

Life That Doesn't Bite Its Owner, Part 5 of 6

NIBBANA IN EVERY ASPECT

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on 8 March 1989

In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. All Ajahn's teachings are now available on:

www.suanmokkh.org,

<https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa> and

<https://www.youtube.com/@buddhadasabhikkhu7829>.

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Today we're going to speak about Nibbāna from every angle and aspect that we can, both Nibbāna within Buddhism and Nibbāna outside of Buddhism. The words 'Nibbāna' outside of Buddhism will be a bit surprising for many people because there are many who've never thought that there is a Nibbāna outside of Buddhism, have never heard about this, have never studied it – never given it any attention. This might be quite surprising for many Buddhists in Thailand as well as Burma and Sri Lanka. But the fact is that there are kinds of Nibbāna outside of Buddhism, and we'll also give attention to them today. We'll talk about Nibbāna in Buddhism first before talking about Nibbāna outside of Buddhism. And then we'll also talk about the Nibbāna that can benefit us today – what kind of Nibbāna we can benefit from today.

When one's Dhamma practice is successful to the degree that one has *atammayatā*, then there occurs or appears that which we call Nibbāna. When we have passed through all 9 Tās, then Nibbāna appears or manifests, or we could say that the state of Nibbāna is in the mind. When one has realized impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-selfhood of things, then step by step carry these insights deeper and deeper until there is a thorough realization of *atammayatā*. The mind that has *atammayatā* completely and that mind cannot be concocted by anything, which means that there is no possibility whatsoever of any defilement arising again. That is the state that we call Nibbāna. With *atammayatā*, it's the final level of *atammayatā* that leads to the transformation of the mind so that the mind enters Nibbāna. That means that there are a number of levels of *atammayatā*. If one proceeds through them to the highest or the final *atammayatā*, then the mind undergoes the transformation. When the mind is completely unconcoctable, the state of Nibbāna appears.

When we talk about the lower levels or the lesser *atammayatā*, the first one, the first level of *atammayatā* is when the mind can free itself from the power of sexuality and sensuality. When the mind is no longer caught up in these things, when sexuality has no more pull domination over the mind, this is what happens to the first *atammayatā*, such that the mind can enter into what is called *rūpa-jhāna* or the material absorption. Just about all people have minds that are very much dominated by sexuality and sensuality. This is a fact that we need not do anything more than just observe ourselves and our friends and see how much sexuality dominates our thinking and behavior. How much effort and time we put into finding sensual and sexual pleasures. When one has studied and understood and realized all 9 Tās, to the point of *atammayatā*, then the mind can free itself, separate itself from that pull of sexuality. And then the mind let's go of the objects of sensuality and moves up to a level that where it is only interested in material objects but in a non-sensual way. This is called often the realm of fine materiality while the mind is still involved with material things, but there's no longer a sensual or sexual quality to it.

When we talk about being free of sensuality and sexuality and then moving up to where the mind is then dominated by fine materiality, traditionally this is expressed that in terms of the *rūpa-jhāna* (the fine material absorption). These are when the mind has a total focus, a complete one pointedness on one object and that object has a material basis. But we don't have to just talk in those terms. We all have friends who are no longer concerned with sexuality and sensuality, who instead a very concerned with material things such as money, clothing, property and so on, in a way that isn't in sensual, but their mind is still very much indulging in these material objects. There are some people who are completely caught up in collecting things. There are some people who have this obsession with collecting a certain kind of thing. There are people who are totally hung up on art: collecting art and studying it in all kinds of things. We can see that sometimes this obsession with material objects can be more powerful than one's attachment in husband, wife and children. So, there are a higher level of happiness than the happiness, the pleasure that comes from sexuality. There is the happiness of pure material objects, pure materiality, especially the happiness that comes from the deep one-pointed levels of concentration that we called the *jhāna*. The *jhāna* is where the mind knows only one object: it completely focuses on one single object, and when those are material objects, we call them the *rūpa-jhāna* – the material absorption. The happiness that comes from these deep levels of concentration is a higher degree of happiness than comes from sensuality and sexuality.

In the Pāli scriptures that we study, there's a place where it says the *atammayatā* or the *atammayatā* that is for abandoning the first *jhāna* or the first absorption is something which the exalted one has proclaimed or has explained. Then the *atammayatā* which is for abandoning the second *jhāna* is something that the exalted one has explained. And the *atammayatā* for abandoning the third *jhāna* is something the exalted one has explained, and then so on through all the *jhānas*. There is *atammayatā* for the abandoning, of the letting go of each level of *jhāna*. And then one can proceed abandoning each of the material *jhāna* until reaching the immaterial *jhāna* which are similar in that they are very deep and refined states of concentration, but they have immaterial, non-material objects and one abandons these up until the highest immaterial *jhāna* or *arūpa-jhāna* which is called '*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*' – the experience that is neither perception nor non perception. This is the highest state of concentration that can be achieved. It's what Prince Siddhartha learned from his last teacher, this was very refine state of concentration. Then eventually the Buddha was able to let go of that, abandon it completely through the highest *atammayatā* and in so doing realized Nibbāna.

There's a very well known discourse of the Buddha called the Brahmajāla Sutta. In this, he discusses many of the wrong understandings that are common in human thought, and in there there appears a number of misunderstandings about Nibbāna. For example, there are often people who take sex and sexual pleasure as being Nibbāna. And there are others who take the first absorption, the first material absorption as being Nibbāna. Others have taken this second material absorption as being Nibbāna and others the third, others the fourth. There are some who take the first immaterial absorption, the experience of infinite space, this is sometimes taken as Nibbāna and so on through the experience of infinite consciousness, experience of infinite nothingness, and then the experience that is neither perception nor non-perception. All eight of these absorptions have also been misunderstood as being Nibbāna.

We can say that all of these Nibbānas arise from *atammayatā*. Each of these Nibbāna has its corresponding *atammayatā* that through which each of these Nibbāna appears. So there are all these levels of the Nibbāna until the Buddha appeared and realized the highest Nibbāna – the genuine Nibbāna which occurred through the highest *atammayatā*. So each kind of Nibbāna has its corresponding *atammayatā*.

Some of you may have read that Nibbāna is the Summum Bonum, or the utmost goodness, the highest good of Buddhism. If we read this, we must understand that it's speaking only about the highest Nibbāna. If we're talking about the highest good or the utmost goodness of Buddhism, we are only talking about the highest Nibbāna and not the other Nibbāna which other people have taken as the highest. This is because every creed and every religion have its Summum Bonum. All religions have something as their Summum Bonum, but these themselves may differ in degree and in quality. Those who take sexuality as Nibbāna, that means that sex, sexuality is their Summum Bonum. And those who take the first material absorption as Nibbāna, have that first absorption as their Nibbāna, and so on through the other stages of lesser Nibbāna.

For example, we can talk about the words having a good time. The fools have very low things as their Summum Bonum. Then intelligent people have much higher things as their Summum Bonum. For example, if we talk about the words having a good time, the meaning of this you can figure out for yourself, but having a good time has different meanings for different people. There are some people that having a good time means spending time with prostitutes – that for them is having a good time. There are others that being with God is what they call having a good time. So something as simple as having a good time has many different levels. Even the people running around in the forest without any clothes, the tribal peoples or whatever, even they have something which satisfies them the most, which makes them the happiest, and so that for them is their Nibbāna. So, everybody has got something which is most satisfying, most enjoyable for them. And that for them is their utmost goodness or their Nibbāna. There are various levels of this up until the highest level – the Nibbāna that we find in Buddhism.

Nibbāna doesn't mean death. Some of the foolish people, whose minds are on one of the lower levels where their idea of Nibbāna is much lower, think that the highest Nibbāna means death. But this is incorrect. Nibbāna means coolness. Nibbāna is quenching, not extinction. This is a common misunderstanding that Nibbāna means death or extinction other oblivion. But Nibbāna properly means coolness, means quenching.

One fact you need to understand is that the technical terms of Buddhism, of all religions must be borrowed from the ordinary terms of regular people. To speak about Dhamma, to speak about spiritual matters, we have to borrow the language of ordinary actions and ordinary life, which is

very much based on material things. So we have to borrow the ordinary terms to create our technical terms. So the word Nibbāna, coolness, has been borrowed from just the ordinary word for cool, for things cooling down. So we'll study the history of the word Nibbāna and see how it's been used over the years. How it has been used in terms of material things, how it's been used about animals, and then how it's been used in terms of people.

First, with some material objects, when charcoal or wood is burning so that they have many flames, when those flames go out, when those flames disappear, that is called Nibbāna. When soup or rice porridge is just been cooked and it's still too hot to eat, then the cook says, "wait a moment, wait a little while until it Nibbāna, let it Nibbāna first." Or another example is, with the Goldsmith who has been using its his bellows to keep the molten gold hot and then pours it into a form. Then he has to cool down the gold that's in its form. He cools it down by sprinkling water. And this cooling the gold is called '*Nippapeiya*,' which is making it cool. This is a word that has the same root as the word Nibbāna. Or an example about animals, when a wild animal such as an elephant or tiger or a lion has been captured from the forest and then well trained, when it's been trained so that it's not at all dangerous anymore, when all the wildness has been calmed down, then that animal is said to have been cooled. Then when we speak about people, whenever there's something making someone anxious and worried, when there's something really on their mind that they're dwelling on and worrying about, any object that makes that anxiety cool down – anything that can make them cool down all that worried has been called on a Nibbāna.

For this reason, at certain times with rather foolish people who didn't have any higher understanding, they took sex as Nibbāna because sex could cool down some of their anxieties and worries. Later there were some people who decided to go off and be hermit in the forest to live in solitude, and they decided to give up this idea of sexuality as Nibbāna. They gave that up and they discovered the first absorption, and they said, "Oh! This is much better." and they took that as their Nibbāna. Then there were other hermits who were smarter, who had a higher understanding, and they discovered the other absorptions and so some took this second absorption as Nibbāna or the third or the fourth or the immaterial absorption as being Nibbāna. They discovered these various absorptions until finally the Buddha abandoned all of them and found the highest Nibbāna – the Nibbāna in Buddhism. This is Nibbāna in all aspects from all angles, both Nibbāna in Buddhism as well as Nibbāna outside Buddhism. These are various ideas or understandings of Nibbāna.

These lower understandings of Nibbāna still occurrence among ordinary people. And so many people still use the word 'cool' in ways that are less than the highest Nibbāna. So we find there's a very similar word used for very ordinary kind of coolness. This word is '*nibbuti*.' There's a passage in the Pāli scriptures where a young woman from the Sakya clan – the same clan as the Buddha saw prince Siddhartha approaching. This is the first time she had seen him and when she saw him, she said that whoever his mother is, she will be '*nibbuta*,' which meant the feminine form of "one who is cool" or "one who has *nibbuti*." And then whoever son he is, that man will be '*nibbuddho*' which is the masculine form of "one who has *nibbuti*, one who is cool." Whoever his wife is, she will be '*nibbuta*.' So this is a very common use, very ordinary use of the word coolness or *nibbuti*. So this word 'coolness' has just completely ordinary meaning like this also. And this word is still used even in Thailand when people request the five precepts (the five moral trainings); At the end of this, there is the word "*Sīlena nibbutiṃ yanti*" which means that morality leads to *nibbuti*, means leads to coolness. The goal of keeping morality is coolness.

And so Buddhism has borrowed this ordinary term and used it in regards to the highest reality in Buddhism. Not only Buddhism, but many different creed and sect at that time have also used this

word. Although the word is used by many groups, it's used in common by many. The meaning differs according to the experience of the founder of each sect or creed. But still we find this ordinary word that used in a spiritual sense on various different levels. And this point is demonstrated by examples such as once a man came to the Buddha and asked the Buddha to "explain your Nibbāna to me." This shows that there were many versions or many understandings of Nibbāna to the degree that this man had to specify your Nibbāna or your understanding of Nibbāna, please explain this to me.

There were some sects or groups that used other words for their highest thing. For example, some use the word 'gaiwaya (กายวาเย)' or 'gaiwayata (กายวาเยตา)' which basically means wholeness or totality which used by some instead of the word Nibbāna to refer to what they understood to be the highest thing. There were others who use the word 'brahma' or 'arama-brahma' which means the supreme, the highest *brahma*. This is very similar to the way Nibbāna is used, once again because it means the highest or the highest thing. Then there were others who used the word 'paramatthama' or 'paramatthamañ,' which means the supreme self because these were groups that think there is a self, and so they called the supreme self was their term for what Buddhists called Nibbāna. But it's kind of funny that in Buddhism we take "being without self" as Nibbāna as the highest thing. So we could see that all these sects and creeds and religions had something as their highest thing. Many of them use the word Nibbāna, others use other terms. But without exception each of them had something that, according to their own hopes and desires, was the thing they were aiming for, so all of them had something as their goal, their highest thing. Many of them were called Nibbāna even though Nibbāna with various different meanings. So this is Nibbāna on many different levels with many different meanings and understandings.

Now I'd like to discuss something which you probably haven't paid much attention to, something that ordinary people don't have much interest in. This is what I'd like to call Natural Nibbāna. If we hold to the principle that Nibbāna is coolness, when the fires of the defilements aren't burning, whenever there are no defilements, then Nibbāna appears naturally. We call this natural Nibbāna. Whenever there are no defilements. Whenever the mind is cool because of the absence of defilements, we call that natural Nibbāna. So this natural Nibbāna is not something that is given a lot of attention in spiritual circles, because it's not something that human beings do for themselves – it's not a result of our spiritual practice. All things have been nature of arising and ending. They have a beginning and an end. This is true also of the defilements. That means that any defilement that arises will naturally quench by itself. So when the defilements arise and then quench naturally, just following their ordinary course – that's natural Nibbāna. And it has nothing to do with our own practice or understanding or effort. It just happens by itself. It's not the kind of Nibbāna that we do. That is a result of our understanding and practice. But still this is very important because it's still the quenching, even though the natural, ordinary quenching of these defilements, there is still the meaning and the value of coolness.

There is a natural secret. A secret of nature that everyone should know. In Pāli it goes "yankinci samudayadhammam sabbantam nirodhadhammanti" which means all things which naturally arise, those things naturally are quenched. All things that naturally appear, naturally cease or quench. So defilements are included in all things as well. So all defilements which arise will also be quenched eventually. But it's not always easy to endure, waiting until these defilements quench by themselves. Once they come up, it's not very easy to live through them. If we just went around enduring that defilement, in fact we might not survive very long. We might either go crazy or it might even kill us. It's possible we would commit suicide. And so human beings have tried to find

ways to quench the defilements through human practice, to do something to quench them so that they needn't be endure. So we don't have to bear them. And this is why some people have taken sex as Nibbāna because it can help to cool down some of the defilements temporarily. The things we call bad moods or bad tempers which in Buddhism is called the Nivarana, the hindrances – these little moods and states that disturbed the mind. And all of these are hot, these bad moods are hot and if we had to go around with them all the time, we spend 24 hours a day, every day of the week in a bad mood, with a bad temper, then we probably would die. We wouldn't be able to survive. But all of these bad moods, all these Nivarana, hindrances, they naturally are cooled down – because they arise and then they pass away. This is natural. So we should be very thankful for this natural Nibbāna where in all these bad moods, all these subtle defilements are cooled away naturally without us having to do anything about it. If it wasn't like this, we'd be crazy. So we should be thankful for this natural Nibbāna, which allows us to remain sane and relatively healthy.

Think about it. If we were tormented by lust all day long, it drives us crazy. But this comes away by itself. Or anger, if we spent the whole day angry, that would really be an ugly and horrible thing, but anger eventually calms down by itself. The same with fear, worry, confusion – all of these would drive us crazy if we spend the whole day afraid or confused, but they only last for a while, they come and go away. And any instance is like this where the defilements naturally are cooled, this is the natural Nibbāna. Something that allows us to live and to function fairly well, because we're not constantly bothered and tortured by lust, greed, hatred, anger, fear, worry, confusion and all the other defilements.

Now let's look at some of the Nibbāna that human beings bring about through their own practice – the kind of Nibbāna that comes from our own activity and understanding. If we practice *ānāpānasati* successfully, then *ānāpānasati* will lead to genuine Nibbāna. When one practices *ānāpānasati* up until the last stage of the practice which deals with seeing the natural truth of things, then this leads to seeing the impermanence of things, the unsatisfactoriness and not self-hood. We see the three characteristics and then the rest of the Tās are realized about these bodies and minds and this world we live in. And when we see everything in terms of the 9 Tās, it takes us to *atammayatā* and the highest level. From that there is the highest Nibbāna – the Nibbāna where the defilements are cooled and quenched completely. Genuine Nibbāna appears when there is *atammayatā* at the highest level. And don't forget that *atammayatā* means that nothing whatsoever can concoct that mind – that mind that nothing can stir it up, cook it up or affected it in the least way. That's the mind that has *atammayatā*. And so remember those what we've said a few times – the young woman who has *atammayatā*, there is no man who can hook her. For the woman who has *atammayatā*, there's no man that can trick her and hook her. This is what we mean by having *atammayatā* – the mind that is completely unconcoctable. And when there is this highest *atammayatā*, then there appears genuine Nibbāna.

So Nibbāna in Buddhism goes beyond sexuality, goes beyond the material absorption and goes beyond the immaterial absorption, goes beyond all the Rupa and the *rūpa-jhāna*. Then there is the true, genuine highest Nibbāna. This is just a natural thing. There's nothing really supernatural about it, although this Nibbāna is beyond all the lesser Nibbāna. There's nothing supernatural about it. It's natural. It's just a natural essence – what we call a '*dhātu*.' So we can call it *nibbāna-dhātu*. It's always there, already there in nature.

We can study this matter and make some inferences about the Nibbāna by looking at some material examples. Take for example, one fire, a wood fire where the flames are quenched, but the wood still remains; and another fire that is completely quenched and there's no wood remaining. What

about these is the same and what about them is different? We can compare these two to help us understand what is meant by Nibbāna.

In the Pāli language, we have two words. We have the word '*Sa Upadisesa Nibbāna-dhātu.*' We just mentioned that Nibbāna is a *dhātu* that means a natural essence of reality that already exists in nature. This is what we mean by *dhātu*. So Nibbāna is a *dhātu*. There are two kinds of *Nibbāna-dhātu*. There is a '*Sa Upadisesa Nibbāna-dhātu*' which is like the first fire where all the heat is cooled down, but the fuel is still remaining. This is what '*Sa Upadisesa*' means with fuel still remaining. So, it is a Nibbāna where the fuel still remains. It's the first kind of Nibbāna. Then there is the second '*Anupādisesa Nibbāna-dhātu*' which means with no fuel remaining. There is none of the wood, none of the fuel left. The fire is completely cooled down and there's no fuel left. These are the 2 kinds of *Nibbāna-dhātu*: with fuel remaining and without any fuel remaining.

In these two words, there is the word '*upadhi*' which we have been using as firewood. *Upadhi* means firewood or fuel. It's often translated in various ways in Thai, and it's quite difficult to translate, but it's often used in the very mundane sense as fuel or especially in those days, firewood, because there remained fuel used. So *upadhi* means this basic fuel or fire to translate it as something like cause or something wouldn't quite be correct or sometimes it's translated as something like a seed or germ, and that's not quite proper either. It's best if we just stay with the word fuel. So, there is Nibbāna with fuel remain and the Nibbāna with no fuel left. What this means is that there is fuel. There're certain things which acts as fuel for the arising of the defilements, the flame, the fires of the defilements, and the attachment to ego, to I and mine. There's a fuel for this.

There are certain awakened beings or *arahant*. Some *arahants* have completely cooled down all the fires of greed, hatred and delusion. There's no more attachment to I and mine. But still, they feel some of the fuel and this fuel is the sense of positive and negative. Some awakened beings, some *arahants*, still experience things as positive and negative, and this fuel remains but it doesn't go and bring up the defilements or ego. But there are other *arahants* who are completely cool. That means that even this fuel of positive and negative has been cooled away. So for some awakened beings, there's no sense or feeling that things are positive or negative at all. There's no way the second *arahant* feels any positiveness or negativeness. There's nothing that is experienced as positive or negative, so this awakened being is completely cooled, completely quenched. There's not even any fuel remaining. The fire is gone, and all the fuel is gone as well.

So there are these two kinds of Nibbāna. There's the Nibbāna where the fuel of positive and negative is still there, but there's no way that it can concoct up defilements, concoct ego and attachment. Then there's the second kind of Nibbāna in which the fuel is completely gone and so everything is cool. The defilements are cooled, the ego is cooled and even the fuel of positive and negative is cooled. The second kind of Nibbāna is cooler, is calmer. These are the two highest Nibbānas as understood in Buddhism.

We should also let you know that there are people who explain things in a different way, and they're welcome to understand things however they wish, but this is how we understand Nibbāna. And so, there's the fire that's cooled down, but still has fuel remaining. And there's the fire that's been cooled down and there's no fuel remaining. And then what about all of us sitting here with these fires blazing up all the time? And there's lots of fuel where we're still having these strong feelings of positive and negative and then the defilements are blazing forward in positive and negative ways. So not only our fires shooting up as we sit here but we keep adding fuel to the fire also. So we're still all caught in this positive and negative and fires are blazing up and around all

the time. So we ought to make a little comparison between our current situation and the Nibbāna where the fire has cooled down completely.

Now we're going to summarize all the different angles and aspects of Nibbāna.

First thing we'd like to point out very important fact is that Nibbāna has nothing to do with Death. What good would Nibbāna be if we die? If there was Nibbāna and we were just dead, it would be of absolutely no meaning or benefit in any way. Nibbāna is useless for a death person. Nibbāna has nothing to do with death. So, it happens while the life is still living. Nibbāna appeared way before any religion appeared. Before we had any religion or spiritual ideas or anything, the earliest human beings in the forests and caves still desired coolness. They still needed coolness. So Nibbāna appeared way before any religion did. Then once people had various means of cooling things down, then this was the first religion on the most primitive level, and then religion evolved finding more skillful, more successful ways of finding coolness. Until this evolved to the highest level as we've been describing where all the fires can be completely cooled in the highest Nibbāna.

And we've also explained how Nibbāna is originally, and just an ordinary common term used around the house and home, and this has been used in various ways. We can use Nibbāna regarding material objects which were hot and then have cooled down. We can use it about wild animals that have been tamed. We can even use it in the meaning of certain fools who use it in a very crude and coarse way, and then higher and higher meanings until the highest. So this ordinary word Nibbāna has been applied on very different levels. It has many different meanings or can be used with many different meanings. Something that most marvelous about Nibbāna is that it's an instinct. We instinctually desire coolness. That living being instinctually seeks coolness. If we put our hand in a fire, we immediately withdrawn without having to think because the organism instinctually seeks coolness. This is a natural fact that is truly marvelous that in seeking Nibbāna, we don't have to go against our most fundamental instinct that Nibbāna is a natural desire. Coolness is a natural instinct of living things. So heat teaches us to want coolness. *Dukkha* teaches us to seek the quenching of *dukkha*. This is completely natural, that nature, that life teaches us in this way. So we ought to be very grateful to life and to nature that it teaches us, that it naturally points us in the direction of Nibbāna. Then not only that provides us with natural Nibbāna and that full Nibbāna is always there, ready to be discovered.

Further, it's a science. A science of Nibbāna. But this is a science that nobody is interested in. The whole methodology, the whole approach is scientific. One can directly verify these facts for oneself using a truly scientific approach. We don't need a hypothesis or anything. All we have to do is perform the experiment. If we take out the fuel, the fire goes away. By doing this, we can verify the fact of Nibbāna. So this is totally, thoroughly scientific which is completely appropriate in a scientific age like this when we have to be scientific about everything. We ought to be just as scientific about our inner state, about the problem of suffering, of *dukkha*. Stupidity regarding positives and negatives – this is the fuel of all the fires. If we remove this fuel, then the fires cool down. We ought to learn how to remove this great foolishness and find out what Nibbāna is. Don't give anything the values of positive and negative. This is the method to avoid all the fires. This is the way to keep life from burning itself. Don't fall into the stupidity of giving anything the values of positive and negative.

And now we come to the last fact or last truth. This is one that we should be grateful to impermanence. We should have nothing but thanks for impermanence. Because of impermanence, there's the possibility of change from *dukkha* to the quenching of *dukkha*. There's a possibility of

all the pain and misery changing. If there wasn't impermanence, if everything was permanent, then there would be nothing but permanent *dukkha*. So we should be most thankful for impermanence that provides the possibility for the ending of *dukkha*, for the elimination of *dukkha*.

As we said earlier, impermanence is the stream of evolution that we're all a part of. If there was permanence, there would be no evolution, and no development. It's only through impermanence that there is development from the child to the teenager, to the adult. So you might say that this is looking at impermanence in an optimistic way, which is wise. There's no reason to look at impermanence in a pessimistic way.

Now we should look at some of our misunderstandings we have about the thing we call Nibbāna. The first misunderstanding is that Nibbāna is death or that we must die over and over again through many lives until we can find Nibbāna. This understanding is totally incorrect. Nibbāna can only be found here and now. Nibbāna already exists in nature. So it's to be found right here and now.

And then there's the later teaching, which has nothing to do with what the Buddha ever said, that Nibbāna is a city or a world somewhere, that Nibbāna is some city or world or Kingdom up in the sky, or who knows where we can go. This idea that Nibbāna is some physical place somewhere is complete foolishness and is absolutely incorrect. We must finish with the world right here and now. Nibbāna appears right here and now. There's no need to go anywhere else. Just eliminate all worldliness right here and now and then there is Nibbāna, immediately instantaneous. There's a word in Thai that comes from the Pāli and when people use these words without understanding their proper meaning, they get very confused. So sometimes people talk about either the villagers or sometimes even the monks in the Dhamma chairs talking without knowing the Pāli word. If they use, they talk about the *uttara* world. Udon is the Thai for *uttara* which means in one sense means northern, but in the other sense it means above. So the direction above of course is the north, but people who don't understand the way these words are used, when they talk about beyond the world, they end up talking about the north, someplace up north, up there, and so they're totally confused about what Nibbāna is.

Another misunderstanding is that Nibbāna can't happen in this time and age, that this era is inappropriate for Nibbāna, that Nibbāna has no place in this modern world of ours, that we're unable to realize it or something like that. This understanding is also quite stupid because in a world where there's so much suffering, pain and *dukkha* like this, then there's an even more important relevant for Nibbāna. In a world wherever there is *dukkha*, there is the need for Nibbāna, and we've got more than enough *dukkha* in this modern world of ours. And so Nibbāna has a place here just as much as in any time or era.

The biggest fools say that Nibbāna is the enemy of development when, in fact, Nibbāna is the most important supporter of proper development. In fact, Nibbāna is itself true development. Nibbāna is the goal of all real development. How can Nibbāna be the enemy of development when Nibbāna is purity of mind, cleanliness of mind, when it's the calmness of mind, when the Nibbāna is a brightness and clarity of mind. Nibbāna is a lightness and activeness mind that is very light, flexible and active. Mind that is very cool, very clear, and a mind that is completely free. This is what Nibbāna is. How could it be the enemy of development?

And the results of Nibbāna are the end of all heaviness and all burdens. The end of all bondages, all chains. It's the end of all pain, all *dukkha*, and it's the end of all problems. So in short, Nibbāna is quenching. It's not extinction. Nibbāna is the meaning of that peace that we want so desperately these days, although it might be a little bit more complete than ordinary people are willing to try

for. But in material peace, mental peace, bodily peace, spiritual peace – all of these are included in in Nibbāna.

Nibbāna is what the Christians call or what we could call the Kingdom of God, but God here is not a personal, egoistic God – a god that's conceived in terms of 'I' and 'mine,' but God is something completely natural. God is here, the highest thing in nature. So the Kingdom of this highest thing, this is the same as Nibbāna. It's reached not by I and mine or by ego but is reached through egolessness. So we can all have Nibbāna right here and now. If not the highest Nibbāna at least an appropriate level of Nibbāna and then this can be raised higher and higher until Nibbāna is perfect. All of us can find Nibbāna here and now, and that can be perfected in complete Nibbāna.

So don't settle for the Nibbāna of sex or the Nibbāna of having positive. Don't settle for the Nibbāna of the first, second, third, fourth absorption or even of the immaterial absorption. Even the highest one of the experiences that is neither perception nor non perception. Don't settle for any of these lesser Nibbāna but realize the true Nibbāna where the fire has been quenched completely and all the fuel has been cooled as well, where there's no more fuel of positive and negative left. This is to be completely, thoroughly quenched in perfect Nibbāna. So having *atammayatā* from level 2 to successively higher level will then bring Nibbāna, will reveal Nibbāna on successively higher levels as well.

So may you all have Nibbāna that is coolness on successively higher and more perfect levels. If you are successful in the practice of mindfulness with breathing, then there won't be any doubts that this will happen. Our time is up for today and so we ask that we close today's meeting. Thanks for being patient listeners once again. If you still have some patience left, come back again tomorrow and we'll speak one more time.

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Transcribed by a Dhamma volunteer and lightly edited by Supavadee in September, 2024

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