

# Samādhi (29) Co-ordinated Wholeness

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Five faculties, connecting, sustaining, joy, happiness, one-pointed, onward leading, relax, spaciousness, centered, onward movement, trust

**Gil Fronsdal**

Hello and welcome to this next talk on *samādhi*. We are now at approach phase of *samādhi*. We are approaching *samādhi*.

The classic way of describing this is as a gathering together. We could also say that the coordination of five different factors comes into play. Coordinating these factors creates forward momentum. There is an onward movement of opening, settling, or strengthening the state of awareness or meditation that we are in. Gently, we do not try to make anything happen, but we allow the coordination to happen. Then we gently feel where that onward leading spot is and rest with it. It is almost as if we are allowing ourselves to be pulled along.

These five coordinated faculties come into play and become a bit more pronounced. We do not have to identify each one. Tradition says these five faculties start to become coordinated and work together. The first two are applying and sustaining attention, or connecting and sustaining attention. We are not just resting quietly on some focus of attention like breathing. There is a gentle, wave-like movement of connecting and releasing. We connect, release, then connect, wander away, and come back. There is a gentle massage available.

Sometimes I have had the sense of a little voice in the back of the mind that says, "Stay here. Stay here with this. Stay with this. Stay now. Now." Sometimes I've used the word yes for this. "Yes. Yes." There is a bit of a wave, like the connecting and sustaining. I like the yes because it speaks to the next of the five coordinating faculties. The first is connecting attention. The second is sustaining that attention in a relaxed, nice way, like yes. The third faculty is a degree of joy. There is some degree to which the mind is getting lit up. The mind is saying, "Oh, yes, yes, this is good. Yes, this is nice."

It is not necessarily verbal, but it is as if there is a kind of brightness, a bit of a thrill, or pleasure that feels delightful and wonderful. This comes with the feeling that we are now on a slide. It is so great to slide along. Now we are in the field. We are nicely connected. It is almost as if this connecting and sustaining attention is like a cat purring while being petted. We feel so joyful, happy, and thrilled.

There is also a deeper, more embodied feeling that is less clearly felt. This can initially be described as contentment. I often think of it as happiness. There is less mental brightness or thrill. There can be this mental, yes, this is great, but now there is a more settled, ah-ha. This happiness is a place where it is easier to be happily calm, settled, or just here without needing anything else. We are happy to have just arrived and be present. Just being alive is enough.

It can be a feeling of contentment or coziness. There can be a feeling of sweetness that is settling, calming, and reassuring. It is a kind of happiness that brings a sense of confidence, "This is the right place to be. This is a good thing."

There is connecting attention, sustaining attention, joy, and happiness. The fifth of these coordinating factors is sometimes called one-pointedness. It can be very easy to have the idea that one-pointedness requires tensing or straining to lock onto something. Sometimes there is a feeling of clicking in and being present in a very clear way, but we are not the one who is doing it. It is the system that is doing it, so the mind can be quite relaxed.

The example I like to use for this is that we are just staying with the breath, and the breath is like a wave coming and going, rising and passing. Then someone says we should concentrate on the breath. The mind hears concentrate, and everything in the mind gets tense and focused like a point. Then the mind points and tries to

pierce this breath that is a moving, flowing thing. Sometimes that can create strain and headaches. All kinds of problems can arise trying to do it this way.

Another way of doing this is to let the mind be very soft and relaxed. We calm the mind, calm the body, and relax everything. There is a feeling of spaciousness and openness. It is like the hand is now open, not collapsed on itself.

Then you bring these two together. This is the holistic, broad, wide sense of being aware, because the mind is quite open and spacious. The body feels open and pervaded with a hum of just being alive. We may experience the hum or vibration of all the different little sensations of the body singing together. This mind is open. There is no tension in the mind, and the breathing is still moving.

We bring this together so that the breathing becomes quieter and quieter. The breathing and the most sensitive part of the mind meet and join. There is a resting, or a coming together. There is a sense of being centered on the breathing, the massage of the breathing, staying there. We are connecting and sustaining our attention. This falls away, and then we are connecting and sustaining to the most sensitive part of the mind. We are centered there, but we are not focused or preoccupied.

At the same time, there is a broad field all around it. This can sometimes feel like space, or a sweetness, a pleasure, a joy, a holistic sense of being here in the whole body. This is soft and relaxing. This begins to take prominence. Sometimes, what will happen is this connection will become stronger and stronger, and everything around it becomes softer and softer. Parts of the body may seem to disappear. The wider world disappears. We are just sitting right there breathing. This is the one-pointedness. It is the one gathering, the one settling. It is the settling, gathering, or the sensitive place. We really feel, "Oh, this is it."

When these five factors are coordinated, there can be a gentle feeling of onward movement. I have felt it is almost like a place, maybe in the breathing, where the sense of joy or pleasure is the strongest. It is almost like the Dharma is up ahead with a string. It is gently pulling us, here, here. There is some place inside that feels like, "Oh, here is where the slide is." This is where the world opens up to relax into.

It is not a place to rush toward, but a place to approach. We are approaching this feeling of being content, holistic, unified, and whole. This feeling becomes a bit stronger and stronger. Everything is here together. There is nowhere else we'd rather be. The thinking mind is quieter and quieter. To the degree to which we are thinking, the thoughts are about the meditation. It is thoughts like, "Aah, here it is. Here is the inbreath. Here is the whole feeling. Here, I'm present." It is no more sophisticated than that. It is the simplest kind of thought about the experience.

As this proceeds, there might be a feeling that something is operating here that is not you. Something is operating here that we can trust. It might be an onward movement, a deep settling, or a deeper opening. This is something that we can trust. We can let go into this place where that onward leading feeling feels like the pleasure, or the joy is going to grow. It is onward leading because it feels like this is where we want to rest and be with the center point. We want to allow ourselves to be pulled by that string. We want to allow ourselves to be carried on that slide, or to open that door. If we have a parachute on, we can allow the floor of the airplane to fall open, so we can start floating and flying in space with that parachute.

There is this kind of onward leading, or coordination of all these things. Coming into wholeness this way is not something we can engineer and plan for. We can feel the symptoms of it. We can feel the joy, the pleasure, or the goodness and sweetness of it all. We can feel the contentment of just being fully here and trust it. Trust it and allow it.

Don't be the engineer. Don't be the constructor and the maker of it. Don't measure and try to figure out if we are there yet. Trust that the fastest way from A to B is to be fully at A. When we are at A at this approach stage, the Dharma will know what to do. Our job is to trust the process, not be in a hurry, and not to try to make it happen. The biggest thing we can do is to let go into trusting the process rather than making the process, for however long it takes.

We'll have one more talk on this approach point. Thank you very much.

