

2018-03-07 Dharmette Not Carrying The Burden

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SPEAKERS

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So I would like to begin with telling a somewhat famous Zen story. And it's the story of two monks who are going to pilgrimage kind of wandering around from temple to temple monastery to monastery. And they come to a somewhat shallow river where there's a ford crossing, you have to walk through the river to get across. And there's a lady who is there who present reason is not able to cross the river herself. And I don't know exactly why. And so one of them monks, picks her up, carries across the river and puts her down and then the two monks continue to walk and do the day they come to a monastery. For the night, just before going into the monastery, the second monk who didn't lift to carry help the woman across the river, finally blurts out and says, How could you have done that? One of the important rules that we monks have is we're not supposed to physically touch a woman. And you've picked her up and carried across into how could you have done that? And the first monk said, I put the woman down at the river. Why are you still carrying her?

And so this idea of what we carry and you know, what the mind does, and in some ways, the mind is more important. could be argued maybe the mind is ultimately more important than what we do. I guess me that might not come across very well saying it that way. But hopefully you get the idea that Paying attention to our minds and the source of what we do. And sometimes clarifying freeing the mind is sometimes more important than, you know, clarifying what we do physically. And this idea of being attached, you know, and holding on to things and repeating things and obsessing about things and, and returning the same ideas, ruminating about things is can take a lot of energy, and really interfere with, you know, our happiness or well being our clarity, or wisdom. And so how do we let go? One of the functions of meditation practice is to help us to see how much we're obsessed, how much we're holding onto things. And many people don't realize it until they stop to try to meditate. They thought they were just kind of having an ordinary mind and the mind was wandering, we're doing what it does perfectly fine. And then we sit down to meditate. And we try to stay on the breathing, for example. And we find that we can't because we're concerned we're involved with some thoughts, some preoccupations, something and then we try to let go and come back to the breath, then we find ourselves like a like a bungee cords attached to us. And we want you know, your backup in those things. Same concern again, and back up into the same concern again, and I and what that shows us is how strong these obsessions can be how much we're preoccupied how much we're still carrying the woman. Now, some people will protest this kind of what I'm saying and they will there's important things to think about, you know, should be thinking about these things. There are important things to think about. But there's no need to be attached to the to those things. There's no need to be obsessing about them, we want some freedom in relationship to them. And meditation is one of those laboratories, to explore, to see if we can

find that freedom. After meditation is a fine time to think about if it's important. Meditation is not the time to think it's a time to find the freedom. So to justify thinking in meditation means that you're going to limit your capacity to find that freedom from those preoccupations that we hold on to and we're caught up in so can you so it can you use meditation not to think but to let go. And in the process of doing that, you'll learn over and over again, that it's not so easy to let go because the mind has a strong momentum. It's okay, that's this isn't a laboratory. This is where you were set up to discover how that works.

But not to go along with it, but to keep coming back and keep coming back. And this little movement of coming back to breathing. That's how you come back to the present moment. Each time you come back, it's kind of like especially if you can come back in a relaxed way, without being upset that you wandered off, just come back. Each little movement of that is relaxing, the forces of distraction, relaxing the forces of preoccupation. And it might be imperceptible, sometimes how that relaxing is going, but chances are you'll have a lot of opportunities and those little imperceptible little changes. begin building up over time. And over time, your capacity to let go, your tendency to be caught up, will decrease and decrease. So one thing that we want to be careful for when we do meditation is any justification that we're relying on to stay thinking? That oh, this is so important, I have to think about this. The proposal is that in the short period of time that you're meditating, there's absolutely nothing you need to think about. Unless it's a little bit of thinking about the meditation itself, about what's happening the present moment and staying on track. And that principle is that is a kind of a guide or a reference point, so that you don't easily convince yourself that I have to think about this. It's so important. And, and or you're operating under almost an unconscious or subconscious kind of attitude or feeling. This is so important. I have to do this. It's much, much better in meditation to have the policy that in meditation, I don't have to think about anything. Later I can think about it. You have chances are you have lots of opportunities. Later, because we're learning a different skill and meditation and how to think better. We're learning the skill of not of putting things down when you're no longer need to be involved in it. You don't have to carry it all day until you get to the monastery. And it's, you know, just put it down, picks things up and put it down when it's appropriate. And have some flexibility and ease with that movement. Learn to navigate that and discover yourself and find your way with this little simple thing of putting things down. And if you can do that well in meditation, then you have a power, strength, a real skill that is useful in daily life, because occasionally you'll find yourself preoccupied by something in daily life that you probably don't need to be preoccupied with. It's the wrong time, the wrong Place or even the wrong thing to be preoccupied by by. And because you develop the skill to let go in meditation, it be that skill can be used in daily life to great effect to say, Okay, now I let go, I'll just be here with what's happening and not carry whatever I've been carrying for the last period of time. So when you're at the river, help whoever's there. When you get across the river, put it down. So you can go and be helpful in the next river or the next situation. You're with. Thank you.