

## Samadhi (3) The Temple of Samadhi

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So hello and welcome to this third talk on series, on long series. Now, it's going to be on *samādhi*. And this first five days of it is really setting the stage, its introduction to the topic and entering into it. And today in particular, I want to emphasize... that *samādhi* is something that I believe is appropriate to enter with humility, with care, with reverence, with respect. That too many times I have and people I know have attempted to get concentrated without humility or reverence or care.

With a kind of forcefulness, a kind of expectation, I'm going to do this, and I can do it, I'm going to really kind of bear down and laser focus and just stay focused. And it is possible to get somewhat concentrated that way, maybe sometimes very concentrated in a certain kind of way with that kind of attitude, but I don't think that that's the useful attitude to have and useful for what purpose? In the Dharma, in the Buddhism, *samādhi* is the precondition. It's often considered the precondition for the rising of liberating insight. And that if...

And liberating insight is not just an understanding that we appropriate for the purposes of the self, but it's liberating insight from... the appropriation of self from the attachments to self and doing things for the self. It's allowing ourselves to step beyond the limitations that we create for ourselves when we orient ourselves around me, myself, and mine. It's allowing ourselves to step beyond the limitations that we create for ourselves when we orient ourselves around me, myself, and mine. And that is pretty special. I can feel like grace.

I can feel like something transpersonal. Sometimes people even use the word transcendent, a word that I don't care too much for, but it's, for some people, it's the only thing that can represent something that seems to take them out of their usual understanding of self. And, um, so *samādhi*, and in my studies of Indian religions, it seems that there are some of the religions in India or yogic traditions in India that use the word *samādhi* the way Buddhists would use the word *nibbāna*. That *samādhi* is sometimes a word for the ultimate experience that these yogic traditions will emphasize. And in Buddhism, that's usually not the case, but it does point to this kind of very special feeling of what *samādhi* is.

And so I like to think of it as *samādhi* sometimes as a temple, a sacred temple that I enter into. And maybe some of you don't care for that kind of metaphor. Sometimes I've thought about it as a sacred

grove of trees. I've been in places in nature where I just felt like everything got quiet and peaceful and clear and felt all this is something inside shifts and changes in my whole demeanor. Because of the place, and it calls a certain kind of clarity of attention, like now I'm really here, and I'm here with a kind of reverence, and sometimes there's a wonderful feeling of being quite small because of the great majesty of the natural things, the natural world that's in that place.

But it's entering a sacred temple, and the reason why I think this is useful when we think about... *samādhi* is that when we sit down specifically to practice *samādhi*, it's helpful to reorient yourself, to spend a little bit of time preparing yourself, similar to how you prepare yourself if you were going into some kind of sacred location. And if a temple, I think that works for you, sometimes you go to these places you might put on clean clothes. You might clean yourself, take a shower and show up clean. You might, you know, some places you go in and you bow as you enter the temple or you touch a sacred object or you, you know, do something that kind of marks the transition going in.

Sometimes you would... you know, you really feel like you're outside in the busy hustle and bustle of the world, but inside you get quiet. Now you're ready to, for something that's not exactly you, something beyond you or bigger than you, that is found in the quiet, in the care, in the reverence. And... and rather than objectifying that, like this is some sacred place where a sacred being or something lives, I kind of prefer to see it that it's the very shift in the subjective nature of our experience that then allows us to feel or sense something that doesn't feel like it's part and parcel of the usual way way we think of ourselves, usual attitudes, orientations, judgments, feelings we have.

So it might not be so easy to make this kind of shift in orientation, but I think it's helpful to realize when we practice *samādhi* that we are involved in a process of shifting and changing our subjective experience. And so to the degree to which that can be a choice, the degree to which we could prepare ourselves for that or care for that and support that. So we have kind of like a... we start the process to live a busy life, run around and do a lot of things and check a lot of websites and check all your texts for all your texts and emails and... social media, just, you know, because, you know, you're not going to be on it for 30 minutes, 45 minutes of meditation. And you sit down and the momentum of all that greedy attention, doing things, wanting things with attention, follows you and, or any attitude you have. And so, have a transition.

To practice *samādhi*, where we're leaving all that behind long enough that we allow for settling, allow the whole system to become calmer or more settled, more ready to feel the deep, maybe sacred dimensions of subjective experience. So this is very different than just sitting down and being determined, I'm going to get concentrated. There is a kind of humbleness or humility where we're preparing ourselves almost like to receive a gift. We're preparing ourselves, you know, it's almost like *samādhi* willing, *samādhi* will come. We're kind of shifting something about how we are to become a vehicle become a vessel, I guess is the word, a vessel in which to receive something that bubbles up from deep inside, something that spreads, or something that appears, maybe there's no clear sense of whether it's inside

or outside.

But now we're really here to be open, to be available, to be receptive, to be a vessel for something. And, um, and, uh, so to give you some sense of this, how the Buddha presents it, for him, just as *samādhi* is a condition for liberating insight, well-being, happiness is a condition for *samādhi*. So he's already focusing on a shift in this subjective experience that's needed in order to open up to this world of *samādhi*. And so when you sit down to meditate, what can you do that supports that transition? Can you give yourself more time in preparation to sit?

Not just rush from what you did to just sit down, but maybe always come to meditation five minutes early whenever you meditate. Maybe go into it slowly. Maybe do some stretching, some settling. Maybe do a little bit of walking meditation. Maybe quietly have a cup of tea and let things settle.

And then maybe sit down and just kind of be before you start to even close your eyes. Maybe look around and look at the walls, look at the floor, look at the objects where you are, look out the window. To kind of begin really feeling connected to here and now this place so that the momentum of the mind being concerned about other places and other times begins to fade away. And so we're beginning to gather ourselves, to hear and now, be here, to prepare ourselves for a new subjective way of being. Thank you.

So, in these, still doing these introductory remarks about *samādhi*, I want to review that the first day I talked about discovery, that we really want to see and understand how we are. And the more we can discover about how the mind, body, heart is, it's the more material we have for the unification, the gathering together process we have. And then discovery involves attention. An important part of *samādhi* is to find a form of attention that has a lightness to it. That's not forceful.

It's not contracted or straining. Very light, transparent, translucent, just open. And it's easy then for the mind to wander off into thoughts and get distracted. But then if we start now today to... appreciate that we're entering into, we're shifting ourselves, we're entering into a new mode here, then that preparation, that new mode now can maybe be a vessel to hold that light attention that is going to be the gathering point or the support for a deeper, a deepening into a dimension of our life, which we often don't experience in everyday life. A dimension of our life that is healing.

*Samādhi* can be quite healing, a dimension of our life which can feel sacred, and a dimension of our life that can give us a tremendous amount of wisdom and understanding. And so with that, one more thing I'd like to suggest as we go through these weeks around *samādhi*, as we settle into it, I would encourage you to consider a time where you're going to start meditating a little bit more each day than you do. Maybe add a second meditation. And to sit twice a day at least, maybe 15 to 45 minutes. And because *samādhi* builds on a familiarity, a connectivity, a familiarity.

Builds on the residue that's left behind each time we're practicing meditation that helps it to build over time. So that works for you. So thank you for today and look forward to being here with you again tomorrow.