



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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## THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF KILESA

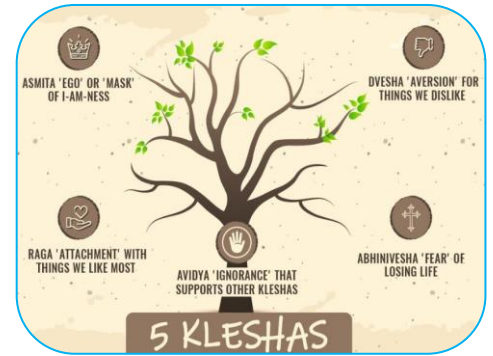
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### ABSTRACT

*Kilesa literally means impurity, defilement or corruption. Derived from the root klis; Kilesa refers to “things which are defiled”, and which in turn defile the mind of sentient beings. The term is rendered sometimes as “corruption” as in the English translations of the Abhidhamma texts, and sometimes as “defilements” as in the Suttanta Texts and in the Path of Purification.*

*Upakkilesa: “anything that spoils or obstructs, a minor stain, impurity, defilement, depravity” In the Atthasālinī, it is defined as “cittaṃ upagantvā kilissati kilīṭṭhaṃ karotī ti upakkilesa” – approaching the mind (greed) corrupts it, makes it corrupt, and so is depravity This word is often used in the Sutta Pitaka, e.g. in the Majjhima Nikāya where 16 upakkilesa-s are mentioned. Here upakkilesa is used as what defiles the mind and thus is synonymous to the term “kilesa”.*



**KEYWORDS:** greed(*lobha*),hate(*dosa*),delusion(*moha*),conceit(*māna*),wrongviews (*micchāditti*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), torpor (*thīna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), shamelessness (*ahirika*), recklessness (*anottappa*)

### INTRODUCTION

*Kilesa* (Sanskrit, also spelled *klesha*) are the afflictions or defilements that keep us from seeing reality as it is. You could think of the *kilesas* as mental disturbances or unhelpful psychological habits.

The three primary *kilesas* are the Three Poisons — greed, hate and ignorance. All the other defilements flow from those. In Theravada Buddhism, the most severe *kilesas* are associated with the demon Mara and sometimes are called (in *Pali*) *Kilesa-Maras*.

Over the centuries various sages have proposed different lists of *kilesas*, so there isn't any one Official List of Buddhist *Kilesas*. For example, the *Pali Abhidhamma* lists ten *kilesas* - using the *Pali* terms, these are greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*mana*), wrong views (*ditthi*), doubt (*vicikiccha*), torpor (*thina*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), shamelessness (*ahirika*), and recklessness (*anottappa*). But in the Sutta-pitaka and in Mahayana scriptures there are other lists.

Beyond the Three Poisons - which you probably will hear about a lot no matter where you practice - the *kilesas* are spoke of more in some traditions than in others. Depending on where you study and practice, you may hear about them a lot, or you may never hear them mentioned at all. These overlap a bit with the *Five Hindrances*, and like the hindrances, a review now and then doesn't hurt, especially if you are going through a rough patch.

The defilements presented here are common ones taken from several sources. The names are Sanskrit; if the *Pali* differs from the Sanskrit that will be noted in the definition. Terms are in alphabetical order rather than order of importance.

In this essay will portray the different type of *Kilesa*, the arising of *Kilesa* and the ways of abandoning of *Kilesa*. These are important to understand for one who wants to know about *Kilesa* (defilement) clearly.

### The arising of *Kilesa*

There are causes and conditions for the defilement of being as well as for the purification of beings. Because five aggregates are pleasurable, beings are attached to them. By being attached, they are captivated by them, and by being captivated they are defiled. This is a cause and condition for the defilement of beings. It is thus that beings are defiled due to causes and conditions. And because five aggregate are suffering, immersed in suffering, steeped in suffering and is not steeped in pleasure, beings experience revulsion towards them. Experiencing revulsion, they become dispassionate, and through dispassion they are purified. This is a cause and condition for purification of beings.

Pleasure and pain are experienced by one through feelings. Feelings which are unwholesome become causes of *Kelisa* because feeling can be the conditions of craving (*vedanā paccayā taṇha ti iti kho panetaṃ vuttam*). In order to understand phenomena as they really are contemplation about feeling is recommended because feeling is prominent factor for seeing the arising and ceasing, the nature of impermanence. With regards to this it is said “having truly understood the arising and passing away of feelings, their attraction and peril and the deliverance from them, the *Tathāgata* is liberated without remainder. *Visuddhimagga* explains that defilements are caused by unwholesome feelings (*akusalavedanā*): unwholesome feeling is a state of disquiet, because it is the cause of reprehensible actions and because it produces burning of defilement.

Since the term *Kilesa* without prefix is not frequently mentioned in early discourses, in canonical source it is difficult of find the order of arising of *Kilesa*. In the *Vatthupamā Sutta* defiled state of mind is explained with the simile of defiled cloth (*vattham saṃkilittham*) and purified state is described as one bathed with the inner bathing (*sinato antarena sinanena*). what this signifies is that whenever beings come to this world, their mind is innately defiled with certain defilement.

We cannot speak about the order of arising of *Kilesa* in an absolute sense because there is no first arising of defilements in the beginning-less samsara but we can talk of arising in more relative manner. Since *Kilesas* are constituents of *āsava*, when *āsava* (individual I-ness) arises in an individual, *Kilesas* as constituents arise with the function of *āsava*. It is the cause and that *āsava* as the cause and *avijjā* as the condition personal *sankhāra* (*abhisankhāra*) arises. With the arising of personal *sankhara* various *Kilesa* arise. The *Visuddhimagga* explains the arising of *Kilesa* in a relative sense:

Usually in single becoming the misinterpretation of insistence on eternity and annihilation are preceded by the assumption of a self. After that, when a man assumes that this self is eternal, clinging of rite-and-ritual arises in him for the purpose of purifying the self. And when a man assumes that is breaks up, thus disregarding the next world, clinging of sense desire arises in him. So clinging of self-doctrine arises first (*pathamaṃ attavadupadanam*), and after that, false-view-clinging, and rite and ritual clinging or sense desire clinging. Thus, then, is their order of arising in one becoming.

Here, *Buddhaghosa* comments on the arising of *Kilesa* within the limit of present birth. However, the previous existence of *Kilesa* could be understood for there is ‘*anusaya*’ (underlying tendency) as the chronic innate nature of all ordinary human beings. The concept “I am” (*asmi ti anusayo*) is the underlying tendency which is the core of *Kilesa*. Even an infant who has no notion of self cannot be an exception to it. As a result of the latent tendency ‘I am’, self-view-clinging (*attavadaupadana*) arises first and depending on this, various views arise. Beings with views come into conflict with others. Defilements arise in our present birth depending on an innate defilement, the underlying tendency ‘I am’ with *āsava* as cause and *avijjā* as condition. Therefore, it is possible to say that *āsava* is the basis of arising of *Kilesa*.

### The way of abandoning of *Kilesa*

We can overcome *Kilesa* (defilement) by practicing and fulfilling the seven factors of enlightenment (*satta-bojjanga*) expounded by Buddha in *Bojjanga Saṃyutta*. The term "*bojjhanga*" is composed of *bodhi* + *anga*. "Bodhi" denotes enlightenment, to be exact, insight concerned with the realization of the Four Noble Truths; namely: the Noble Truth of Suffering; the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering; the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering. '*Anga*' means factors or limbs. *Bodhi* + *anga* (*bojjhanga*), therefore, means the factors of enlightenment, or the factors for insight, wisdom. There are seven kinds of factors, namely, (i) mindfulness (*sati-sambojjhanga*), (ii) investigation of Dhamma (*dhammavicaya-sambojjhanga*), (iii) energy (*viriyā-sambojjhanga*), (iv) zest (*pīti-sambojjhanga*), (v) tranquility (*passaddhi-sambojjhanga*), (vi) concentration (*samādi-sambojjhanga*) and (vii) equanimity (*upekkhā-sambojjhanga*).

There are also included in the aggregate of thirty-seven Factors of Enlightenment (*sattatīṃsa-bodipakkhiya dhammā*), the cultivation and development of which is said to result in the realization of wisdom (*bodhi*). In fact, it is said that one enlightened by the harmony of these seven constituent states (*dhammasāmaggi*), thereby attains a "rising" from the slumber of the continuum of the lower nature (*kilesa-santāna-niddāya utthahati*), or a penetration of the Noble Truths (*cattāri vā ariya-saccāni paṭivijjhatī*) or the realization of *Nibbāna* (*nibbānameva vā sacchikaroti*). Therefore, *Bodhi* or supreme wisdom has to be realized by the cultivation and development of seven enlightenments. *Saṃyutta-nikāya* defined them as factors that contribute to the realization of enlightenment (*bodāya samvattantīti bojjhangā*).

### Mindfulness factor (*sati-sambojjanga*)

The first mindfulness factor is the instrument most efficacious in self-mastery and whoever practices it has found the path to contemplation of the body, feeling, mind and mental objects. Its characteristic features are alertness and lucidity of mind. Sometimes, it is described as the lucid retention of both the past and present. In the commentaries it appears under the metaphor of an inward mentor, discriminating between good and bad prompting choice. In the *Dhammasaṅgani*, it is defined as recollecting (*anussati*), calling back to mind (*paṭissati*), remembering (*saraṇatā*), bearing in mind (*dharāṇata*), and the opposite of superficiality and of obliviousness (*apilāpanatā, asammussanatā*).

Right mindfulness, in a way is superior to knowledge, because in the absence of mindfulness it is just impossible for a man to make the best of his learning. Intelligence void of mindfulness tends to lead man astray and entice him from the path of rectitude and duty even people who are well informed and intelligent fail to see a thing in its proper perspective when they lack this all important quality of mindfulness. Mindfulness is conducive to great profit, that is, the highest mental development, and it is through such attainment that deliverance from the suffering of cycle of existence is possible. Heedfulness is the path to the Deathless, heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are already dead. Therefore, by completing the mindfulness factor, we can overcome *Kilesa* (defilement) in this very life.

### Investigation of Dhamma (*dhammavicaya-sambojjanga*)

The second enlightenment factor is keen Investigation of the *Dhamma*. It is the sharp analytical knowledge of understanding the true nature of all constituent things, animate or inanimate, human or divine. It is seeing things as they really are, seeing things in their proper perspective. It is the analysis of all component things into their fundamental elements, right down to their ultimate. The term *vicaya* of the compound *dhammavicaya* has the meaning of "examination, research, investigation, study." In the *Dhammasaṅgani*, it is explained as research (*paricaya*), discernment (*sallakkhaṇa*), discrimination (*upalakkhaṇa*), differentiation (*paccupa lakkhaṇa*), criticism (*vebhavyā*), reflection (*cintā*), and analysis (*upaparikkhā*). Thus, it refers to the type of investigation that is characterized by intensity, force and thoroughness. When we face the *Māra*'s temptations, can investigate what is unskillful

mindfulness. Therefore, investigation of *Dhamma* is very important. For overcoming of all temptations we have to practice in daily until to attain liberation from *samsāra* (the round of rebirth).

## CONCLUSION

I have discussed about *Kilesa* like different types of *Kilesa*, arising of *Kilesa* and the ways of abandoning of *Kilesa* from the *Pali* and Commentaries. *Kilesa* is one of the main things for creating next life but there are many kinds of aspects. They are, therefore, difficult to know and wipe out into our mind.

By understanding about *Kilesa* in *Pali* and Commentaries, we can know how to control our mind and what they happen and how they finish. Based on bad thing or defilement, we can change our mind into purification. Therefore, this essay is intended to those who are getting change from bad mind to good mind.

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