the actions of a person or persons that intend us harm, if anger and ill-will arise in us, we should note the words of the Buddha:

"Hostilities aren't stilled through hostility, regardless.
Hostilities are stilled through non-hostility: this, an unending truth.
Unlike those who don't realize that we're here on the verge of perishing, those who do: their quarrels are stilled."

These are the facts of all life.

We should also note that what comes to us does so as the inevitable result of past karmas. Realising this, we should not be attached to feeling anger or revulsion if we are subject to unpleasantness:

"He insulted me,
hit me,
beat me,
robbed me'--
for those who brood on this,
hostility isn't stilled.
'He insulted me,
hit me,
beat me,
robbed me' --
for those who don't brood on this, hostility is stilled."

Instead, we should cultivate adosa (in English hatelessness). Adosa "is opposed to dosa and it can overcome dosa. It is not mere absence of hatred or aversion, but is a positive virtue. When adosa turns its attention to living beings wishing them to be happy, it is known as metta, i.e., loving-kindness. Adosa is also one of the three roots of good." Dr Mehm Tin Mon (1995).

Ajahn Brahm, an English Buddhist monk and former disciple of the legendary Thai meditation master Ajahn Chah, graduated with a Masters Degree in Theoretical Physics from Cambridge and became a monk at the age of 23. He has been a Monk for 29 years, and is now the Abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery in Perth.

In a talk at the Dallas Brooks Hall in Melbourne on November 2, 2003, Ajahn Brahm said, "We suffer because we do not know human nature. We expect the world to be something it is not." Ajahn Brahm talked about his father, who died when he was 16. When he was 13, his father said to him that whatever he may do in his life, the door of his house would always be open to him. The family was poor, and in fact, did not live in a house at all, but a flat. What his father meant, however, was that the door of his heart would always be open to him.

Is the door of your heart open to yourself ?

To have no sense of friendship among persons is already very bad, but sadder still is when one cannot have it with oneself.

Ajahn Brahm told the story of seven monks meditating in a cave on metta, or the door of your heart being open to all beings.

One was the head monk, the second his brother, the third his best friend, the fourth his enemy, the fifth, a very elderly monk, the sixth an ill monk, and the seventh a useless, clumsy monk.

Some bandits came and found the cave, and thought it would be good for their headquarters, and they wanted to kill all of the monks and take over their cave.

The Head Monk negotiated with the bandits, but the best deal he could negotiate was that the bandits would take one monk to kill, and set the others free.

The question is "Which monk did the Head Monk choose to sacrifice for the lives of the remaining monks?" The correct answer is that the Head Monk could not choose, as his love of all seven monks, his brother, his best friend, his enemy, the elderly monk, the ill monk, the useless, clumsy monk, as well as himself, was the same.

According to Ajahn Brahm, in western countries, most people will say the Head Monk, that is, 'self'. The reason that they give this answer is because they do not love themselves enough.

They need to say, whatever I have done, the door of my heart is open to me.

At one time, a wall needed to be built at his monastery in Western Australia, and so Ajahn Brahm decided to build it himself. He had no building skills, but he did have patience, and so set about learning the skills.

When he had finished the wall, and stepped back to survey his work, he saw that there were two bricks out of one thousand that were markedly out of alignment. He was so unhappy about the two bricks, he wanted to bulldoze the wall and re-build, however the Temple Abbot at the time wouldn't let him. When visitors came to the Temple and he was showing them around, he would always avoid taking them to the wall, as he was so displeased with the two bricks.

One day a visitor who came to the Temple to visit saw the wall, and said "What a beautiful wall". Ajahn Brahm responded, "Can't you see the two crooked bricks? The visitor replied, "Yes, I can, but I can also see 998 beautifully-laid bricks."

And that is often what we do with our lives. We are so strongly drawn to the negative, we have such a propensity to focus on the far fewer negatives, that we forget to look at the positives.

We look only at the two bad bricks and make them characterize the whole wall.

People commit suicide because they focus on the two bad bricks.

We also need to look at our positives, to recollect our good actions and our good qualities.

We need to look at the whole wall.

He also used the wall as an analogy for relationships, saying that people will complain about their partners on the basis of the two bad bricks, selectively ignoring the 998 good bricks.

After one talk at which Ajahn Brahm told the story of the brick wall, a builder came up to share a trade secret. He said "When we make a mistake and lay 'bad bricks', we call them a feature and charge an extra \$5,000 dollars for them!"

And so we should also make the 'bad bricks' the features of our lives.

If someone comes to our house and drops a truckload of manure in front of it, our first response might be to complain that it was not ordered, and no one will take it away. Some people would pick it up and carry it around with them. Your job is to dig in the dung, to grow flowers, and fruit that is sweet and delicious, that you can share with your friends.

So next time you are confronted by something unpleasant in your life, such as a severe illness, your response should be "Great! More fertilizer for me to develop my compassion and wisdom."

The Late Venerable Ashin Thittila in Buddhist Metta writes:

Metta - Universal Love - is generally taken to exist in connection with other people, but in reality love for self comes first. It is not a selfish love, but love for self- pure love - comes first.

When we meditate on love, we meditate on love of self first: May I be free from harm. By having pure love, Metta, as we defined it, for self; selfish tendencies, hatred and anger will be diminished.

Therefore, unless we ourselves possess Metta within, we cannot share, we cannot radiate, we cannot send this Metta to others.

Supposing you have no money, how can you send even a few small coins?

So meditation on love is to be started within ourselves.

You may say that we love ourselves. If you can say that you love yourselves, can you harm yourselves by having angry thoughts within yourselves? If you love a person will you do harm to him? No.

To love the self means to be free from selfishness, hatred, anger, etc. Therefore, to clear ourselves from these undesirable feelings we must love ourselves.

According to Buddha dhamma, self-love comes first. Buddha dhamma always is a method of dealing with ourselves. Therefore, it is self-help. By helping ourselves we can help others effectively. We talk about externals, meaning by this the duty to help others; but as pointed out by the Buddha, if a person cannot help himself well, he cannot help others well.

'One should first establish oneself in what is proper; then only he should advise another; such a wise man will not be reproached'. (Dhammapada,

Verse, 158)

Also in the Dhammapada, (Stanza 42) it is said no enemy can harm one so much as one's own thoughts of craving - thoughts of hatred, thoughts of jealousy and so on.

If one cannot find happiness in himself, he cannot find happiness anywhere else. It is also said that people who cannot control themselves cannot find happiness.

In social service, the so-called social workers are not happy in the performance of their duties unless they are calm themselves. If they are not calm in themselves, they cannot produce calm in others. We must, therefore be properly trained not only' in outside organization but in our inner culture.

In the case of some social workers, the real thing they are doing is telling others what to do, like dictators. And they say that, 'We do our best but others are not willing to accept our help'.

Everybody is in need of help if the help is properly given in the way they like to be assisted, but not in the ways others want to help them. So a true social worker should be a person who has true love for himself first filled with a love which is nothing but pure, unselfish love. Then he can confer a double blessing; that is, he, having pure, true love, enjoys himself while helping others, at the same time making others happy.

In the Jataka stories, the stories of the Buddha's past lives as a Bodhisatta, the Buddha-to-be is always trying to strengthen himself by helping others - so that other people will be happy, so that he will be stronger to give greater help.

Again, if a person cannot be right with himself, he cannot be right with others. He should be like an engineer who first perfects himself in his trade and then only produces perfect work because he has perfected his training first. A doctor without the required qualifications may try to help patients but he may do harm instead. Therefore, a leader of any kind, social, political, religious, if he has no mental culture, may be leading his followers in a wrong direction.

We are so used to seeing external training that we forget inner training, the training of ourselves. We like to train other people and forget to train ourselves. We tend to take it for granted that we are always right and others are in the wrong.

It seems to be a characteristic of people that they blame others; even when they are late, they blame others - because of wife, because of friends or somebody else, etc. I do not mean to say that we should blame only ourselves.

There is a saying of Confucius - a very wise, useful saying: 'An uncultured person blames others, a semi-cultured person blames himself, and a fully cultured person blames neither'.

The problem is, 'What is wrong', not 'who is wrong'. According to the Buddhist method, training oneself comes first. Individual perfection must be

first, so that the organic whole may be perfect. The state of the outer world is a reflection of our inner selves.

To conclude we suggest you meditate a few minutes every day on love, so that our thoughts, actions and words may be filled with love. From trained minds come right thoughts, right actions and right words.

In true meditation, first you fill yourself with love mentally, 'May I be well and happy'. After a while you extend it to all others, saying mentally, 'May all beings of the Universe be well and happy'. Mean it and feel it.

Also try to see that the world is filled with your love, with a great desire that they may be happy, a desire such as a mother has for her only child.

If you send out these thoughts of Metta before you go to sleep you will have extraordinarily peaceful sleep.

If you can maintain these thoughts of Metta, you will have a serene, peaceful, successful life and you will be loved because you are loving.

The world is like a great mirror and if you look at the mirror with a smiling face you will see your own smiling beautiful face. If you look at it with a long face, as the English say, you will invariably see your own ugly face.

There is also an expression in the form of greeting. 'Well friend, how does the world treat you?'

The usual answer is, 'Well. I am all right'. Your answer should be. 'Well, the world treats me as I treat the world'.

If you treat the world properly, kindly, the world will treat you kindly. We should not expect other persons to treat us kindly first, but we should start by ourselves treating them kindly.

The teachings of the Buddha are the teachings of your own heart.

May your heart always be open to yourself. May you be well and happy.

This script was written and edited by Leanne Eames and Pennie White.

References:

1. Thich Nhat Nanh. "In Search of the Enemy of Man (addressed to (the Rev.) Martin Luther King)." In Nhat Nanh, Ho HUU Tuong, Tam Ich, Bui Giang, Pham Cong Thien. Dialogue. Saigon: La Boi, 1965. P. 11-20, at:
 - <https://plumvillage.org/about/thich-nhat-hanh/letters/in-search-of-the-enemy-of-man/>
 - [Buddhist Radio Program Archives – 19 September 1999: Are You Combining Unsuitable Poisons? \(HTML\)](#)
 - [Buddhist Radio Program Archives – 6 April 2003: The Teacher in Your Heart](#)
 - [Buddhist Radio Program Archives – 1 October 2000: How Ought We View Our Ancestors?](#)
 - [Buddhist Radio Program Archives – 1 April 2001: The Importance of Cultivating True and Wise Friends](#)
2. Abhidhamma Class No. 34, 11 February 2003 at:
 - <https://www.bdcu.org.au/bddronline/bddr13no1/abhi034.html>
3. The Buddhist Hour Radio Broadcast Script 248 for Sunday 27 October 2002. This script is entitled: "Developing adosa (non-hate)" at:
 - [Buddhist Radio Program Archives – 27 October 2002: Developing Adosa \(Non-Hate\)](#)
4. Buddhist Metta, Late Venerable Ashin Thittila at:
 - [A Buddhist Library](#)