

Samadhi (50) Opening to Joy and Happiness

Gil Fronsdal

2025-04-11

Keywords:

samādhi, second jhāna, joy, happiness, pīti, meditation, Spirit Rock, abiding, non-verbal knowing

So, welcome to our next talk on samādhi, on the last talk on the second *jhāna*. And most people who experience the second jana, feel that it's much more satisfying than the first *jhānas*. And there is maybe a little bit of evaluation in the mind with the first *jhāna*, kind of a sense of relief of not being caught in the thinking mind, the desiring mind, the immersive mind anymore. And so there's an able ability to kind of just be in the experience itself in a deeper way. It's not in reference to... what we've left behind and how good it is to no longer be caught up in the hindrances.

And so things get, the thinking mind, the active mind becomes quieter and quiet or more peaceful, more open. And there's virtually no thinking. And one of the ways to kind of move into this or enter into it is to begin appreciating the difference between ordinary thinking, conversational thinking, commentarial thinking, thinking with words, or images, and begin appreciating that there are non-verbal ways of knowing. We could know without... there needs to be thoughts that tell us so. And so when we get into these deeper states of samādhi, there is a kind of a knowing.

There is a deeper place inside that maybe even guides us a little bit because it knows. Stay here, enter here, be present. And this is good. There is a deeper place inside that maybe even guides us a little bit because it knows. Stay here, enter here, be present.

And this is good. But there's an ordinary verbally thinking or vision-making kind of thinking that goes on for some people has gotten quiet. It's taken a wonderful, delightful vacation. Finally, it could rest. But still, there can brand a deeper knowing that somehow keeps us connected here in the present moment, that kind of non-verbal knowing.

And it's that kind of knowing that recognizes the... the joy and the happiness that characterizes the second genre. So the *pīti*, the Pāli word, and *sukha*, the Pāli word, that I translated as joy and happiness, and other people who practice John as... Sometimes they're not happy with me using the word joy and happiness because they feel like generally that's too modest that it should be something more like rapture and bliss. But as we get into this deeper, especially in the second *jhāna*, it becomes important to open to the joy and the happiness when it's there. The joy and happiness of being fully engaged, fully involved, with no distractions, with the practice itself.

It's such a wholesome feeling. It feels like there's such a rightness being here and now. And the, they feel so complete like, this is good. This is a, this feels more deeply satisfying than a lot of things that people can experience in life. And so there are these two things, joy and happiness.

And as this second John matures, matures means we become more familiar with it, the joy and happiness spreads, it becomes more fully embodied, be open to it more, that we start seeing the distinction, the difference between the joy and happiness. Yes. Until this point, we talk about joy and happiness, but maybe we don't really see these kind of mingle together. There's no real difference between them. But as everything gets quieter and calmer, and thinking mind becomes even quieter and softer, the excitement of, very subtle, but excitement of, you know, entering into these states begins to abate.

We can start seeing the difference between the joy and the happiness. And one of the common ways to see it is that the joy is a little bit more mental, whereas the happiness is a little bit more physical. Now, the physical sensations of the joy can be quite strong, so people kind of are a little bit confused to hear that it's more of the mind than it is of the body. But there's a kind of mental excitement. You start feeling there's a mental thrill, a mental kind of uplifts, energy, excitement.

Ah, this is good. Oh, yes. Not that we say those words to ourselves, but there's a little bit kind of energy like that. And that energy is a higher level of activity of excitement than the happiness... And happiness is almost like a very deep contentment in the body.

It's a very deep sense of well-being. That the mental excitement or the mental activation of joy is no longer there. And now, and with the mental activation of joy, the sensations in the body tend to be a little bit more stronger, more active, sometimes quite active, or strong, like big waves of bliss that kind of wash over us. Sometimes it feels like a lot of movement. But with the happiness, the movement, and it feels like a gentle hum or a vibration or warmth.

Or it might still feel like there's a flow, but the flow feels very harmonious within us. And there isn't any of the subtle maybe, and maybe not so subtle, excitement of the joy. And so as the second genre matures, being able to distinguish these two becomes very useful in terms of moving further into the third genre, which we'll discuss. I'll discuss with next week. And so learning to... feel the distinction or the difference between joy and happiness becomes part of the task as we go deeper into this meditation into the *jhānas*.

And either way, don't be in a hurry. It's best that *jhānas* never to hurry. Take all the time in the world, to become familiar, to feel it, to look around, to spread whatever goodness there is, to enter into, to abide. The idea of abiding means we're not in a hurry and an opening, an opening so that, in the quote from the classic traditional teachings, so that the practitioner fills, pervades, saturates, and permeates, this body with a joy and happiness born of concentration, so no part of the body is not touched.

The idea of abiding means we're not in a hurry and an opening, an opening so that, in the quote from the classic traditional teachings, so that the practitioner fills, pervades, saturates, and permeates, this

body with a joy and happiness born of concentration, so no part of the body is not touched. And this expression, this body is not referring to kind of the ordinary physical body we might think about. But rather the body that we experience in meditation itself. In a kind of way, the experience we have of our body is very much conditioned by our mind, except when the physical pain the body is quite intense. The Buddha acknowledged that that was not mind-made.

But so many of the sensations in our body have a very strongly conditioned by the quality of the characteristics of our mind. Our posture shifts and changes with the moods of our minds, the preoccupations, what we kind of, the negativity bias we have sometimes brings us into parts of our body where we're reacting to them or pushing the way or aversion. Certain emotions and attitudes cause a lot of tension in the body. And so as we meditate and the mind became softer, mind becomes more relaxed, no longer preoccupied, no longer caught in things, then the body responds accordingly. And you start feeling a very different feeling in the body.

And it's almost like we have two different bodies. We have the body in ordinary life, and we have the body, the samādhi body, that kind of glows in this luminous and light and open. We have the body in ordinary life, and we have the body, the samādhi body, that kind of glows in this luminous and light and open. It has a very different sensation. And so to appreciate, enter into this kind of different body, even when just the feelings of it are just beginning to happen, and enter into it, help it support you to be willing to put down, put to rest, the ordinary thinking mind.

Enter into the state, the feelings, the sensations. Enter. Abide, rest in it. Resting in it so it can kind of spread, so you can appreciate it, you can be nourished by it, you can let it register in a deep way. Let it recondition you in a nice way, and then open to the goodness of it, open to the joy and the happiness of it.

And then next week, we start the third Jana. We'll talk about this distinction between the joy and the happiness becomes particularly important because the joy will fade away and will be able to enter and abide in the happiness of meditation of the *jhānas*. So in the meantime... You might want to go over this weekend. Keep these three steps in mind, maybe throughout the day as much as you can.

Maybe have a sticky note that you put on something that reminds you. Enter, abide, and open. And just see if you can do that in ordinary life, everyday life. Maybe when you drive someplace and you arrive, don't get out of your car right away. And just see if you can do that in ordinary life, everyday life.

Maybe when you drive someplace and you arrive, don't get out of your car right away. Sit there a little bit and relax. Enter, abide, and open. If you're standing in a line in a supermarket, don't read the headlines on the news that's there. Rather, stand there maybe with your eyes closed but looking down.

Enter, abide, and open with what's happening here for you and maybe being attuned to what is good and right right now that you want to be attuned to if you're just in your thoughts thinking a lot. Enter

and abide and open through the weekend and then we'll go further on Monday. So thank you very much, and I'll still be here at Spared Rock, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. And you'll get to see these wonderful hillsides here. You see a little bit of my view out of my sitting outside my little room.

And this is these hillsides. Behind that forest there, up further up there are. The two Spirit Rock Meditation Halls. So there's actually 96 people in the retreat. There's probably like 110 people living here.

You would know that from all the grasslands. So thank you.