AN 5.23 — AN 5:23 Defilements | Upakkilesa Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN5_23.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017

License notice: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Attribution: From Handful of Leaves, Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu; https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/SuttaPitaka_251113.epub. Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Defilements

Upakkilesa Sutta (AN 5:23)

“Monks, there are these five defilements of gold, defiled with which gold is neither pliant nor malleable nor luminous, but brittle & not rightly fit for work. Which five?

“Iron, copper, tin, lead, & silver: These are the five defilements of gold, corrupted with which gold is neither pliant nor malleable nor luminous, but brittle & not rightly fit for work. But when gold is freed from these five defilements, it is pliant, malleable, & luminous. It is not brittle and is rightly fit for work. Then whatever sort of ornament one has in mind—whether a belt, an earring, a necklace, or a gold chain—it would serve one’s purpose.

“In the same way, monks, there are these five defilements of the mind, defiled with which the mind is neither pliant nor malleable nor luminous, but brittle & not rightly concentrated for the ending of the effluents. Which five?

“Sensual desire, ill will, sloth & drowsiness, restlessness & anxiety, and uncertainty: These are the five defilements of the mind, defiled with which the mind is neither pliant nor malleable nor luminous, but brittle & not rightly concentrated for the ending of the effluents. But when the mind is freed from these five defilements, it is pliant, malleable, & luminous. It is not brittle and is rightly concentrated for the ending of the effluents. Then whichever of the qualities to be known & realized that one turns one’s mind to know & realize, one can witness them right there whenever there is an opening.

“If one wants, one wields manifold supranormal powers. Having been one, one becomes many; having been many, one becomes one. One appears. One vanishes. One goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, & mountains as if through space. One dives in & out of the earth as if it were water. One walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged, one flies through the air like a winged bird. With one’s hand, one touches & strokes even the sun & moon, so mighty & powerful. One exercises influence with one’s body even as far as the Brahmā worlds. One can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

“If one wants, one hears—by means of the divine ear-element, purified & surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine & human, whether near or far. One can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

“If one wants, one discerns the awareness of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed it with one’s own awareness. One discerns a mind with passion as ‘a mind with passion,’ and a mind without passion as ‘a mind without passion.’ One discerns a mind with aversion as ‘a mind with aversion,’ and a mind without aversion as ‘a mind without aversion.’ One discerns a mind with delusion as ‘a mind with delusion,’ and a mind without delusion as ‘a mind without delusion.’ One discerns a restricted mind as ‘a restricted mind,’ and a scattered mind as ‘a scattered mind.’ One discerns an enlarged mind1 as ‘an enlarged mind,’ and an unenlarged mind as ‘an unenlarged mind.’ One discerns a surpassed mind [one that is not at the most excellent level] as ‘a surpassed mind,’ and an unsurpassed mind as ‘an unsurpassed mind.’ One discerns a concentrated mind as ‘a concentrated mind,’ and an unconcentrated mind as ‘an unconcentrated mind.’ One discerns a released mind as ‘a released mind,’ and an unreleased mind as ‘an unreleased mind.’ One can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

“If one wants, one recollects one’s manifold past lives [literally: previous homes], i.e., one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion, (recollecting,) ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There, too, I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an

appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus one remembers one's manifold past lives in their modes & details. One can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If one wants, one sees—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—beings passing away & re-appearing, and one discerns how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, & mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views, and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, & mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views, and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a good destination, a heavenly world.' Thus—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—one sees beings passing away & re-appearing, and one discerns how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma. One can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If one wants, then through the ending of effluents, one enters & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for oneself right in the here & now. One can witness this right there whenever there is an opening."

Note

1. Mahaggataṁ. This term is used, together with "immeasurable / unlimited," in the standard description of the awareness generated in the practice of the brahmavihāras (SN 42:8). According to Ven. Anuruddha in MN 127, however, an enlarged mind is not immeasurable. Its range of awareness is larger than the body but still measurable, ranging in distance from the shade of a tree to the earth bounded by the ocean.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 51:22; AN 5:28; AN 5:51