

2020-09-15 Mindfulness of the Body (2 of 5)

Calmness Surfaces Goodness

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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So the topic is mindfulness of the body. And as an introduction to this, there is a teaching that there are two wings or two sides of Buddhist practice meditation practice. And they're called Samatha and Vipassana, śamatha and vipaśyanā in Sanskrit. And here samatha means tranquility, being peaceful, calm. And Vipassana can mean clarity, can mean to see. The word passana comes from the word to see, v is emphatic, to see well, to see clearly.

And this combination of tranquility and clarity is the real, real kind of balanced or match ingredient of what this practice involves. And so the idea of being mindful of your body. One of the purposes of that, that pay attention to your body is to notice the tensions of the body, the holding patterns in the body and to spend some time letting that relax. And as the body relaxes more, not to the point of going to sleep, but the direction we're going is to be relaxed, with clarity, with a kind of relaxed alertness. And so that's the art of it is how to have allow a calming, peaceful movement within in the body, and to have clarity at the same time.

Now some people might feel that it's kind of to, I don't know, not really words, meditation is supposed to be just to relax the body. But it's a, it's the body and the mind are not so separate from each other. The tensions of the body are there because of the activities of the mind. And as we relax the body, the mind has a chance to relax. As we relax the mind, the body has a chance to relax. And these two work closely together. And if we really want to kind of drop deep into ourselves, then really this idea of calming, letting ourselves, become be more tranquil.

And so wherever we can feel or sense or smell the tranquility, that's the door to greater tranquility. The Buddha talks about tranquility as the food for tranquility. In other words, tranquility is the very thing that

promotes more tranquility or peace promotes more peace within us. And so to relax, and not just to relax, not just be calm, but then to really appreciate the value to, to rest in that glow, the afterglow, of the relaxing of the peace to allow us to receive it and feel it.

So there's so it's kind of a conditioning force. So even if it's very teeny bit that we feel a peacefulness or tranquility, feel that fully, receive it. And let it kind of be a guide to how to grow that in a gentle, calm way. Don't be in a hurry. Don't be greedy. Don't be pushing for it. As this body becomes more tranquil and as we develop more clarity, and way more mindful of the body and see what's happening here. The body becomes a, it brings a lot of benefits to us.

One of it is the body then protects us. And the primary thing it protects us is against ourselves in the sense that when we're really sensitive and attuned to how we react to contract and pull back, how we build up tension in the body. If we're attuned to that, and really pay attention to it, we get the early warning sign that there's the danger of going into some of these mind states and motivations that require us to be tense. We might get angry, we might get greedy, we might get get spin out with fear in a way that's not really useful for us. And so to stay grounded in the body and get the signals of how we're reacting, then we maybe don't have to relax, react that way we can relax. Also, the more we can be familiar with our body and are at peace in our body, there is a kind of stability in the body as well. And so we're less likely to be pushed over by our reactivity or reactions and our reactions to what people do, and we can stay grounded. And that's a protection.

The body is also a way the Buddha talks about how the body protect us from being unethical. I think he doesn't say this, but I think that what's the implications are, that when the body is not calm and at ease, and we're not clear and mindful of what's going on the body, we won't notice how we get more tense. And being unethical, involves tension, though some something gets kind of contracted and tight in order to want to hurt someone. And so if we take refuge in a relaxed body, a peaceful body in mind, we'll get again there early warning signs that something is off when we start feeling tension. But more importantly, we start feeling the kind of self harm, that unethical behavior does. The tensions that close, the way we close up, the way we it's kind of grading, is kind of painful, to be angry, to be greedy, to be hostile. And the more sensitive the system becomes, the more we get the clear indication, clear experience, that we're harming ourselves as well.

On the other end, the more we're connected to this body and a sensitive, good calm way, the more we're also become attuned to these good qualities within. What are the things that are kind of add more room to show themselves more that you know they almost need a receptive feeling or kind of an open, receptive, calm, non conceited, non aggressive, kind of stands to that generosity, love, kindness, friendliness, care, forgiveness. All these beautiful interpersonal kind of qualities have more chance to be more chance to recognize them, be attuned to them. And sometimes those can be scary to have. But this when we feel the fear, we start feeling tense. And if we really trust learn to trust, the tranquil, relaxed body, what we find is, this is a fantastic support for a living, what in English we would

call an ethical life. a life that is for the welfare of others, the welfare of ourselves and a life that wants to avoid causing harm. Because that's kind of the nature or the quality of this relaxed state, this clear, relaxed open state. So this movement of relaxing, calming, settling the body and relaxing and settling the mind has ethical connotations, ethical consequences, that it makes us better people, makes us more more careful and conscientious people. It's a beautiful thing to do.

And so to practice mindfulness of the body one of the aspects of this is not simply to be aware of the body, but actually to take the time to calm the body, settle the body. Bring some peace, let go relax the body. This is a teaching and instructions that go all the way back to the Buddha. The Buddha talked about settling into the body, feeling the whole body and then relaxing the bodily activities, relaxing the tensions, the active ways in which the body is tense and tight. And to such calm the body. Last last week I like the expression cool the body, let the body if it is overheated, let it become cooler. calmer, more peaceful, more settled, more at ease in this body. It's a beautiful thing. And so excuse me, it's a profound thing to, to really center one's practice in this body. And perhaps there is no deepening real deepening, into the path of harmlessness the path of liberation without being well attuned and connected to a body, a body that has learned sometimes this slowly learns how to relax deeply, how to be peaceful, how to be at ease.

So may you enjoy your body and if you want to do a little bit of reflection about something during next 24 hours, You might reflect on what I said that all the things like anger, hostility, greed, craving, being perplexed, being confused, being diluted, all involves some kind of tension, some kind of tightening up or contraction and the in and of themselves. Motivations and emotions like love and generosity and kindness and friendliness don't involve tension. They come from a place, they arise from a place where there is no tension. So why don't you reflect and see on that topic, see if that's true for you and how it might be true and the implications for it, maybe talk to some friends about this distinction and what does it imply that there are certain things that arise? tension, and some things arise without. And what does that teach you? What do you learn from that? That might be an interesting topic to reflect on.

So, the well and take good care of yourself and may these reflections help you help the best of you to come forth for the world. Thank you.