

Incomplete Transcript

Content and Process Meditation.

28: Process just refers to the natural phenomena as they are, beyond the conceptual interpretation of them. So most of the samatha meditation they are using concepts.

So the idea of a human being, the idea of a female, the idea of a male, the idea of an animal, or an angel or a devil, this is a conceptual representation of a field of energy. And so all beings are fields of energy, they are just processes, but we interpret them in the way we are conditioned to see reality.

So in the case of vipassana, then we see everything, just as a process, it is just energy, it is just forces and it is just in a constant flux, so it is always changing.

But when we develop the samatha, then on these concepts, the concentration can build up quite strongly, because we can keep an image, we can keep something that is not unstable, we can make it fixed.

So then on metta, or on the brahmavihara, then the concepts are used. So we can develop this meditation by thinking about somebody, or by thinking about classes of beings, or thinking about beings in certain directions. But these objects are also concepts. So if we are using that as a base then samatha and samadhi is building up. And then because of that then the concentration can be very strong. But you are not analysing so much what is going on. And you don't see beings as a constant flux. So you don't see that in this way.

So sometimes you can use that conceptually, and sometimes you can just see that as a process.

And also when you come to analyse, and when you come to observe with vipassana eyes, not only will you see the disintegration of concepts regarding to the forms of the body, but also in regard to the mind. So both mind and body are going to be the object of your meditation.

So in the case that we are practicing metta, or any type of object. So like anapanasati, you are using the breath. But once the concentration has been built up, then you are looking at the physical process and also you are looking at the subjective aspects of it. So you are looking at the quality of your own mind. So the mind that has developed samadhi can become the object of your awareness.

So when you are practicing metta, once you have finished it, then you are looking at how your mind is conditioning itself, is conditioning it's own perception, and that perception of the other mental factors are just a process, it's just a mental process. So you see that with your own self when you are practicing the metta, and also you are able to see that on the other beings in which you developed. So instead of seeing a concept of a person or a being, then you just see the physical and mental process.

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Also, the difference with the samatha is that you surrender to the object. So you need a lot of faith, you need a lot of trust. So if you are analysing too much at that time, then your meditation will not develop because you are investigating too much about what is happening.

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The samatha is going easily and also it's easy to develop, then it can be developed and it's very useful. But it depends on people. Some people have difficulty to practice very strong samadhi and then they can be encouraged to go with the vipassana first. Like in the gradual training, one of the pages there is showing us that in the texts you have some elaboration of the gradual training, some explanation of the structure. But at some point a choice can be made.

So some people can develop the samatha and the samatha can be developed before going to the vipassana. But some people just after developing a very balanced mind with controlling the senses and protecting the mind, and also with clear comprehension, then from there they can go straight to the vipassana because the mind is clear enough and then they really don't need to develop really deep samadhi. So it really depends on individuals.

Some teachings then they say, no no no, if you don't develop very strong samadhi then you will not be able to get insight, you will not be able to practice vipassana correctly. And then some other people say, no no no, if you practice too much samadhi then you get lost into an artificial building up of your meditation and then you don't see things as they are.

So both of these approaches are possible. So it depends on individuals really.

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So the question is about, if we are practicing samatha, if it's metta, or anapanasati, or anything like that, and then we want to develop our samadhi, so at some point, naturally, insight will creep in and then we will have very deep insight about how things are. So the practice is sometimes difficult to put in a box and say no no it should be like that.

But the practice can combine each other from time to time. So you practice samatha and then insight can come in. This is quite possible. And sometimes also the opposite is true. So you practice the vipassana, and the mind becomes so calm and so clear that naturally it can just switch into a state of meditation samadhi.

So that's why also to be able to differentiate between these stages of samadhi and the objects of samadhi can help us be more clear about, 'what happened'. What happened when I was practicing vipassana and the mind switched into a very weird state of mind, very peaceful or very clear. So what was that. So it is possible that sometimes we will do the vipassana and then the mind could switch to a samadhi attainment.

That's why as much as possible we have to be clear about the quality of our mind and what we are doing, which types of objects are supporting our meditation.

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So when I explained about guarding the senses, then the mind can be a little bit distant and then you don't choose so much what you are looking at, it is very general, and then you know now there is the sound, there is the sight and then there is. . . of course, if you are in the mood then it is changing. But the attention is changing, not necessarily the object.

So of course the attention is so fast, the process of perceiving is very fast. So you can use that just to protect your mind and to keep your mind untainted. This is a possibility.

But when it comes to the vipassana, then not only the objects are going to change as different objects, but the objects themselves are going to be changing. So you are looking at the sound and you have time to see that the sound is changing. Not just that the attention is going from one door to another door. But the objects themselves are changing.

It is like, suppose you are in a theatre, and you are looking at the actors who are coming to the stage. So you have one actor that is coming on the stage and then he is going away in the back. So before he has gone in the back and you don't see him any more, then there is another one that is coming and another one that is coming. So there can be the possibility of looking at one actor, and then before seeing his disappearance you are looking at the other one that is coming and then you are looking at the other one that is coming. But actually they will still be there on the same stage, they will not have disappeared.

Whereas the practice of vipassana is that you take the object and then you follow it from its arising moment to the time that it disappears. So that's why you have to ask, what are we doing?

Like if you just observe the process, then it is very fast. So do we see the changing aspect of phenomena in the phenomena itself, or just the observation that is changing?

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So to see with the vipassana eyes the mind has to be very sharp and then it depends on samadhi. So you have to see what is the support for that insight.

Because of course if you go for a hike then you get much more energetic and you see the natural thing as just a flow. But is it a vision, or is it perception based on deep samadhi, or is it perception just based on more energy?

Well you have to see. That's why sometimes the hike itself can be revitalising. Sometimes the fact of having more energy and then you are more strong and maybe the samadhi that you practiced before and then supported by healthy conditions of the body and the exercise maybe this helps the mind be much more together and then the insight can be genuine and the perception can be very deep because you are grounded back to the experience and the mind is more stable.

Whereas sometimes if you are just developing samadhi in the hall and then the whole day you get a little bit cloudy, not clear, so we have to see what has brought that into being. So sometimes a lot of practice can be behind that and a moment of insight can happen just like this.

Sometimes we read the texts, and people will come to the Buddha and just like that they will attain. But if we look at the background, what they did before, then we think, oh yes, of course, there were many other conditions that were supporting the insight that the person is supposed to have attained.