

Thursday sit with instructions, week 4

Gil Fronsdal

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We understand the process of deepening in the Dharma can support us in that deepening. And as has been said, the cultivation of concentration, of *samādhi*, involves a gathering together, a unification. As the practice deepens further beyond what *samādhi* can do, there is a deep experience that can happen, that's described as a meeting, like coming together of a different type than *samādhi*. The word that's used can also mean to come into agreement with. At some point there's a gathering, a meeting with the truth. And something about meeting and coming into agreement, coming into harmony.

If we spend a lot of time thinking, or even a little bit of constant thinking, it's like all the rivers that flow into a lake are blocked, or it's as if a cup for tea is completely filled with old dishwashing water, and there's no room for the tea. Part of the purpose of quieting the mind is to open the space up in awareness, not to expand the mind outwards, but to allow a gathering, a settling in, a unification, where all things come into harmony, where we meet, where there is peace. So as you sit here this morning, be sensitive to the tension, the pressure of the thinking mind. Be aware of the sensations of agitation, tightening, associated with any thinking. Be aware of how thinking shifts the center of our being, maybe to the head, away from some deeper possibility of settling into our core, and to the degree to which it's possible to relax the tension of thinking.

Soften the thinking muscle, and soften and relax any preoccupation with doing this, so that as you relax the thinking muscle, it's like you're making space, space of awareness, quiet, open space, in your body, deep. Then relax your body. If there's any subtle ways that you're bracing yourself against life, let that bracing melt into the space around it. Let there be a relaxing in your whole body and mind that allows for everything to settle, gather, and fill the core of your being. Letting go of concerns with thoughts and ideas.

So there's room in yourself, in you, for all things to come into harmony, into agreement, settling here, may be supported by the gentle rhythm of breathing, relaxing any ways in which you pull away or separate yourself from this gathering together, where everything rolls into the center of your being. Perhaps you can let there be a self-forgetting in this settling in to meet the peace within. All things come into agreement, into a gathering, into harmony, where self-concern is a pulling away, resisting, letting go of self-concern. So you can better feel and sense the movement of gathering together in peace. There are ways we are holding ourselves from the gathering, letting all things be together in agreement, in harmony, thinking that something needs to be fixed, or thinking that something is not right, thinking that something needs to be done, being too concerned with oneself, even concerns with doing this very thing that we're doing today, always that keep us separate, keep us apart from the open space into which all things are gathering, meeting, all things can be in harmony.

Being involved with thinking can keep us apart, removed from the whole, can keep us separated from the vast space within. All things can exist in harmony. Relax any tension that pulls you away from the meeting place of all things. All things can be in harmony and peace, where whatever knots that you have can dissolve, opening the space within where there's a harmony for all things to come and go, arise and pass, or to be there peacefully. When awareness is caught in thought, when awareness is caught, preoccupied with self, caught in emotions, fears and desires, where we are held apart from the vast space of awareness that all, where all things can be in harmony, we're held apart from this deep sensitivity, where a deep trust in freedom is possible, the freedom to dwell in harmony.

The full maturation of *Satipaṭṭhāna* can give us the opportunity to live from a deep sensitivity. If we live from our thoughts, navigating, negotiating the world with our thinking only, if we live navigating the world through our emotions only, we'll never finish and we'll never be safe. But if we can trust and live in the deep sensitivity, and from there, we can learn how to be in harmony. From there, there's a deep harmony that we can't really even say that we're in harmony. We become the sensitivity, we become the harmony. Or in traditional Buddhist language, we become the *Eightfold Path*.

See if you can trust this deep area, deep place of sensitivity that's within you. Make room for it. Let things gather there and find that there there's conformity with all things, harmony with all things, where all things live together in a kind of agreement, regardless what's happening on the surface. May you live from the source of life within. Take good care today. Thank you.