

2008-10-10 The Five Hindrances Introduction

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SPEAKERS

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Since I didn't listen in those conversations, I didn't partake of some of the wisdom that was passed on. And I wonder if some few of you might want to summarize very briefly, some of the reasons why sensual desire can be quite compelling. It might be also interested to hear what different groups said came up with. They like to do that little bit.

It's not a consensus,

which is that essential desire is part of a mechanism of survival. It tracks us, make sure we do the things we need to do to mechanism of survival. Okay, thank you.

Chocolate I wanted at lunchtime. Yes.

Two things came up that I remember about why is compelling.

One is the belief that the satisfaction that it will bring is permanent. And the other is the belief that there's something not good enough about or sort of boring or whatever about this present moment. And so adding some spice will

make everything okay. Great. Thank you,

for a very talkative group has suddenly gotten very quiet.

We focus a lot on this survival thing, but we also talked about

control, sort of it gives the illusion of control. And I might add also that there's an attitude of entitlement. You know, like I deserve to have this and I should have it.

Great, thank you.

We talked about there are needs that that desire can be attempting to fill but their natural needs like breathing, eating, sleeping and so on, which you don't need to apologize for. But there are others that may not be helpful or fulfilling. So it's a distinguishing between the two.

So is the desire to watch television, the sensual desire Sure. Can be depends what you're watching, of course. debates was not a central question.

Think we touched on the addictive qualities of sensual desires? Okay, the first piece, the first bite of chocolate cake is good. The second bite wasn't quite good enough. I gotta have another I gotta have another. So it's it just builds on itself. It's the addiction. That's great. Thank you.

Right fine you

need to finish that thought. We also said if we ate chocolate cake cake mindfully that we would eliminate that

There was another part about the illusion that perhaps the object of desire would create a change in me that would or anyone else that would you know, solve my problems or whatever is going on with me at the moment. Great, thank you.

When I was I suppose I was 28 I worked with Tassajara Bakery

and and

when I felt kind of lousy little bit come down. I met her all the success is wonderful French forgets that bring him home with me leftovers and all that so I feel a little bit down or whatever I start eating. But yes, and then I feel worse. So then it eat more. And then I feel worse, and then a more to comfort myself, but I didn't I didn't make the connection with the bread and feeling bad. And what had happened was that I had become allergic to wheat. And so it had a big impact on me and remember once walking around San Francisco, kind of not even knowing how to think or do you know I felt numb and I don't want they're gonna have to institutionalize me sitting. This is serious. And eventually I figured out that was you know, had this allergy and then I cleared it all up. But this idea, this idea of, you know, feeling lousy, wanting to comfort myself and going for particular food and just keep doing it and then this how vicious it was, because it was very thing that was comfort, comforting myself with was the thing that was doing the under. Back.

In our group, the issue of desire was soaked on a physical level of this kind of tightness in the throat and This feeling of reaching and you know, kind of

a grabbing, whole kind of constriction and so that when the desire would come in paying attention, you would see that there was a lot of discomfort attached to it. Great.

And the front came to me she has one she has a mic just keep it there until

we talked a little bit about how desire has some energy to it. And they're sort of a

almost pleasant I mean, if you examine it, it's unpleasant but there's Yeah, a sense of energy or a lightness in leaning towards something.

So that's what's compelling is a sense of aliveness that comes. So less alive a person feels, the more addictive it can be to feel alive from desire. So you know, some of you know I talked about the kathina

the soul, I said at the first two hindrances, desire and aversion Are the kathina the soul because they energize people, and they get them going and motivated and, and that some people when they stop being driven by desire and aversion, it's just like with caffeine, you start to caffeine there's a withdrawal period. And that's kind of hard for a while. And But eventually, if you give enough time, that some natural vitality has a chance to surface, but it takes a while and, and if you're not willing to deal with transition time, then you'll go back to wanting and hating.

We also talked about how

deep it seems to be a deep assumption that

if we're not getting

pleasant, comfortable, feeling that there's something wrong

with us or conditions or

somehow it's a measure of weather

Yep, anyway we get a lot of messages from from our society that you know they're supposed to be comfortable all the time or pleasant.

So one of the things you talked about was disadvantages of and I would love to have more time I'd love to hear some of the things that were talked about the disadvantages. If you look at the handout, the one that says the weakness of wisdom, one of three, the river analogy I like you read the analogy that home, but if you look at the part involved

in both of those

when closest to you to adjust to their people and It says if practitioners have not rid themselves of these five hindrances, there is no possibility that they can know what is for their own benefit, or the benefit of others or both. And I love that it isn't just for your own sake, that you overcome the hindrances. But when you're in the grip of the hindrances, it's hard to know what's been really beneficial for you, you know, just one more drink. And, but it's, it's also hard to know what's beneficial for others. So from for the for community for everyone together. And I find over and over again, in the sutras that the emphasis is not on self benefit, not on benefiting others, but embedded benefiting everyone mutual benefit. And here we've had another example of that. So you see that, you know, many times when people are in the grip of you see it and other people I think you see they're in the grip of desire aversion, and we have to suffer The consequences, you know, it's painful for us somehow or for the for the society. So it's part of the disadvantages, what it does for other people.

So one of my interests for you during this next month as part of this program is, is for you to become students. naturalists of desire, in particular have a desire for sensual pleasure. And just look for opportunities to study it, look, you know, this is a good time for people watching. You can watch other people and see happy so look at that, that's how it operates in that person. But certainly look at yourself and just kind of get a try to get a wider sense of the terrain of a territory. As you can all the different ways it operates. It might operate for example, How you lay yourself down to go to sleep at night. Remember that was many years ago when I was a news end students. The Zen teacher was so impressed by some man who said that it was a it was an older man and said his whole life, he had

gone to sleep curled up in a kind of fetal position. And, and after some months of Zen practice, he finally straightened out. And so, you know, we could comfort ourselves we kind of, there's nothing wrong with comforting oneself, but it's important for him to see the desire that's there. And, and to begin to assess what motivated what drives it, because there might be even that might seem innocent enough on the surface. It might represent some deeper roots and deeper cravings, anxieties, fears, discomforts that are really better addressed by looking at him directly, then by getting relief to comfort or sensual pleasure or something. So pointing you to how you go to sleep at night. Maybe it's a simple thing if you wouldn't even think about it. But there might be some some very kind of subtle way in which even there you're kind of pursuing comfort and sensual pleasure just how you lay down and do your covers or something. And, and so in around food, events, socializing with people, to what degree is socializing with people, driven by a simple desire for the pleasure of contact with others, some people that saw it as the case entertainment, to kind of spend time looking at it all exploring it. So I'm more interested in that at this point than I am and how you free yourself of it, how you overcome it, but overcoming it is also very important and becoming free of it. And what I'd like to suggest it's in the home and the homework and exercises is I would like before kind of our budget yesterday, in addition to doing a study of sexual desire, how it operates in you for you, you also become a student of contentment and look for when your content and look and see how you can cultivate more contentment and how you can find more content and then look and see what the relationship is between contentment and your, your craving for sense pleasure. What's the connection? You know, it's not meant to be rhetorical question, because you probably you could automatically think of a connection but, but find out for yourself. What is that connection between the two? That makes sense? Okay, so anything that anybody wants to say before we do assuming any questions or comments about any of what we've done today please

I just wanted to say that when you it, I think it was in the meditation when you said, What is it like to be in the grip of desire? I mean, that was just so visceral to, to me, because desire has that element of, of gripping or contraction, and it really does feel like a grip and it was great.

I'm curious on the how a desire develops into a compunction compulsion. Hmm.

Yeah. How does the desire turn into compulsion? You're looking for the answer.

There's a process that I'm sure is understood by some

Yeah, I mean the best place to get the answers in yourself. So I would, I would spend I would spend a month studying that.

I'm looking for pointers. Anything else?

Yes, please.

It occurred to me when I overheard somebody at the getting their tea, really enjoying the tea, that there's sensual desire, and then there's just accepting central pleasure.

Yes, it's a different thing if it does very important to distinguish sensual enjoyment from Central, central sensual pleasure, from the desire for sensual pleasure. And there's there's no requirement to give up sensual pleasure unless you have a tendency to experience some have sensual enjoyment, and to translate that into addiction into some addictive quality, some kind of desire wanting more wanting something. So it's one thing you know, so you might see, you know, I saw this bowl of chocolates there. So that's what I'm talking about. You know, the, you know, you could have, oh, maybe something

handed to you. Someone forces your mouth open and puts it in. And, oh, that's very nice. So you enjoy it. It's, you know, it's enjoyable. it's enjoyable, nice, sweet flavor. And, but then, the rest of the afternoon. Can I get the chocolate right out chocolate, I'll just go to Safeway. As soon as this is over. I'll give them some more chocolate, chocolate chocolate. And you see an after after, you know, and this might happens, you know, on different occasions. After a while you realize, you know, it's not so innocent for me to have the enjoyment of chocolate. The result I've seen it over and over again result is that I spent the next six hours fanatic. They trying to find a way to get more, I think I should leave a chocolate bar down. So there is a difference between sets between so sensual enjoyment and sensual desire. But that doesn't mean that we're, we can innocently just enjoy sensual enjoyments because they're not there's no desire there. The way that we in enjoying them, we might they might condition us or affect us in such a way that it might be wise not to go for those. And this is related to a Buddhist practice that's in the exercises, called I called safeguarding oneself at the sense doors restrained to this traditional name of safeguarding as restrained to the sense sense doors so You realize the effect that taking in sense senses sense experience has on you. And so then you you say you know you kind of restrained from looking at it or engaging in it or do something so you don't have a deleterious effect.

Okay. Okay, so, upright, alert, comfortable posture

and gently close your eyes

and let yourself be at ease

feel the rhythm of breathing in and out and let yourself kind of feel or experience or receive that rhythm. Breathing in and out in the body

And then, can you see if you can evoke or find some feeling of contentment or an attitude of contentment as you sit here? Is there some part of your body that you associate with a feeling of contentment

As you breathe, breathing in and breathing out if you can let the winds of breathing, move through contentment, spreading contentment throughout your being one breath at a time

So thank you for today and another way of getting more value out of it Here study of the hindrances, and simultaneously another way of offering more value for someone else for the year, not just for your own sake, is to look for opportunities between our monthly classes, monthly day long events, to have conversations with other people in the class about the hindrances, your discoveries, your exploration, your questions around it. So some of you know people here so it's going to be relatively easy to get together for tea or for a walk or call him on the phones, as you say, you know, I'd like to have my monthly mid month hindrance conference chat. Could I do that with you? As some of you don't know people here, really, you can easily ask that way. Or I said this way, some of you don't know, and people have to think that you can easily I would encourage you, you know, over the course of the year to, you know, if you're if you're new to all this done know people to maybe be a little bit more assertive than you normally would be in life, and see if there's people here you could be willing to talk with you in between, during the, during the during the month, on the phone or for tea or something. The other thing is that there's a world of difference between pleasure and happiness. Many people make that distinction. And some people but some people confuse the two. And they think that they'll become happy if they can have more pleasure. And that's part of the reason why sensual, sensual desires can be quite compelling, because of that confusion. And to the to the degree to which this practice will lead you to want to give up certain sense pleasures or certain indulging in sense pleasures, you're not expected to

do it because it's just good to give up and do without. Hopefully it's very clear understanding that in giving up that indulgent indulging and compulsion or being grip of Central sense, sense pursuits that you're going to experience so greater happiness. As a result, you were, you were placed the pursuit of sensual pleasure with the pursuit of real happiness. That's the hope maldis. So, I hope that you'll have a happy month. If you're not happy enough. That I hope it makes you happy to have a practice and a study, to do some direction to go. Because I think it's phenomenally meaningful for our society, to have people look more deeply into the nature of desire and the nature of science. Desire. So, thank you for doing it. And I'll see you again in about a month.