

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,

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“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](http://www.noblepath.info) to make it of suitable length for a recorded audio talk.