

Samadhi (30) Harmony in Approaching Samadhi

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So, good morning everyone, and hello, and welcome to this now fifth talk on the approach to *samādhi*. Now, I think we've done maybe six weeks now on this topic of *samādhi*. The last piece of approaching or moving into *samādhi* is what's called the approach *samādhi* or access *samādhi*. I'd like to evoke the idea that it involves some kind of harmony. We're gathering ourselves together, a unification of ourselves. Not every single thing that we are, we know we are, is included, but everything that's present in meditation is included.

Whatever we can be aware of here and now as we're settling into the present moment feels like it all gathers together into one large whole, one large harmonious whole. And so to find a way to live in this harmony. In the ancient world, *samādhi* is sometimes associated with harmony or an evenness, where all things are held together in a kind of even way, harmonious way. Sometimes there's a word that's used as beauty, that there starts to be a kind of beauty, and we begin to live in kind of a beauty. We meditate in beauty.

I love this expression beauty because it's not something we can appropriate for ourselves. We can't kind of claim it to be ourselves or who we are, but it's kind of like the atmosphere or the context in which we're operating. We're operating in the context of beauty, walk in beauty, talk in beauty, meditate in beauty. So the world that we live in begins to change when we start entering into deeper *samādhi*. And, so, it's not easy to do. Most of the time when people meditate, they're not in *samādhi*.

It's still amazingly beneficial to practice mindfulness meditation, well short of entering into a state of being that's known as *samādhi*, or recognized as *samādhi*. Or, we could say that *samādhi* is many different types. For people who do practice mindfulness, there is a kind of *samādhi* that has to do with how we enter into any single thing we do. If you're washing

dishes, there's a *samādhi* of washing dishes where you're really there in harmony with that activity. You're not trying to do it quickly to get on to other things. You're not doing it while doing a second or third thing at the same time.

You're just there in that. This idea of just being present for this activity, fully in harmony or attuned to this activity, is sometimes called *samādhi* in daily life. The more we do that, it supports doing that then in meditation as well. So this *samādhi*, the approach *samādhi*, I like to use an analogy. Say that you've never ridden a bicycle before and that you want to try, you know, and so you never plan to ride a bicycle. It's the last thing you want to do.

But then there's a friend of yours who may be many miles away, is really in need of some medicine. It's really important the person has the medicine. But you can't get there fast enough. You don't have a car, you don't have any public means of transportation, but there's a bicycle. But you've never ridden a bicycle before. But someone says, well, if you ride the bicycle, you can get the medicine there in time.

But if you have to walk, you won't be there in time. But I've never ridden a bicycle. Well, it's up to you. So you said, okay, well, I might as well try. So you begin getting on the bicycle, and it's really difficult. The first few times you try to get on, you fall off.

You pedal a little bit, and you kind of fall to the side. You get back on. It's so important to keep trying because of your friend. And so you keep trying. And you keep moving on. Slowly you can pedal more than a few pedals without falling off.

Finally you seem to be able to pedal and stay on, but it's very wobbly and shaky and difficult. You feel like you're ready to give up because why bother when it's so difficult? Maybe you have one big spill and then you're really ready to stop. But you remember your friend. So you get back on again no matter what, even with scraped knees or whatever you have. Then you keep pedaling.

After a while, you get the hang of it. After a while, you can pedal, and it's a long, flat stretch. You're pedaling along. After a while, you feel like you're in the groove. You feel tired, so you stop pedaling. But then the bike stops.

It's a little hard to start again because you're still wobbly. Maybe you fall again and finally get going again. Then you realize, I just have to keep pedaling because when I have some momentum, it seems like it's easier. So you keep doing it and doing it. The way the terrain is set up to where your friend is, you know you're going to get there in plenty of time because with the bicycle. But as the terrain goes, it slowly begins to slant down the road, a slow grade.

At first, it's so slight you don't even notice. Then you notice, well, it's a little bit easier to pedal. Then you feel it's getting easier to pedal and easier. At some point you feel the momentum, the pull of gravity and you realize you don't have to pedal anymore. You're being carried, you're being pulled. You can just glide down.

You're now in this place where you're approaching your friend's home that's down that hill. It's not a real steep hill, but all you have to do is to stay on the bicycle and feel that momentum. Stay with the momentum of gravity that pulls you and you get pulled all the way down to your friend's house with the medicine and then your medicine is happy ever after. Your friend is happy ever after. So *samādhī*, practicing meditation, can be like that. At the beginning it can be wobbly and difficult and we fall off and we get discouraged.

The point is to always just get back on again and back on again. The regularity and familiarity with this, something starts developing and it gets easier and easier. At some point, as we keep practicing and keep pedaling, there's almost like there begins to be that slope that begins now beginning, you know, there's a directionality. There's an onward leading. Just like on the bicycle, if it's on a grade going downhill, if you're keeping your balance in the bike, it's onward leading now to some place. At some point, you're really all there.

It's all smooth. He's all in harmony. Biking is in harmony. Everything is flowing. You have the balance. Now you're in this approach stage.

At some point, you have to learn to just let go of the pedaling. Then allow the momentum, the onward leading nature to kind of pull you along. That takes a lot of harmony. It means to be in harmony with all things. It means not to be resisting, not to be wanting, not to be ahead of yourself or behind yourself, but to be centered here in yourself. So to bring everything into harmony.

We're here now at this approach stage of *samādhī*. This seems like a good place to pause because I'm going off to IRC for a couple of weeks, our retreat center. We'll have wonderful guest teachers who come to teach while I'm away. In the meantime, and then I'll come back. We'll continue the Samadhi series in March. I think on March 10th I'll come back.

On that day, we will do one more week on this kind of approach stage to *samādhī*, kind of warm up again, get back into the groove of it. Because it's a kind of very refined state, and becoming more familiar with some of the challenges that can happen in the *samādhī*, and this approach state will help you kind of maybe understand better what it's all about. It may be easier to kind of maybe follow along when we go to the next step with it all. May Elliott

will be here next week. Diana Clark will be here the following week. They're both wonderful teachers.

I look forward to our return to continue on this. If some of you would like to kind of stay a little bit more in the flow in this Samadhi series, you might want to re-listen to some of the previous talks or guided meditations of this series, maybe even going back to the beginning, to kind of stay in the flow. Some of the earlier teachings can be more familiar for you and supportive as we go forward here. So thank you. Then I also want to just offer a big thanks and final report about the fundraising we did for Save the Children. We exceeded our goal.

On that little thermometer kind of circle that we have, it shows we've now raised over \$73,000. Plus there's another some little more than \$10,000 who's come in directly to IMC that we're sending to Save the Children. We're getting close to \$85,000, not quite. If any of you would like to offer more, it's still available. But I want to thank all of you who did. I'm very happy and very grateful that our community could come together this way.

So thank you, and I look forward to seeing you all or being with you again in a couple of weeks.