

2005-04-03 Imperfection

Thu, 7/16 4:28PM • 41:08

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

imperfection, perfection, zen, people, compassion, buddha, acceptance, buddhism, perfect, story, acknowledging, freedom, reached, enlightened, accept, monks, shortcomings, person, stand, book

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

There's a Zen koan that goes very approximately, like this. The fox or the bull, jumps through, the window jumps out the window. But the tail remains behind. The tail doesn't make it. It doesn't mean the tail gets cut off and left behind, but somehow, and the bull in the Zen Lord is often symbolic of enlightenment or the enlightened person. And I don't really understand this koan. So you should make that clear first, as a koan, but anyway, the enlightened person and the I see the window as being kind of jumping out there. Window jumping out into freedom out of the confined space of the house, perhaps out into freedom. And so the whole book is big, massive bull was able to jump out the window. But then everything gets out, something left, the tail gets left behind. So it's kind of a funny image of this poor, poor boy, you know, hanging by the tail out of the window. But the idea of something being left behind. And one of the reasons I like this little story is it points to the issue of perfection and our imperfection. The idea of media, the tail gets left behind is always something which kind of does not doesn't quite make it. And what do we do with that part of ourselves, which is remains imperfect or remains odd, or doesn't quite go all the way through into some kind of great freedom and as As I've looked at I've been involved in spiritual practice over many years and looked at looked at different forms of practice and different teachings and stuff like that. I see that there's kind of two general teachings around spirituality that can be distinguished. And that is the kind of teachings that focus more on our imperfections and or acknowledge them receive them or relate to them. And the other part is the kind of teaching with focus more on perfection. And it's often been said that Indian religions tend to be focused much more on the perfection side of the spiritual life. And sometimes in Indian spirituality, there's a kind of ideal is to become kind of a perfect human being someone who's perfectly enlightened, fully enlightened, reaching some level of perfection. And there's even a book published in English, unlike the perfect man and Buddhism was published a long time ago by Woman author, but the idea of perfection and it's a very strong archetype, that you have a Perfected Human Being and in Buddhism, you see it in the chronograph II have that kind of the hagiography of the Buddha, as someone who has, you know, there's 32 marks of the Buddha 32 characteristics of a Buddhist body, and is supposed to be a perfect human being, in many ways, with perfect

characteristics, so some of them are kind of odd in our eyes, like the arms are supposed to be so long that they reach down to the knees. And they have webbed fingers and various kinds of things. But the idea is in the old, the old kind of system is the Buddha was someone who is in some ways, perfected both physically and emotionally, in many different ways and spiritually. So two different kinds of device two different ways of looking at the human being one is beside of imperfection when is perfection. And I see here, especially here in the West, there tends to be a much stronger emphasis on somehow coming to terms with our imperfection. And some of you see it in the western Dharma teachers, who teach a lot of talk about acceptance, accepting who we are. You see it in many different strands of Western kind of spiritual thought. One of the places where it's quite prominent, I believe, is in recovery is in a, where it's very important to recognize our imperfections or faults or errors or mistakes. And the argument is sometimes made in a is that it's the non acceptance of those struggling against them trying to reach perfection, that is part of the symptom of the part of the problem. And that if we kind of really accept ourselves very deeply who we are faults or imperfections or errors or mistakes, we've made that that in that accept Have it we stopped trying to be God we stopped trying to be perfect or control everything. And in that acceptance we find the kind of certain kind of peace or well being, or serenity that sometimes people are trying to get through alcohol and drugs. So it's something in the in the acceptance of our faults and our imperfections is is where freedom is found a certain kind of freedom. And I've seen people including myself, who've had perfectionist ideals about the spiritual life and I've suffered because of holding those ideals trying to live up to them and measure myself according substandard trying to have it perfect meditation or perfect mind or perfect this or that perfect response to the situation. To You know, if I just knew how to be completely compassionate, you know, then the situation would be perfect, right? I know what to do and everything everyone lived happily ever after. You know, the there's the great myth. I think it's a myth, I hope it's a myth of the perfect parent. And sometimes just make the children who suffer under that myth the most. But the idea of perfection and it could be, of course, a source of a lot of suffering. If you did it. This is the way it is. There's a there's a philosophy of parenting where it said they say, being good enough is good enough. You're not supposed to be perfect, you're supposed to be good enough and good enough. So one of the questions then is how do we relate to that part of ourselves? If there is that part of us, there isn't that part of us You can go now. Part of you, which is somehow could be called imperfect or is flawed or is not always knows always. No one knows what to do in In situations how to respond how to deal with things in life completely, perfectly well. How do we do, how we how do we deal with our shortcomings? How do we relate to them? When I was ordained as a Zen priest, as ordained in 1982, and I didn't have much thought about ritual and the value of rituals, I just was going to do this ordination go through this ritual, and I thought, just the steps you go through, but the ritual actually had a big impact on me. And but one of the impacts what I noticed, before and after that ritual, was that in being ordained as a Zen Buddhist monk or priest, I felt in some way that I was a child of the Buddha, somehow, kind of default the Buddha was this parental figure and, and in some kind of archetype, archetypical way or mythical way. I was now entered into the fold of being, you know, Obviously the cycle of the Buddha Buddha, a child of the Buddha, and so there was this level of acceptance of who I was. And then the other but the other aspect that I saw was, I became much more self conscious or self aware of my faults after it was ordained. And partly it made some sense

because when you shaved your head and wear robes, you'd become a public figure. And so, your behavior is scrutinized much more, you just kind of stand out more if you do, if you say something, then people notice more you know, but if you for good and worse, and so I noticed my imperfections, my faults much more than I had, they stood out much more. However, it was more okay to have them and before and that wonderful juxtaposition of, of seeing them and not being very conscious of them not pushing away or denying them. But at the same time, having a spaciousness is openness, this acceptance of them is okayness with them being there. Was this part of the wonderful delight of what happened after the ordination so some kind of acceptance and kind of space for it to be that way. It wasn't that then I kind of just, you know, continued to be an abductors person and just ignored people. But rather, I just felt very important to work on that to kind of try to work with that and try to become kinder and not so angry in different ways that I was, but but it was more okay. It wasn't like I was I was upset or angry with myself for being the way it was. It wasn't that I was felt that this prove that I was an unworthy person or bad in some way. I was freed of a certain kind of judgmentalism way of judging myself negatively that kind of drained me by going through civil ceremony and, and so I thought that was really great. Now I hope that you don't do it through a ceremony to have that kind of benefit. I hope it's something we can all have just through a little bit of wisdom in our life. That, oh, can we be more attentive, we notice our shortcomings are false the errors we make, we confess them can be open to them. And at the same time, can we be more at peace in that process of acknowledging what they are? Can we see them and feel them and recognize them and admit them and find some pieces of doing that. And then when we started working on that, trying to, you know, improve it and change it and not act on our impulses or whatever, can we do it in a way that is not burdened by a feeling of lack of burden with you know, self anger, self reproach, but rather a sense of compassion for ourselves or delight or joy in who we are. So I've known a lot of people, including myself, who tried to do Buddhist practice, where somehow it was not acceptable to be imperfect. You know, somehow I have to get rid of that side or ignore that side or not admit that side It's taken a number of different symptoms, different kind of manifestations, that kind of situation. One of them was that like a little newborn duckling, you know, duckling, it's kind of sees whatever, and bonds to the mother, you know, if it sees a human bonds to that, you know, tries to. So when I was a brand new student, I kind of like the first sense priests that I saw. That's what I'm supposed to be like, supposed to be just like him. And, and he was, and, and that has been over time it's in center and we went away for two years. And I for two years, I this idea supposed to be just like him. And he was a little bit kind of a, you had some kind of, you know, perfectionist way of carrying himself through the world. So some people carry themselves a certain way, certain stature, certain charisma and so on. So it's kind of lended added to that kind of sense of oh god so supposed to be like, and then after two years, I went back to Zen center. And, and then I saw there were more priests or other priests there. And I looked around, they weren't like him. You know, they weren't just like him. In fact, I remember seeing Philip whale and who was a Zen priest by that time famous beat poet who was president center. And you know, Zen you supposed to do one thing at a time to eat just eat, you know if your walk used to walk? Well, he was sitting there breakfast, eating his cold cereal, drifting and reading the paper. Wait a minute, you know, I had this idea Zen just perfect. Just read, you know, just read the paper. You read the paper. You just eat your cereal, doing both and dripping. What? And luckily, I didn't judge him terribly much though. He doesn't get Zen. But

but rather what he did to me. It freed me from this idea that I was supposed to be like the first guy. That's what's the whole point. And that was incredibly liberating. And then a story I've been told for a while now, so maybe I'm allowed to say it again. It's okay to have imperfections. I can be imperfect in my talks too, right? By repeating myself this when I was also relatively new Zen students I was sitting. I went to a little sitting group once or twice a week, and we met in somewhat small little bedroom and Zen style. You sit with your eyes open meditating against the wall, because it was a small bedroom, we had our knees up against the wall. And I sat down one day to meditate. And suddenly this Roman column rose up in front of me. NASA Roman, call it kind of a column that's you know, tells you that the bank has a lot of authority and weight and seriousness, you know, really massive column. And written on this column was the lighter sitting described and painted black was it was letters z, e n. And then I don't know when the hill this nation stopped and when reality came in, but this is what my, my experience was, I then went to embrace this big column. And as I embraced, it disappeared, and I fell forward, my head hit the wall. And so being kind of slow, you know, they sometimes you've kind of, you know, get a little jolt to kind of wake up and notice. So one of the things I thought about that reflected and I noticed from that experience, was that I was chasing after zen, zen, which is great, authoritative religious tradition, the great thing, the great, perfect thing, it's out there, and I'm supposed to go there and come embrace it and get it and become it or whatever. And, and I realized that there's no Zen. There's no Buddhism out there to get and then the sense the practice of Buddhism was not to get Buddhism, but in some way was to understand myself or to wake Up here. And to as this Mr. Duggan said, to study Buddhism is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self to be liberated from himself. But the process is to come in here. And then something happens. So then I turned the attention around and stopped kind of chasing after Zen out there as if it was books and teachings and this and that, or perfect meditation experiences, but rather turn the mirror around. Okay, what is happening here? What's going on here? So the value of turning around and starting here. So I'll give you a little exercise. You don't have to do this. You can just imagine. So imagine you're set you're standing up and your tippy toes be bouncing into tippy toes, and then you're told to jump off or can you jump? Not very far, can't go up at all. And so but in order to jump what you have to do is really jump well in high, you have to bend down and crouch down. And then you could leap back and jump, Crouching Tiger, right. And so in the same way, there's something about, I understand the spiritual life, there's a very important aspect of crouching down of settling back into ourselves deeply into ourselves. And the more we can settle into ourselves into our heart, into our heart, into our body, and settle into it. Then it gives us a platform from which we can do that leap out the window like that cool. leap out, took a leap somewhere, we could do something. And so a very important part of a spiritual life as I've lived it and as I think it's for many, it's true for many people, is some way of of settling back into who we are before going out before leaping into freedom. So discovering who we are, what is here, what is in our hearts, what is in our bodies, what is in our minds, what is in there really deeply I've known people who spent years doing meditation practices that brought a lot of bliss. You can do that, you know, you can learn certain practices that bring a lot of ecstasy. And, but they never had much paying attention. And then they've come to a retreats that I've taught, where we teach them to pay attention rather than go into bliss states. And some of them are unwilling to make the shift. Because they're into this kind of perfection, maybe mode. But if some of

them who have been willing to make a shift, sometimes it's a shock. To find out what was going on in here. They had no idea all this stuff was going on. All this subconscious stuff, all this movements and feelings and they realize the degree to which the bliss experience was kind of repressing or holding back what was here. So a very important part. I think, personally, especially of the passionate practice, then is this crouching down, just settling down back, fighting up what is here, and then as we find out what's here admitting it, confessing it, acknowledging it feeling of being innocence? How do we hold it? How do we hold it? So it's not more material for self for self reproach? Can we hold in such a way that we're more spacious about it more accepting of it? So we're a child of the Buddha, for example, it's okay to be this way. Is it okay to be human? Or are we supposed to be perfect. And I would argue that it's a lot easier if you start where it's okay to be human, okay to be it to accept the fact that we have flaws, perhaps for we have shortcomings, or we have big mistakes in our lives. And we don't always know what to do, we're not always in control. We're not always, you know, happy or grumpy. You know, we can kind of acknowledge who we are and acknowledge the range of it, how it changes over the days and over the hours and over the months, that goes up and down, up and down. So some kind of deep acceptance of this. So that allows us to kind of Delete to jump more properly. It allows for a number of different things. One of the things that allows for is it'll, it's, it allows for greater access to compassion. To understand ourselves well, and understand our shortcomings is to understand, is to touch the wellsprings of compassion is to be able to understand recognize other people when they suffer, recognize other people that have shortcomings. Even if you're perfect. Most people, you know, are not are they? And in fact, the people who think that the most perfect are often the ones who see the most imperfection and others. But if we can kind of see ourselves as you know, see, have some compassionate way of holding ourselves, then I think it's a lot easier to have some compassion understanding for others. And I think the world needs a tremendous amount of compassion, compassion for ourselves, self compassion and compassion for the world around us. And if we don't have compassion for our neighbors and friends, look out because sooner or later You're gonna need their compassion. Compassion is kind of the currency of human relations, relatedness and relationships, the flow of care of kindness that moves through us. So that's one one benefit from really being willing willing to admit to you or be present for who we are in some deep way. Yet Another benefit is that as we begin opening up accepting, holding an awareness, all of who we are, that the container for or the holder or the, the awareness that holds that starts being seen as being distinct from our personality, our personal qualities, our personal characteristics that are different aspects of our personality, the ones that are beautiful, the ones that are not. If we're identified with those, if we're preoccupied with those, if we're in meshed in it, there's very little freedom there. But, and if you're rejecting it, there's also very little freedom there rejecting something is as being as as a meshed in something as holding on to it. But as we can accept something allowed to be there and be generous about its presence, be open to it. Then we begin discovering the benefits, the sweetness of the openness, the sense of kind of fresh air, it's in the open space that holds and let something be there. So if we find ourselves, for example, being angry, then to back up in a sense or open up a little bit, just hold the anger as if it you can hold a little you know, little bird or something in your hand, very gently, very softly. Just hold it there kindly, then you kind of hold it there and see it, then the space around or the kindness that holds it is one of the way one of the windows, the ball jumps through the window,

right, the windows towards becoming freer. Now the beautiful thing about this is that it's in this space of freedom, the free space of non clinging or space of open awareness, that we can find something of the qualities of perfection. The mind which is what Buddhism is pointing towards, is moving the mind moving the heart to that place where there's no clinging, nothing we identify with nothing we get in meshed in or hold on to the possibility of open awareness or the knowing which is not in meshed or entangled. with anything at all. Now, if we try to just get that or go there, directly, sometimes it's kind of like going for perfection, and has a lot of problems, just going for perfection. But if we find it by acknowledging and accepting what is here fully, and then notice that in the cracks are the space around that acceptance, the sweetness in that acceptance of that presence, that mindfulness, that there is this kind of freedom, this this openness This, this, then what we're finding is that the perfection is found through the imperfection that the perfection is found as, as with the help of the imperfection. We don't have to reject part of ourselves to find that place of perfect freedom. So both to hold be able to hold both at the same time. So the bull jumps Through the window, but a tail gets left behind. Part of us gets left behind. Part of us can we can stay who we are, we don't have to become this perfect person. We can be someone exactly who we are. One of my favorite little stories from the early Buddhist tradition is a story of an AR hot, which is fully awakened, perfected person. He's perfect. You know, he's fully perfect in terms of enlightenment. And he's out wandering around with other monks. And they come to a river that they have to cross. And, and these, you know, monks wear these robes. And so he Jacks up his skirt in the most unbecoming way, maybe even above his waist, they don't wear underwear, and she pulls them up, right? And then he prances across the river, you know, splashing all the way across. And the other monks are scandalized by this because this is this is very unbecoming of a monk monk is haphazard. chorus, the chorus, the chorus, the chorus, the chorus, deck, decorous now and get to put up together put up with you have to accept my problems with the English language. Part of my imperfection is anyway you got the points printed at a certain kind of proper behavior. And so the so the other monks go to the Buddha to complain and say, you know, so and so you know you he's supposed to be at our heart You said he's at our heart, but let us tell you what, how we how we cross that river. And the Buddha said, Oh, don't worry. He is in fact fully enlightened. However, for 500 years, for 500 lifetimes he was a monkey and, and sometimes His monkey nature comes through that monkey nature, you know, comes through so. So what we're up to 500 years. And, you know, and you know, maybe you were squirrel. So in your fully enlightened nature, you're going to be timid. Or maybe you were a silent sage and sort of 500 lifetimes and so in this lifetime, you'd be enlightened, but you can be really quiet. You know, just kind of stay by yourself and know that that's who you are quiet kind of contemplative kind of person, or maybe for 500 lifetimes or maybe because of jeans who knows why 500 lifetimes just means who knows why. You know? Maybe you're gregarious. I read this book recently. With a person who's contrasting, I think mostly children. The book was contrasting children. Children have things called the Williams Syndrome, versus children who've had Asperger's, Asperger's syndrome. And they're kind of opposites of each others. And the Williams Syndrome are kids who are a little bit, a little bit of mental retardation. But they're, they have tremendous empathy of everybody else around them, they just kind of tune in their impacts are like in Star Trek. And, and they just come up in a really friendly and everybody becomes their best friend within 10 minutes. where kids have Asperger syndrome, they

have very little empathy. And they can be very bright, they can have great logic, logical skills and great at math. And I know one who started reading when he was three, but has almost no sense of how to read other people, you know, my empathy and you know, has to do with you know, so this was a huge range of how people are, and even people in the normal range of being human being. Have a range of some people are more empathic than others, some people less, some people have more rational, linear, some people are more other ways. And, and we're all different from each other, and how to accept all the differences in different qualities that we are different ways that we are, and how not to assume that as you become a freer person that you're supposed to look, I have some, you know, fit some archetype of perfection. I'm supposed to be just like that present priest I met, you know, just like this or just like that is supposed to be just like Mother Teresa. That's it. Or I'm supposed to be just like, you know, so and so. I think that in a sense that I don't want to say it's the point. I'm not gonna say it's the point but the, the manifestation or the one of the consequences of greater freedom is we become more and more ourselves. And in a funny way, the more we kind of become selfless, the more we also become ourselves and become who we are as a character stands out more and more. Whereas Jacqueline Phillips I said all the different people these met too many great spiritual teachers and people who practice spiritual spiritual practice for 30 40 50 years, the more free they become. He says, the more eccentric they become. So, are you willing to become eccentric? Are you willing to become who you are? And some of you are one way and some another way. Some of you are completely your way is completely ordinary. You don't stand out in the crowd at all. In this crowd. Other places you will stand out. And in some of you stand out, you know,

some of you are odd.

I suspect most of you are odd. Or to say differently, I think most of us are odd. I'm odd. And sometimes you don't see how I die. Because I'm in this role was teacher, except the way I speak sometimes is odd. But, you know, we're all odd. And odd fellows club is wonderful. And I don't know why they got that name, but it's a great name.

You know, you could sign up I guess,

I don't know 30 men, county men, the odd fellows. Anyway, there's there's a down San Jose, this big property called the oddfellows a club. So there's the spirituality of imperfection, there's a spirituality perfection. And then what I tried to do today is to show how there's a way of bringing them together so that they both fit together. And there's no perfection or that imperfection, no imperfection without perfection. And that somehow holding who we are, with the openness, kindness, compassion, and care is one of the ways to begin discovering that dimension of our psyche, a dimension of life. That sense is perfect can be defined perfection. We have a few minutes if anyone would like to ask any questions or have any comments or anything. You're welcome to. Thank you don't mind doing that microphone?

Well, this question has nothing to do with what you were talking about today. But I was just hoping that at some point, we could talk about the relationship between John Paul the second and Buddhism and how he reached out to so many different peoples poor Jewish labor movement, etc. And I just was curious about whether he and Buddhists reached out to each other in any way.

There's more, there's more

that could be tied to that anytime shooter. I don't know so much.

I don't know so much about that. But this is more than one I'm gonna go. There's a photograph of the Dalai Lama visiting the pope in the Vatican. And I have a picture of Zen master studied with in Japan. He did a field trip to the Vatican, also a picture of him in the pope together. I don't know if how much he reached out, but I certainly know people sometimes going to visit him. I don't know much about it. I know some people were quite upset. He wrote a book with a TED kind of uninformed view about Buddhism. And he was quite critical of Buddhism in the book. So but you need to I don't think he knew what he was talking about. Or if he did that, I'm in trouble. But, but it's a little bit more while you're asking. It was it's very moving for you that he passed away are meaningful for you or

I've just been so intrigued list. To the news in the last week, and especially in the last 24 hours, and how he reached out in ways that I mean, not only was he Polish and, and approached life, from the unique Polish perspective and, and the concentration camps and so on, but he just seemed to have a kind of compassion for people outside of, I guess it used to be that the Pope has reached out primarily to wealthy Catholics and the ordinary Catholic people were sort of left behind. And he saw that that or he felt that that wasn't true to his religion. And so he just seemed to me to be so much more compassionate and so much more broad based in his perspective. So I just wondered whether there was any application to Buddhism

Anyway,

application to Buddhist life.

I don't really know.

Just one thing as a whole. And mother who was a recovering Catholic, had a mother who was a recovering Catholic, excuse me. The one thing I think that probably is the most significant thing was when he was there was an assassination attempt. And a couple years later, he went into that man cell and said that he was forgiven it. It almost seemed when you're talking today that came drifted through my mind, accepting someone else's when you kind of choose and, and I feel like that it seemed very, very true. I don't know about all the media hype and so on. And I'm sure there's some very a lot of that but that seemed like a really important and seminal thing that he did.

Thanks, first.

And thanks for mentioning

a.

I am a member and one of the things that has been really eye opening for me is in front of the preamble that's read at all the meetings is we are not saints. We are we see spiritual progress not perfection. And

when you

when one thinks about how many people out there suffer from

any kind of addiction and don't want to recover and go on entire life

it's the

I think what works in that program is the There isn't, is an applicability of the spirit to acknowledging imperfection and just what you're saying like in finding that, like you said, if there was perfection, we could all just go home. And I'm thinking also to I've been listening to stages of meditation by the Dalai Lama and one of the goals is to the goal.

He talks about

in the bodhisatta go if you wanted to pursue that of reaching, omniscience, for lack of a better translation, in that mission, it's like everything else has a cause. It doesn't just if it existed without a cause, then a mountain could be admission or everything could be on the ship. But I'm thinking Archer here and you cause some perfection versus imperfection, then you have something to work with. Yeah,

maybe. So, I have a question. Maybe. So

there's a there's a the two most famous stories in Southeast Asia Buddhist stories. One is a story of the Buddha's enlightenment how he left the palace and became enlightened. That we know pretty well here in the West. But the other story is a story. We don't have time for me to tell the whole story maybe another day, I can tell you the story. But it's a story of the Buddha in the lifetime before this one before the one he got enlightened and because there's always stories of his past lives. And, and that

story, he's he was a prince named this Antara and he had this flaw. one flaw, a big, big flaw. And that was he was too generous. And so he started giving away not only all this father's well then Nothing started giving away things weren't even his to give it away and so this became too much too difficult for the people and so they insist people insisted the king had to manage them for the kingdom. And so he was bad interesting with lived in, in the jungles, but he's still had this, this tendency to give you so generous giving, giving giving. And so he ends up giving away his children and his wife because we're them into the jungle and there's four there's description of this usually is full of paths and when the story is told and in because told a lot in Thailand places you know, people cry, they're quite upset that he did this happens or can really densify with the pain of giving away children and why but he just saw his generosity. So strong. And, and then at some point, so the story continues and, and one of the great Gods comes down makes everything right, and brings us, you know, rejoins the family and he goes back to his kingdom becomes the king. So it's kind of, you know, kind of whips out the story in some ways. But but the traditional interpretation of the story is that in order to become a Buddha, he has to perfect. The virtue of generosity is generosity, generosity has become perfect, in order to have the qualities to become a Buddha. And so, giving away even your children and your wife, you know, that's really proving that you've done, you know, nothing's left behind, you're giving away everything. So, my interpretation of story with all the imperfection I bring with me to interpret stories and understand Buddhism, my interpretation of story is that before you could become a Buddha, you had to make a colossal mistake and he you know, giving your children and your wife that was this colossal mistake, and is realizing that level of mistake of shortcoming that allowed him to develop the level of compassion that was necessary in order to become a Buddha. So rather than perfecting his generosity, you have to practice compassion. And he and one of the ways that he did that was by making a huge mistake and realizing his mistake. So don't make those mistakes, please.

So,

thank you very much. It's lovely to be here this morning. And I hope that the life of the pope can inspire all of us to great deeds of compassionate acceptance. Thank you