

REC005 (Continued)

This is

Part Two of: The Cause and Cure of Mental Suffering

[And]

Today's talk continues-on from where we left-off in our previous discussion and analysis of the Four Noble Truths:

Concerning the Second Noble Truth

Francis Story discusses/ the **Cause of Suffering**/ as follows:

“It is usually explained that unfulfilled desire or craving causes suffering,
so the way to cut out suffering
is to cut out desire or craving,

but, unfortunately for us,
it is not as simple as that,
as will be explained in the sentence below:

“In a single sentence the Buddha said,

‘Thus it is,
Ananda, that craving comes
into being **because of sensation.**’

“But [in order] for the sensation to be/,
there must also be/ the mind and the body/,
and that body and mind/ must have been/
brought about/ by prior craving
so that the sequence/ of cause and effect/
extends/ infinitely/ into the past.”

This is precisely the idea which dependent origination presents:
it is a system of related conditions
rather than of temporal events.

It is a system which necessitates
close observation and analysis.

In the *Abhidhammattha/sangha* (VIII.I), it says

“Through ignorance/, a human being fails/
to understand the/ impermanence/
and/ ‘substanceless/’ nature of existence/

as it truly is.

“He enjoys the things of the world,
taking them to be real and lasting,
and/ so /creates a craving for them.

“On account of his cravings,
he seeks
to obtain one and avoid the other.

“This leads to the continuity/
of his life process/
a chain of the struggle/ for living ...
[and]
his good and bad activities (*sankhaara*) ...
determine/ his mental disposition
and all/ of his subsequent consciousness ...

“Dependent on the mental and physical
aggregates, he acquires the six fields of
sense cognition.
Depending on the six fields of sense cognition,
he gets **contact** with the object of sense.

“The **contact** produces sensation;
the sensation gives rising to craving;
and craving to grasping.

“Grasping continues the life process ...
And/ thus/ (the life-continuum flows).

“Thus ...
he becomes old and dies,
experiencing all kinds
of grief,
lamentation,
suffering,
anxiety and despair.

“Perpetually he moves on
in the round
of birth and death/ so long
as he is in bondage to ignorance.”

*

We are further reminded that,

“Sensual craving,
which is generated/

by contact/
of the organs of sense/
with their objects,
is six-fold:
craving for pleasurable sights/, sounds/, odors/,
tastes/, tactile-sensations/, and mental-impressions.

These are known as the fields (*aayatana*) of sense perception.

The craving for existence takes **three forms**/,
corresponding to the spheres/ in which life manifests/:

Which are craving for existence
(i) in the sensual spheres (*kaamaa loka*);
(ii) in the fine material spheres (*ruupaa loka*); and
(iii) in the formless spheres (*anuurupa loka*) or mental planes.

The craving for self-annihilation
is the group of desires that accompany
the erroneous view that the aggregates
of phenomenal personality constitute
a soul which is annihilated at death.”

To continue the analysis,

“Thirty-six streams of craving
are recognized in Buddhist psychology:
Eighteen of them internal (*ajjhata*),
depending on subjective concepts
and on eighteen external (*bahhirra*)
associated with subject-object relationships.

But every type and degree of craving
contributes to the sum total of the grasping
which fastens living beings to the wheel of rebirth.

“This is especially true
of the lower forms of craving
connected with the
unwholesome mental concomitants
of lust, ill-will and delusion.

So we find in the *Anguttara Nikaaya* (III, 33)

“Where so ever/
beings spring into existence/,

there their deeds will ripen/,
and wherever their deeds may ripen/,

there they will gather the fruits/
of those deeds/, be it in this life/,

be it in the next/
or be it in any future life.”

The pith of the point, here, is:

“Every volitional act/ is motivated
by some kind of desire/;

consequently, ‘thought’ itself
is practically inseparable from
desire in the mind/
[which is]
still dominated by ignorance.

“And it is the thought-impulse
that radiates outwards/
in the last moment of consciousness/ -

which gives rise to another
arising psychophysical organism/,
thus/ renewing the sequence of
cause and effect/ in a fresh life-continuum.

“Throughout the creative process,
the urge which maintains this
perpetual renewal of energy is

the desire to experience conscious life,
‘seeking now here, now there’
for satisfaction.” (Wheel Series 34-35)

We may throw some fresh light on the subject
by considering that, if neurological impulses
in the brain can create and emit energy,

which even medical research can measure/
to some degree/, we are not just using
a loose metaphor when we use the term:
“**brain waves.**”

And it figures that if
everything in the universe works
in **systems** of **processes**
of tiny vibrations and waves,

the process of thinking
will work/

and be/ the cause of/
determined
psychophysical effects/
in the same way.

Just as there are uncountable invisible forms
that create and radiate energy in this world,

[beyond the ones like electricity and light
and solar radiation/, which we all know], etc.

so the psychophysical system,
when it is in a process
of seeking and desiring,

with increasing intensity,
will throw-off or emanate
energy in the same way.

Often, we can even feel,
within ourselves,
the arising energy connected to
basic, natural instincts,

and perhaps just as often/
(or perhaps even more frequently),
those close to us/ feel the effects/
of our aggressive-energy arising.

They may 'pick up on' and 'feel'
the effects of the mental energy
burning within us, resultant from
our hidden frustrated,
subconscious and conscious desires,

even though we ourselves,
in our own mental confusion,
distraction and delusion,

are not yet consciously aware
of the energy field which we
are creating and emanating around us.

This arising mind-body energy,
(some will be happy to hear),
can, [depending on circumstances],
be either harmful or healing
to the body and the mind,
in their psychophysical interplay,

but, unfortunately, in the primal world
of common-place/ human interaction/
it usually works negatively/
rather than in a positive way.

Although positive energy,
as we have mentioned before,
can also be aroused for the
establishment of sublime states,
[which we will find discussed
in a later lecture entitled
The Four Sublime States.]

the mind and the body/
and their inter-relationship/
with our environment/,

as an inter-dependent field/
for such consummation of energy/
can be either creative or destructive.

Unfortunately, as we have said,
it is usually destructive,

especially when we are so intently
self-absorbed in grasping after
consciously or unconsciously-created
(desired but hidden) mental objects,

[of which we may be unaware]

as the mental energy
thus being created/ and further radiated,
is inevitably becoming harmful
both to others and to ourselves.

Why we can be so blind
to the harm we do to
ourselves and others
is due to (*avijja*)

Unfortunately,
even though it is often the case that,
such individuals secretly know
that the cause of harmful desires
will lead to negative long-term effects,

they obstinately/, out of habit/, perversely/
continue to resist/ even their own insight.

They will not consciously confirm/
what the mind inherently knows/
about the harmfulness/ of their actions,
(even to themselves), and, they continue

in their obdurate/ and unwise course,
all the way through
to an increasingly negative/
and harmful/
and, inevitable, painful end.

If the ignorant man could train
his mind to go the opposite way,
the result for his mental and physical health
would be positive and wholesome,

but the obdurate mind which resists
like a stubborn animal, cannot be prodded,
[even in the moments of occasional dim insight],
to admit that there is any other way than his own.

Another clear point Francis Story makes is that,

“It was under the domination of the
craving urge that the rudimentary
forms of life evolved into the complex
structures of the higher animals and man.

“More and better sensory organs were
needed to satisfy the unconscious
craving for sense experience,

and so the vital urge worked
through the gradual processes/
of biological evolution/ to produce them.

“Life is not the work
of a conscious creator,
with his object fully in view;

it is the life of a blind groping force.”
—a force to survive and stay alive
and get whatever you need and want
if there is nothing in the way to stop you.

Thus we may say that

“Man is not a distinct and special creation.
He merely represents the highest peak
to which organic evolution has,

(as yet), reached on this planet.”

Unfortunately, he has developed more than the force/ which he needs/ to get/ only what/ is requisite to survive in a healthy and relatively peaceful manner.

And this is why he strives to get more than he needs/ and develops the tendency/ to become aggressive and greedy to protect his possessions.

The Buddha also reminds us, in total contrast, to the above, (for those few who may know)

that there are also those who have the good fortune to be born into this world, who develop the capacity

to strive on the Middle Path, maintaining only what is needed

to develop a healthy mental-physical balance, to develop the moral faculty on the path of -

right concentration and wisdom to ultimately attain the peace that surpasses understanding.

It all depends upon why and where and when you were born and upon what conditions and factors.

Concerning the Third Noble Truth

Francis Story discusses the **Cessation of Suffering** as follows:

We are told that the Buddha’s Enlightenment was attained in three stages:

In the **first watch** he acquired knowledge of previous states of existence.

In the **second watch** he achieved knowledge of how beings pass from one state of existence to another in accordance with their deeds.

“At this point, he has discerned
the truths
of suffering and moral causality
as it operates through *kamma*...”

And, at the **next stage**,
“At the conclusion of the **last watch**,

he penetrated to the knowledge
of the underlying causes of existence,
with its root in craving and ignorance
and the means by which the process
could be brought to an end.”

And now comes the important part
for those who want to know:

“In the last watch of the night,
out of compassion for living beings,
by fixing his mind/ on dependent origination/
and meditating upon it/ both in order of becoming/
and in order of cessation,

at sunrise, he obtained Supreme Enlightenment,
and then he uttered these words:

“Vainly have I wandered through many
Births seeking the builder of this house.
Painful indeed is repeated birth.
Now, O builder of the house,
Never again shall you build.

All of your rafters are shattered.
The ridge pole cast down.
My mind has attained the unconditioned;
The cravings are extinguished.”

(*Dhammapada* commentary and *Dhammapada* vs. 134-135)

And what do these words mean?

The Buddha, having been well-educated,
was accustomed to speak in figurative language,

in similes and metaphors,
(just as cultivated men have done
in the development of all languages),
and, here, he is using a comparative analogy.

He means that the ‘house’ is the body,

the 'builder' is craving,
passions are the 'rafters'
and the ridge pole is 'ignorance.'

In the Buddha's words,

“For, through the complete fading away
and extinction of craving (*tanhaa*),
clinging to existence (*upadaana*) is extinguished;
through the cessation of clinging,
the process of becoming (*bhava*) is extinguished,
through the extinction of becoming, rebirth (*jaatti*) is extinguished,

and through the extinction of rebirth,
decay and death, grief, lamentation,
suffering, sorrow and despair are extinguished.

Thus comes about the extinction
of the entire mass of suffering.

And thereby comes about the cessation
and overcoming of bodily form, of sensation,
perception, mental formations and consciousness;
this is the cessation of suffering, the end of disease,
the overcoming of decay and death.” (*Samyutta Nikaaya*, 12)

This is not a selection from the texts
that we should speed-read
before we go quickly on to the next passage.

On the contrary, we should go back
to the beginning of the quotation
and review the intention of
each statement, until we are sure
that we have got the meaning
of each step clearly in our heads.

Otherwise/
If we were to read too quickly
our minds/ might soon go fuzzy/
and become unclear/ and begin to wander/
even though we wouldn't know or want to admit it.

*

We cannot delve deeply, here, into
a discussion of the Ultimate and Nibbana,
because it is beyond the scope of our topic,

but **concerning form**, the Buddha explains that Nibbana is the cessation of the process, the extinction of the aggregates of clinging that formerly gave rise to the phenomenal life continuum.

“It is the only state in which suffering cannot find a foothold.”

*

In the *Dhamma/cakka/ppava/ttana Sutta*, the Buddha declares:

“This, *Bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the cessation of ill: the complete cessation, giving up, abandonment of that craving, complete release from that craving and complete detachment from it.”

*

Here, Francis Story says:

We have the psychological state presented in terms that relate to an attitude towards the world and towards the contents of sensory perception.

This, we may confidently state, is the end of the mind watching the mind and its reactions to external perceptions.

The mind becomes free from dependence on changing external conditions, it is detached it is unconditioned...

Unfortunately, for us, all but the saints
live in a world that is conditioned.

To illustrate, Francis Story says,

[End of REC005 audio recording](#)
[To continue to listen to the end,](#)
[click on audio File REC005_2.](#)

“All terms of reference we use in
thought and communication are
founded upon things and ideas
belonging to the realm of conditionality,”
so that we have no means of formulating
an idea that is not related by comparison
or contrast to some other idea.”

And further,

“The whole content of our experience
is a complex of relationships.

Thought swings continually
between the opposites, light and dark,
heat and cold, good and bad.

All these are relative values representing
oppositions or degrees of contrast,
none of which has any real meaning
apart from that relatedness.

Since nothing in the world of sense-experience

has any character except in relation to something else,
the only way to regard the sensible world
is as a sphere of merely relative reality.

It is supposedly real on one particular level of awareness,
the one on which consciousness normally functions

(but,

it must be noted, the nature of phenomenon as to details
will not be altogether the same for any two individuals),
and,
on other possible levels of consciousness, it may,
of necessity, be quite unreal perhaps even non-existent.

The physicist sees the universe in terms of electronic forces,
the mathematician reduces it to mathematical formulae;

and, while both have to deal with the world as though it
really is what it appears [to be] to the ordinary man,

their picture of it
on the level of their work
is something quite different.

They have to live simultaneously
in a world of the senses,
taking it to be
just as their sensory faculties
report it to be,

and to live in yet another world
of the intellect, in which they know

sensation is only a picture
and not a true one.

The information we receive has a kind of validity,
but in the ultimate sense the picture formed from
it is a product of sensory [legerdemain] or [delusion]

Actually,

The 'solid' objects we see and feel
consist more of space than of matter.

This fact is demonstrated
by the structure of
the smallest atom known,
that of hydrogen.

In the hydrogen atom
the distance
of the electronic orbit
from the nucleus is,
relative to its size,
twice the distance which
the earth would be from the sun
i.e. a matter of 96,000,000 miles...

What we cognize through the senses,
therefore is not the 'thing as it is'
but a relative aspect of it—relative, that is,
to our own particular mode of consciousness.

We might say that the physical world
as it 'appears' to us is 'unreal' or false,

because it exists only in our consciousness,

but to ‘suppose’ that it is real, as an
external and objective reality,
is even further from the truth.”

[One] reason why
we can’t talk about ultimate truths here
is because of the limits of language,

because language is just a set of
socially-related assumptions based on
commonly-accepted grammatical conventions.

Words and ideas are, in fact, unreal constructions,
born of the “mistaken belief that ultimate truth can
be understood through conceptual thinking which is
bound to the realm, and the terms, of [empirical] sense-data.”

It is for this reason, Francis Story tells us,
“that the brave attempts
of philosophers,
profound and intricate
though they may be,
have never succeeded
in giving a final and
completely satisfying
account of reality.”

[So much for philosophy.]

He also says another thing
which summarizes it all

in one sentence:

“The final *Nibbana* is
the point at which
cause and effect
become identical and,
by canceling one another out,
annihilate space, time and all
the categories of thought.”

How is that for concise?

In the Buddha’s words:

“O Bhikkhus, of all the states, compounded or un-compounded, Liberation is the best— namely, the expulsion of pride, the relief of thirst, the uprooting of attachment, the cutting off of the round of birth and death, the extinction of craving, emancipation, cessation, the going out of worldly desire.” (A. II, 34.)

The Buddha also said the well known
but little understood words:

“O Bhikkhus, there is an
Unborn, Unmade, Unoriginated, Unformed.
[and]
were there not such a state,
Unborn, Unmade,
Unoriginated, Unformed,
there would be no
escape from that which
is born, made, originated, formed.

But since, O Bhikkhus,

there is, indeed, this state
of the Unborn, Unmade,
Unoriginated and Unformed,
there is truly an escape
from the born, made,
originated and formed.”

The meaning is clear,
but few reach the stage
in the path where
they finally achieve it.

Concerning the Fourth Noble Truth

Francis Story describes
the way to the cessation of suffering—
which is called the Noble Eight-fold Path:

“And what, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth
of the way that leads to the cessation of suffering?

It is the Noble Eightfold Path, namely,

Right Understanding,

Right Intention,

Right Speech,

Right Action,

Right Livelihood,

Right Effort,

Right Mindfulness and

Right Concentration.”

Before outlining the eight factors of the path,

which requires some detail,

first let's relate, what the Buddha had to

say about the Middle Path or the Middle Way.

In the first discourse after his Enlightenment, which the Buddha delivered to the five ascetics (who had deserted him when he abandoned the path of self-mortification), he explained that there are two extreme courses to be avoided:

“On the one hand,

that of sensual indulgence, which is ‘base, low, vulgar, impure and unprofitable,’

and on the other,

the practice of extreme physical asceticism, which is ‘painful, impure, vain and unprofitable.’

In contrast to these two stands The Middle Path/, which the Enlightened One has discovered; the Path which enables/ one to see and to know/, which leads to peace/, to discernment/, to full knowledge/, to *Nibbana*.

Free from pain and torture/ is this path/, free from lamentation and anguish/; it is the perfect path” (*Samyutta*, 56).

Francis Story, here, concludes
with a one-line synopsis which
is precious for its conciseness:

“The Noble Eightfold Path is a way of life
which
begins with the mind and
ends with the mind transcended.”

*

The breakdown of the Noble Eightfold Path will be
the subject for a fully separate lecture, soon to follow,
because it is much too expansive to be summarized here.

*

Before closing,

we may say
in praise of Francis Story
that those who knew and
remember him

are aware of the
significant contribution
he made to

the Buddhist Publication Society
and to his dissemination
and understanding of
the Buddha Dhamma

for readers,
both in the East and the West,

and in the condensation above,
we have depended
on his rendering,

firstly, for his concise
critical expertise
and,

secondly, as a tribute to a
Buddhist scholar and teacher

who is still being widely-read,
in learned Pali-English circles
even though, he was born almost
one hundred years ago, in 1910.

[Thus ends this Lecture]

*This paper has been extracted and slightly altered from *The Mind Watching the Mind*
from www.noblepath.info to make it of suitable length for a recorded audio talk.