

Defeat the Klesha

Part Three: By the depth of discernment

Dharma roadside dialogue series.

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#1 Exposé

We are going to go over the third installment of how to overcome and compare the kleshas, and we have seen two ways so far of working with them. I like to see them as a progression of our skill in handling mental afflictions and doing something out of it, instead of just being a victim of our own mental afflictions. The first one was to basically become aware of them, and how dangerous they are for our well-being and that of everybody else, and deciding to curb them to have them under some control. Taking vows, for example, could be a very good way to support this effort. Instead of acting very hastily or impulsively, we have this railing that encourages us to not go there, encourages us not to do it. So this was from the first session...be aware and control ourselves.

In the second part we heard that on the basis of control becoming more and more spontaneous and natural, we can begin to do something with them instead of just controlling them. Maybe we can begin to use them. Like we would with fire; fire burns and we know to stay away, but when you know how to handle fire in a secure way you can cook your meal. So the second way of dealing with them is to use the medium of compassion and loving kindness, and particularly all the mind training instructions on sending and taking, so we can recycle or transmute the kleshas into compassion and, of course, because they are indisociable, wisdom and discernment.

So that is what we saw in the second part, and now we are coming into something that requires more of a practice and experience. The third way of dealing with klesha is to use them to recognize the nature of mind. It is quite obvious that this capacity is only available if you have worked seriously on the first two ways of dealing with them, so that you have a certain skill in dancing with your own mental afflictions. This capacity will be based on a few elements we have to cultivate. One element is a good understanding of the view that is the intellectual background that we need to really understand the situation. And the view will be based on what the Buddha taught in the third major cycle of teachings he gave, when he taught on Buddha nature; the fact that we are endowed with this Buddha nature. If you want to know more about Buddha nature then I suggest a book by Shamar Rinpoche called *Buddha Nature*, published by Bird of Paradise Press. It's a clear overview of Buddha nature. Basically Buddha nature is the fundamental element, or we could say the cause, for us to reach enlightenment...because in terms of reaching enlightenment it's not like we are building something, but rather that we are discovering something that is present but we are unaware of. It's not about building, it's more about the process of clearing; and as we clear the confusion and the different veils in our mind then there will be more and more evidence of Buddha nature that will shine through; more and more certainty about it, more and more recognition of this quality that will happen thanks to the practices we do. Basically, practice here is accumulating positive energy to

push away the negative habits and to cultivate and refine our insight discernment wisdom. So using all the ranges of practice we can do that. So that's the first thing, we're all endowed with Buddha nature.

The second thing is that the ground of mind, what we call the ground of mind, which in Sanskrit is *alaya*, is actually a synonym for Buddha nature. When you say Buddha nature or *alaya* or ground it's the same thing. We use different words to describe different facets or aspects of it, but it's the same thing. So we need to really understand how mind works and how we have Buddha nature, how we have the ground of mind, and because it is ignored all sorts of misunderstandings happen in the very space of mind; it's not happening elsewhere. The ignorance of mind allows the proliferation of speculations and mental afflictions that will lead to actions, words, and thoughts that will have consequences, therefore creating misery for ourselves and obviously for others. So we need to have a clear understanding of that. The text I just pointed out, *Buddha Nature*, along with *Boundless Wisdom* (also by Shamar Rinpoche and printed by Bird of Paradise Press) which is a mahamudra practice manual, will explain the different steps and different stages of meditation. Because the first thing that we need to understand is the view. Second, we need to have some experience of what mind is, so we need to go through the stages of pacifying the mind, developing insight so we can come to recognize the true nature of mind and all the phenomena that mind perceives. This is done through the practice of calm-abiding (*shiné* in Tibetan, *shamatha* in Sanskrit) and vipashyana (*lhaktong* in Tibetan); insight.

In *Boundless Wisdom* Shamar Rinpoche explains that there are different sorts of shamatha and vipashyana, and he begins first by showing what is known as common shamatha and common vipashyana. Common here doesn't mean inferior, it means it is commonly practiced throughout all the different schools of Buddhism; a sort of common trunk of practice. Then on that he goes on to describe the specificities of shamatha and vipashyana in the mahamudra perspective. This is what we need to acquire, certain levels of experience or mastery in the recognition of the nature of mind...to gain a certainty about the nature of mind in order to be able to recycle or to use the klesha in the ways that we are going to see. The requisites are that we clearly understand the general picture and have a good understanding of the philosophical background, and secondly, we have a solid practice that leads to some experience and growing mastery. Otherwise it will be very difficult to use the klesha, because they are very sticky and they will take us down. If we don't have the distance they will take us down.

In *Boundless Wisdom* Rinpoche describes ways to use different encounters, like thoughts, afflictions, sickness, adversity, suffering, death...and instead of feeling like you absolutely have to push them as far away as possible, on the contrary you can really embrace them and use them to deepen your experience of the nature of mind, to strengthen your experiences and mastery. There are six specific methods for the different encounters. One, and this is the one we are going to use, from page 179 in this book, if you have it and want to follow along. This chapter is Turning Affliction into Practice. Turning affliction into practice is a common thing you find in mind training literature. The Tibetan

word is *lam su kyer*; *lam* is the path, *su* is in the direction of, *kyer* is to drive. To bring into the path is the general idea, so here we can say assimilation, or turning affliction into practice. Basically it's how to benefit from the presence of afflictions to deepen your wisdom and your certainty about the nature of mind, that's the topic. So in that sense afflictions stop being afflictions...if you are able to do that. They actually become your allies, you know, they work with you, they help you.

I will just go through what Rinpoche said about this.

“Although it is said that there are 84,000 afflictions, in fact they are beyond enumeration. Broadly speaking, they can be generalized into five groups: attachment, anger, ignorance, jealousy, and pride. When you turn them into practice by recognizing their true nature, all 84,000 afflictions are resolved in an instant.” So that's the heart of what I want to address today. When you turn them into practice by recognizing their true nature, all afflictions are resolved in one instant.

“At that moment, Buddha nature reveals itself spontaneously in the five forms of wisdom.” Buddha nature, the ground, the mahamudra all become obvious; because we have seen through the appearance of klesha we have seen the true nature of mind. We pierce through the appearance of klesha to realize our wisdom nature. That's the idea of this topic. “That is the far-reaching result of turning afflictions into meditation. The fundamental nature of mind is pure wisdom.” So we're back to this idea of Buddha nature. This mind, as Suzuki Roshi said, “This mind now is Buddha.” You know it or you don't know it, and if you don't know it, that's a problem...in the sense that there are a lot of consequences to not knowing the nature of mind. And you can't know it intellectually. It just doesn't work. You may have a clear understanding or idea of what Buddha nature is, but as long as you haven't gained certainty, it's not totally useless, but in terms of resolution it is not very helpful. Like if you've read the menu but you didn't eat...you're still hungry. It's nice to have a menu so you can choose your meal, but you must eat it. That's the difference between view and meditation. The view is clear understanding, and meditation is gaining certainty progressively through a long process. Certainty that escapes words and concepts that you can't talk about; a personal ineffable intimate experience you have with tremendous certainty, nothing can change that. That's what we try to reach when we practice meditation.

“The fundamental nature of mind is pure wisdom. In other words, the five forms of wisdom are the innate nature of mind, commonly known as Buddha nature.” So here we are. Buddha nature equals mahamudra equals innate nature of mind. Innate means that this quality of awakening is co-emergent, it is indissociable from the nature of mind that we come to understand when we study Buddha nature. The nature of mind is endowed with wisdom. The nature of mind is to be cognizant; to be aware. And when the nature of mind is aware of its own reality, that is enlightenment. When the cognizant aspect, the cognizant quality of mind, is dividing perception between a subject which is knowing and an object which is known, that is samsara...and both happen on the same basis. Conditioned existence arises on the basis of mind, which is endowed with this quality of awareness. And obviously enlightenment arises also on the basis of the very same mind. There is no difference in terms of the basis; mind is mind. There is no difference in terms of fruit. What we will realize at

the end of the path will be what was right at the beginning, but there is a difference in the experience we will have of this reality. Each individual has a different experience of this reality. Some are totally disconnected from this, they don't even know they are endowed with Buddha nature, some are connected with it but in a partial, slightly affected way, like perceiving it as an outer object they want to achieve, and some are connected in a more generous way...they want to achieve it but they want to achieve it to service to everybody and help everybody eventually to reach that state of freedom. So, different ways of being connected or disconnected will not affect the presence or quality of Buddha nature.

Buddha nature, as it states in the *Uttaratantra Shastra*, has nothing that needs to be added to it and nothing that needs to be subtracted from it. This statement from the *Unsurpassable Continuum*, that's the title of the text, is actually very similar to what Suzuki Roshi says when he says, "Mind right now is Buddha." At the basis, as the fundamental element, and as the fruition. Now we have to learn the path to overcome the different afflictions that prevents mind from knowing itself, that's our main challenge.

"When the mind is obscured by ignorance, these pure qualities are distorted...(Like if your mind is covered, let's say your mind is a lightbulb and covered by a very thick lampshade, probably you will not see any light even though the light is there. If the lampshade is thinner, maybe red, then the light will be red. Maybe blue, maybe green. Maybe some cracks and holes in the lampshade...then some rays of light could be experienced. But the bottom line is, no matter what, whether the lampshade is here, thick, covered, or absent, the light remains the light. It's just the personal experience of this light that will be different from one person to another, because of our lampshades;~} Our "lampshades" are making the difference)...and they appear in us as the five forms of affliction. In reality, they are the five forms of wisdom." That's the fascinating thing, it's because there is the slightest distortion that wisdom appears as mental afflictions. And the remedy in this perspective is not to suppress the mental afflictions, it's not to try to get rid of them, rather it's to poke through the lampshade, so to speak. And to connect directly with the light that is the very nature of each emotion and mental affliction.

"Thus, the true nature of all afflictions is in no way different from the true nature of mind. If we can only see that the mind and all its afflictions are intrinsically empty and unborn, ignorance will be eradicated in an instant." So I'll go back to that, because that's a central point. "If we can see that the mind and all its afflictions are intrinsically empty and unborn, ignorance will be eradicated in one instant." Okay! How do we do that? Now we've heard it, now we know it...it doesn't really change our life, right? We still get upset and still fixate on things and whatnot. So we need a process, which as illusory as it may be, is indispensable. And this, as the 3rd Karmapa said in the *Prayer of Mahamudra*, the method of purification is the great yoga of mahamudra. This brings us back to *Boundless Wisdom* and the chapter where Shamar Rinpoche explains shamatha and vipashyana from the perspective of mahamudra and shows the difference between the commonly practiced and this specific form of shamatha and vipashyana. We use the same words so it might be a little bit

confusing, because the views are different and the methods are different. Let's say that the way the vipashyana and shamatha are practiced in the vehicle of the listeners, what we might call theravada, or this kind of denomination can be used. It's not based on the view that we're endowed with Buddha nature. This view came later and pertained to the general treasure of instructions that are found in the mahayana. So already there is a difference.

Right now is not the time to go into what the common vipashyana is in the vehicle of the listener, so we're going to stay on the mahayana and in particular the mahamudra perspective. It is definitely based on teachings about Buddha nature that the Buddha gave in the 3rd cycle of teachings. We're all endowed with this; this is the ground, this is alaya, this is Buddha nature...all of these are synonyms, and this is mahamudra as the fruit. Once we understand this, we understand that we don't have to get rid of the kleshas but we do have to understand their illusory nature and how they become toxic because we are convinced that they do exist as such. To be able to look at their deep nature and come to realize what they have in common with wisdom, one first must be free from the mesmerizing nature of the kleshas. How they are so sticky, and how they catch us. We have to be able to look at anger and desire and arrogance without shame, without problems, without being a slave to it, without denying, you know, in any shape or form that you are under the influence of those things, but directly looking at it. So you must be able to have a certain level of passionlessness. You're not mesmerized by them. You just really look at them for what they are. Okay?

That's really the prerequisite, and in order to be able to do this you need to really work with your mind. So obviously you need to first create a good basis of calm-abiding. I won't go into much detail about how to do this here, but basically the outcome of the practice of calm-abiding is that the mind can abide in a state of openness and clarity. Rinpoche said about shamatha, and I am paraphrasing, that whatever your mind produces, or not, it is not disturbing and you are not attached to stillness nor disturbed by movement. The mind is totally at peace; not aiming at anything in particular nor afraid of anything in particular, remaining whether you have a lot of thoughts and mental events or the absence of them. You remain always even in a very spacious awareness which is extremely clear and precise, that can be placed on any object at any moment we decide to do so. It's a very subtle, very light state, and it has to become very natural and very familiar; we have to be able to go there quite naturally. Once we're there we can use this space and freedom, this clear knowing sharp mind, to look at this particular affliction.

In the practice of mahamudra vipashyana we are aiming at seeing the falsity of our assumptions regarding the substantial and independent existence of both the subject and the object. We're directly targeting the falsity of dualistic fixations. Not in an intellectual way, we do that through study and contemplation. But when we come to meditate, we just look directly at it, and so as instructed in the text we look at phenomena. Roughly, phenomena are inner and outer, to use a convention. Outer phenomena is the world, all the objects, the sentient beings and the world; houses, rocks, mountains, nature. And then the inner phenomena, the thoughts and feelings and sensations and all of that. These will be our object of observation. And in this particular context, the

phenomena that we are going to look at is the affliction. And we are not going to think in a theoretical way about what happens in your mind when it happens. When you are angry, you look at it. When you are fixating in a possessive way on an object or person, you look at it.

You are not trying to shy away as if it doesn't exist, and not trying to suppress it, like, "Oh, no, God forbid, I can't do that."

You just look directly into it. The skill in this practice is to be able to look into it without thinking about it too much. You're not here to make a report about what my attachment looks like, where it comes from and all of that. No...no, no, no. It's like if you were looking at a rainbow, but instead of being mesmerized by the shape and the colors, you look through it. And then you come to realize that there is, obviously, a phenomenon, but it doesn't have the substantiality or the existence that I project onto it...because I can see through it. And when you see through it, you see emptiness. And when you see emptiness, you see that it is indissociable from manifestation...and that one doesn't exclude the other. You see the form, it reveals emptiness, and when you are aware of emptiness, it also shows that because of emptiness, everything can arise. "As nothing exists, everything is possible," as Nagarjuna said.

So you keep looking at things like this...in a way you're not trying to solve the klesha as if it is a problem, because when you try to solve it you've already decided that it exists. You look through what seems to be its characteristics; does it have a shape, a color, a form, a particular location? Anything that would make it recognizable in every moment, every circumstance, everywhere by everybody? And when you look through it in this manner, you see that it is devoid of this, it is empty of this. And then suddenly, wow, emptiness is pushed up to the surface by the observation of form. So you realize that phenomena are the indissociable union of manifestation and emptiness. That's the result of mahamudra vipashyana...of the first phase of the practice.

In the second phase you're going to place your attention, which you know how to do thanks to your practice of shamatha, you're going to place your attention on the ground, the basis. Where does this thing arise from? The basis, mind, alaya, mahamudra, Buddha nature; you realize all of this arises on the basis of mind. And if you are not convinced, if you are not certain about it, you have to keep watching. You haven't looked thoroughly, you haven't looked enough. Deeply enough. You need to keep going, looking at it...looking at it.

So manifestation brings you to emptiness. Emptiness brings you to the ground. Then you realize that this manifestation, which is indissociable from emptiness and manifestation, is actually indissociable from mind, which is in essence empty. They partake from the same essential reality, and whether the manifestation and phenomena are labeled by me as poison or nectar, that is, klesha or wisdom, these are just randomly conceptually attributed notions which in no way prevent them from being essentially empty, thereby indissociable from the ground.

You gain certainty about manifestation's nature, and that brings you to the second step, which is to gain certainty about mind, mind being empty. But when we look at the emptiness of mind we look at the form of mind, what is the form of mind? Awareness. You realize that mind is cognizant; it's not a cognizer, it's cognizant. Mind is the union of emptiness and awareness. Its ground is Buddha nature. Everything that arises from this is, in essence, the expression of Buddha nature. In essence it is the expression of the five wisdoms, appearing to our senses as a deluded concept of the five afflictions. If we look through them and come to realize the union of manifestation and emptiness as we look at the kleshas, that leads us to the ground, the mind itself that we come to realize as the union of awareness and emptiness. These poisons are not poisons anymore, they cannot operate as poison. To use the language of the vaccine, they have been denatured. They are not viruses anymore, they are vaccines. So that's how we overcome the kleshas....by recognizing their true nature in the practice of vipashyana.

And then, the third aspect of the third part of the training in mahamudra vipashyana is to look at the perceiving mind. Because we have been looking at the mind that is perceived, we came to some conclusion, or mastery. We have thereby been driven to look at mind itself, the ground, the basis...and then we gain some certainty, some mastery. But we still have to figure out what is the true nature of the perceiving mind. The true nature of the perceiving mind is cognizance indissociable from emptiness. Out of ignorance of this reality we think that the empty awareness of mind is an entity and we superimpose a mental construction on this that becomes "me," the perceiving mind also known as "myself." So we attribute a certain avatar to the empty cognizance of mind that becomes "me." Me is a thought, it's not a figure. And then because of this basic ignorance of what we call *dak mong* (the confusion of what the self is) then there is fixation. Fixation on several things.

There is one fixation on "I am" and, as I am the center of all operations, I am thereby superior to everybody else, because my point of view, my vantage point, is "the" view. Therefore we feel that we are different and superior...and then we feel that the self is entitled to a number of perks and privileges. And then the desire for more of this, the fear of losing it, the anger when it goes away and the jealousy of others having it, all of this piles up on top of this basic ignorance of mind not knowing itself. And so it appears as kleshas for sure, because it is just a proliferation of confusion and wrong assumptions that pile on top of each other and make this problematic assemblage, like a house of cards.

When you practice vipashyana, to begin with you first pay attention to phenomena, outer or inner, and come to really understand the union of manifestation and emptiness...that brings you quite naturally to the ground, the basis of what is the mind. And after that, naturally you try to figure out what is this perceiving mind that we perceive as an entity, "me." And then progressively you realize that all of this is actually interconnected...and not as divided as it seemed in the first place. That the perceived is perceived because there is a perceiver, but the perceived and the perceiver arise from the same ground, which is mind, and therefore they partake from the same essence of emptiness.

Yes, there is a manifestation that we might misinterpret as a self perceiving, and there is a manifestation that we may misinterpret as phenomena. But in reality they only arise through interdependence. There is a visual object because there is a visual consciousness, and there is a visual consciousness because there is a visual object. You can't have one without the other, and which came first, the chicken or the egg? Actually none of them exist in and of themselves. All of this is the definition of an illusion; it appears but it is not.

So the purpose of the introspection of mahamudra vipashyana is to cut through all these old habits and misconceptions; what is called *shes bya sgrib pa* in Tibetan, the veil of distorted cognition. To readjust all of this. If we can do that through our meditation then we have some experience, some mastery that we can contribute when we are colliding with kleshas, situations where kleshas will explode. Mental afflictions. And we can use them in a very special way...not like before when we controlled them, no, it is already controlled...nor transmute them into something else, upgrade, upcycle, that's fine, but we can go deeper! And deeper means looking at the essence of it. Look at the essence of it. So when we look at the essence of it, as Rinpoche explained here, all of these kleshas will appear under a very different light. Not as kleshas, but as wisdom; there will be an amazing transformation in our relationship to what we used to call kleshas.

So let's go through the different afflictions. Rinpoche starts with attachment. Fixation, possession, sometimes you could say desire if you want, but it's the fixation of attachment. When the intrinsic nature of attachment is recognized as empty and unborn (unborn refers to the manifestation), it appears but it doesn't really exist. For something to exist it has to be born; if it doesn't exist it is unborn. But unborn doesn't claim that this phenomenon doesn't appear, for when you say the phenomenon appears it's not a claim about its existence. Our dualistic mind has a little bit of difficulty with that, because we speak in terms of exclusion. It's either this or that. And here we are saying it is not this and it is not not that. This is a little bit difficult when we try to think about it; in the meditation experience it's much easier, because you can see that something manifests, and you can sense how devoid of any substance and reality it is. That's why we need to use the meditative language and not the conceptual language to approach this.

When we come to realize that it is empty, devoid of any defining characteristic that would be substantial and permanent, it appears...but because of its emptiness it doesn't have any substantial existence, so it's unborn; what was attachment is now revealed as discerning wisdom, *so sor rtog pa ye shes* in Tibetan. The wisdom of the difference between the different aspects and the different manifestations. Here Rinpoche says at the end, "A Buddha can, looking at the tail of a peacock, instantaneously tell what karmic causes and conditions have brought about all the different colors in each feather." So, the fixation actually closes; the recognition of the empty and unborn nature of mind opens up. But as it opens up, what was fixation and desire becomes wisdom that can see the particularity and the reasons why this is like this and like that. I would say that this is the relinquishment of a quality that was choked by the fixation of attachment, that's what is happening when you recognize.

Then you want to have more desire...it's kind of strange to say that...not that you have to look very far, it always comes. We came to this world through desire and desire is a driving force in our life, so it's all around us, it's everywhere. So wow! We've got so many opportunities to discover the empty and unborn nature of mind, and see, and relinquish our discriminating awareness or our discerning wisdom. So instead of a fear, of desire or an object of lust that you want to have, this becomes a liberating experience...but it's like licking honey off of a razor blade. You have to be very, very careful. If you move away from the vision of the empty and unborn nature of these kleshas then you're back into it.

In discerning wisdom all things are perceived distinctly as they truly are, and this is as much as one can say about a Buddha's wisdom...a Buddha's wisdom is really inconceivable, so we can only see a little part of it or have a poor description of what it may be. What we can say is that a Buddha intuitively knows how and why things are the way they are. In this book *Buddha Nature* there is a chapter that describes the 32 qualities of an enlightened mind. Among the 32 are the first ten, the ten powers or ten capacities of a Buddha. Buddha mind, awakened mind. Not buddha in the sense of Buddha Shakyamuni, but rather the quality of the awakened mind. One of the powers is to be able to understand the different qualities or the different capacities, and different appreciation of sentient beings. Another power would be to evaluate really thoroughly, like through the ten directions and the three times, every aspect...of how this person came to this point, in terms of meditation qualities, in terms of the levels of the kleshas, the influence of the kleshas on his/her quality of meditation and what would be the best remedy. One of the powers of the Buddha is full mastery of all the skillful methods that will work 100% for each particular person. Only buddhas have this range of capacities. With this discerning wisdom we know all of the parameters that participate in the construction of one element of time and space in the character and personality of one individual.

The second affliction is anger, and here I must say that Shamar Rinpoche is following the model of the five wisdoms that are found in the text by Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Moonbeams of Mahamudra*. In common teachings anger will be revealed as mirror-like wisdom and ignorance will be revealed as the Dharmadhatu wisdom, or the wisdom of the expanse. In his explanation, Rinpoche describes the following from the *Moonbeams of Mahamudra* of Takpo Tashi Namgyal, which describes the affliction of anger as being revealed as the wisdom of Dharmadhatu, and ignorance as being revealed as mirror-like wisdom; there is sort of a modification of the position. So for your information and clarity, if you had received other instruction or read my little pamphlet on the Five Buddha wisdoms which is according to the common exposition, you might notice there is a difference, and then conclude that either Shamar Rinpoche or Tsony is wrong;~} When you have this question, it's always me who is wrong. I say this because the question came to me....I didn't even begin to teach about this, but someone wrote and was confused about this different way of describing, so it's just a little precaution. When we look at anger, which is quite strong, we can see that the nature of anger is actually the union of emptiness and manifestation, and it's true nature being seen it reveals itself as

the wisdom of expanse, the Dharmadhatu. Dharma means phenomena and dhatu is the dynamic space where all phenomena can arise. So Dharmadhatu is also a synonym for alaya, a synonym of mahamudra and of Buddha nature. It is the ground. The dynamic aspect of mind which is empty yet dynamic in the sense of creative, cognizant, and so on and so forth.

This is when every aspect of experience is recognized as inseparable from emptiness, mind's true nature. In the emptiness of mind every experience is an experience of spaciousness. It's quite interesting because when you think about anger, it is something that closes you, closes your mind. You sort of separate from others because it's unbearable...and you close yourself. When you look at the essence of anger, you see that its essence is emptiness. Suddenly it just pops up open; what was closed is suddenly seen as the Dharmadhatu, the wisdom of the expanse. So the effect of closing from anger is counterbalanced, or liberated by, the vision of the true essence of mind. There is a liberating factor here which is just creating space. In emptiness of mind every arising phenomenon offers within it the-all encompassing experience and liberating quality of awakening. So you can be as angry as it gets and every time when you see the closing you look at it opening in expanse, and you can see all things that appear in that expanse, and you realize the beauty of that expanse; the beauty of the expanse is to create the space in which all phenomena, all the other wisdoms, can arise...so it's not anger, it's spaciousness. I like the idea of pairing the restricting and closing anger with its counterpart of openness and emptiness. That is just so liberating.

The third affliction is ignorance. When we look at ignorance...and how do we look at ignorance? You know, sometimes when we meditate we go through a blank state; we're sort of dumb as a bell. Like, duhhh. We feel bored when nothing happens, or we are in a state of sideration, like a rabbit in the headlights...you don't know what to think, what to do, where to go; kind of a blank state. Don't try to push this away and don't remain imprisoned by that, just do what we've done with the first two, with anger and attachment...look through it. Look through boredom, look through the blank state. Then if you come to recognize the nature of ignorance as empty and unborn, then it reveals itself as the mirror-like wisdom, sometimes also known as all-knowing wisdom. There is no limitation to knowledge in omniscience, neither in space nor in time. An ordinary person cannot help but perceive things sequentially but a buddha is more like a network perception; not so much sequential, it's much more network-like. All parameters, like space and time, all of this participates in this omniscience. So a buddha knows everything instantaneously and simultaneously, and whatever comes to mind comes with clarity and precision without hesitation or obstruction. So all things are perceived as directly as the images in a mirror, that's the idea of why we call it mirror-like wisdom. In this state of openness it's as if you have a vast space with a lot of trees and rivers and mountains and palaces in the thickest fog you can think of, and then when your discernment, your vipashyana, acts like the sun, it dissipates the fog and suddenly all of these qualities are seen very clearly; you can see a house, you can see the details of the house...all of that is very clearly seen because the kleshas or ignorance has been revealed as mirror-like wisdom.

The fourth affliction is pride or ego-clinging. Basically pride is the discrimination between self and others. When I talked about the confusion about what the self is, what comes next is the distinction between what is me and what is not me. And in itself it carries the sense of “we are different,” as I am at the center of all perception...I am in the control room, therefore I am superior. I have more importance, I am more important. And then after that there is fixation on the entitlement that comes with this position. In any given situation we generally favor ourselves over others; that’s the general position. We feel entitled. We already worked on this entitlement in the previous system when practicing sending and taking; we practice balance, we care about others as much as we care about ourselves, which attacks this sense of self-righteousness and self-entitlement. And after that we practiced exchange, when we took upon ourselves the heavy load and let others have the easier tasks. So we already worked on that, but here we work at an even deeper level...it’s like we worked on the manifestation before, and now we work on the substrate, the underlying structure it comes from. It comes from not knowing the nature of pride.

When we know the nature of pride it transforms into the wisdom of non-discrimination, also called the wisdom of equanimity. When you realize that all phenomena are the union of emptiness and manifestation and you aren’t fixed on what the manifestation is and don’t value or oppose one manifestation to another, but rather tend to see a unity of all manifestation in terms of their essence, there is less ground for discrimination. Like you’re black, you’re white, you’re blue, you’re a man, you’re a woman, you’re whatever you are, okay? Discrimination? We’re all human. We bleed, we love, we die. When you see that instead of the differences, you see the unity, the essential unity of all manifestation and all phenomena. Then the klesha of arrogance will be revealed as the wisdom of non-discrimination. You realize that in the emptiness of mind all things are undifferentiated in that they are all equally empty. We are all human beings first and foremost, before we talk about ethnicity or sexual preferences or age or whatever. And foremost, we are all human. We share the same dreams and the same aspirations...we express it differently but there is a common factor and so we cannot say that, “Oh, you know what? I am a more human being than you.” This is ridiculous. There is no competition, nobody can be more of a human being than somebody else. There’s no measure. So that’s how the affliction of pride appears as the wisdom of non-discrimination or wisdom of equality.

The fifth affliction is jealousy. In enlightenment jealousy is turned into task-accomplishing wisdom; the wisdom of activity. When you are free from all the other afflictions, and you understand that beings suffer from the ignorance they have from not knowing their true nature, your heart of compassion flows towards all...and you realize that there is so much to do to alleviate the suffering and to bring people to a level of freedom through their own realization of the true nature of manifestation of phenomena. As an enlightened person you just perceive (and that’s part of the power of a buddha) the wishes, the capacity, the abilities of all sentient beings; and then you’re in a good position to help them. You understand their deep aspirations (that maybe even they are not even aware of) and their capacities, and then also gauge how deeply they’re connected with their Buddha nature. You also can gauge how much the kleshas are obscuring this realization. If you

know perfectly all the different methods that can be used to overcome specific problems, you are in the best position in the world to help them. That's the wisdom of accomplishment. You are not doing this out of competition...or wanting to be the bigger buddha;~} The better buddha. The faster buddha. More efficient buddha. This would be absolutely ridiculous because to have this kind of idea precludes that you have the sense that a buddha is an entity; to be bigger, better, faster, you have to be somebody. When you realize that being a buddha is just mind knowing itself, there is no one there to get the award of the "best buddha." So jealousy and competition is not part of your modus operandi, efficiency in your work for the benefit of sentient beings is.

But when jealousy comes into the game the first casualty is efficiency. Say you've got a group, it could be a company or a family or a Buddhist center, any kind of human organization...and say you have a common goal, a common objective and that everybody is trying to pull the cart in the same direction. You have all the intelligence and energy of everyone going in the same direction, it works fantastically. Nobody is in it for glory individually speaking. Everyone is there for the fulfillment of the goal, whatever you are incorporated for. If on this team each person is pulling the cart in a different direction because they have different agendas, because they want to be recognized as the indispensable one, the one who is leading, the one who does the most...and then suffers from being the one "who does everything" and "nobody else does anything" and so on and so forth, the first casualty is efficiency. It's just not going to work. And secondly everyone is going to be exhausted. And then third, everyone is going to be pissed at each other. I've spent all my life in communities, I've seen that allllll the time. Alllllll the time. If you cannot look at the true nature of jealousy, you cannot fulfill the wishes and the goals that you've set yourself. But if you can, then you realize that in the emptiness of mind everything takes place. Then you see that maybe it even comes from other sources, maybe it's not even you who does the thing, but somehow there's a dynamic and somebody joins in and does the job, and in the end what matters is the efficiency. You are here to help everybody out of their misery...not to be the best at it. If you're the best at it, it's in terms of efficiency, not in terms of a promotion. So that's how we look at the wisdom of activity as the enlightened pendant of the affliction of jealousy. The afflictions are poison for as long as they are not transformed into wisdom. And the technique for turning the afflictions into practice is exactly the same as for turning thoughts into practice, as was explained earlier in this text; you can use the thoughts, you don't have to suppress them. Thoughts can be your enemy or they can be your friend. If you don't look at them and through them come to realize the true nature of mind, then they're your enemy...but if you look at them you don't have to look for a state without thought. You welcome thoughts, but in the sense of outer and inner perceptions and feelings.