

## **The End of Suffering: Lasting Freedom from Stress**

Welcome to this new topic! Today, we will see what is the main cause of suffering. We all go through ups and downs in life. We often wonder why we feel suffering and unhappiness. In this session, we will explore this idea in a gentle way. By understanding this, you might find a path to more peace.

Sometimes, thoughts pop into our mind. Other times, our minds are quiet and empty. When thoughts do show up, have you ever wondered how that happens? What exactly is a thought? What is the mind? These are gentle, quiet ideas that we can only really understand by sitting still and watching our own minds in peace. That is when we start to see where thoughts come from. Once we do, we might even smile or laugh. We will realize that everything in life is unfolding all by itself. Right now, we often feel like we are the ones making things happen. That feeling is what creates most of our troubles.

Let us take a calm look at this together.

Imagine someone buys a new watch and puts it on their wrist. What do they say? "I bought this watch." But breathing is something that happens all by itself. No one goes around saying, "I am making myself breathe." When does this feeling of "I" start? It pops up along with a thought. So, how does a thought begin in the first place? This "I" is not separate from the thought. When a thought is there, the "I" feels real. When no thoughts are around, like when we are in a deep, dreamless sleep, there is no sense of "I" at all.

Now, if this "I" did not buy the watch, then who did? If I am not the one thinking about it, then who is? I can move my arms back and forth. If it is not "I" doing that, then who or what is making it happen?

If we look closely and go deeper, we can start to see how things work in the world around us and inside our minds. How do events unfold? Otherwise, we will stay stuck in our wrong ideas. Nothing will change.

Let us break this down slowly. I say, "I bought this watch." But who really bought it? If the idea of getting a watch never came into my mind—which I call "I"—would I have gone out and bought it? That idea came because of what? At some earlier time, I must have seen a watch somewhere. Maybe on a friend's wrist or in a shop window.

If I had never seen a watch before, it would not be part of my world. The thought of desiring one would not come up. If you have never heard of or seen something, can you ever have a thought about it? No way!

Someone might argue, "But in a dream, I once saw a flying car with wings." That is because you have seen cars and birds or airplanes before. Your mind just mixed them together—putting

wings on a car. You have experienced both parts. So, it creates something new from what you already know.

Your mind can only create thoughts from things it already knows. It never creates from complete unknowns. If you do not know a certain place, like a faraway mountain you have never heard of, you cannot dream up thoughts about visiting it. If you do not know about a certain object, like a rare fruit from another country, there cannot be a desire for it in your mind.

That is why people living in small, quiet towns often seem more at ease. Or, to put it better, they might have less psychological suffering. They have less information about the big world. That means fewer thoughts popping up, fewer desires, and less pulling in different directions. Simple thoughts lead to simple desires, simple fears, and a simpler life.

But in big cities, with so much going on—ads, people, things everywhere—you get endless bits of information. That leads to endless thoughts, endless desires, endless chasing, and never-ending fear.

So, who is behind all this? If "I" did not buy the watch, then who did? Something was spotted by these eyes. That detail went into us. Now, this same detail goes into many people's heads. But some buy the watch, and some do not. What is going on here?

People might say, "I have a choice. I can decide freely." But is that real freedom? Imagine you are at a table with 50 different sweets laid out. Someone says, "Pick one." Where is the freedom in that? It is actually a trap. You will get mixed up thinking which one to take. If you eat one, you might regret not trying another. If you do not eat any, you feel like you are missing out. You are stuck either way.

You are tied down by all those ideas, right? This is a soft, hidden trap. It is not like the usual way people see the world, hear about it, or think about it. What do most people mean by freedom? "I can choose to do it or not." But if you look closely, that is not how it works.

That picture of the watch went into two people's minds. One bought it, the other did not. The one who bought it thinks, "I chose to buy it." The one who did not buy thinks, "I chose not to buy it."

But actually, what is really going on? It is all based on what happened to each person in the past—their experiences from childhood, all the details stored inside them. Maybe one person grew up feeling left out. So, there is built-up frustration. They desire to buy the watch to feel important or to show off.

And even that past did not happen because they made it. It just happened to them.

Whatever built up in both people led one to buy and the other not to. Ideas came up in both. They did not come from nowhere. They just appeared, like how sights appear when you open your eyes. When you are awake, thoughts flow in. But based on those thoughts, one acts, one does not. We wrongly think, "I did it," or "You did not," but it is the desire inside that drives it.

Because of that desire, the person bought the watch. Without desires, no watch would be bought.

Now, you might say, "I had the desire, but I did not buy it, so I had the freedom to choose." There are many layers here. We need to look deeply. You have to ask yourself questions to get to the bottom.

If everything flows by itself, then why in some cases do I have a desire but do not follow it? Like desiring a sweet treat but holding back. What is that? There is a conflict inside your mind. You are not creating it. It is happening on its own. For example, you desire ice cream, but there is other knowledge inside—like knowing too much sugar makes you sick, or you promised yourself to eat healthy. But if that knowledge was not there, would there be a clash? The desire comes, you eat, and that is it. No issue.

It all unfolds by itself. We just think we are in charge. In short, if there are thoughts in your mind, they are there because of a desire or a fear. Fear is just the flip side of desire. For example, I have a fear of death. Why? Because I have a desire to live. If I do not have a desire to live, why would I be afraid of death? Do you see? Behind every trouble thought, there is either a desire or a fear giving it power. Without that, no thought would come.

Check this with your own thoughts. What do you think about all day? If you share one, I could point out the hidden desire. For instance, someone thinks nonstop about the pimples on their face. It means they care a lot about how they look. So, their happiness and sadness depend on their appearance. All day, their mind spins around looks only. We can see the desire hidden in any thought easily.

If there is no desire, there are no fears. Someone with no desires has nothing to fear.

A person is on a spiritual path and meditating for the past 30 years. There is a desire within him that he will be experiencing something. But a fear also engulfs him. "It has been 30 years already, and I have not experienced it yet. I am not sure if I will experience it before death." One who does not have a desire for that experience—he does not have that fear of experience.

Someone without the desire for that experience has no ideas about it. And someone with a strong desire? Their whole day is filled with thoughts tied to that desire, nothing else.

So what is desire? People talk a lot about getting rid of desires. How will you get rid of desires? Is there a way? No, you can only understand this. And during the path of understanding, these desires burn out on their own.

You need to see how these desires are born. What is the center point of each desire? I am this body. I am a form. I am finite. I am limited. This is why there will be desire within me. If you are unlimited, try to desire something. If you are infinite, try thinking about something. Try to be frightened of something. Think "I am the source of this creation" and now try creating some desires within you.

To have a desire, you make a key mistake: believing "I am just this body. I am this limited." Every desire—to become better, to do more, to get things, or fear about losing—comes from this thought that I am body.

But if you want to understand the reality, you need a mind open to falling apart completely. Whatever you have held onto, thinking that is you—that is why you are stuck. Just look at your body. Is it separate from nature? The information inside you is not separate from the world. How did that information form? From words and talk.

How did words form? Because people can speak. How can they speak? It is part of nature. Why is the world here? Because there is a source of everything. What is that? That source is you. Get there, and now think.

Whatever your thoughts are, if you have cravings behind them, that is how sorrow happens, is it not? Craving leads to all kinds of problems. I am craving for something. When this truth goes deep within us, all our cravings die. It is fine if I get something. It is fine even if I do not get something. Now what remains? There is absolutely no sorrow within thoughts. Understand this with finesse.

Thoughts backed by desire, cravings, fear, feeling short—that is where suffering is. I see a flower, and a thought comes about the flower. I see a cup, and a thought about the cup. No issue. I see a bike, and a thought comes. I rode it to the store, come back. Where is the suffering? None. So, when does suffering begin? "I did not get that bike. My neighbor has a better one." Those are troublesome thoughts. So, if there is no desire, then where will fear be?

Your basic way of being, the setup of body and mind—if it is strong like an eagle—you will soar like an eagle. Easy, no effort. You do not need to try. An eagle does not try to be an eagle. The issue is when an eagle sees a fish and tries to swim like one. Trying to be what it is not—that is trouble. If an eagle is just an eagle, no issue.

Desire means what I am does not make me content. I need to turn into something else.

There is a tale in old stories. A shiny bird flies by. Seeing it and letting it go—no problem. Desiring to catch and keep it—that is the issue. Why? You see yourself as separate from the bird. You think, "I am this body, and if the bird comes near, I will be happy." Who gets happy? You are the bird. You are the sky it flies in. You are all. That is full contentment. Total peace.

You can free yourself through this simple understanding without doing anything. And the fun thing is that it is very simple, which is why most people do not actually understand it.

To put it in a nutshell, you are not separate from the universe. The universe is in you.

In summary, suffering comes from desires in our mind. These desires start because we think we are just this body—small and limited. But your true self is not the body. Your real self is formless, changeless, beginless, endless, and eternal. Many saints and sages in the past understood this and lost all desires. When you truly see this too, desires go away on their own. No desires mean

no fear, no chasing, and no pain. Everything flows easy, like it should. You are part of the whole universe, not separate. Plant this thought in you, walk on the path of self enquiry, read scriptures, or learn from someone who knows these truths not just in theory but from real experience, and understand it deeply, and find real peace.

Thank you for giving your time.