The Three Pillars of Buddhism

you should be mindful of whatever is occurring in the body and mind, whether it be good or bad, and thus you will become aware that all conditioned phenomena (Physical or Mental) are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self

Anichcha, Dukkha, Anaththa

Maha Sathiphatthana Sutra
Understand reality

When one understands above three things, it is easier to understand ultimate reality. 

**Anichcha (Impermanance) is easier to understand.** We know that anything at all in this world, is in continuous transformation (Decay) into four states of matter. (Solid, Liquid, Gas & Energy). Budhha identified them as Phatavi, Apo, Vayo & Thejo. Scientifically, we know that these are the only four states of matter.
Anichcha is the cause of Dukkhha.
The nature of Anichcha, causes pain, displeasure, sickness, decay and ultimately DEATH. It is all summarised in the three words “Sabbe Sankhara Anichcha” (All conditioned phenomena are impermanent). So the suffering (Dukkhha) is a resultant of the nature of impermanence (Anichcha)
Do all things impermanent leads to Dukkha?

No.

An inanimate object (A rock) decays and destroys. It will not suffer.

Why?

It may have all four states of matter in it. But something is missing.

It is not alive.

So, life(Jathi) is essential prerequisite for suffering. If we can stop Jathi, suffering ends.
How do we stop Jathi?

Paticca Samuppada explains following cause and effect for the occurrence of Jathi.

...Upadana Paccaya \(\rightarrow\) Bhavo

Bhava Paccaya \(\rightarrow\) Jathi

This means by being alive you develop Upadana (Strong attachments). It is necessary to remove Upadana in order to stop Jathi.

But, How do we stop Upadana?
Third Pillar of Buddhism – “ANATHTHA”

To remove Upadana, you need to understand what is “Anaththa”.

This is one of the difficult concepts to understand. But through proper philosophical argument, it will become clearer.

Anaththa, simply means, there is nothing called “Myself”

So, if there is nothing called “Me”, then there can’t be anything called “mine”.

Life around “I” and “Mine”

We care about entertaining the five senses and the mind. When we are lacking that entertainment we become restless, stressed, angry & suffer as a result.

Kids demands their needs; "I need this toy, I need this book, I need this food, I need this & I need that..." these demands grow with the age... when they become teens their demands will also change... when they are youth they demand for partners. "I need this girl, I need this boy" sometimes boys demands "I need this boy" I prefer to be a Gay... some girls prefer to be a lesbian... so they demand... simply they demand what they need to entertain themselves.
when they enter into the middle age they demand various things even from their life partners & their kids, and when they are old, their demands vary with the situation...

Sometimes, for the good doctors, good medicine, good company, Holidays, grand kids ... etc... etc. It's simply, a war of maintaining "I or myself".
What is reality?

In such a world, people fail to understand what reality is. What is reality?

Immediate reality

All what you can experience around you through your five senses will be your immediate reality.

Remote reality

All what is happening right now and you can not experience directly will be your REMOTE REALITY. This will be only your thoughts and imaginations conditioned by your mind which assumes everything is alright.
The reality in this world call ‘I’

You experience your immediate reality about yourself. But you do not experience your remote reality about yourself, as you do not experience what is happening within your body. It is only an imagination assuming everything is fine, but may be not, in reality. Same applies to the things you assume are your’s in the remote reality at the present moment. You have no knowledge or influence or control on these matters. So is there anything that can be called I or mine?
Your world of pain and pleasure

Pain proportional to pleasure proportional to attachment
More pain => Less Pleasure  Less pleasure => Less attachment

Let’s say somebody died in front of you.
You see the body and do not know who that is.
You do not feel any pain. Physically it is a collection of matter. Then you realise it was a friend of yours. Then you feel a pain, because you loose the pleasure you got out of him/her will be there no more.
The world of pain and pleasure

Let’s imagine that, this happened to be one of your loved ones. You will be devastated!! Still physically it is a collection of matter. But what is different is the level of pleasure you got out of that person. You have lost all that. It is ultimately the level of desire you had with that person, which we call the Attachment’ that caused the suffering. This explains the direct proportionality of pain, pleasure and attachment.
The two packages you care for is your world

You have attachments to two packages; What are they. One is your personal package which has a physical form and mentality. You identify it as Yourself’. That is ‘I’. When something happens to it, it causes distress and despair.

Then you have a second package you build with the help of your first package. That is your extra-personal package of desires, pleasures and attachments. That is “Mine’. It causes pain and despair when something happens to this package as well. Those are the things external to you, but hold dearly as yours. These may be your loved ones, your country, your race, your world. That is the universe you love and care for. Nothing less, nothing more.
The desire to control your two packages causes distress

A child cries when he does not get what he desires.

Parents are distressed when a child does not do the things the way they want.

Wife is distressed when the husband looks at another woman.

People are distressed when others threaten to take over something they believe is theirs. Thus the inability to control things of this I and mine package, causes distress.
My, Mine and Control....

In this personal package you identify as yourself there are things you call “My”, such as my hand, my head etc. You call it my hand because you can control it.

Likewise in the other package called mine, will also have things you call my. My son, my wife etc. You desire to have control on them, because they provide you with pleasure and you want to protect them. But you do not have a direct control on them. You feel that you will loose them and that makes you worry.
Like and Do not like

And finally, you identify things you like and things you do not like. Those are the only things that matter to you. Anything outside this group has no value attached to it in your world. Say Tony has a pet rabbit. But it does not make any difference to my world. I have no value attached to it. So, finally all that matters to you are the things that you like or dislike.
Nature of things as they are...

All things that has arisen will decay and die. This truth is known as “Impermanence”.

It is true for Human,
For animals, for plants

All things living or non living will decay and get destroyed. All these things that are formed by the four states of matter, will finally disintegrate to those four states again.
Is everything OK?

If something is really "mine" they should be able to keep us happy. Then how can they bring us suffering & worries? If we CANNOT be happy all the time, then there must be something wrong somewhere. What is wrong with us? To find out the answers we need to clarify one small fact.

Do all these things, of mine actually behave in the way I want? How can you be so sure that they are truly behaved as the way you want? How can you be so sure that you are the owner of the package call "I" & the package call "mine"?
Do you have control on Yourself

Your body and body functions make your body dirty. You have no control. You wash it up but get dirty again. Your mind similarly get spoilt with bad thoughts etc. If you can not control it in the way you want, you can’t call it I or mine. It is also clear that the package called mine, you do not have any control, because it is external to you. So, is there anything called I or mine?
You are actually out of control

You can not control, What you see through your eyes all the time to be good things.
or
What you hear to be good things only.
Similarly for other inputs too.
So it will not be possible to have a sanitised environment to avoid contact with bad things.
So, what you call “I” is not in control of what is happening to yourself.
You have no control on the package you call “Mine” as well.

The package you call mine will also be subjected to decay, death, destruction, and other forms of good things and bad things, that you can not control.

If you do not have control of things you call “mine”, it can not be yours.

So you are not in control of your world of things, you like or dislike.
knowing, applying & realizing!

Imagine a mathematician who develops a formula, but doesn't know how to apply it to the relevant problem.
And another, who understands the formula, to the extent that he/she can apply it, and solve the problem.
Once the problem is solved, the realization is a different experience, altogether, compared to the time and effort you spent in understanding & solving the problem.
The wisdom you gained through understanding Anicca, Dukkha and Anaththa, will lead you to understand the reality.
Sand Castles

You built sand castles as a kid. At that time sand castles were more valuable to you than your big house. But, as you grow up and realize the value differently, Then you discard the sand castles as worthless and all attachments to them vanishes in you.

You still build sand castles with the grand kids, but would not worry about, they being getting destroyed.

Samma Sambuddha & other enlightened being lived with the normal, unenlightened human being. But the actions, words & thoughts of those worldly human being doesn't affect the enlightened being.

Why?, because they already have realised that those thoughts and actions are worthless.
So, in short

One would be able to see that in reality, there is nothing that you can find; where you have full influence, and control in the way you would like it to be.

You like to be young. But can’t.

You like to be free of disease, but can’t.

You like to live for ever, but can’t.

So, if you have no control of your own body, or things you believe, is yours’, you can not say it is “Me” or, it is “Mine”. That is ANATHTHA.