

2009-02-27 The Five Hindrances Sloth And Torpor 3 of 3

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SPEAKERS

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did what was that like and what might you have learned from listening to those or listening to yourself being part of that discussion? Sonia?

I just thought it was very interesting that we all had such varied responses to our relationship with sloth and torpor. Just all over the map. Way, way more variation than

the relationship with energy.

Great, thank you.

I'd like some actual clarification on

there is a sloth and torpor,

that can happen when one is going through a version avoiding things and tired. No, I don't want to do that. I'll say whatever. In the softer torpor that happens when you start tired physically, vitality is not there. But at the same time. No. Okay. So there is a difference between the sloth and torpor, of vitality versus a hindrance of aversion that's causing you to react in such ways to be. I don't think we wouldn't. I don't think it's so useful to make up absolute separation to a nice, but there is important distinction to be made between natural tiredness is the energy is not there, because you're tired, you're into the long day or something, haven't slept for three days versus tiredness that, that comes very clearly as a form of resistance or, or a psychological strategy of how to deal with things. Sometimes, when people get challenged, some people's response to that is they get tired or shut down. So there's that form of softened torpor. There's another kind of sloth and torpor that comes not so much from naturally being tired, but from being drained. Maybe with excessive use of energy or excessive use of kind of worry or anxiety. People who worry a lot tend to get tired pretty easily. And so it looks a little bit like you know, natural tiredness end of the day but and then there's I don't understand all the all the all the different aspects of tiredness and how it all comes on. But I know this is wonderful phenomena of power naps. It seems that you know that there's something chemically almost something shifts inside. But what about those chemicals going in the first place, you know, that are. What is it? What is it that can shift so quickly and 10 minute nap or, or something? So there's a whole range of things. And the reason not to separate it out too hard and fast is that for meditators, you have to learn how to practice wisely with all of the above, including when just tiredness and sometimes when we're really tired. The best thing to do

is to go get sleep. And, but sometimes also you don't you're not you know you're in the practice with now. You're tired and you try to do your best to be continued practicing with it. And, but then sometimes the strategy of how to be with that might be different, how to be with the tiredness that comes from resistance.

Just something that came to me with this whole series is that there's the five hindrances which we're discussing, and it's been very, very useful. And in Christianity, it's called the seven deadly sins. And there five of them. I think they're part of the seven deadly sins, the hindrances all of them are but not all, but the

seventh seventh or seventh deadly sin this slot.

Yeah, no, I know. I think I actually did look at them while back and the five are in the seven. But I think it's nice that this is just you know, we work with these things versus that they're deadly sins that you would never want to look

at. Right? There's no there's no need for confession. Pride. gluttony i think is one of them. Yeah, less than desire kind of like, gluttony is it? anyway?

I have a question out of the sharing that came in our group and related to what you just said. It seemed Well, we were talking a lot about shoulds in the aftermath of shoulds being resistance and things like that. But there's another thing that happens on the cushion, or I've experienced on the cushion, which is, if I get too concentrated without enough mindfulness, it's like my head is full of cotton and I can't arouse myself. So is that is there resistance or other things in that or is that is there just a pure concentration versus mind? On this balance

problem, it's usually not usually not worded as concentration versus mindfulness, but concentration versus energy. And, and so, usually the balance is to bring them both in have them in balance. And, and so, their strong concentration this concentration is almost synonymous with calm almost. And so it tends to be is separate this kind of lowering of energy level. And so there has to be a match matching of appropriate kind of energy to meet that concentration. So you kind of there, so you can be mindful of presence. So, that's one of the reasons for sloth and torpor meditation or dullness and meditation is the person gets to calm and there's a lot of people are looking for calm or even trying to soothe themselves by meditating, even consciously or unconsciously. They think meditations about soothing themselves or soothing themselves with a breath or lingering with the outbreath kind of do soothe and calm and they don't realize that that if that's the Kind of main thing that tried to do in meditation, that's going to lead to a dullness lead to tiredness or is going to, and there's no it doesn't represent psychological resistance. It just means that somehow we've left kind of, like if you sit all day, if you sit for three or four hours you sit, sit, sit, and conventionally sit, you know, we're in a dentist's office or something, you know, it tends to be kind of tired at the end of it. So, you know, but if you got up and walked up and down the hallways and got some energy going, come into balance again. So that's one of the causes of sloth and torpor is too much concentration. But, but you don't, you don't necessarily want to get less concentrated. The concentration is good. You want to match it with certain kind of vitality or engagement or effort.

So how do you generate mental effort when you're meditating? There's a variety of ways that I was going to talk more about that this afternoon, but Did you ask, there's one thing I find is fit is, it's always good to try to do it physically. So, retreat, for example, or even in home, to do walking meditation, this way of getting energy to walk and then come and sit. And if you're really tired, don't just go sit, go,

you're walking meditation for a while, and then when you're that tends to make some good, good energy flowing. And then you can go sit, and other is to, is to do some physical things like what? Wash your hair, your face, your neck, your hands and your feet with cold water. You know that in the Zen monasteries in Japan, one of them they had actually a base in front of meditation hall for the purpose. And the so it's a variety of physical things you can do in meditation, one of the great ones is sit up straight. And that's gonna help open your eyes can help. If you're, if you're able, which most people aren't just sitting in full lotus is a great way. I can't really do it so much anymore. But the when I could still do it, I would. No, no, I wasn't recommending pain. But but the pain is energizing, but don't use pain for that purpose. But there's yoga, I think yoga kind of yoga kind of things that happen. And when you sit in full lotus, that I found that would help me a lot too. I was really sleepy. It's one of the few times I would in no glass decades, where I would sit in full lotus was in order to combat sleepiness. So that you know, something different happens here. And then, and then inside meditation, you know, in terms of the that's physically very, very physical things, adjusting your breathing can help sometimes, sometimes breathing just a little bit more deeply than usual. Breathing deeper into the belly or emphasizing the in breath. Sometimes breathing into the upper chest as you breathe in, it kind of brings the energy kind of uplifts the energy a little bit can sometimes another thing then there's a whole mental way of energizing yourself. And, and so especially if the medications getting kind of very concentrated, you don't want to do so much physical stuff, maybe that's even as you that'd be agitating energy, but you want to engage in some kind of greater mental effort that keeps you going keeps you energized and one way to do it is to use mental noting, sometimes to stay activity of mental note and brings more energy. And or if you're doing mental noting, you could notice a little bit more faster, we're fuller or more energetically, like more notes per minutes. Some people find that kind of brings my energy pro until you get going Sometimes there's a little bit more nebulous how to describe it how you do this, but there's a way of kind of brightening up the mind to bring some kind of light or brightness to the mind. Some of that is done by a little bit related to noting but a clear emphasis on recognizing what's happening. look more carefully what's happening here, what's happening here. Recognizing that activity of recognition to active recognition, more engaged recognition, can bring more energy sometimes. Those are some things okay. So I'd love to hear more, but but I want to move on a little bit before we take our break for lunch. And that is, I want to ask you a question. And then here are some of the range of responses that it might take a curse to you What are some of the ways of thinking? that encourage sloth and torpor, dullness, tiredness, lethargy, laziness. What are some of the ways of thinking

for me not having a direction or being indecisive,

not having a direction being indecisive, great.

an inability

to do something or being can't do something. Yes, yeah, there's there isn't an option clear or

something's been shut down. He can't can't go that way. Then that's when I can tell

Yet, it's reasonably reasonable. But the question was what way is the thinking caused sloth and torpor? So to translate that to be when you when you're thinking I can't do I

believe in what somebody told me that believing Yes. Yes. Is

I was just gonna say something very similar negative attitude

will bring me down. Can you give me an example of negative attitude?

I'll never be able to do this the delusion of permanence, yes. Never pirated, never, I will never be able to do this or get this accomplished or be this way or that.

That'll put you to sleep.

Yes, it's much easier to fall asleep

to deal with those negative thoughts. The seduction of sleepiness? It's better it's more pleasant. So pass it back there and then we'll take sure

variation on it is that thinking about something I can't do anything about? Literally I have no power over that feeling. Listen, keep thinking about it this time, great.

Something that really makes me feel sloth and torpor is thinking is this really worth doing

is worth doing so having doubts about whether it's

worth doing without even trying to find out what it is not immediately attracting me. So is it even worth doing?

Having doubt about the worth worth worthiness?

There's the one about I just don't seem to get any satisfaction and I feel deprived so I'm just going to quit trying to deal with things and gratify myself for a while

to shut down. Okay, so, Galle

the idea that I have to do something, just if it's

something that I should or but even I've got to do it.

That that's

what creates it for me

thinking of a project like seeing the whole project at one time as if I have to do it all at once.

Instead of just when one step at a time forgetting that

what you said about aversion from resentment, that's a huge one for me that this thing is taking it more time so I'll just won't do it.

It's a sloth and torpor is a strategy for not doing it to stop shut down or it's very passive aggressive.

straight back.

I don't know if it's often tougher, but I used to when I was still working. I used to have to travel a lot to present a concept that I had developed. And

usually I

just didn't want to exhibit myself. I didn't want people to see me for me. I thought I was stupid. Anyways, that thing when I developed the story Crap. So I needed a lot of empowerment from others to do it. And that was I found inappropriate for what I was supposed to do. So that was one reason why I quit because I realized I just can't do that. So and for me is like, I back off or this really run away or get extremely curled up a little bit. When I have to. kind of funny I'm talking about when, when you have to do things like this, you

have to do something that

reflects on me. I mean, that's

great, great. Yeah. So there's a whole, it's a great profound thing you said that, for many people. This reflects on oneself. So when self worth self image, all this data can have a big impact on our energy level and whether we get tired or drained

from it. Learn thing. It's just a habit. It's something I learned when I was a child. And I realize it's not necessary anymore because I'm way better than what people have told me in the past. But overcome that, that is a challenge.

For me, emotional confrontations or conflict with other people make me leave me immediately very tired. I mean, somebody just has to say to me, we really need to do something about Ingrid's room and my heart.

It's I think, fear of conflict is

what I find fascinating is that mostly individual responses to sloth and torpor are generated by hindrance. And it's a response of a hindrance that triggers a response in the body to shut down.

I think it's fascinating.

So, I mean,

explaining as opposed to Well, you're tired That's why they're sloppy.

Yeah. Yeah. So so

it means it's a mental state, or it's generated from a mental state.

Yeah. So I think it's helpful to think of, sometimes it's helpful to think of all the five hindrances as being strategies of dysfunctional strategies for responding to challenge is that's not the whole story by any means. But sometimes that's, it's interesting to look at.

Okay. So,

your instruction during lunch is to give further consideration to what are the conditions that bring on sloth and torpor, dullness, lethargy, laziness, so forth? What are the conditions? So one of them is the mental conditions, the beliefs and the thoughts? And so what are the some of the conditions that bring it on so as you as you go through lunch and occurs to you, you can consider it or maybe talk about it. What boredom, and boredom is connected to all this as well. So if you're if you're leaving, some people leave at lunchtime, I have the handouts up here front here for the reflections and practices for the next month that you can take home if you'd like. I think I'd like to ask you if you don't take it unless until the end of the day if you're staying till 330. So don't get distracted. And so let's Oh, and now we have this wonderful dog here. Yolanda. Some of you might be thinking about. Well, Yolanda is a is Yeah. Vonda knows how to sleep really well. To relax, but Yolanda is a service dog. And the yuanda is amazing. It has amazing offers amazing service to the world. So part of the saga and

when reflection is if a dog doesn't have anything to do, it usually just goes to sleep.

And what when a dog has nothing to do, it just goes to sleep. And

you know, you know, maybe used to Suki Roshi whenever he had nothing to do he would just go to sleep.

Does a sleeping dog mean does it does a sleeping dog have Buddha nature?

I think so.

Yeah. Well, that's interesting. That's interesting. It's very interesting question you ask and or issue you bring up and Is there in being being falling asleep is not being awake? It's obvious but also awake with the big a, you know, being awake. And, and is there a way of doing nothing? Where we stay alert and energized? And is there a way? Is there a different way of doing nothing? Where? What are the conditions that allow a person to fall asleep? What's absent, that allows the person to sleep and what's present that allows someone to do nothing and stay alert. You know, what's, what's so, so? So if a person's doing nothing, if a person's doing nothing, what is absent that allows a person to fall asleep and what is present That allows a person to stay alert. What's the difference?

Oh, the question, what are the conditions were the variety of conditions that are that are prompt sloth and torpor, in addition to including in addition to ways of thinking. So let's take an hour for lunch. And so we'll start in here again at one