

Guided Meditation: Seeing Clearly

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Hello and welcome to our meditation. One of the primary reference points for the action, for the activity of mindfulness practice in the early Buddhist tradition, teachings of the Buddha, is the use of sight. It's used not as literal, it's using the literal eyes, the physical eyes, but kind of the inner eye. Sometimes one of the best English equivalents might be to perceive that which we can perceive, observe within us. We can observe that we're thinking. We can observe or perceive that there's feelings, sensations.

There's a lot of ways in which seeing is emphasized. Sometimes in other world religions, someone is a seer. That's their specialty, to really see deeply into life. In *vipassanā* means to see clearly, literally. The "vi" is an emphatic prefix, and *passanā* means to see. One of the powerful uses of the word seeing or the inner eye is that at some point in practice a practitioner opens the Dharma eye.

So the inner eye has been closed. Then at some point we open and we see clearly. The idea being that ordinary ways of perceiving, we don't see clearly because we see maybe through the... We don't know what to look for. We don't know what to see in the present moment. In the seeing, we have filters, layers of filters over our eyes so that we don't see what's there directly.

We see the filters or we see the projections we put on top of things more than the thing itself. The remarkable thing about seeing is ordinarily we don't interfere with what we see. The seeing doesn't interfere. The seeing doesn't try to fix or try to push away or tries to grab a hold of. Those things are happening deeper in the mind. But the seeing itself is just seeing things as they are.

We're looking for this capacity, in a sense, to settle back and allow the inner perceiving to occur without extra interpretation, meaning-making, values, associations put on top of it.

In doing so, we begin to see the changing nature of the present moment, to see the comings and goings, how that part of life, which is always changing. There's something profound that happens when we put aside all our ideas, but rest or abide, do what, abide in the Dharma eye, abide in the seeing, where there is no object or subject, there's no there or here. There's simply this simple, simple act of just observation happening. From that place where we can't distinguish between the object being seen and the subjective experience of sight. The two arise together in our direct experience.

So to assume a meditation posture and to gently close your eyes and in whatever easy way you have and your way, open your inner perception, to perceive, to see what is happening for you in a way that perceives without judgment, needs, wants and aversions, so that you're curious for a few moments, what is your capacity to perceive, to know, to observe, in the simplest possible way where everything is allowed to be there as it is in its present moment simplicity. Without a past and a future, just a thought, just a feeling of the moment, a sensation, can you experiment of opening that eye, inner eye, to see in an innocent way, see without agenda. Just for a few moments more, just to observe and be with things as they are. Then within your body, take some gentle, fuller breaths. Breathing in and exhaling. Breathing in as fully as is comfortable and nice.

On the exhaling, relaxing. Relaxing parts of your body, relaxing the whole body, letting your breathing return to normal. As you continue to breathe, on the inhale, find some place in your body that has some tension or holding. On the exhale, relax, soften, without ambition to do it well, just lightly. A light softening in the body, light softening in the mind, feeling the tensions in the mind as you breathe in, and a softening as you exhale. Then feeling and sensing the body's experience of breathing.

On the inhale, notice were there anything associated with tension or holding in your breathing? And no, it's very simply not seeing it as a problem. As you exhale, soften that part of your breathing. Also with no ambition to do it well. Or notice the tension in breathing as you exhale. Maybe there's a way of softening that area as you inhale.

As you do this, also notice if the way that you're practicing, the way you're aware, has any tension or pressure in it. If it does, feel that as you inhale. Soften it as you exhale. Then as if you're opening your inner eye, your Dharma eye, opening to a clarity of perception, to the radical simplicity of present moment experience, the part of the present moment that the mind is not thinking about in relationship to the past and the future. We're not projecting our judgments and associations. Relaxing backwards to simply sit back and observe as if everything in its own nature is very, very simple.

Like you're laying back watching the clouds drift and shapeshift in the sky. Settle back and observe the drifting, shifting sensations, experiences as they come and go in the present moment. In the most simple way to observe, there is no self-concerned, no reference back to me, myself, and mine, seeing, observing. It is this radically simple act of clarity to what is happening now, whatever it might be. There is clear seeing of the simplicity of this moment, a seeing that can also know how we make it more complicated than it has to be. With judgments, me, myself and mine, being pulled into thoughts.

Whatever complications you add to it, see that clearly too. See it as present moment phenomena, nothing to fix or change. Then as we come to the end of the sitting, with maturity and practice, practitioner has what's called in Pāli, *dassana*. In Sanskrit is *darśana*, *darśan*. Often in modern India, *darśan* means seeing, viewing the teacher. In this Buddhist tradition, *dassana* is seeing the present clearly, seeing the Dharma, seeing the arising and passing of phenomena.

Something about seeing the changing nature of experience is as invaluable in Buddhism as is seeing a teacher in other Indian religions. We are looking to be in the presence of the Dharma in our own direct experience. Opening the Dharma eye, opening the clarity of perception, and then using that clarity to gaze upon the world kindly, to gaze upon the world clearly, and letting that clarity be an uncomplicated channel for kindness, goodwill, care, and love, so we can live inspired to wish well-being to others. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. May they at least be free from all the extra baggage we carry with us in how we view them. May our seeing be free of how we project onto others. Thank you.