

The Path That Leads to Atammayatā

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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. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the volunteer and the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

Today we'll speak about the way or path of reaching, or getting to, *atammayatā*, in particular. We'll speak particularly about this path. We mentioned previously that *ānāpānasati* is the complete system of practice, which is the most efficient way of realizing *atammayatā*.

In the word *ānāpānasati*, the most important word is *sati*. The last word *sati* (mindfulness) is the key, the crucial element in *ānāpānasati*. However of all the ways of training and using mindfulness, training mindfulness on the breathing in and out is the most beneficial approach, is the best way.

When one practices *ānāpānasati* completely and correctly according to the way it is taught in the Pāli scriptures, then one has a way of practice that is complete and perfect. In that there is *sīla*, or ethics, proper conduct in speech. There's *samādhi*, the calming and stabilizing of the mind. And there is *paññā*, intuitive wisdom. In *ānāpānasati*, when practiced as taught by the Buddha, there will be these three elements – the three trainings of the path will be there together, complete. There are other ways of practicing *ānāpānasati*, but these other ways will not be complete in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*.

The yogis in India are also practicing *ānāpānasati* in many forms. They call it *prāṇāyāma*, *prāṇāyāma*, which means controlling the breath, controlling the breath, and this is done in all kinds of different ways according to the way each of these yogis has learned.

Prāṇa means breath, but it can just as well mean life because in those the old days people took that breath was life. So *prāṇa* means both breath [and] life, and is even seen as the life force.

This understanding of *prāṇāyāma* goes back very very far, before there was anything that we could properly call religion. In fact the people who were still living in the forests, caves, and jungles started to notice the wonder and excellence of the breath, how marvelous and powerful the breath could be. This was something that occurred naturally. This was taught to them by nature, and in a natural way they discovered *prāṇāyāma*.

What they discovered was that when the breath is long, with long healthy breaths, one feels really comfortable and at ease. There's a great feeling of health and strength. When one breathes in long easy breaths, a lot of oxygen is brought in, and so the body is very comfortable – the body is able to rest and relax. And also, this way of breathing controls and eliminates any bad or evil moods, a lot of harmful mind states such as anger, fear, and so on. And this long deep, healthy breathing can just sweep all of those ugly mind states out. And then the mind will be calm and clear and peaceful as well. This was discovered in a very natural way.

Or if there was a cut and blood was flowing: with very long, relaxed, deep breaths, the blood flow would slow down and could even be stopped by the influence of the breathing. This is an example of how the breathing can control the body with the powerful influence of the breath when it's used properly to control the body.

The breathing has various physical effects on the body, as we've mentioned, including [plus] it lowers the blood pressure – the long deep breathing can lower the blood pressure. There're also mental affects [effects] and influences as well: the long deep breathing is able to calm away, sweep away, any harmful emotions and moods which assail the mind.

So in this way *ānāpānasati* was a science way before anybody really knew of the word 'science,' a very ancient science naturally discovered by our primitive ancestors. We should understand mindfulness with breathing in this aspect as a starting place.

Then in the Buddha's time 2,500 years ago it seems that the knowledge and practice of *ānāpānasati* had spread all over India, because even at the age of seven, the young prince *Siddhāttha*, who later left home and became the

Buddha, was practicing ānāpānasati and was quite successful in the early stages of it.

But in those days the way of practice was incomplete, it hadn't been developed to its completion, to its full potential. But then the Buddha was exploring ānāpānasati, and through his explorations, investigations, and discoveries, developed it further and further until awakening. The Buddha said that he awakened, achieved complete liberation, while practicing ānāpānasati. He had been practicing it and taking it further and further beyond what anyone else had done with it until taking it all the way to perfect liberation, and then in this way completed the system of practice and realized its fullest potential. The Buddha himself said that, when practicing this to the point that "I dwelled only in *ānāpānasati*, then there was the final awakening." And so because of this, the Buddha recommended and taught this system specifically. The Buddha only taught one system of meditation, and this is the system of *ānāpānasati*. Now sometimes he didn't use this name, sometimes he spoke of it in terms of the *satipaṭṭhāna*, the foundations of mindfulness, but he was teaching the same system of meditation and it's the system of ānāpānasati that he practiced himself. And this is what he taught and encouraged the monks to do. Nowadays there a dozens of kinds of meditation, but the Buddha himself taught only one. And we maintain that this is the practice called *ānāpānasati*.

Then a thousand years after the Buddha there was a Brahman man who became a Buddhist and wrote a big fat book called the *Visuddhimagga*, *The Path of Purity [Purification]*. This man, Buddhagoṣa Ācariya, collected a lot of information on meditation, and in this book he recorded forty kinds of meditation, and so ever since Buddhists have been going around talking about the forty kinds of meditation. And after that, more and more techniques and methods and systems of meditation have been invented, so that now there's all kinds of them all over the place. None of these newly invented systems, however, are better than ānāpānasati. None of them achieve better results. So one ought to be interested in the original system, the system used and practiced by the Buddha himself, because it's a system that goes back way before the Buddha discovered by our ancient ancestors, and then it has developed and evolved through the experience of many many people until it was perfected through the Buddha's experience. So this is an ancient and venerable system of practice, one that we ought to be interested in.

But nowadays you hear about Theravādan meditation, Mahāyāna meditation, Zen meditation, Tibetan meditation – all kinds of meditations, meditations all over and doing all kinds of different things. Please note,

however, that ānāpānasati is a way of meditation, is a complete system that is quiet, simple, and peaceful. In ānāpānasati, for example, one doesn't have to make any noise – one can do it while sitting very quietly. One doesn't have to stand and stretch and move the body around in various postures and movements – one can sit peacefully and do it. It's very simple. One doesn't have to bring in any complicated theories or any visualizations or any of that – it's a very quiet, calm, simple system of meditation. One doesn't have to also carry around any special furniture or special devices in order to meditate.

The details about practicing ānāpānasati can be found in a manual that has already been printed, so if you're interested you can find that book¹ and study it yourselves. What we'd like to discuss today is how ānāpānasati leads to the realization of the knowledge which is called *atammayatā*.

In ānāpānasati there are four areas of study, four groups of lessons for us to investigate. The first group, or area, is about the body, and specifically preparing the body and the nervous system so that they're calm and quiet and provide a fitting foundation for higher levels of study and practice. If you study the meaning of the first area regarding the body, you'll see that it prepares the body so that one is able to investigate things on a higher and more profound level.

The second area helps us to know how the mind relates to the body, how the body and mind are interrelated, and then to lessen the ability of that relationship, that association, to concoct the mind.

The third area deals with the mind itself directly. The third area is about understanding the mind in its various manifestations, and then mastering that mind, mastering it by delighting it – forcing the mind to be glad and delighted, by stabilizing the mind, collecting it and concentrating it, and then liberating it, freeing it. The third area is all about mastering the mind so that one is out from under the mind's control and power.

Then when the body and mind have been prepared through these first three groups of lessons, one comes to the fourth group, and this is where the mind starts to look into the reality of things. And this is where there arises first of all, *aniccatā*, the fact of impermanence: One studies, contemplates the fact of impermanence, and then you don't have to worry if this is done correctly, it will

¹ See *Mindfulness with Breathing* available at Suan Mokkh and at the Buddhādāsa Indapañño Archives, Bangkok, and also *Mindfulness with Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners* (Wisdom Publ.): <http://suanmokkh.org/books/27>

lead to all of the other *Tās*, all of the Nine *Tās* from impermanence to unsatisfactoriness, selflessness, naturalness, the natural law of conditionality, voidness, thusness, and finally, unconcoctability – *atammayatā*. In the discourses where this is discussed, only *aniccatā* is mentioned, but if *aniccatā* is seen thoroughly and correctly, it will lead to seeing all the rest of the Nine *Tās*.

The first three areas of training are essentially the development of *samādhi*, developing the mind's strength, clarity, and power. Or we can say *samatha*, the development of tranquility. So the first three groups of lessons develop *samādhi*, and within that there is also *sīla*, there are]ethics and morality. But in the fourth area is where *vipassanā*, specifically, is seeing clearly into the nature of things. Or we can say this is the part of the practice that is exclusively *paññā*, about intuitive wisdom. To just go and see things in their true nature – it just doesn't happen. First the body and mind have to be calmed and prepared. The mind must be stabilized, cleared, and focused. If this is done properly with the first areas of practice, then it's possible to come to see *aniccatā* quite easily. It's seen all over in all its aspects and all meanings and significations of the fact of *aniccatā*.

The Pāli word *tā*, or in Thai *taa*, merely means state of being, the state of being, but coincidentally this word in Thai – same sound and spelling – means 'eye,' the thing we see with, 'e-y-e.' So in Thai, *taa, taa, taa* means 'eye' or 'eyes.' And so in Pāli the Nine *Tās* are the nine states of being, but in Thai they're the nine eyes, and this is nine ways of seeing reality, nine ways of seeing the truth, or we can say the nine insights, the nine *vipassanā*. If the mind is prepared correctly, then these nine eyes arise and enable one to see things as they really are, which is the meaning of *vipassanā*.

When *aniccatā*, the fact of impermanence, is seen thoroughly, then there are all nine of these *Tās*. When all nine eyes arise, then there is what we call *viratta* there's the fading away of ignorance. When all these nine of eyes are there, then ignorance fades away, and the defilements fade away. Attachment fades away, and *dukkha* fades away. *Viratta* means 'fading away,' so there is this fading away of *dukkha* and all the things associated with *dukkha*, all the causes of *dukkha*. It's just like the dye used to dye cloth, the color used to dye cloth: if you keep pouring water into this color, this dye, then it becomes lighter and lighter and lighter, it fades and fades. And so this is what happens once the nine eyes arise.

This fading away of *dukkha* and the causes of *dukkha* is the activity of *atammayatā* working, all these nine eyes culminating in *atammayatā*, and then

the activity of them working is this fading away. Once there is this fading away, then there is a quenching, there's the quenching of dukkha, dukkha is quenched, and then there's the quenching of defilements, and there's the quenching of attachment, which is the cause of defilements and dukkha, and there's the quenching of ignorance, which is the ultimate cause of all dukkha. So this is the result of the activity of atammayatā. The result, the fruit of atammayatā, is working, is this quenching of dukkha, of attachment, of ignorance. This quenching is called *nirodha*, *nirodha*, which means 'quenching,' 'extinguishing,' to put out all these fires so that there is coolness. And this *nirodha* is a synonym for Nibbāna. Nibbāna means 'coolness.' *Nirodha* is the quenching, and when things are fully quenched, they are cool, not cold, but cool.

The fourth lesson in this last area of study, the study of Dhamma, is called *paṭinissaggā*, and this is where one has finished all the duties. All the things that need to be done, have been completed. All attachment has ended, all suffering has been quenched – there's no more ignorance. All positive and negative has disappeared, having been illusions in the first place. And then there is nothing to do except acknowledge that none of these things are 'mine' or are 'me' or ever were. *Paṭinissaggā* means tossing away [back], just tossing everything away [back] in acknowledgment that it's not 'me,' it's not 'mine.' This can be compared to the fact that previously in our ignorance we've been possessing everything, we've been stealing these bodies, these minds, these thoughts. We've been laying claim to everything as 'I' and 'mine,' which is basically an act of theft. But through the fading away of ignorance we realize the stupidity of possessing these bodies and minds and everything else, and then just toss it all back, toss it all back to nature – the rightful owner. This is called *paṭinissagga*, which is the fourth lesson and the final lesson of ānāpānasati.

An easy way to remember this is that we are thieves. We are thieves and have been thieves all our life. We're constantly stealing things, taking them to be 'I' or 'mine.' And because of this constant thieving, there also must be punishment, and the punishment is dukkha. Dukkha – I'm not talking about physical dukkha, but real dukkha. With this punishment of dukkha we finally start to learn that something's wrong. And through using ānāpānasati to delve deeper and deeper into the situation and the problems leads to atammayatā. And then this cuts through all the attachments and ignorance until one realizes, 'Oh, I've gone and been a thief all my life, foolishly stealing all these things from their rightful owner. Now let's throw them all back.' And so we throw everything back to nature. 'Throwing back' is a better word – a minute ago I

said ‘tossing away,’ which is actually another word *wotsata*. [??] *Paṭinissaggā* means ‘throwing back.’ We don’t just toss things away, but we throw them back, acknowledging that all of these things belong to nature, to Dhamma.

We’ve now taken an overview of the system of practice called *ānāpānasati* and briefly shown how it leads to the full understanding and realization of *atammayatā*, of unconcoctability. This is one structure, one way of explaining how this occurs. There’s a different way of talking about it, and this is what we’ll go into next. We’d like to talk about the *ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*, the noble eight-factored path.

The noble eightfold path, or the noble eight-factored path, is something that has been discussed in many places, and so you can read about it in books, both by us and other places; it’s not very difficult. The noble eightfold path is one path or way of life, but to understand it more fully, it’s explained in terms of its eight factors: right understanding, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right *samādhi* (right concentration). These eight factors cannot be separated. In fact it’s one path because it’s just one life. When one maintains life, lives life according to this noble eightfold path, then there will be *atammayatā* all the time. The effect of following the noble eightfold path – not in the future, but right now – the effect right now is *atammayatā* whenever the path is full and perfect.

The essence of this is that it is correct and right. For it to be the noble eightfold path, there must be correctness and rightness. This is very important. Often people forget about the correctness part, and so they never have the path, they never understand what is meant by the ‘path.’ So first of all there must be right view, right understanding (*sammādiṭṭhi*). *Sammādiṭṭhi* is the way of looking at things, the way of understanding things – all our beliefs and views, as well as our ideals. All of these are correct. All these understandings are correct, then this leads to right aspiration – our aims, our goals, our needs are all correct. And then following this there is right speech – speech is always correct. Right action and right livelihood – the way we maintain life, the way we go about getting the physical, the material, and mental necessities of life – this is done correctly. Then there’s right effort – doing one’s best, putting full energy into everything one does, but doing so correctly. And then right mindfulness – mindful of the right things in the right way – this must be correct. And then finally, right *samādhi*, right concentration – where the mind is stabilized, collected, and focused in the right way, correctly. If all of these are correct, then they fit together into one correct whole, and that’s what we call the noble eightfold path. This is what leads to *atammayatā*.

When all of these eight factors are correct, and then they come together in a whole, it's incredibly powerful. You don't just have eight separate things kind of working on their own. But when the energy of all eight of these factors comes together you've got eight times the power and the strength. When all the factors are an integrated whole, very powerful whole, then it's given another name in the Pāli: there are places where it's called *ariya samādhi* with seven attendants – seven attendants or supporters. The last factor is *samādhi*, which is often translated 'concentration,' but the refined levels of concentration always have equanimity at their heart, the mind that is completely balanced in a clear equilibrium. So we could call it 'excellent right equilibrium with seven attendants.' The word *ariya* means 'excellent,' 'superb,' 'noble.' And so the path is also called 'excellent right equanimity with seven attendants.' Or you could call it 'noble right concentration with seven supporters.'

Please, please don't go and think that there are eight paths! To think that there are eight paths or many paths is to completely misunderstand. There's only one path. So please don't go and confuse the words 'eightfold' or 'eight-factored' and think there are eight paths. There's only one path. Please don't fall into the confusion of many people, even in Thailand, who have been Buddhists for hundreds of years, and they still misunderstand this. There's only one path. If you've got eight paths you'll never know which one to choose, and you'll never get anywhere.

So understand it as one path which has eight components. Or you could say that it has eight qualities – this single path has these eight qualities to it.

An easy way to see it is to talk about it in more physical terms. Someone's going on a journey: we need a correct map of where we are and where we're going. We need the right kind of aim – desire to travel. We need to have food and all the physical material supports [support] needed for that journey. There needs to be restraint and safety in one's speech and conduct. There always has to be right effort to get anywhere, to travel. We always have to put effort into it, but it has to be the right kind of effort. There must be awareness of where one is, where one's going, awareness, mindfulness of anything that meets us along the way. And then there must always be the focus – the mind must be stable and focused on its destination. So it's one path that has these eight qualifications or qualities to it. If any of these qualities are missing, the path will not lead to the correct goal.

When the eight qualities are complete and full, and the path is whole, then there arises a ninth factor. Once the eight factors are full and complete, there

arises the ninth factor, which is called *sammāñāṇa*, or ‘right knowledge.’ Except be careful – knowledge for most of us has a very petty and trivial meaning, but here *ñāṇa* means knowledge that is correct, complete, knowing what must be known, what needs to be known. So it’s complete knowledge or full knowledge, perfect knowledge. This is the result of the path, becoming whole. The ninth factor is this right insight knowledge. This word ‘knowledge’ here is basically a synonym for *paññā* (intuitive wisdom) or *vipassanā* (insight). So it’s this insight knowledge, this thorough insight knowledge, is what results as the ninth factor. And in this there is atammayatā. This itself is atammayatā.

And then the result of atammayatā is the tenth factor, which is called *sammāvimutti*, which means ‘right emancipation’ or even ‘right salvation.’ When there is atammayatā it cuts through everything that is trapping, that is tying up the mind, or we could say ‘life,’ and then the mind is emancipated from all its bonds, from all bondage, all prisons, from all dukkha. This is the result of the realization of atammayatā.

The eight factors of the noble path are the causes, are the set of causes which lead to results of right insight knowledge and right emancipation. The first eight factors are just the causes – they’re not everything – they’re just the causes. And then there are these two results of *sammāñāṇa* and *sammāvimutti*. All ten taken together can be said to be Buddhism in its entirety. To talk about all of Buddhism, there must be all ten of these, just the first eight isn’t enough. Buddhism, to be whole, encompasses the last two factors. Or all together, these ten are normally called the *sammatta*, or the Ten Sammatta, the ten states of being correct. There’s this *ta-ta-ta* word again. And *sammā* means ‘correct,’ ‘right,’ so the ten states of rightness or correctness. This is the heart and essence and whole entirety of Buddhism in these ten factors. It’s one thing with ten factors, ten qualities.

Most of you have probably never heard of the *sammattas*, the Ten Sammatta, before. It’s never written about in most of the books. You’ve all had a chance to hear about the noble eightfold path, but you haven’t heard the full story until you understand the *sammatta*, the Ten Sammatta. The eight factors of the noble eightfold path, these are the factors to be practiced, this is what is to be practiced, but when it’s practiced until complete, there arise the second two factors. The eight causes and the two results together – this is the whole story, this is what is complete.

The Buddha said that anyone who has the Buddha as a good friend, anyone who takes the Buddha as their best friend, will escape from all the problems

associated with birth, aging, illness, and death. Which means, one who takes the Buddha as their best friend, as their good friend, their best friend, will not have any more dukkha in life. Dukkha happens in life, in the natural processes of birth, aging, illness, and death. With the Buddha as our best friend, we escape from all the dukkha associated with life

Notice that he used the words ‘good friend’ or *kalyāṇamitta*. *Mitta* means ‘friend.’ *Kalyāṇa* means ‘good,’ ‘beautiful,’ ‘splendid,’ ‘noble.’ So the Buddha used the words ‘good friend.’ This is very important, the emphasis on a friend. He didn’t use the word teacher, guru, master, boss, or owner or priest or any of these words. He just used the words ‘good friend,’ and the meaning here is very very special. If one takes the Buddha not as one’s master or teacher, but as one’s good friend, then one escapes from birth, aging, illness, and death. These things are no longer any problems for us, there’s no dukkha in these natural processes of life. But look around us nowadays – we’re hardly ever good friends anymore. The relationship is hardly ever one of being a good friend like the Buddha recommended. Instead there are teachers, there are masters, there are bosses, people giving orders, and all kinds of things. Please give a lot of consideration to the fact that the Buddha referred to himself not as a teacher or master, but as a good friend. And that if we take the Buddha as this good friend, we escape from all the problems of birth, aging, illness, and death.

The most one could say would be that the Buddha is the leader, the one who walks first and then shows us the way, but in no way is the Buddha a dictator or an authority telling us what to do, trying to force us into anything. Buddha just shows the way for those who want to walk. And the Buddha said when one has him as their good friend, then one has the Ten Sammatta.

If one really has the Buddha as one’s best friend, then all Ten Sammatta are there, all ten complete and full. There’s both atammayatā and the fruits of atammayatā and it’s all finished. The story is over.

Whether by living with *ānāpānasati*, by using *ānāpānasati* as our way of living, or by taking the noble eightfold path, the excellent eight-factored path, as our way of living, either way then we have the best friends that one can find: the four friends of *sati* (mindfulness), *paññā* (intuitive wisdom), *sampajañña* (applied insight), and *samādhi* (the concentrated, stabilized, equanimous mind). When we have all four of these friends by living correctly, then there are no problems. We are safe, safe from all dangers, both physical and mental.

If we would like some holy water that cleanses away our sins, like they talk about in Christianity and Hinduism, if we would like to have this, the Buddha

said that you can't. The best water for washing and cleansing away sins is the Ten Sammatta.

Suppose we have eaten something poisonous, something very harmful, and it's in our stomach and intestines. The Buddha said that if we would need a purgative to clean it out, or something to make us vomit it up, the Buddha said that the Ten Sammatta are this purgative that flushes out everything foul, poisonous, and harmful. It's a vomitory, a medicine that makes us vomit up everything which is harmful, dangerous, dirty. And so these are some metaphors the Buddha used for the ten states of rightness – they're the best friends one can have. They're the water that washes away all sins. They're the purgative that flushes out everything foul and dangerous. They're the vomitory that makes us throw up all the poison in us.

Because there is atammayatā in these Ten Sammatta, only because there is atammayatā in these ten, are they able to flush out all the poison, throw up all the garbage, and wash away all the sins, only because of atammayatā in those ten states of brightness.

We've been looking at the results of atammayatā. If one understands the results and effects of atammayatā, then you will understand atammayatā itself. So we've been looking at these results in order that you will better know what atammayatā is.

Whether Theravāda Buddhism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, no matter what form or version of Buddhism it is, if something is truly Buddhism, it teaches that all suffering arises from attachment to the five *khandhas*. The five khandhas are the five fundamental functions of human life, both the physical and mental processes that together make up human life. If we grasp at these as 'I' and 'mine,' then suffering arises immediately. To free life from suffering, one must cut these attachments to the five khandas. It doesn't mean killing oneself or anything, it means just stopping the foolishness of attaching to things as 'I' and 'mine.' This is taught in all schools of Buddhism. So in fact we don't need all the different schools of Buddhism. There's just one Buddhism, this essence of Buddhism that teaches all suffering comes from attaching to the five khandas. Stop that attaching and there's no suffering. If anything doesn't teach this, then it's not Buddhism. But anything, no matter what's going on on the surface, if this is the core teaching, then this itself is the essence of Buddhism. And in that, you can see once again, atammayatā is what allows us to cut off those attachments to the five khandas, so that life is free, so that there's no suffering anymore.

If there's no atammayatā, then there's no Buddhism. If there's no atammayatā in something, then that thing isn't Buddhism, because then there's nothing to cut through the attachments and free one from dukkha. There's no Buddhism in it and it isn't Buddhism without atammayatā. There's no perfect awakening and there'd be no Buddha. There's no Buddha without atammayatā. There's no ultramundane, there's no transcendence of the world without atammayatā.

Now we'd like to look at the Buddha himself. If there was no atammayatā, the prince Siddhāttha never would have left home to search for the way out from suffering.

Or once having left home in search of truth and the way out of dukkha, without atammayatā, the prince, now an ascetic, would have just gotten stuck at the highest level of knowledge available at that time. He wouldn't have been able to go beyond it. The last teacher that the Buddha stayed with was teaching a very deep and subtle state of concentration called *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*, which means the experience which is neither experience nor non-experience, the experience that is neither perception nor non-perception. We could call it the utmost absorption, with the mind so absorbed into itself that you can't say that the mind is experiencing anything, but you can't say that it's not experiencing. This was the highest mystical state taught before the Buddha appeared in the world, and the prince would have just got stuck there if there wasn't atammayatā, but because of atammayatā the prince saw that this was not the end of suffering, this was not the end of dukkha, it was just a very refined state that was impermanent and not worth relying upon. So the Buddha saw atammayatā and went beyond that until finding the true and total end of dukkha.

Atammayatā is used to progress from step to step to step. At every stage we tend to get stuck –we get comfortable and feel secure and don't want to go any further. It's atammayatā that allows us to get unstuck so we can proceed to the next level and stage. If atammayatā keeps releasing us from the current stage, then we can go further and further until we are beyond all stages when we have transcended all levels and all conditions. Any stage or level is just a condition, and there's dukkha in that condition. But to transcend all those levels we need atammayatā to keep letting us be free.

Everything has what we call its *atsathat*, *atsathat*, [??] which means the attractiveness. It's the charm – everything has a charm, something that pulls and attracts us. And so first we get stuck in sexuality, in sensuousness. It has an attractiveness, a deliciousness, and we get stuck in that.

If the mind can go to a higher level, if there's enough atammayatā to abandon, to let go of the sensuality and sexuality and move to a higher level, then the mind will get stuck in pure forms, material things where one's attracted to just the materiality in itself, not the sensual pleasures that they can bring. Then one gets stuck in the pure forms.

Then atammayatā allows us to let go, releases us from the attractiveness of these pure forms, and then one gets stuck in the formless – things that are beyond all form and materiality.

But even these formless things – things like beauty, truth, justice, love – all these beautiful ideas, all these formless concepts, even these are impermanent and are dukkha. And it eventually is too much for the mind, it's still concocting suffering. And so there is atammayatā that releases the mind from the attractiveness of these formless things. And then the mind goes beyond all conditions – the sensual, the pure form, and the formless – these are all just conditions, they're just all states for ego to arise. And atammayatā releases the mind from all of that, releases the mind so that it can rise above all these conditions, be free of all these conditions, and transcend the entire universe, to be above and no longer trapped within the universe. This in Pāli is called that state of being beyond all conditions, *nirodha*, the quenching of all dukkha, the quenching of all states and conditions. This is another name for Nibbāna, perfect coolness.

This quenching or coolness of Nibbāna doesn't have any attractiveness, it doesn't have any condition in any way whatsoever.

So now we've looked at the Dhamma benefits, the spiritual benefits of atammayatā, from quite a number of angles. Now it would be interesting to take some time to look at some of the worldly benefits of atammayatā, ways that atammayatā can help us in just the ordinary worldly business of our lives.

Any woman who has atammayatā can't be tricked by any man. No man will be able to lure you. And then any man who has atammayatā, there won't be any woman anywhere who can lure you into love and trap you. So you don't turn into anyone's bait. This is a very worldly benefit of atammayatā.

One won't be the victim of all the advertising and deception that's filling up the world. There's no way that one will be a victim of any of that trickery and deception. One won't be a victim of any politics, politician, or political system. No one can hypnotize you. No one can implant thoughts and ideas in your mind. You won't get infatuated with material progress. Atammayatā will lessen the

amount of insane people and will lessen the amount of suicides. It will lessen crime and war. Atammayatā will decrease all the various kinds of crisis in this world.

It's not very difficult to observe that in this world full of science, technology, and material progress, people are really infatuated with the attractiveness, the deliciousness of these things produced in this modern technological world. People are so hooked on the attractiveness of these things that they become envious of each other, they compete, struggle, and fight. People are struggling for power in order to control as much as they can, even trying to control the entire world, and so this brings up all kinds of conflict and fills the world with crises all over the place. Atammayatā can cut through that, will eliminate being infatuated by getting caught up in all those attractive things and will thereby cut through a lot of the crises in the world.

All this wonderful knowledge about atoms and subatomic particles and outer space and the cosmos – all these things, all this increasing knowledge – just leads to more jealousy and more competition. People take this knowledge and just try to use it to control the world more and more, so all this kind of knowledge is just leading to more competition and strife. Atammayatā can free us from the attractiveness of that knowledge and allow us to live in peace.

All the problems, all the problems that exist – whether physical, mental, or spiritual – all of these will be eliminated from the world through the power of atammayatā.

Whether you're going to live as a householder, a layperson, or a homeless one, you need to use atammayatā either way.

Finally, we'd like to summarize saying that all of you who are searching for the best thing in life, all of you who are looking for the best thing for a human being, for a human life, searching without really knowing what you're looking for, but somehow trying to find the best thing, what's most worthy and best and highest for human life – we'd like to tell you that that best thing is atammayatā, the thing that one is searching for, if one's really looking for what is best and highest, that thing is atammayatā. This is the object of any genuine search.

Or if you're looking for yourself, if you really find yourself, then you'll find that you've got problems. And you've got problems because you don't have atammayatā. And then you better find some atammayatā, that or have atammayatā. And when one has atammayatā, then there are no more problems. So it's a good thing to look for oneself, but once you find yourself, don't stop

there. When you find out you don't have atammayatā and realize that you need it, then find it and have it, and then you'll be free of all problems – life won't have any more problems.

You've heard the words, probably, the 'world of the Messiah,' the world when the Messiah has come and is then ruling the world correctly. And many people are waiting for the coming of the Messiah – they're hoping for the Messiah's world. You can find the same kind of thing in Buddhism – many Buddhists are waiting for the coming of the Maitreya Buddha. They talk about Sri Ariya Maitreya coming, and then there will be a world of universal love and peace and kindness. This idea appears in Buddhism, in Hinduism, in Christianity. You ought to know that when atammayatā comes, then there is the Messiah. When atammayatā is ruling the world, then we will have the world of the Messiah, the world of Maitreya Buddha of universal peace and love and harmony.

In Hinduism it's called Kalki, in Buddhism: Maitreya, and in Christianity: Messiah. When atammayatā is controlling the world, when the world is under the influence of atammayatā, then there are no defilements. When there aren't any defilements, then there is peace, and so Dhamma is running the world through atammayatā.

Atammayatā is like a spaceship that lifts us out of hell and takes us up to heaven. And then atammayatā is this spaceship that lifts us out of heaven and takes us beyond all worlds, takes us beyond the universe, beyond any condition, to where there's complete freedom. Atammayatā is a spaceship like this.

In the political field with atammayatā, there won't be capitalists and there won't be communists, there'll just be what we call 'dhammic socialism': everybody loves each other and works together for the common good, for the good of society, and so society is run through Dhamma rather than these conflicting political ideologies. There are not these opposite ideologies anymore. Atammayatā has cut through them, and then everyone is just working together with kindness and love for the good of all. This is what we call 'dhammic socialism.'

Everyone in the universe are friends in birth, aging, illness, and death. All of us share these fundamental experiences of birth, aging, illness, and death. So in fact we're all one, we're all one friend. And so where are you going to find an enemy or an opposite?

In the al-Quran of Islam it says that all human beings in the universe are just one human being. That can't happen without atammayatā. If there is atammayatā, then all human beings are one immediately.

We need, we very desperately need to create understanding among all religions. This is a very important objective. So we need to use atammayatā to eliminate all the conflict and opposition, so that all religions can help to work together to truly help humanity. We need atammayatā to eliminate any of the conflicts and the oppositions between human beings and celestial beings, or between the poor and the rich, and whatever. Atammayatā is necessary to cut through any opposition, any conflict, any competition.

We can compare atammayatā to an ambrosia, an eternal elixir, that if we drink this elixir of atammayatā then we will never die. So the Christians have this word, the Hindus have this word, and the Buddhists have this word, the *amrita* water, the water of deathlessness, or the ambrosia, the elixir of life eternal.

So we ask all of you, we implore all of you to study atammayatā the best you can, and practice atammayatā completely and fully, so that you have atammayatā and there are no more problems, no more *dukkha* in this life. So allow us to end these lectures on *atammayatā*, and once again we'd like to thank you for being very good and patient listeners.

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Transcribed and lightly edited by Bill Weir (arizonahandbook@yahoo.com) in Mar.-Apr. 2016.
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