



## Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

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## Consciousness Disperses the Darkness of Ignorance, Evil and the Ego

The "false self" is the ego or personality, refers to the mistaken belief in a permanent, unchanging, and independent "I" or "me;" this belief is fundamental ignorance (avijjā).

The ego is composed of the five aggregates (pañca khandha):

1. form (rūpa): the physical body.
2. sensation (vedanā): feelings of pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain (neutral feeling).
3. perception (saññā): recognition and interpretation of information obtained from the sense faculties.
4. mental formations (saṅkhāra): thoughts, emotions, and intentions.
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa): Pure Consciousness (anidassana viññāṇa) that is influenced or colored by the sense faculties and respective sense objects.

Sense Faculties (indriya)      respective Sense Objects (ārammaṇa):

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1 eye (cakkhu)   | visible forms (rūpa)  |
| 2 ear (sotā)     | sounds (sadda)  |
| 3 nose (ghāṇa)   | odors or smells (gandha)  |
| 4 tongue (jihvā) | flavors or tastes (rasa)  |
| 5 body (kāya)    | tangibles (phoṭṭhabba); touch: solidity, temperature, motion  |
| 6 mind (mana)    | mind objects, mental events or states of mind (dhammā);<br>thoughts, concepts, feelings, perceptions, intentions,<br>memories, defilements, wholesome qualities |

The ego is ultimately not real and is an illusion because no enduring, independent self can be found within the five aggregates. The ego is impermanent, as the aggregates are constantly changing, yet the ego mistakenly perceives the aggregates as stable and permanent.

Pure Consciousness is consciousness without surface; that is, consciousness that doesn't get entangled with either the sense faculties nor the sense objects.

- Pure Consciousness is always present but is obscured or veiled by the ego.
- Pure Consciousness is the mind of the fully enlightened, the Arahāt who has tamed and trained the ego to be subservient to the wisdom aspect of consciousness.
- Being formless, Pure Consciousness is outside the domain of space and time; subjectless-objectless consciousness; primordial consciousness.
- Pure Consciousness is impersonal, not my nor your consciousness, and therefore cannot be described as a "self" but is nevertheless, the essence of all sentient beings.
- Pure Consciousness is what connects all beings and is the foundation of loving-kindness.

See the December 2022 Newsletter - viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ (consciousness without a surface or Pure Consciousness) for elaboration.

The ego is the part of the mind that identifies with the five aggregates and is characterized by separation, fear, guilt, judgment, and a sense of individuality; and is the root cause of suffering and conflict in the human experience. The ego is the result of the thought of separation and independence, and is a distorted perception of reality. The thought and belief in a separate self,

distinct from other sentient beings, is the foundation of the ego's existence. Spiritual practices aims to guide the mind to recognizing and undoing this belief in separation and in dethroning the lordship of the ego through training in the Noble Eightfold Path. See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on the Noble Eightfold Path.

The ego is a defense mechanism whose function is to maintain and protect the physical body. The ego is not evil, cannot be eliminated and there should be no attempt to kill the ego because it is a necessary mental program or process designed for the survival of the body. The ego has been the lord and master over the mind for countless lifetimes, causing much suffering to the host, humanity and sentient life. Instead of trying (and failing) to uproot the ego, the ego is to be tamed and subjugated to the wisdom (paññā) aspect of Pure Consciousness by way of spiritual practices.

The mind habitually identifies with the five aggregates as "self," leading to attachment, craving, and suffering. The mind craves and attaches to the aggregates in order to perpetuate the "self" and experiences suffering due to the impermanence of the aggregates. The craving of the ego to be a "self" perpetuates suffering and keeps beings trapped in saṃsāra.

Saṃsāra is the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth; its literally meaning is 'perpetual wandering'. Saṃsāra is the unbroken chain of the five aggregates combinations, which constantly changing from moment to moment through inconceivable periods of time.

The following notes on the ego is from A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose by Eckhart Tolle.

- In normal everyday usage, "I" embodies the primordial error, a misperception of who you are, an illusory sense of identity. This is the ego.
- The ego is a collective dysfunction, the insanity of the human mind.
- Ego implies unawareness.
- Ego takes everything personally. Emotion arises, defensiveness, perhaps even aggression.
- Ego confuses opinions and viewpoints with facts, and is a master of selective perception and distorted interpretation.
- The ego is pathological.
- For thousands of years, humanity has been increasingly mind-possessed, failing to recognize the possessing entity as "not self." Through complete identification with the mind, a false sense of self, the ego, came into existence.
- The egoic mind is completely conditioned by the past.
- The ego is a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment, its very nature compels it to ignore, resist, or devalue the Now. Time is what the ego lives on. The stronger the ego, the more time takes over your life.
- Fear, anxiety, expectation, regret, guilt, anger are the dysfunctions of the time-bound state of the egoic consciousness.
- There are three ways in which the ego will treat the present moment:
  1. as a means to an end,
  2. as an obstacle, or
  3. as an enemy.
- The ego is never fully here because you are always busy trying to get elsewhere.
- The present moment is regarded and treated as if it were an obstacle to be overcome. This is where impatience, frustration, and stress arise.
- The present moment is treated as if it were an enemy.
- More time means more ego. Time, that is to say, past and future, is what the false mind-made self, the ego, lives on, and time is in your mind.
- Psychological time, which is the egoic mind's endless preoccupation with past and future.
- The unconscious assumption is that by identifying with an object through ownership, the apparent solidity and permanency of that material object will endow the ego's sense of self with greater solidity and permanency.
- The ego equate having with Being: I have, therefore I am. And the more I have, the more I am.
- The concept of ownership, is a fiction created by the ego to give itself solidity and permanency and make itself stand out, make itself special.

Elaborations on the ego may be found below.

- January 2023 Newsletter - Egoic consciousness, the false self
- March 2025 Newsletter - The ego takes on a role as either a "hero" or a "victim"

Consciousness dethrones the ego's control over the mind and is often likened to a metaphorical light that dispels darkness because of its illuminative nature. Consciousness plays a crucial role in dispelling the darkness of ignorance, evil, and the ego.

- Consciousness is the awareness of contents of experience; that is, awareness of the five aggregates. The bare awareness coupled with wisdom brings understanding and clarity, dispelling ignorance and confusion, and is essential in recognizing ego-driven behaviors.

- Mindfulness, another term for wakefulness or consciousness, is necessary for the mind to critically reflect on actions, beliefs, and motivations. This reflection allows the mind to identify and correct ego-driven tendencies such as arrogance, defensiveness, and the need for validation, and to confront and overcome inner darkness such as biases, fears, and prejudices.
- Consciousness enables loving-kindness, empathy and connection with others. The realization that all sentient beings have the same quality of consciousness, even though the contents of experience will be different, enables the mind to relate to all other minds as no different in essence from itself. This realization motivates the mind to understand different perspectives and experiences, which fosters compassion and deconstructs conflict. Empathy frees the mind from the self-centeredness of ego by expanding perceptions and views that is beyond personal interests and biases.
- Consciousness that is free from the distortions of the ego enables the mind to pursue and uncover the truth of reality and grows in wisdom. By seeking to understand the behavior characteristics of the ego and how most beings are under its control; consciousness combats ignorance, relentless craving for more things to identify with and fear of loss of those things; this understanding and realization leads to liberation from suffering (dukkha), enlightenment (nibbāna). Consciousness drives the mind to grow in wisdom that transcends ego-based limitations and biases.
- Consciousness allows the mind to train in moral and ethical precepts that averts the causing of harm to others or to oneself. Ethical behavior counters the ego's behavior to take advantage of others in an aggressive and violent manner.
- Consciousness fosters humility by acknowledging the ego's limitations. This humility counters the rigid and arrogant aspects of the unenlightened mind, promoting openness to new ideas and perspectives.
- Consciousness supports the mind to live authentically according to wholesome and wise values rather than ego-driven desires for status, power, or approval.
- Liberation from suffering is realized by identifying with Pure Consciousness instead of the ego. Wisdom is a characteristic of consciousness that frees the mind from the power of the ego.
- Ignorance is the root cause of suffering and refers to the lack of realization of The Four Noble Truths and a fundamental misunderstanding or lack of awareness of the true nature of reality, particularly the Three Characteristics of Existence: impermanence, suffering, and not-self. Consciousness is the unbiased awareness that reveals these truths, and the realization of the truths uproots ignorance and suffering.
  - The First Noble Truth is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of Suffering
  - The Second Noble Truth is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering
  - The Third Noble Truth is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
  - The Fourth Noble Truth is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering
  - Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) is discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā)
- The term "evil" is associated with mental afflictions or defilements (kilesa), the Root Defilements are greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha). Consciousness illuminates these afflictions as they arise in the mind. With the light of mindfulness and wisdom, the mind observes the mental unwholesome states without being consumed or influenced by them.

Awareness coupled with various practices allows the mind to respond skillfully which gradually erodes the defilements from the mind. The defilements occur at three levels in the mind.

1. Subtle level (anusaya) is where the defilements remain as mere latent dispositions. The Seven Latent Tendencies (satta anusaya):
  1. lust for sensual pleasures (kāmarāga),
  2. aversion (patigha),

3. conceit (māna),
4. views (ditthi),
5. doubt (vicikicchā),
6. craving for continued existence or becoming (bhavarāga),
7. ignorance (avijjā).

Wisdom, developed with the practice of insight (vipassanā), erodes the defilements at the subtle level.

2. Middle level (pariyuṭṭhāna) is where the defilements rise up to obsess and enslave the mind. The training in concentration (samādhi) erodes the defilements at the middle level.
3. Gross level (vīṭikkama) is where the defilements motivate unwholesome bodily and verbal action. Ethical conduct (sīla) is practiced by training in moral precepts erodes the defilements at the gross level.

Training the mind to maintain and promote such states as loving-kindness (mettā), patience (khanti), equanimity (upekkhā), and generosity (dāna), cultivates wholesome mental states that also help to erode the defilements.

- See the July 2022 Newsletter - The Practice of Metta (Loving-Kindness).
- See the August 2022 Newsletter - The Practice of Generosity (dāna).
- See the January 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī).
- See the April 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī).
- See the June 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī).
- See the September 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī).
- See the October 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).
- See the December 2024 Newsletter - Taints (āsava) and their Removal.
- The ego is a construct created by the mind that leads to suffering, attachment, and self-centeredness. Consciousness, through mindfulness, concentration and insight meditation, helps the mind see through the illusion of a fixed and separate personality. By observing the ever-changing nature of thoughts, feelings, and sensations, the mind comes to understand that there is no permanent, unchanging personality within themselves. This realization leads to a reduction in ego-driven desires and aversions, fostering compassion and interconnectedness with others.

Consciousness, unobstructed by the illusions of the ego, aides in understanding the nature of existence and the mind itself. Through mindfulness, concentration and insight practices, the mind cultivates the awareness, which gradually dispels ignorance, diminishes the power of mental defilements, and dismantles the illusion of a fixed ego. This process is central to the path of liberation from suffering and the realization of nibbāna.

## Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media and we ask that you please sign-up for every event that you are planing to attend at [www.MeetUp.com](http://www.MeetUp.com). Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps).

## Activities of the Meditation Center

- Group sitting meditation practice for one hour is held Monday through Friday at 6:30AM and everyday at 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) on the days and time you would like to participate.
- Group sitting meditation practice for two hours is held every Saturday and Sunday at 6:30AM.



- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30PM and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15PM the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a Library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00PM and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.
- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information please send an email to [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com). We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

## Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website [www.mittameditation.com](http://www.mittameditation.com).
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website [www.mittameditation.com](http://www.mittameditation.com) and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.