

## Airport

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**June 06, 1985**

**Keywords:** *mettā*, joy, delight, becoming, suffering, faith, trust, confidence, right action, unfabricated

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Level of timeless interest, enthusiasm for something like our breathing or our mindfulness meditation, just moment by moment, what's happening now, what's happening now. And to begin cultivating that interest, oh, this is really interesting to do that. My breath or my moment experience is so interesting. It actually has greater value than sitting here wondering about anti-wrinkle cream, or wondering about car payments, or wondering about, you know, what video to rent for tonight, or whatever direction your mind might go seems so interesting.

In a moment, as our interest in our meditation and we feel more settled and committed, have more confidence in a going to sit here and be here in the present moment with this activity, with this focus, greater and greater interest comes, and greater enthusiasm can become one, like a feedback on. There's another. If it is a healthy cycle, the greater the interest, the greater the joy. The greater the joy, the greater the interest. And so the joy that can arise.

Sometimes meditation sometimes is called rapture, and the Buddhist texts describe five different kinds of rapture you might experience in your meditation. There's a minor joy or minor rapture. There is a momentary rapture. There is a, I'm not sure how best translated, but cascading, or cascading. I may use the best word, cascading. It feels like waves washing over you, one wave after the other.

Is this wave like this huge? It's kind of like an orgasm, you know, ten degrees more strong, or, you know, ten times stronger than an orgasm, because it's so thoroughly its waves of cascading, pounding, full bodily, a wave of just rapture or joy that just passes through the body. And then there can be a transporting joy, the fourth kind, which it feels like you're being lifted off the ground. In the ancient texts, they say it, you actually are. You actually fly different places when you are. This level of joy, I don't know, but at least feels that way.

And then there can be the joy of the last. Fifth one is all-pervading, just you feel like you feel like maybe feel like a balloon which has been blown up to its capacity, just you feel so filled with capacity, is bursting, ready to burst with delight. But whether it's that intense, or where there's just a very kind of small, subtle joy, joy is a very important element of the path.

But now, to feel joy, there has to be a sense that it's not only okay to feel it, but that it's appropriate to feel it, and that maybe it's there more often than you realize. And it's a matter of kind of looking for it, or relaxing, or opening to the possibility of it being there. Because we were so consumed with our preoccupations, our preoccupations don't allow us any space in the mind to notice the joy that might be there. And there's a lot more joy in our lives than most people will admit or allow for. It doesn't take much to experience some joy for many people.

I know maybe this is a dramatic example, but yesterday I went to the beach with my son. You know, we had a wonderful time on the beach together, and then we went and put him in the car seat, and I sat in the front seat of the car, and for some reason he was really content sitting there, and I gave him a cracker. He was eating his cracker, and he was content to be left alone for a while, and I was all concerned about taking to making sure he was happy and everything, and I was us, his movement of becoming, this movement of preoccupation and concern. And, you know, it was a cycle of my reactivity to him. He has to be happy, and I have to make him happy, and make sure he's well fed, and because if I don't, then he's going to want even more from me, and I was like a bit preoccupied in his world of taking care of him, you know, his sickly world of waiting.

And it suddenly took me a while to realize that he was basically didn't need anything from me. It probably could. I've realized it a bit earlier, but, you know, I was like, you know, in my cycles, right? A while I waited. Well, just eat anything. Then we just sit here and relax in the driver's seat and look out at the ocean. And all this joy was right there, you know. It wasn't very far away. All that I had to do was stop my preoccupation with his happiness, and was there just now at the ocean, looking at the big waves.

So enough. That was a good example for you. But so I thought talking about this today because of I had noticed that I one week, three weeks ago, talked about suffering, and the following week I talked about faith or trust or confidence. And then I remember that actually that's the beginning of the twelve steps towards freedom that the Buddha laid out. The process towards freedom that's the alternative to the process of the sickly process of becoming and suffering. So now I'll talk it about joy, delight, and joy. Then I thought I'd better explain where it comes from, why I'm doing it now.

So that's my thoughts for today. I didn't cover joy and delight very well, but you're not going to be preoccupied by that, are you. But we have five minutes if you want to ask or have comments or questions to what I said.

Yes, I wonder with loving-kindness, *mettā*, I was wondering if the difference between may I be happy, or the affirmation, and a New Age of I am happy, is anything to do with what you talk. It is connection, or why I am, so I can feel joy.

Just the fact that she asked that question. Do you ever go? She wants to know the difference between the Buddhist or loving-kindness meditation where the phrase is may I be happy, versus what she called New Age practice of affirmation, where you say, I am happy. I am happy. I'm not a woman. I strive to be right. So say something to be related.

And I then kind of sidestep question immediately by just point you, taking an opportunity to point out that since I could, I could have been very preoccupied with her answer and with my sense of becoming, oh, I better please her and have a wise answer. Or, you know, all these people are listening. As with be a teacher, you know? And in order to be a teacher, I'd better kind of have a good answer for all of you, and that's a cycle of becoming. I need to become something and create something, a good answer, and that just creates more suffering. To do that kind of way, or I could just kind of take a moment and relax, not to be preoccupied with that.

And now, that's a great question. And the fact that there's a human being who has this interest in that kind of question actually brings delight to me. I mean, well, someone who's trying to explore this issue of loving-kindness and happiness and how it comes about, and it's great. So I think I take the opportunity to feel more joy in the question than I do in how good this answer. But you're still waiting for answer very well.

So the difference between an affirmation, I am happy, and may I be happy. It might be that you are happy, and being reminded of that by an affirmation might be the really wise thing to do. I may think we there tends to be more happiness under the surface if we just turn to it. Then sometimes we realize, if we're really preoccupied sometimes, but the movement of affirmation sometimes, and the reason I distrust it, i.e., because sometimes, not always, it tends to be an overlay of a demand: this is the way things should be. And sometimes it does change our consciousness, and we can feel happier as a result, but tends to a happiness which is all too easily kind of a superficial overlay on top of the actual movements of our psychology.

And Buddhism tends to focus more on understanding what are real of psychology in a deeper

way, so you can uproot it once and for all, rather than to overlay a nice veneer over it. A loving-kindness practice, may I be happy, it gets born out of some confidence that, yes, it's possible to be happy. I may not be happy right now. It's possible to be happy. And it's a really beautiful thing to have that intention that I'd be happy.

I don't know if I'm going. It's like, kind of, may I be happy. Intention is kind of like Buddhism doesn't say this because it's not a theistic religion, but it's kind of like saying, may I be happy, God willing. You know, it's like your intention is there, and that intention is very powerful, if perhaps it plants a seed which gives fruit. But we don't know when that intention is a beautiful thing of itself. And if you properly understood, to have that intention for your happiness can bring happiness itself.

You want to be happy with the desire for the intention, when done wisely, is a happiness-producing state of mind. So sometimes if you say, may I be happy, I say, may I be happy? Sometimes my happiness is just right there, and I just feel all this happiness just in a moment. It's all till may I be happy. May I wish for that happiness to be there. And sometimes it's not there. But the fact that I am practicing and feeling or feeding the intention, may I be happy, conditions me in the future that happiness to be more likely, more likely to rise in the surface.

So the loving-kindness practice is strengthening the intention. The affirmation is kind of an overlay. And the intention, I think, if it's done, hopefully, with the loving-kindness, it's strengthening the intention, which is sincere: may I be happy. As in affirmation, may or may not be sincere. It may be, you know, born out of tremendous aversion of your state of being: I am happy no matter what, you know, or so. Is that approaching an acceptable answer?

That is my cycle becoming. Well, it is a little bit awkward to say this, but they both create cycles of becoming. Loving-kindness meditation also creates a cycle of becoming. But it's a healthier cycle. It is. You can participate in a cycle becoming in healthier and unhealthier ways.

And there are healthy ways. They still perpetuate the cycle of becoming in creation and becoming. But loving-kindness participates in the cycle, but tends to create a healthier cycle and supports other really healthy cycles with a lot of happiness and joy in it, but still cyclical. And it's not the same thing as freedom. But the loving-kindness, as it creates a healthier cycle, makes for a much better jumping-off place for freedom to happen.

Yes, Ashin: oh, maybe it ties to what I just said now, that in a cyclic, healthy world of becoming. We can create a maybe it's like the cyclic world, like a cylinder rather than a, okay, like a hoop,

and on that's, and we go round around in the cylinder. And if we end down at the bottom of the cylinder's like a can, right, then broken, it's all rusted and kind of, you know, it's kind of sharp and painful. And if you get near the top where it's been kind of above the moisture, whatever, it's really smooth and shiny, and just like you can just kind of put your ice skates on, just kind of skate around really easily, really that you now apply, and you still intentions which are wholesome, which are skillful, which are conducive towards going up higher in that cylinder, and unwholesome actions are conducive to going down to the rust in this sharp corners, orange stuff.

I mean to say differently that the choices we make of how are we going to choose to act have consequences. And if we choose to act out of hate, that tends when the circle comes around again. What goes around, comes around, they say, right? So if we act out of hate, it tends to condition further suffering and further habituation of hate, and tends to drop us in a lower level on the cylinder. If we act out of love, what goes around comes around. So if we act on love, it comes round again to further becoming. But we tend to float up to the top of the cylinder where it's really nice.

We're still in the cylinder. Freedom is getting off the cylinder. It's easier to get off the cylinder if you're not at the bottom with all the rust and all that. What's all right is really difficult. So right action is the action that tends to help us create the conditions so that it's easier for us to step off.

So, for example, if you just did how much of awful things last week, just did a lot of terrible things, and were lost, consumed in desire and ambition, or consumed with hate and ill will towards everyone else around you, just consumed in all this stuff. When you sit down to meditate, that momentum is still there. It's very hard to see, oh, I've a different other. I've a different choice. It just seems so compelling to be filled with hate or ambition.

But if you choose to act out of more love and out of more generosity, then when you sit down to meditate, that the love and generosity probably hasn't created the same force of preoccupation. And it's going to be a lot easier to see, oh, it's possible to respond to this in a non-reactive way, and there for stepping off the cycles of reactivity. That makes some sense.

It makes a I go, the goal in action in it, or the goal is other in action, in inactive of the goal is in action. The goal is, in a sense, is to know that there is a possibility to know, to experience the unfabricated, unmade aspect of reality, unmade, unfabricated mind that does not lead us to become passive, but rather leads us to actions, to activity in the world which is not tainted by anything extra, any sense of ego, of any sense of wanting to become something, and any sense of trying to create something for the mind. There is no, there is no, as some people say,

there's no traces in the action, no traces of ego.

So people who are enlightened still go around doing all kinds of stuff, you know. They go out and eat their food, and help other people, and do different things. But there's nothing extra about it, and is an unfabricated aspect to it. There is a presence that they're kind of like this, a sense of there's a presence that they're at home in, which doesn't require them to be anything for anyone, including for themselves.

But to discover that presence, it's helpful to create healthy conditions like the delight, like the delight that arises out of you feeling your own integrity creates healthy conditions. That becomes a lot easier then to step out of the cycle of our activity into that unfabricated presence. And how you choose to act once you're in that unfabricated presence, that's up to you. Buddhism doesn't tend to give a prescription of how you suppose to be when you're there. It's maybe so.

This is a teaching that I did very briefly today is considered to be a very profound part of Buddhist teaching and Buddhist practice. And if it didn't make any sense because I covered it too quickly or too simplistically, I apologize. And if it confused you, just was very valuable to grapple with it and try to understand it better. If it really bugs you, then just leave it here. So I thank you for your listening so carefully.