

## Inner Silence and the Five Faculties

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The talk I was thinking about giving, and that's been on my mind for a few days, and the topic is the five faculties. But as for introducing the five faculties, I want to read a story from my little book, *The Monastery Within*. It says the title is *Noise and Silence*. The monastery work leader always appeared peaceful. This was not so unusual among the monks, the nuns of the monastery. He was unique, however, in that he remained peaceful and calm even when the monastery was its busiest.

For example, when large crowds of people visited to celebrate the Buddha's birthday. If a person was needed to visit the hustle and bustle of the local market town, this was the monk the monastery usually sent. When asked how he managed to remain peaceful, he said, I entered the monastery for peace and quiet. I had spent years in the harried world of commerce and people. I longed for the silence the monastery was rumoured to have. I was delighted with my first weeks in the monastery.

The silence was exquisite. However, as I settled into the silence of the place, I was shocked to learn how noisy my own mind was. The real noise was within. It was the business of my own mind that oppressed me, not the noise and activity of the world. Now, it doesn't matter where I go. I carry the silence with me.

So a part of the noise of the mind is all the thinking that goes on, the swirl of thoughts and images that goes on in the mind. And when those are strong, and we are somehow obsessed with it or swept away in those thoughts and concerns. It's almost like losing our life. And when we stop being obsessed and swept along by the current of thinking, kind of like getting the life back. And for some people, meditation is made one of the primary places where they get their life back, because in meditation the mind quiets and we're not. So we learn to let go of our preoccupation with thoughts or being pulled away in them, and the mind begins to become quieter and stiller.

And it doesn't necessarily mean that thoughts have to go away, but that it feels like the silence feels like there is a peace, a peace there as well. So the day of silence in meditation, the idea of a is the reference point for how I want to teach today about the five faculties. And a So the background for this talk is the idea that when the Buddha, before the Buddha was awakened, he went and studied with two spiritual teachers of his time. They were kind of meditation teachers, or they had access to the truth that they were teaching. Their teaching was through meditation. But first he learned the teachings of these teachers, and he learned them well, and he became together with others who had learned those teachings.

He kind of mastered the teachings, and he assumed, and this is an amazing story, he assumed that he now knew and saw what was true, but he actually didn't. He had just learned the teachings. But sometimes teachings can be so compelling and now, so a kind of enlightening the teachings, that people sometimes confuse a cognitive understanding of this life with this deeper life, that this has to do with a kind of a more silent knowing, a silent seeing of what's happening here. So then he went to teachers, and he said, You know, it is. How do I have access to really know and see? Oh, really to know and see what you're teaching.

And so they explained to him, they taught him the kind of meditation practice they were teaching. Both of them were kind of meditation practices where you really cannot disappear from this world, a world of senses and experience. And one of them is a meditation state of nothingness, where you dip into a place of tremendous nothingness. Is there just absence? And the second one taught all but further along that even the perception of absence kind of disappears. And there's a V so rarefied, so simple, so a lack of input on the mind. The mind is very still and peaceful. But the Buddha thought, This is not freedom. This is not freedom. And then he had a realization or had a self reflection that he had five qualities that he could rely on to find his way.

He had faith, well, we usually called faith. He had confidence. He had courage. He had the capacity to bring attention to his experience. And he had ability to be centred in his experience. And he had ability to be discerning, to see clearly what's going on here, and differentiate between what's happening. And these are my translation for today for the five faculties, usually translated as faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.

And now, faith, because sometimes it assumes to be a kind of faith in something, alike, in teachings, in a teacher or something. This is not what the Buddha had faith in at this point, but rather he had confidence in himself. And so he was able then to go to meditate and call on this confidence. And he didn't know what the truth was. He didn't know what liberation was. Yet he just knew that's what he was going pursuing.

And so, not knowing where this was going, nothing of a teacher to accompany him on the path, or point him out the pitfalls of the path, and keep him on track. He was on his own. So it took courage not just energy, but real courage, and then it certainly it took mindfulness, but probably it took a real sense of presence with all the attentional faculties that he had to engage attentively with what's happening. And then the concentration part was to be centered, to be one pointed, or one centered, really here, centered, and then to be discerning. Now, each of these five could be seen in what I started with this little teaching about silence. One reference point for understanding how to evoke these and support have the support meditation practice is to evoke them in such a way that they help the mind become silent, to quiet the mind.

So this confidence is not to stir us up, or faith to stir us up with beliefs, ideas and thoughts about what we have confidence and faith in, but rather a kind of embodied confidence which allows the anxious mind, the planning mind, the confused mind, the obsessed mind to quiet down almost as if the thinking is not really needed much. What's needed is the mind to become still and silent, silent from its chatter, silent from its inner noise that spins around. So to call on confidence to sit here and become still, quiet, and to have the courage to do so. The pull and the authority of our concerns, the things we're anxious about, the things that we're resentful for, the things that we want, the thoughts about me, myself, and mine, these have a lot of authority. People are often quite ready to defend them, how important they are, and how can I be safe? How can I find my way and my life unless I engage in these kinds of authoritative kind of thoughts which, just if we engage with them, are just more noise?

And so to have the courage, for at least in meditation, to not pursue a career, not pursue and fix a relationship, not to be worried about the future, not to be caught up in what's happened in the past. All those things are appropriate at times. There is a time and season for all those kinds of thinking about the future, the past, our desires, the problems we have in our life. But it takes a kind of courage to not succumb to them, do not get sucked into them, but to have the courage to really sit. Now's time to be here silent and still, and then attention to do so with attention, attentiveness, an attentiveness that kind of partakes to the silence. This is not attentiveness that is thinking about what's happening.

Some people confuse mindfulness with thoughtfulness, and there's a kind of thinking of what's happening in the present moment, but an attentive, silent attentiveness to enter into that silence. That is not the lack of sounds, but rather, it's an ability to be more attuned, more sensitive, to take in all the data that's happening. And then there's the support that being centered in our experience gives to being silent, the ability to be within our middle of

our experience and find a place of centre. It could be the object of concentration. It could be the belly as it moves, the sensations of the breathing, some place in the body, tip of the nose. But it isn't so much that we're focusing, like from the control tower on to this singular place of attention. It's kind of more like what we're composing ourselves on it: a composure, a centredness.

Some people like the word become grounded in this, and so like all and that. This composure, grounded centredness, is an embodied experience for all of us as here, present. And then this discernment and wisdom faculty in the service of silence, in the service of differentiating and seeing, Oh, now I am getting obsessed with thoughts. Now I am involved with noise and contributing to the agitation of the mind. What is it if I turn my attention and keep it in the realm of what's quieting and stilling and the silence? What is a part of the function of wisdom is to see and discern and work with the other four faculties.

So one way of understanding these five faculties is that they are not separate from each other. It isn't like five separate capacities, but rather there's a way in which, when they win, what we're doing is attentive, silent attentiveness. They actually are five facets of the same jewel, the jewel of stillness, the jewel of silence, the jewel of a kind of peace. And so it's possible in meditation to go through a kind of like a checklist and check in with oneself, Where is my confidence? And to evoke it if necessary, but don't evoke it with thoughts and ideas. But where is there an embodied feeling of confidence that allows something to be still and quiet, and or embodied feelings are not thoughts, and so they don't partake of the world of chatter, of noise.

But to feel the silent quality of embodiment, an embodied sense of confidence, may be a strength that's there, and then the embodied quality of courage. So not talking yourself into being courageous, being strong in your dedication, but a courage to allow yourself to be still, allow yourself to be silent. And this probably takes a lot of courage, because sometimes the forces of concerns that we have are important. Sometimes they have tremendous power and strength themselves, so much so that if we try to sit still and sit quiet, we might get very restless, anxious, angry, all kinds of things can happen that because we're meeting and confronting these deep kind of operating systems or conditioning that sometimes have been formed over a difficult lifetime. But what is the courage that allows us to sit still and quiet? And I love the fact that courage comes from the French word heart cure, and that it not only is courage. But maybe courage comes with or with compassion, with heartfelnness, with care, and then attentiveness.

What's the attention that is left, or that which has a chance to shine? When we're still and

quiet, if we're not distracted by thoughts, if we're not busy talking to ourselves, what attention appears? It's kind of like if the curtain's been pulled. We don't see outside. And then if we pull the curtains, what do we see outside? How's the weather changed? What we notice? So this silent attentiveness. It's the attention that is left when the mind is silent. And rather than being so much something that we have to apply and do the mindfulness, it's more of an allowing of that attentiveness. The natural. Attend whatever attentiveness is for you at any given time.

When the mind is allowed to be quiet enough, still enough, receptive enough to allow the attentiveness to surface and be there, it's very hard not to be attentive, not to be aware, not to know what's happening if the mind is quiet and still and alert. And that's why the courage and the strength, the confidence, brings that alertness. And then the centredness that provides stability, that provides steadiness. And what is the steadiness, centredness, groundedness that you can feel your way to when the mind starts becoming quiet and still? And then the discernment, again, the recognizing, the keeping the attention, noticing these things. So going through the checklist and saying, Oh, here's my confidence. Here is my courage or my strength. Here's my attention. This is attentiveness. Here is stability, steadiness, centeredness. And here is the discernment, the understanding, the seeing clearly.

And perhaps, in going through that, rather than thinking of each of them so being separate, they're each part and parcel of this quality of attentiveness, a quality of that's all kind of one big pact, one thing. It's like a jewel that has five sides, and depending on what side you're looking at, you see a different quality. So they're not these qualities are not distinct practices, but they're things that are there when we are stably attentive here. It's kind of like, if you, maybe, if you've been on a train for a long, long time, and shaking on the train, shaking on the train, and you know, have to kind of get your balance all the time. And then you come out of the train, and are no longer cooped up, and you're no longer on its moving vehicle, and you open up onto the, you know, maybe it's a train stop in some rural place where you open skies and vast fields, and you come down on the ground, and you're just, It's so good to be now on solid ground. And maybe that sense of stability and solidness and space and aliveness and attentiveness is all one thing. It's being as we were experiencing all at once isn't like it were a rot, developing each one of them by itself.

So the Buddha, before he went, after he left his teachers, he called on these five qualities that he had to support him. And sitting still and quiet, and delving deeply into his in the realms of freedom, of letting go, of being here, and seeing clearly, and knowing clearly what this lived life is. And I think of the Buddha's liberation is as giving him life. And if we get caught in

too many thoughts and preoccupations, we kind of lose a life. In the *Dhammapada*, it says that can paraphrase it wildly that to spend too much time distracted and basking in thoughts, for it can be as if we're already dead. But to really show up and be attentive is to never die something like that.

So in these last minutes of the sitting of this talk, what I'd like to do is to suggest we do a short, maybe five minutes meditation, and I will name each of these five faculties and see if you have any reference point for how each of these faculties, each of these sides of the jewel, can support you become quiet, a kind of inner silence. It doesn't have to be a hundred per cent quiet of thoughts, but a kind of silence that allows the thoughts to be there without you being obsessed. And it might not be that you have direct access today, but kind of feel in and imagine. And maybe something, some point in your life, something happened, or some contact of these things that can be a reference point for you about how these five faculties support you in becoming still and quiet. So if you're comfortable with it, you can close your eyes. And if you are sitting, you might sit up a teeny bit little bit straighter than you are, especially if you're, you know, listening casually on the couch or something. Sit up straighter because you want to find a way of some This is an embodied practice we're doing here.

Where the embodiment of these qualities is what supports the silence, if you have to think about them, then maybe we get more noise. And as you exhale. For next three exhales, allow yourself to relax, alert and relaxed, settle in, quiet down, and then to hear these words that need names for each of the faculties, and maybe not think about it so much, but feel your way. Is there some embodied quality that some place in your body where these qualities live, or some way it you associate with bodily feelings that, if you centre yourself on them, they support more silence, quiet. So the first is confidence. Is there any confidence already in you, confidence in them, in your capacity for a few minutes to just sit, to be still, to be quiet? The second is courage. Is there a courage to show up for what's here, to be present, for this experience now, your embodied experience, a courage which is calming, steadying, a courage that helps you become more embodied here and now.

And as you enter into the world of inner silence, stillness, is there a quality or form of attentiveness which is part of that silence, that is part of the stillness? That's not something you do, but something in you become attuned to quiet, still attentiveness. And then there's the quality of being centered: steadiness, stability, where attention is centred in the midst of your life, midst of your body. Is there kind of a centring that is part of the stillness, part of the silence, that enhances the silence of now? And then your ability to notice confidence, courage, attentiveness, centredness that is discernment. May be a silent recognition, silent

atonement. And may be these five qualities make a part of the whole, make part up of the whole experience of sitting here with an inner silence, stillness, and peace.

And then, to end this meditation, you can take a few long, slow, deep breaths, feel your body more fully, and when you are ready, you can open your eyes. So thank you. And if you found this interesting, the five faculties. It's one of the God of Foundation all teachings about these inner capacities we have that can support meditation. You might find it interesting from time to time to go through them systematically. And I've done it sometimes by, Oh no, each breath I do a different one first breath confidence, strength, or courage, attentiveness, centredness, and then discernment, then just kind of go through. And there's something about having got a little task that itself is centering and focusing and instance quieting. And maybe you'll come to appreciate your capacity for inner stillness, and it's a stillness you can carry with you wherever you go. And doesn't matter how noisy it is around you because you carry the stillness inside. So thank you very much for this time.

And then one announcement, and that is that, you know, I think that probably many of us have been moved by many of the serious difficulties existing in the world right now. And I thought it'd be very nice for this YouTube community, and people watching, sharing and with these teachings for so long, and joining together, and practising together. And, you know, I often end every meditation, up to day, every meditation, with a dedication of merit or expression about the value of allowing the momentum of meditation to go into living a life that benefits the world around us. So one way we can do that, you're interested in it, is I thought collectively to make donations to help the people of Haiti, a country that has been having challenges for years and years. And the donations will go to Partners in Health, a wonderful non profit that does health care in Haiti, and they do it grass roots level, and so they really go there into the towns and villages, work with grass roots medical care teams and nurses and people to make sure that it goes to the people who need it. And now it's quite an extensive network, and in Haiti, it's a great organization to support, and you can certainly go there directly to do it yourself. I think it's so a p i h dot, or is the web site, or it's all to be nice if you want to do it through M C.

And so what we're doing is a Friday, Saturday, and today. Is that any donation that goes to M C, whether it's to me, sometimes people make a teacher donation, or it goes to c the general fund that can wollwollaturn right around and donate it to Partners in Health, and all of it will go that way. And the way to make that donation, we don't have a special Haiti button, just you just have to go on to donate button, and then there'll see a win. There'll be different options on the donate page, and one of them will say, I see a slash audio Dharma, and there's

a window. You type in how much you want to donate. So that's the place to put it. And as I said, that'll go if it comes in today. It'll go to Haiti, to Partners in Health. And I just delighted by this idea that maybe our community. It's been together for some up, some of us, for so many or so long. The Pandemic I might have a well project like this. So if you'd like, that's available. And hopefully now we're on track with the, you know, our internet service here at IMC. And I apologize for those of you who, you know, found it confusing or difficult to not to connect today because the internet service provider was down. So thank you very much.