

## Dharmette: Insight (13) Insight Revealed

**Gil Fronsdal**

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Hello and welcome to this continued series on Insight. Today I want to emphasize that Insight, as I think of it in this Insight Meditation, is more like revelation than searching. It is not straining to see and understand something. It's an understanding, a seeing that reveals itself to us. We're not searching for something; we're allowing something to show itself to us. But we're preparing ourselves to be good recipients of what gets shown to us.

Practicing *samādhi*, quieting the mind, getting focused and still, and cultivating a simplicity of being with our experience helps the mind not jump around so much. The mind settles down, gets steady and quiet. Then the insights of insight meditation, again, are not a searching process. They can arise out of real radical simplicity. All the insight that you need in a deep way can come from resting experience with the breathing.

One of the primary insights that we're looking for, or waiting for, or allowing for in insight meditation is that of inconstancy, change, impermanence—how things are constantly arising and disappearing, appearing and disappearing. That insight, that revealing of change, can happen completely with the breathing. All that you need to see in change and impermanence and inconstancy can be experienced first and foremost in the changing experience of breathing. The advantage of this is the breathing is relatively simple. The advantage of this is the breathing, sitting in meditation, is the largest movement, generally the biggest changing sensations that we experience. So we don't have to go searching for it. It's there for us to experience generally.

Sometimes breathing is counterindicated when people get too anxious around the breath, or it awakens difficult emotions. Sometimes the breathing gets very, very subtle. But generally, in insight meditation, the way I was taught was having the central focus be on breathing. I found that really beneficial to help with the simplicity of the practice. I wasn't looking around for things to have insight about. I wasn't looking to have insight.

We talk about the insight into impermanence, change, and inconstancy, but the idea is not to go looking for that so much, but to relax and open, to receive it, to let it find you rather

than you find it. It will find you if the thinking mind is not predominating. If we're not seeing the world through our thoughts, if the only part of the world we're seeing is thinking, we're inhabiting our thoughts, living in our thoughts, consumed with our thoughts, making up worlds with our thoughts. If that whole movement can be quiet for a while, and we step out of the stream of thoughts—the constant stream of thinking all the time—and step out of that stream and into this other stream, the river of change within us.

Today I'm emphasizing the breathing to help with that simplicity of being and to gather ourselves, orient ourselves, not just around the breathing, but allowing ourselves to take in all the sensations of breathing that come and go. It might simply be recognizing the coming and going of in-breath and out-breath. It might be seeing the individual sensations that occur even within an in-breath or within an out-breath. In doing that, one of the advantages is we can see how much we disconnect from that and return to the old habit of thinking. Thinking is a leading cause of all kinds of psychological challenges. Depression can come from a lot of rumination.

Thinking about oneself a lot is said to be one of the leading causes for all kinds of psychological challenges. If we're thinking about ourselves all the time, we're usually repeating often challenging thoughts, debilitating thoughts, undermining thoughts, or an attitude that is not so healthy, often with excessive self-preoccupation. So to get refreshed—willingly to be refreshed or to trustingly know that it's okay to put that aside. It's okay not to be thinking so much about oneself, thinking so much about reality, thinking so much about our desires. Not only is it okay, but over time we begin appreciating that it's really refreshing, it's really healthy, it's really beneficial to us to keep coming back to the direct experience in the body with breathing.

The rhythm, and it's easier for the mind to get focused, to get centered, if there's actually a subtle movement in the focus of attention. It's almost restful for the eyes, restful for the mind, to follow a simple ordinary movement that comes and goes, that arises and passes, or that flows peacefully through us. As I many times say, it's like sitting at the riverbank and watching a river go by, or sitting at the beach and watching the waves come up on the shore and down. I can do that for long periods of time. It's something very refreshing and nice and renewing to watch the very simple rhythm of something coming and going. So to ride that, to surf on the movements of the breathing, to receive it, to let it wash over you, and enter into the *samādhi* of breathing.

As an alternative to the kind of unhealthy *samādhi* of thinking, where we get absorbed in the world of thinking. For some of us, the level of concentration we need to be with the breath-

ing is comparable, or maybe the same, as the absorption, the concentration we have for our thoughts. There's a phenomenal kind of zeroing-in focus on thinking, which many people have at some point in their life. We're learning what to do here is to kind of turn that around. So rather than a straining, somebody straining focus on thinking, there can be now a whole-hearted, relaxed focus on the breathing.

In having insight around the changing nature of breathing, do not be looking to have insight. But cultivate a receptivity, cultivate a simplicity, cultivate just an allowing of experience to be seen carefully until really the magic of insight reveals itself to you. You can certainly sometimes see impermanence and change consciously. But the magic of it is when it really begins to, by being absorbed with it or settled on it, or it begins to be compelling, and you're right there with it in a delightful way. Some of the qualities of *samādhī*, some of the *jhānic* factors of joy and happiness, can arise with this receptive, open, entering into the world of change and changing nature of the breathing.

The same thing can happen in daily life where we discover the delight, the joy, the benefit, the refreshment of stepping out of our thoughts in daily life and being here for the simplicity of our experience here and now. The richness of it. It might be more boring than reading a great novel or watching a great movie. But the art of meditation is to teach us that it's wondrous to be alive, to be present, to be conscious, and to be here connected in a three-dimensional way or multi-dimensional way with our present moment reality rather than in the two dimensions or one dimension of mental preoccupation. So, insight as a form of revelation. So, thank you. And may the world of change, moment by moment, be refreshing for you.