

Satipatthana and Profound Samadhi - Day 1 Talk 6

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Francisco Morillo Gable

And so profound sensations and surface sensations. And now we're coming to this incredible pivot point. To me, it's an incredible pivot point that the sutta, *Satipatthāna Sutta*, is making. Because the Buddha is asking us to make these two major distinctions now, to really expand our knowledge and our vision. And that is to notice surface sensations, and know and feel them. And also know profound sensations, or deep sensations, and to know and feel them.

And in there we're going to find that there's the sublime happiness being offered to us right there, to develop and to enjoy and to tap into ourselves. So it's an extremely exciting point in this sutta. We're entering, we can enter this realm of profundity and bliss, to use the word that Alayse used, for ourselves, in ourselves. Seeing it in ourselves. Letting it be cultivated in ourselves, which we've been doing through the practice of sensations that we just ended up with.

And we will also be seeing at some point what begins to develop is this attentional faculty of observing, sensing, and knowing, and calming. As they take root and build, our depth of knowing and our depth of sensing comes forward. Then this natural capacity of observing, of seeing with the inner eye, that eye of insight in the word insight, the translation of the translation of *vipassanā*, of seeing very clearly, that happens as the mind is very calm and settled. And there's a lot of space because we're not dwelling as much on stories, fantasy, commentary. That's not in the foreground.

What's in the foreground is this other realm that's very vast. This realm of sensations. And it gets vaster now. It gets broader as we look at surface sensations and deep sensations. *Vedanā*, often translated as feeling tones, here is being translated as sensations. And that interpretive translation makes it very palpable, very useful, because we have feelings, and these feelings are always connected to our sensations.

These sensations can be known as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. A big unification is happening within us. Knowing and sensing now are being connected. And so knowledge is increasing. We're knowing what's pleasant and unpleasant.

And why this is really powerful is because if we know, we can know many things in that very simple way. Many, many, many, many things in our lives come down to this basic fact of being pleasant, being, having a root coming from something that's pleasant or unpleasant and neutral. But pleasant and unpleasant stand out enough. Stand out a lot more for us.

And when we can know something simply as unpleasant, say that I had a bad sit, or a bad, I'm a bad meditator, because in my last sit, I was really distracted. So instead of coming up, lingering on the

term, I'm a bad meditator, and feeling the affective push, kind of the aversive push around that, being pushed around by what might've just been a little unpleasant. Maybe I was caught up in thinking the entire meditation and it was unpleasant. It can be known as unpleasant.

And there's this disillusion of this entire conceptual edifice of, I am a bad meditator. And then I relate to the world as a bad meditator. And many things can be cut off with simply understanding an experience as pleasant or unpleasant. Not watching the entire development that comes after reacting, grasping, and becoming something that's unpleasant.

I don't have to be the bad meditator. I can know the unpleasant meditation as unpleasant and then have it just be something that can be sensed through. And in that sensing through of something that's unpleasant, that wasn't a comfortable meditation, there is a flowing through. There's a movement through sensations. And a judgment of sensation as pleasant and unpleasant can be known and pass through.

And that's key for observing. Observing is intimately tied to this realm of things always flowing in an inconstant matrix. They're coming. They're going. There's a coming and going, coming and going, coming and going, coming and going.

And in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* it's like this ongoing major drum beat to pay attention to the coming and going of things. The refrain, which I'll talk a little bit more about next time, can be summarized for simplicity's sake. Bhikkhu Nilayu summarizes the refrain as, keep calmly knowing change. So this is just repeated over and over and over again. Keep calmly knowing change.

And it's this particular fact around inconstancy, around impermanence, that we're going to see play out further that connects us to signlessness. Because the door of liberation, that signlessness, the signless is in some ways a refinement of impermanence. Like the end point. Like what impermanence is when it absolutely grows up, to put it in a silly way. And there's a strong relationship with the signlessness, signless and impermanence.

And here in this pivot point we first are directed to look at surface sensations and the distinction between surface sensations. And it's not only unpleasant sensations that hook us. It's also pleasant sensations. Pleasant surface sensations that affect the five senses especially, that really can hook us up. Pleasant memories, pleasant activities, anything that is really pleasant that then baits us, to use a lacious word, kind of like hooks us like a fish that got caught. And we're trapped now, attached, grasping and clinging.

So the surface, distinguishing the surface sensation is really what's stressed a lot in the insight tradition, insight practices that we do, insight retreats. Often teach *vedanā* and focus mainly on this, because it's very useful to unravel the layers and layers of reactivity that come from not really just seeing things in a simple way as this is pleasant and this is not pleasant. And as I say this, these things seem so simplistic. They don't seem as profound as they actually turn out to be in direct experience and in the immediacy of direct experience.

But what's poignant to me and poignant to our practice in *Satipaṭṭhāna* is that we're also invited into this realm of the profound sensations. The deep sensations. Those that come from within the practice, from the momentum of practice, from all of the goodness that accumulates from being in meditation, abiding in meditation, the wholesome world of meditation, the living by what's good and non-harmful. And then practicing, practice that calm, that settling, that relaxing opens up into realms of peace and stillness that are very expansive and are a very nice place to abide in, just in themselves.

And we are really allowed to abide in these sort of deep sensations because this is a deep sensitivity within us that is coming alive, can come alive. And it's almost a form of attention that is growing, that grows within us. So that within ourselves, there is this profound attention that can be called a caring attention that just emanates from deep within. That we build as we allow knowing, the knowledge and vision and sensing, to sink in deeper and deeper.

It's not you doing it. But something in you that's knowing. And that's something in you that's knowing just keeps growing, growing, growing, growing. And um the poly term for that many of you have heard it a lot, I'm sure, is *yoniso manasikāra*, is the kind of a profound attention that we cultivate in *Satipaṭṭhāna* practice. And we do that here in this turning point of the practice.

So to discover this profound way of our inner life, of our inner heart, that lies within beyond the constructing level of the thinking mind is uh the shift that's happening here. And before we do a little meditation I wondered if uh I can pause and see if there are any questions or comments or observations that something I think might clarify to support the practice here. There is a high dragon Yogi and Anita. Thank you.

Questioner

I've asked the question before, but Anita hasn't.

Francisco Morillo Gable

Anita also did.

Questioner

My question had to be with the, earlier we were talking about sensations of the body. I've been practicing not having an image of the body. There's no outline of the body, just sensations. And this has just started happening of late because normally I'd have an image of the body or body parts and different sections of the body. But now I'm practicing with no edges to the body. It's just sensations. Is that a good practice for separating from like identity and self and giving a broader, more space? That's what I'm getting out of it.

Francisco Morillo Gable

Yeah, well, there's your wisdom right there.

Questioner

It's raining down, huh? The wisdom's raining.

Francisco Morillo Gable

The space-like quality of awareness is not fixed to the physical body. It's what the physical body perceives through the entire nervous system. And so our awareness is not necessarily my view. My experience is not really here. Awareness can be wherever the perception is perceiving through an embodiment.

Being embodied like we get embodied in the postures and in the activity to allow the embodiment to happen. But what you're doing actually can, if you come back to the body, let yourself be in a body. You can be in the body more broadly and be tuning into this broad awareness. Does that work for you?

Questioner

Yes that works thank you thank you thank you

Questioner

Hey, I have two questions, Francisco. The first one was, we are not completely shutting out the, I don't know the right word, it's not concept, but we're still utilizing our mind. We're just refining the wisdom. We're going from gross concepts to a more and more like you said a clarity and a deeper knowing. So we're always engaging that. I don't want to call it intellectual capacity but it's it's

Francisco Morillo Gable

The wisdom faculty i mean correct absolutely. That's part of that you're pointing. Zeroing in on why I wanted, I invited Aleix to do some etymological explanation to show knowledge, wisdom, all the way through these words of knowing how. And it's ontological, meaning that it's a being and experience here and now kind of a thing. Not just in the head. It's actually fully experienced. It's ontological. It's of the ontology. It's of the being, here, now, place. So that it's enfleshed. And it isn't just intellective. That's another different quality. Fine quality. But here we're talking about something a little much more profound. The being of human being. Does that make sense?

Questioner

Yeah, because I don't know too much about Zen. And I don't want to like, you know, sometimes when you say no concepts, then you're throwing the baby out with the bathwater because there is some, you need that capacity. Agreed. To point and then experience,

Francisco Morillo Gable

Much like your earlier, a little bit like what we were talking about before you and I, concepts point. They help the recognition of things. It's nice to recognize knowing, for example the concept knowing is a concept that then can create a lot of opening for a for our mind body right. It's a concept knowing but then we go we're in the knowing. And that's a whole other realm right of experiential fact and knowledge.

Was that your second do we do we get your get

Questioner

Your second question no my second question is a bit more specific so if you don't have to answer it if you don't want to. Please, no, please, please. Because I did the LEAP program with you, and I absolutely love the meditation you did on silence, stillness, and space. And my question is, how do we apply that knowing, the spacious knowing in all sense doors? Like, how do you, I know it's not in the suttas, but how do you tie it to knowing?

Francisco Morillo Gable

Well it it knowing do you mean knowing space or spatial knowing

Questioner

Well you know the capital A awareness that we were taught, which is the, to me, it is the knowing simultaneously of what's happening in all the sense doors and knowing that I'm knowing with a spacious quality.

Francisco Morillo Gable

Exactly. That's precisely how I would feel, how I would, how I understand, how I perceive and how I experience space. And knowing of space gives me a spacious knowing and imbues everything with space. Space is now there as an experience from knowing it.

Questioner

And I wouldn't say it's not compatible with *Pajanati*. It is very compatible. Yes.

Francisco Morillo Gable

Absolutely. It's a form of ontological knowledge. Of experiential knowledge. That's the key, I think. Thank you. Thank you for those questions, Anita. You're helping lay groundwork for the little bit of a subtler realm that we'll explore more next time. But if we may, let's do a final meditation together.