

## Samadhi (31) Basic Elements of Samadhi

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So, hello everyone, and welcome to this ongoing series on *samādhi*. We had a two-week break, as I was mostly at our retreat center in Santa Cruz during this time. And now I'm happy to be back. And it's a bit of a gap, so I'd like to just a little bit kind of start over. With meditation in general, but also with, especially with *samādhi*, there's something invaluable about always feeling like you're starting over, so that you're not measuring or looking for something or trying to tap into something too quickly, so that you sit down to just be with yourself as you are, to discover how you are.

Because it's very easy in a life, busy life, full life, scared life, angry life, to view ourselves, our world, partially, to only be connected to part of who we are, and to enter into *samādhi*, we really want to be connected to all of who we are, because *samādhi* is a process of unification. It's a process of gathering ourselves together so that all parts of who we are can be working together in harmony. And so in the beginning of this series, I talked about *samādhi* being a temple, and that we're entering the temple. And we want to bring all of ourselves along. And we want to do it carefully, with respect, with kindness, with a certain kind of humility.

We're not storming a fortress. We're not storming aggressively trying to attain something. We're going with respect and care, and almost as if Dharma willing, the doors of the temple will open. And we're bringing all of ourselves along. Just like if you go to a literal, to a sacred place, all of you goes with you. And some sacred places, some places that have tremendous tranquility or peace or sense of inspiration to be there, it can actually kind of, our whole body can kind of be awakened or tingle or feel inspired and feel included, feel the calm of the place.

And so this ability to feel our whole body, to calm our whole body, to settle ourselves, the

Buddha's instructions for first foundational instructions, beginning instructions in mindfulness, and in *ānāpānasati*, mindfulness of breathing, is to breathe mindfully, be present for your breathing, feel the whole body, and then relax the body, calm the body. And when we feel the whole body, part of what we're feeling is the reactivity, the tensions in the body, the holding patterns, the effect of our karmic actions. And the challenging aspects of our body, for the Buddha, his recommendation is to bring a sense of calm to it. Let it, bring tranquility, hold it, calm it, settle it. Like you would if someone is really agitated, dangerously so, you might do things that are calming for them.

So to discover what's here, to enter in a calm way into the temple with all of ourselves, and to not be assertive, not be expecting or wanting or pushing to make something happen. We have to be diligent in practicing *samādhi*. We have to be deliberate. There's a deliberateness like this. I'm going to be here. It's not too casual. It's not like, oh, I'll get around to it. I'll just sit here and let something kind of settle by itself.

There is a deliberateness. This is what I'm here to do. And then you might begin by not trying too hard. There is a kind of natural settling that some people can experience if we don't try too much in the beginning, maybe for five minutes, ten minutes, and then as we go further, then the deliberateness comes into play more and more. Okay, here I am. If we try too early, we might be stressing ourselves or being tense, and deliberateness is to kind of define, oh, this is the territory, here and now, to be here with this experience, now.

And then to steady oneself, to steady oneself, stabilize oneself in a kind of inner stillness, steady oneself in a kind of still way with the whole breath coming and going, coming and going. Not fixating on the breath, but as if the breath is at the center of the global body, the whole body. And we're resting there with the breath. We're riding the breath. We're surfing the breath. We're coasting on the breath.

So we practice. And one of the things that can begin happening for some people is that you feel the benefit of it in your daily life. To interrupt the normal patterns of thinking and reacting in the mind, the loops we're in around fear or distress or anger with the world and how it is, it takes a break. And we can experience ourselves in a different way. And that's more calm, more centered, and not so easily caught in preoccupations and needs and all this. And that can make a world of difference.

And when the world is in a difficult state, *samādhi* is one of the great protectors of us. Not to escape it, but to be able to be grounded and centered in ourselves so that we can go into the world in a more effective way. *Samādhi* is a great support for living our life. And maybe we

can live more calmly, less reactively. Maybe from the platform or from the vantage point of being settled and unified and calm, we can go into the world more kindly, be more friendly, less contentious, less ready to argue, less ready to see conflict wherever we go, but to see wherever we go an opportunity for connection, an opportunity for the unification, the unity, the gathering together, the connecting more and more fully wherever we go.

Whereas *samādhi* is a unification of body and mind, right speech for the Buddha is speech which unifies people, that overcomes divisiveness between people. And so we see here this parallel between unifying and harmonizing all of who we are when we sit in meditation. To not be contentious, not be opposed or not be pushing away any part of ourselves with how we live in our world. To enter the world, to unify, to find connection. To see if we could have a warm-hearted connection with someone rather than a contentious one.

So *samādhi* is a great help for how we live our life and how we go about. And for *samādhi* to have its greatest benefit, it helps to be able to practice every day. So I hope that this, our 7 a.m. sitting here on YouTube, allows some of you to have that continuity of every day. And as we do this series on *samādhi* and we get back in the swing of it, or at least I get back in the swing of it, that this might be a good time to start meditating twice a day, if you can. And even if it's just 10 minutes the second time or 20 minutes the second time, to have one sitting here on YouTube that's guided. But one sitting a day where you really don't, it's not guided. You're just left with yourself and practicing in silence. Do whatever comes up and whatever you see.

So you're developing, it's kind of like taking the training wheels off. And now you're starting to see for yourself what the experience is, what's happening. And some of you certainly can practice more than 20 minutes or 10 minutes, but maybe you don't and so maybe you can figure out to at least add a second sitting of some length that works for you as we continue for some weeks more on this theme of *samādhi* and to kind of remind you we kind of reached the approach stage, what's called access concentration, approaching a deeper *samādhi*. So I want to kind of review a little bit for a few days and to get us warmed up again. And then we'll kind of at least talk about and point you to the possibility of deeper states of concentration. And some of you, it'll just be informative. Some of you might be familiar or recognize these states for yourself. And it's part of the temple, the temple of *samādhi*. So thank you very much, and I look forward to being with you again tomorrow.