

# 2017-10-09 The Buddhas Poem of Peace

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

What is the volume good for you? It's a little loud for me. So maybe, let's see if. So let's see, is that still work? Okay.

So certainly, my thoughts are with the people up in Sonoma, Santa Rosa. People I know up there affected by the fire, and perhaps some of you know people up there. Those of you know who the Avaya carry, it's a Buddhist monastery up there that's kind of affiliated to us with. And they had to evacuate because one of the fires was coming into their Valley. And most of their buildings can be rebuilt quickly. A lot of the monks live in the forest and little huts, little, teeny little cabins. And so some of those can be rebuilt. So with them on my mind, people up north, and people in Las Vegas and people in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands, and Caribbean and all over, boy. I can't dedicate this talk. So I wanted to teach you, if you're teachable, a poem, The Buddha has a poem of peace. And the poem goes like this. Hatred, never ends with hatred, by love alone, does it and this is the ancient truth. Hatred never ends with hatred. By love alone, does it end. This is the ancient truth. So this particular poem goes back to the Buddha attributed to the Buddha. And it has appeared and reuse and at different times in the history of Buddhism. And I wanted to tell you about the poem little bit, then about some of its occurrences, time series appeared. So it's often used in times of conflict. And all too often, conflicts are hostile. And conflicts give rise to hatred, and conflicts, perpetuate hatred, it's very easy to have division between people. And there's conflict.

For these conflicts, to come to a true end, love and friendship are needed. And so how does that how do we do that? One of the ways is to really understand hatred. And then one of the principles of Buddhism is to understand the very thing that maybe you want to let go of, and then not let go of something too quickly. Not until it's understood. Because if you really understand something, then you understand why you're letting go while you're stepping away from it, understand the forces that bring it about.

So we want to kind of certainly bring hatred to an end. with hatred, others are viewed as obstacles or foes as wrong or evil. Those who hate are always blind, and not seeing the full humanity of those who are hated. Hatred perpetuates itself. To end hatred on must learn to love wisely and strongly. Those who love wisely see clearly because they know the full humanity of others, including both the good and the bad. Love heals division, as it used others, as fellow companions in our human journey. Many conflicts dissolve in the warm of love. Those that don't, are transformed into problems to be resolved, not battles to be won. It seems that the first time the Buddha spoke or directly or the Buddha spoke when the Buddha said this poem, his community of monks were in conflict, and apparently was quite hostile the conflict and they were split into two groups. And there was a serious division in a way it's

called, and in Buddhism and Buddhist monastic life The splitting of the monastic community is considered to be one of the great transgressions that a monastic can do. And they were fighting over someone who perhaps had violated a minor monastic rule, having to do with the proper way, they are the rules around how you use a toilet. And it wasn't clear what actually happened, I guess. And there was these two different camps and it got pretty bad. So the Buddha intervened. And one of the things he said was he recited this poem. Hatred never ends with hatred, by love alone, does it end, this is the ancient truth. And perhaps, to put what they were fighting about. And from that perspective, he then added another verse, and diversity added goes, many do not realize that we here must die. For those who realize this, corals. And so I think at least that does sometimes in the perspective of Not always. Sometimes quarrels represents something very deep, that has to be worked out. I once went to visit a man who was dying. And I thought, in fact, I'd come too late, the curtains were pulled, and no one answered the door. And I said, No, as I stood there for a while. And then last time, I saw him, he was in a hospital bed in his living room, and kind of in a semi coma, I thought that come too late. So I stood there by the front door, and suddenly, the door swung open. He was standing there. Get on, I'm so happy to see you. It's like for me, it was like, I thought it was a ghost. But that's like, I certainly was happy to see him. And so he came in. And what happened was that given them too much medication of something, that's why he was in a coma, he was still dying, but he was now on his feet. And he had come in, and I sat down in the living room. And within two minutes of being there, he said, we, you know, you need to help us with marital counseling. Because we're going to conflict with my wife. And I kind of thought what you're about to die. And, you know, but I think sometimes important work has to be done. And so I talked with them and supported them through that. But then these monastics hearing the Buddha teach in their blindness, wouldn't listen to him. Not only Didn't they listen with him, but they actually told them to go away, to let them work it out themselves. And these monks, they only stopped their conflict, when the lady who provide food for the monastics are so appalled by what they saw, that they stopped giving food to the monastics so it was like, you know, many here did not realize were, we here must die. If you don't get food for a while, maybe that becomes clear.

And so then they stopped and they reconciled and they repented, and they apologized to the Buddha. And so, that was the first time that this poem was spoken. The second time it appears in Buddhist history is as a legend, and that we don't know if this happened. But we do know there was a king in ancient India called King Ashoka. And King Ashoka was probably the first great emperor of India. And he ruled much of what we know of today is India. And he inherited most of it from his father. So he was also kind of an emperor. And but he expanded it and expand this particularly one very famous battle. It was famous because it was very gruesome, and a number of historical accounts. They talk about 100,000 soldiers lay dead on the battlefield. And so King Ashoka went out to end this battle, he went out and walked through the battlefield. And in this battle was battlefield what he saw there was enough to turn him off violence. And he became known as a much more proponent of non violence and good works, and he kind of changed his whole tune of how he was emperor. But one legend has said that he was walking across the battlefield, viewing the carnage of all these dead and dying there. And across the battlefield, came a Buddhist monk walking peacefully, steadily, peacefully, calmly just walking. And the contrast between the carnage and this peaceful monk caught his attention. And he went and asked the monk something, but I'm not sure what he asked, but we know what teaching makes you so calm or what teachings Do you have or something and the monk recited. Hatred never ends with hatred, by love alone does it and this is the ancient truth. And according to this legend, hearing, seeing the monk and hearing this teaching, was the catalyst for this great king to renounce violence and war.

In Jack Kornfield, who's a well known Vipassana teacher, here in America for the last 45 years or so he went to, to the border of Thailand and Cambodia at about 40 years ago in 1976 or so 77. When there, a lot of Cambodians had left Cambodia because of the Khmer Rouge. And there was a massive genocide

going on in Cambodia. And they were in refugee camps right on the border. And Jack Kornfield went there at a time when one of the great one of the great Cambodian monks kind of the mogh, the Mahatma Gandhi of Cambodia, in some ways, went to this refugee camp, huge refugee camp, and started to build a bamboo temple. Because the Cambodians were Buddhists, and they had left after they've been left their Buddhist country, and they were lost in refugee camps. And apparently, in the refugee camps, there were the Khmer Rouge still had some even though outside of Cambodia was still somehow infiltrated, and he was threatened with that, but he built this temple. So they built this bamboo temple or platform or something. And 20,000 refugees came and sat all the way around. And Maha Ghosananda began to give him teachings, the teachings he gave, was he recited over and over again, in the ancient Buddhist language of Pali, and also in Cambodian, hatred never ends with hatred, by love alone, does it end. This is the ancient truth. So this is a powerful setting to give that kind of teaching over just chanting it over and over again. And Jack Kornfield, who was there said that people cried. And imagine it was kind of maybe important to let their tears flow and this kind of released it to people who had been through, you know, survived genocide in modern times. And right up to this particular verse, the pomp of peace, had an important role in San Francisco in 1951. in what's called the San Francisco peace treaty, after World War Two, Japan was a conquered nation and an occupied nation. They had surrendered. And the question was what's supposed to be become of Japan, and there were different ideas of what should become of Japan. And so 48 countries gathered in San Francisco, in order to discuss this what to do with this conquered country. And some people felt that it was very important never to let Japan be a sovereign nation again, we couldn't be trusted, they would raise a military that go to war again. Some people wanted that, given what chip a Japanese had done during World War Two, that really they had to stay an occupied country to kind of break their will to ever kind of fight again, through all kinds of ideas. Also, there was a part of the function of this conference in San Francisco at the Opera House was to discuss what kind of compensation the Japanese should do for all the harm and damage they done in their in the war. So there was there was disagreement of what to do, and there's going back and forth and, and there were there was one treaty that was being put forward that people were not agreeing to. And in this disagreement, the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, of then Cylon of Sri Lanka stood up and gave a speech. And you can find this speech on the web. And his name was Jayewardene. I apologize for anyone to Sri Lankan here if I mispronounce it, probably mispronounce it. Jayewardene. Apparently he got up and gave a speech. And he said that his country was entitled to ask for compensation for damage inflicted by the Japanese. However, he then said, and I'll quote him, we do not intend to do so. For we believe in the words of the great teacher, the Buddha, whose message has a noble the lives of countless millions in Asia, that hatred never ends with hatred, by love alone does it end. And then he ended his speech with a statement. We extend to Japan the hand of friendship and trust that her people and ours may March together to enjoy the full dignity of human life in peace and prosperity.

When he finished speaking, his speech was received with thunderous applause. And then everyone agreed to sign the treaty that gave that allowed Japan to be a sovereign nation again. And to commemorate this event, the Japanese in Tokyo have a little monument with a plaque on it. And on that plaque remembering this event, and on that plaque, they have written, hatred never ends with hatred, by love alone, does it end. This is the ancient truth. And then the story little kind of a little, maybe footnote to that story, that some of you know Nikki Mirghafori, who teaches here sometimes she's now at the vipassana teacher in the Bay Area. Her first contact with Buddhism, was seeing that plaque she was in Tokyo. So if this this hatred never ends with hatred, by love alone does it in this is the ancient truth. So it keeps coming back around and around. And it's an ancient truth. I like to say I mean, ancient truth, maybe more like a universal truth. You know, it's not necessarily a Buddhist truth. It's something that many people one way or other have said as well. One example is Martin Luther King Jr. who said, hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate. Violence multiplies violence,

and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction. In addressing the civil rights and racist issues of his time, King also said we must meet the force of hate with the power of love. Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to witness friendship and understanding. No matter what side of a conflict when is on without love, friendship and understanding, a division persists. That is the seedbed for further conflict and hostility. With love, not only can hate end, but the seedbed for hate disappears. And it certainly sad to think of the work of Martin Luther King and civil rights movement did so much to break down some of the you know, some of the institutional prejudice over that time, but it didn't really create the love and friendship that's enduring to let us live together well. These three, love friendship and understanding are not always easy to have. They require intention and persistence. They also take wisdom and discernment. The greater the conflict, the greater is the need for careful consideration of how to act and or what to say. Perhaps the single most important or useful thing we can do to cultivate a greater love and friendship is to be mindful. Mindfulness allows us to see deeply into ourselves and us into other humans. It is the vehicle in which greater understanding and empathy can show us clearly how much better off we are with love than with hatred. And that's a kind of very clear message we get when you're, you know, fully mindful of yourself that you do We do kind of violence to ourselves when we live with hatred. We have a number of stories. In recent decades, I've come from people who went through something really bad. And the first time I heard this teaching was from a man who was held for seven years, Englishman, he was a journalist, and held up I in captivity in cruel ways, in Lebanon during the Lebanese war. And then he was finally released. And he was asked if he had resentment towards his captors. And he said, No, because they're not still be captured. So that kind of sentiment, you know, that day, to release oneself of the hatred and resentment.

So I have a tremendous faith in the power of mindfulness. I believe that the power of mindfulness has a lot to do with this ancient truth or universal truth that lives in our hearts. And if we pay attention carefully to what's going on here, and we're not externalized, in our divisions, externalized in our hatred, but really see here, there's a way in which going inward, turns us inside out. And as we get turned inside out, we become aware, with through our hearts become aware through our care, our empathy, it's kind of like this, inside out the movement of mindfulness, it begins to dissolve the divisions, the hatred, the tightness, the crusts, the barriers, the, the, the contractions that we have, that keep us from really seeing and feeling and knowing, and other as a full human being. And so we sit quietly, not just for our own sake, but we sit quietly to really begin healing, some of the divisions that exist in our in our world, divisions that can't really persist. If we're settled and peaceful and at ease, and have the kind of sensitivity that comes with greater mindfulness. And I've at least what I found, is that this kind of being turned inside out by mindfulness, one of the great gifts of it, for me was that it turned itself into love, into loving kindness and compassion, and my capacity to feel compassion, to feel empathy and love, that I've kind of that really guide me in my life, I directly attribute to this very unusual thing, of just sitting quietly, and not moving. To really is a way of being completely honest with oneself, it's a way of being completely, completely meet yourself, confront yourself, find out what's going on here in a deep way. And, and, you know, and so I did this, and did this and did this and kind of got turned inside out inside out over and over again. And slowly in that process. I discovered love, in a way, I'd never known it before compassion, care, empathy. And I would say that it has a quiet quality to it, because it comes from this quiet place. And so it's not, you know, fiery love. It's not the Beatle love. It's not, you know, it's not love that wants something. But it's just kind of love of a quiet, quiet place from inside a subtle place, that kind of feels fulfilled in itself feels complete in itself. It doesn't need anything. Because it just is it's just, it's just the radiance or the flow or the sensitivity of what's here. But it takes a lot of work. It's a really good work to do, to somehow be able to integrate honest work. It's very noble work. It's very significant work for our world, to be able to somehow come to terms to work through our fears, to work through our hatreds, to work through our lusts to work through our conceits that kind of keep us

separate. And then and as we get turned inside out, that sense of being separate, begins to shift, and we start feeling more and more connected through our empathy through our sensitivity. So did you learn the poem? I repeated it often enough? Do you think we can recite it together? Yeah, should I do it once by myself and then you guys can do the second time together? Yeah, should I do that? Okay, I'll do it once. Hatred never ends. with hatred, by love alone, does it end? This is the ancient truth. Okay, should we do it? hatred, never ends with hatred with love alone does that. And this is the ancient truth. Great. So I hope you never need it, this phone.

But now you have it handy. And maybe you'll have occasion to speak it. Maybe you'll be walking across a battlefield, maybe you'll be at a peace conference. Maybe you'll be with your in laws. And it's good to remember. So that's what I had any comments or questions, or anybody have other stories around this particular verse, that poem that you've heard? Because it gets cited often. I remember that, after 911, it was offered by Buddhists often recited at different times.

Yeah, if you could use the mic, I think there's a mic somewhere in the over there. Here towards the stage, they have it.

Hello, I'm curious. How you know, to stand your ground in a situation versus when to concede, and is there such thing? I presume there? is such a thing as engaging in conflict on behalf of principles or even love? Yes, I'm curious about that. Yeah.

You know, I knew someone I know someone who was involved in conflict resolution work, she was a, she would get involved in mediator and stuff. And she said that when she heard there was conflict made her happy. And but the reason for that is she saw conflict as an opportunity. And busy mediators should go in, and she was trying to find the opportunity to really do some deep work and conciliation and work with it. I and, and then she started getting involved a little bit to help support some Buddhist organizations, Buddhist groups, with their issues around conflict, because there's a history of a number of Buddhist groups of being having a culture of being conflict avoidant. It's kind of unfortunate, but that's the point of that kind of a shadow sides of some Buddhist groups. And so she would try to teach them, you know, they actually should shouldn't just avoid conflict, there's a creative and useful way to engage in it. And so if we take the way we take the hostility and the out of the word conflict, but rather just say people have a disagreement at different points of view, then and have a sense that conflict can be is is an opportunity as a full of possibility, then, maybe we want to stay in it. But it takes a you know, it takes it's not so easy. And hopefully people are polite, and to each other and kind to each other, supporting each other and not hostile. But sometimes you can ask for that. You can say, you know, we're in conflict. Like, I realize we have a different point of view, what's going on here? And I'm I'd like to engage in a deeper conversation with you really find out what's going on, see if we can find common ground. See, but you think we can do this without hostility? And if they say no, then I don't know by conceding but, you know, one option is to walk away. You know, I don't know if that you know, what your what particularly I think you're talking about, you know, what's, what the options are? Or to say, Well, then, then I can't I can't concede, you know, we can't have a conversation. You remain hostile. I can't concede and we can't go forward where we're going to do. The and I think it takes a lot of wisdom to know how to be in conflict, well, effectively, and some people do conflict training, to learn how to do that and how to engage in a way that you know, is productive. One of the things one of my favorite things about the conflict with someone is, sometimes I'm you know, we're kind of some kind of conflict, different point of view about something. And then sometimes people will concede to me or we can, okay, you know, whatever. And I said, No, don't do that. It's important what we're doing, let's hang in there. Let's keep keep keep exploring, as I know, it's a little difficult and, but let's keep doing it. Because there might be a third option, that if we hang in there and kind of kind of keep going back and forth,



something new will get born. And I've seen that happen many, many times for me that Oh, and then there's a third option that was worked for both of us, that not either one of us had realized until we hung in there and stayed with it. So and then the other thing about conflict, that I found really helpful is to really try to understand their position and the place of the other person in the conflict. And not only to understand, but help them know that you understand them. Because if they understand that you understand them, they don't have to try so hard, and they kind of Oh, and a lot of what people some people want just to be understood, or to be respected. I once mediated for some people had a serious conflict. And the person that one person that was in position of power, and the people who didn't have the power came to me for help. And what was happening is the person in power didn't really know how to was kind of basically abusing the power. And you know, saying, you know, you're a little bit, you're off and you have it wrong. And you know, and I don't know what exactly, but you know, it didn't go well for them, they felt not understood, they didn't feel it. They came to me, and I didn't quite know what to do. But I listened to them. And I let them know how well I understood them, and how well I empathize with their concern. And 90% of their charge around the issue decreased just because someone listened to them and hurt them. And so we can do that to the people we have conflict with too. And sometimes we don't people don't want to do it, because we want our way.

But I think that some I also have this belief that or hope that if we can offer understanding to someone else, then there's hope that they might be interested in understanding us. And that also it makes go forward. So I just going on and on, but it's just adequate as an answer, or you have more about it, you want to ask. Okay.

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, I didn't think it was an adequate answer. Because conflict and hatred are two different things. Yes. And I'm curious if there's any other time or space, or situation where hatred is accepted or okayed? Or is there any place for hatred or hate any place for hatred? I can't imagine there's any place for it.

So, so the experience is always that there's always, always a better way than hate, right?

But then a temporary experience of hating, it's at an extreme resistance to what is or a situation or a conflict or someone rises to, I hate this situation, or I hate this person, that maybe temporary exists, has visit only exists so we can get off of it. I mean, that's always the sometimes we get caught in it.

I'm not sure I understand that. But in terms of, you know, you know, I can't imagine that hatred ever has a use. However, it does happen. And so what's one of the one of the benefits of mindfulness is that mindfulness itself does not to hate hatred. But it sits and sits with it and looks at it deeply. And hatred, has, has roots within us. And so resistance frustration might be one frustrated desire. Some of it has to do with conceits of identity and who I am and home building myself up with who I'm through, I feel threatened by many things. And so the advantage of turning towards hatred and really getting to know it and exploring it down to the roots, is that we, I have a belief that it comes down. As we get into the roots of it, we come down to some places that are pretty, pretty important and valuable. And in that valuable place, we find some a whole other thing. I think we find love in the end And it kind of gets transformed. So rather than seeing hatred as an enemy as bad, as long as not acted on it, so it's a very, it's a very You see, it is a very important door for getting to know ourselves. So in that same sense, there's a place for hatred.

But to live with hatred, and to act on it, to speak from it, I can't imagine that there's a place that has any use, can you know, other than what you describe, I'm just wondering, it's whatever it is a virtue or some experience or, you know, exists only so we know the opposite. It's just because it's the opposite of love.

And I give you my pop psychology theory. I believe that things like hatred, belong more to the surface mind, the mind that reacts to things, and that love belongs to real love, belongs to the depth, deep mind or the deep part. And so if we live kind of in the world of agitation, a lot of thoughts and ideas and, and conceit, and you know, the world of agitated world, of the mind, the surface mind, it's all too easy to get frustrated, all too easy to have hate and fear and many things. But if we can kind of, that's if we can settle below that surface mind, or quiet, that surface mind, then there's a deeper Wellspring inside that comes, which is a source of love. So I don't think it's, it's, you know, one teachers is the other or that they're balanced duality somehow, and they come together, I think they actually come from very different places, in their mind, once from an agitated mind, and once from a calm mind. Thank you.

Yes, please. pass the mic over to the chairs.

I've been saddened today by the fires in Napa Sonoma. And I was just wondering if you could shed some light on why that happened. All the people that lost their homes and died in that fire? Yeah. And I keep asking Buddha. Where did that come from? Why did that happen? Well, I appreciate the question a lot. And I wish I could offer you appropriate answer to the question as you ask it. But what I'm able to do sitting here is to let you know something more personal. And that is that I tend not to ask, or I didn't ask why I was wondering if it was an arson. When I read that a lot of the fire started after 10 o'clock. Sunday night, that seemed kind of strange time for fire to start. So is that kind of why but in but I don't ask that kind of why question so much. But rather, I let my heart be broken. And then what can I do? And more interested in while I can now given that it's happening? How can we be supportive? How can we be helpful? How can we make a difference? That's much more interesting. For me. Didn't really answer your question if you want to ask again or differently. Okay, thank you. Thank you. So whether we're in conflict, or we have occasion to support our neighbors are others others people, refugees, from fires, from war, whatever. I think one of the great ingredients is love. And the warmth, the softness, the tenderness, the appreciation, the respect, the care that comes with love, and I hope that it's something that we can tap into and have tremendous confidence in. The more confidence you can have in it, the easier it is to go through the world. May we all love Thank you