

2018-02-12 The Dharma Is Onward Leading

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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsda

The Buddha would speak to a crowd of 2500 people, they said nothing about having a speaker system.

So, there is an ancient description or definition of the Dharma. Dharma is sometimes taken to be the teachings of the Buddha. But the word Dharma also implies something about the basic truths of reality that we connect to, through this practice, lives in us, enlightens us. And it's a very powerful word, this word Dharma in Buddhism. There's a kind of description definition or set of characteristics that's used in the liturgy. So like monastic monks and nuns will chant every post almost every day, they'll chant as part of their regular life. And, and they'll chant this particular particular line that describes the Dharma. And I'm quite fond of it. It's kind of points to some wonderful things. And it goes like this. The Dharma that's proclaimed by the Buddha is visible here and now. Immediate, inviting to be seen, by oneself. Onward meeting to be personally personally realized. By the wise to these five characteristics of it, it is visible here now. It's immediate. It's inviting to be seen for oneself. It's onward leading. And it's to be realized by the wise. And I think the little bit of, you know, a little bit of a public relations, advertisement or something, if you understand that, to be realized by the wise is supposed to be kind of you. You know, you know, you know, if you're think you're supposed to be walking, if you'd like to be wise, this is what it takes to be realized, for oneself. So the idea is for oneself is not something supposed to read in a book. It's not supposed to something you're supposed to learn as some external knowledge, but something that we understand for ourselves and this idea, that's directly visible, they can be seen here and now. So it's not something again, something that you have to read in a book or something you have to take on faith or believe. But there's something in this Dharma that you can really see for yourself. It's like immediate, and it's immediate. It doesn't, apparently means it doesn't necessarily take a lot of time. Or it doesn't involve time. There's something there's something to be realized in the immediacy of this moment here. So it's not so much at the way we get to the Dharma, the full Dharma is immediate, it takes a while. But whatever it is, it could be experienced immediately here. It's understood it can be seen right is available. It's not something that is outside of this moment here. And then, at this wonderful expression to be it's an inviting to be seen for oneself. There's a beautiful teaching from Chinese Buddhism. A Chinese received tremendous amount of Indian Buddhist texts over many centuries. Huge, huge, tremendous corpus of Indian work. And they received that much faster than it was composed. So they got this huge amount to digest and try to understand. And there were some wonderful Chinese Buddhist monks who scholar monks who did a tremendous amount of study and delved into it. And, and one of them somewhere in this seventh century, wrote this big book, you know, that kind of explains it all based on all the studies. In that book. He has one line where he says, it can all be summarized like this. That liberation beckons us within everything. Collaboration invites us Within everything, what a summary. So everything means like anything you encounter, say, hey, you become free, wake up. So it's a nice idea of inviting to be seen come here and take a good look. What is it that we can see that's liberating. And then onward leading.

There's something about the contact with the Dharma contact with the practice. Then once you kind of get a sense of what practice is what mindfulness is when to beginning to wake up is it kind of like kind of like it opens you know, turns on the conveyor belt, and it'll carry you along. It's onward leading it kind of points onward. It shows us the way it's like creates gives us the, the compass in which we can find our way forward into a fuller fuller encounter of the Dharma. So I wanted to talk about this, but they I want this idea of onward leading, onward leading in what way, the Buddha talked about what he said that he taught a gradual path of practice. And, and that I see this gradual path that he taught what was in fact, a journey into oneself, deep inside, in a sense, and then when you go deep inside, at some point, we get turned inside out. And we find out that having gone in, we're out. We're in the world in a whole different way. So rather than thinking that you're going to disappear from the world, it's kind of like you turn yourself inside out. And this an inside out, means that all the sensitivity all the way that we can be sensitive perhaps or, or, or, or for the world is turned on. It's kind of like all the art has been turned off and turned inside out and our sense organs are now operating fully. And so the way that Buddha taught this gradual path of practice, it taught it in many different ways. And, but, but one of the highlights is that he did teach a path, something that develops, and it develops kind of in the same way, I think that human beings mature developmentally from childhood into adulthood. And then once you're an adult, you turn 21, you don't stop maturing, but there's a continual process of developing mature maturation that goes on. And so this gradual kind of deepening into oneself maturing. And one of the ways that this path is described is one starts with getting one's conduct in place, and so that kind of the coarsest activity that human beings do, or the grossest is processed up in their terrible sense of the term. But you know, the biggest things that we do is we, we walk around and we use our bodies. We speak to each other, we behave physically, and that's visible by everyone, every, you know, pretty much. And so the first task is to get this into harmony with being compassionate or being not causing harm. And if we can live physically in the world where we behave without causing harm, we can speak without causing harm. That is a doorway to begin looking more deeply into oneself. Because we're not distracted. We're not preoccupied. We're not externally focused so much. And so that gives you settles people. down. And then you take a step in closer in. And what's closer in is how we relate to the world. So through our eyes, our ears, our nose, our tongue, our body, through our senses. So that's the interface between you and the world is your senses. And so you want to start being curious and interested about the interface. How do you relate to the world when you see both and board on the freeway on highway 101 here, and it's for the latest electronic gadget. And you see it the next thing you don't know how it happens, but next thing you know you're at Best Buy.

Then, you know, you've been hooked. And if you didn't know how you got to Best Buy and didn't even know how this all happened. It means that you are really hooked, you're pulled into this world, this world of the senses for Un you saw something and you didn't you weren't tracking waving what was going on for yourself and you got pulled into those world senses and off you went. And this happens often in our lives we see something we hear something someone says something, our ears hear it. And then we get maybe alarmed or upset or angry or something happens within us. And we get hooked by and caught by it. Before we know it we saying things we wish we didn't, hadn't said. So part of that once we get our behavior in place that would have said, now begin paying attention to your senses. And, and notice how you're interacting with the world. Can you just be present through all your senses open without it? getting hooked into things? Just be aware of sounds or sounds? Be aware of sights, sights, and but don't lose your inner composure, your inner calm, your inner freedom, don't get hooked in don't get. And so one of the language that Buddha uses a little different translation than usual. The practice is to safeguard oneself at the sense doors, protect yourself a little bit there, partly by being more awake, more present in the moment, so that you're there to notice when you see something, notice when you hear something, so that you can kind of just let it be leave it alone, don't pick it up,

don't get hooked in, don't get you know, end up at Best Buy. The and then it taught that the practice of contentment. So, it's a beautiful practice to be content in your content in the right way. But the classic model of contentment is the Buddha in Buddhism is the Buddhist monastic whose content with that The clothes, the robes that they have the food that they're given the bowl they have for eating their food and the shelter, they happen to be having that moment. And they don't have possess almost anything else. Very few possessions. They're not supposed to keep any food overnight. And there's that is the Indian Buddhist monasticism is that it's not supposed to be asceticism, and it's not supposed to be indulging in the senses or indulging in luxury. But it's supposed to be the middle away, the middle way between asceticism, and indulging in the senses, they say, and that middle away, is to have just enough for us to be healthy and well, but not anymore. And then to be content with that, to have a sense of contentment. And there's a nun Buddhist nun who lives in mountain use. You start here a few times sent to sukha and are now means contentment. And she probably is for herself. He's also a little bit of an environmental activist. So she has some kind of healthy discontent too. And, but to have at least you know, some kind of ability to be content with your life. And exactly where the boundaries are between discontent and content is something to be negotiate and figure it out. In Buddhism, we're not supposed to be only content. contentment, you know, when it goes to be discontented with our suffering, because if you're, you're content with your suffering, you don't do anything about it. So how do you what do you want? So the idea of being content with you know what you have, maybe you're not always looking for more and better. You're always trying to improve when no improvement is really needed. For Your basic well being.

So these movements of caring for our ethical conduct, being learning, waking up and being present for our senses. So we're not caught in the world, we're present for the world not caught in it, to have a modicum of contentment, then as a foundation for doing meditation practice, and then so that's not coming in more deeply. So. So the physical activities is how we are in the world interact with the world, through the senses and other way we interact with the world. And contentment is another way in which we interact with the world by being content with what we have. And this having these these things kind of settled enough. Then we sit down to meditate, we're less inclined to be outwardly focused. Thinking about sitting in meditation here at IMC thinking hum how far away is Best Buy it And, and you know, that's what you spend your 45 minutes thinking about, because you saw the bulletin board and it's, you know, really exciting. But you know, you're content with what you have, you're contained, not pulled into the world of electronics. And so you sit down and you were more able to sit here and be present, in the sense turn inward, to become aware of what's going on inside. And then to begin noticing the swirls and the agitation and the movements of the mind in a much more acute way than we normally can in everyday life. And start noticing what the mind is chasing after the mind or thoughts are often chasing after different concerns and interests. And the two that to kind of movements of concern that are quite popular is desire for kinds, and an ill will hostility and anger and to start realizing how the mind is up. It's so much for and against things. And then learn to set all that learn not to be caught in that they built the bulletin boards in the mind. And then also not be caught in resistance then and to what's going on, not being caught in restlessness to what's going on. And not being caught in whatever in the world of doubt and uncertainty, which can be quite a quite a strong pool, the big bulletin board of billboard of doubt. And so we start starting to kind of track and notice what's going on in our minds so that we're not, again, hooked in so strongly. And the advantage of being to settle these things is that the mind gets to be quieter and quieter and more peaceful. And this movement towards a peaceful mind that's not caught in Things is where we start seeing the Dharma that's visible here now. And that is the way the Buddha talked about this and how he defined visible here and now is to see that a mind that was caught up and stuff, caught up in anger, caught up in desire, caught up in envy, conceit, caught up in a equals through a whole bunch of things, jealousy, all kinds of emotions. See how the mind was caught in those things. And see, when the mind is no longer caught. That simple movement. Wow. I was so

preoccupied about going shopping. I sat here for 30 minutes at IMC meditating. 30 years I was 30 years 30 minutes. I was caught up in something. But then so finally I settled in relaxed And then for the last 15 minutes, all those preoccupations seems to drain away. And I was no longer thinking about Best Buy, that was good. I was no longer caught up in my anger and animosity I had or the jealousy or the, or the anxiety or the greed or that is, you know, whatever it whatever we whatever we're caught by. And then to have a palpable feeling of visceral feeling, of release of relief, a piece of openness, of clarity, some kind of feeling of goodness, some kind of feeling of freedom that we're no longer caught and how good it is. To be able to see that difference. In whatever degree we can see it is considered a way of seeing the Dharma. The Dharma makes itself visible here and now.

So this is not something you'll learn from a book unless the book is your own heart, you study yourself. And you start seeing how these works, how your mind is operating. And learning to see that the mind has an ability to be caught up preoccupied, attached. And it has the ability has the potential of becoming peaceful, at ease, settled, clear, open, transparent, settled, stable. That seeing that for oneself is seeing the Dharma visible here now. And if you see that freedom that could come something way you were not free. You see that it's immediate right now, this is I'm free here. And this to this degree, I'm free now. And, and so in some way I don't know. I can't really tell you how this works. I just inspired by it. It's inviting us to come and see for ourselves. So certainly you can say it, you know, just, you know, the Buddha teaches a dharma. He's saying, Please try it out for yourself and find out for yourself. And that's pretty, you know, straightforward. But I get the sense that that there's kind of a deep request. There's a deep kind of heartfelt wish. When we encounter the world when we meet the world, to not be caught by it. And there's an imitation in that meeting of the world wherever we are, to find out how can we be there and be free in the midst of it? And I can't I kind of sense that there's a yearning and desire if you tune in if you're very good if you're kind of get you know, get quiet and listen. I think there's a kind of natural movement towards wanting to be free. So this you then Freedom beckons us within everything. And then onward leading. So if you get a sense of that, what it's like to go from being caught in the mind, to the mind no longer caught from being agitated, to becoming calm from being on fire with greed, hate and delusion, to being cool with peace. And you started valuing the goodness that can come from that. That becomes a personal compass for what we're moving into what the guide is. And so the movement in the Dharma is to is towards letting go of preoccupation into this place of peace. It's not about you know, memorizing endless lists of Dharma principles. It's not about magic mantras that you chant. So that Somehow, the mantras are going to do something for you or it's not about getting Buddhist crystals that somehow you drape around your neck neck, and somehow they'll absorb the cosmic energies and somehow enlighten you or for you, but it's a, it's, it's in his compass to see, in my own mind, how I relate to things, how I meet things, how I show up for things. How do I free myself of things, that's where the Dharma is found. That's where freedom is found. And so becomes a compass. And so generally people who get into this practice at some point, they have an experience or a sense or intuition or a feeling, to knowledge of what it's like, for the mind. To be at peace, what it's like to mine to be free. What's it like different people describe it different ways for themselves. And it becomes a feeling for me it was a feeling of deep integrity. There was a hook that got me into this and that became my guide for a long time, this feeling of integrity.

Other times for me, it's been a feeling of deep peace. Sometimes it's been a feeling of ease, the mind at ease. Sometimes it's a feeling of being, the mind being boundless, just being open and expansive sense of expansiveness and spaciousness, sometimes an experience of compassion and love that comes along with it. And so this becomes a reference point. And then the question is, how do I expand these things? How do I fill my life? How do I do this more fully? How do I find the edges of where I can't do this and practice with that and exploring And so that there too, I can find this piece, not to turn away from things, but to expand our freedom into them. Maybe we can encompass those things also. And so

it's our own the quality of our own mind or our own heart. And its potential that becomes the onward leading compass to do more and more and more. And then this is to be realized by the lies. This is something only you can do for yourself. No one can do it for you. No one can. It's all kinds of things. No one can sleep for you. No one can pee for you. Okay, I can go on right. So all kinds of things that only you can do. Only you can realize the Dharma and you can realize this freedom of the mind on the you can do this inner work. That that is quite profound. So in this way, the Dharma is visible here. Now it's something that's available to you to see and experience for yourself. And the chances are fairly good. I think that at some point in your lives, that you've had some experience that is showing you a potential you have for being in the world. That's not neurotic that's not filled with anxiety that's not caught up in greed or lost, that's not filled with jealousy or anger or hostility or hatred. But somehow, something is settled or quieted or felt safe. Sometimes assumption some people have it as children. For me, and I had a number of experiences as a child and that became a reference point for me when I started meditating. And it's kind of I think I kind of remembered them when I started meditating, like, kind of forgotten memories. And one of them was being under the dining room table, I'll get a white sheet, like a like a bedsheet and drape it over the table. And maybe I think I called it a fourth and I probably hardly knew what a fourth was. But and then our go underneath and this and the lighting and it was so peaceful in there, and the lighting coming into the kitchen and you know, through this under the sheet, I don't know what's your I don't know what to say. But I still remember how to clean light or something peaceful light. And I feel so content and peaceful and cozy. I just sit there and so I started meditating. I remember that. And there were other things like that. And in some something's happened to me. Who knows? You know, kind of just out of the blue. When I was 19, I went to traveled around Europe. And I went to Catholic monastery, Cathedral Church. All of the above, I don't know. It's called Mont-Saint-Michel. And it's, if you come across it, you're driving across this parts of Britaany or Normandy. And it suddenly it looms up ahead of you. Like it's some kind of place something made by Disneyland. This huge kind of, you know, spiraling up kind of thing. It's on a hill that goes higher up pointing towards heaven.

And, and it's a kind of big place. But I got a tour of the place on top of the hill where everything is built around was original chapel that had been built 1000 years ago or something, and everything else is built around that job. Apolo stone chapel. And when he took us into the chapel, there was something so peaceful and cool and settled there, that my inside just went completely kind of just dissolved and felt so soft and tender and quiet and so peaceful. And I tried to linger in that room as long as I could before the tour guide said you have to go now. So maybe I was lucky to have those experiences. But you know, those things, those things. So sometimes you don't have to do a lot of meditation to have this. But to remember sometimes, oh, this is a potential. This is a possibility. This is the Dharma that's visible here and now. Now, how can I move into that? How can I feel that in my life, how can I expand it? Can I rediscover it, which the work that it takes? To answer that question, do put offers a gradual path that In his in his approach, you would start to repeat myself start with the larger ways in which we live in the world, our actions and our speech. And then we look at the interface between us and the world, how we see it through our senses, and kind of clarify that relationship and so we don't get caught so easily. And then we will look in and figure out how to live in a healthy way with is to give contentment with what we have in our life as it is not for its own sake, but so that we have this inner capacity tend to look more deeply inside of ourselves because we are preoccupied and caught by all kinds of things in the world. And then to start now, start becoming really wise seeing clearly the for a few of us, not all of you of course, but few of a few of us the craziness in there. You know all the you know Someone once said that the mind has no shame. I don't know if that's a good thing to say. But you know, it's certainly it'll be too interesting sometimes what this mind can do. So, you know, to start becoming wise and see actually how the with the mind thinks about what its preoccupations are, what its reactivity is to really start getting to see it more more clearly. So we can find, discover how to settle the mind, how we can

help the mind make feel safer and more more contented, more peaceful, so it's not anxious anymore. So it's not always searching outside of itself for things. So it's not always resisting, attack, attacking and blaming, but learning to kind of come freer and freer and free And that movement towards freedom can grow and grow and grow. And it's one of the I think one of most beautiful things a person profound things a person can do with their lives. And to do that process, well, then at some point, it's and we get turned inside out. And then we're back in the world with a sensitivity of compassion and love and care. We're back in the world in a very different way than when we started this path in this process. And the hope by my hope is that this process will somehow grow us into being people who live for the welfare of others that we live in are concerned for the welfare of the world and in whatever way is appropriate for each individual. And so this whole path of practice leads us to becoming people who care And are considered inactive in for the betterment of our society. So, the Dharma proclaimed by the Buddha is visible here now. So immediate, inviting to be seen for oneself onward leading to be realized by the wise. So, if you're aspiring to be wise or wise enough, we have some time and you can ask some questions about this. anything you'd like to add comments or anything you'd like to say?

Taking a green screen light

since many of us have careers right, and we're involved in careers that we hopefully think are contributory to the welfare of humanity or uniwell, some of us get very lucky to be able to do that. And, you know, you get involved and you do get hooked. get hooked on the success of a project or you get hooked on No, I was thinking of you actually interview. I can't imagine that you didn't get hooked on making IMC you know,

more contributory to,

to the human beings in this area in the course, that seems me have done that. You bet you've sort of been surrounded by people who are that, of course, you've been the teacher for most of us are in, in the ordinary environment of people who are in doing the work that you may be doing, that have other interests, maybe just monetary or what have you, you know, and it's, well, I'm at sort of making a comment, and then giving it back to you. But, you know, there's a lot to be said that it's not just finding peace, but also finding a way to

still be active in the world.

Yeah. Yeah. The, you know, that was the other possible topic for a Dharma talk today was I was thinking about getting it Talking about what's called right livelihood. Because a lot of people are working and the whole idea of this big part of people's lives and so to talk about practicing in the context of livelihood. But this the word I talked about just seemed easier to talk about. Given how complex their work, life can be in livelihood, and I felt like I needed to be better, better prepared than I could be today for that topic. So I appreciate your comment then. And so here is many things to be said maybe in response to what you said. But one of the things I think it's very helpful to remember that there are two ways two general categories of ways in which we can be of help to the world. One is based on what we do and the other is how we are and I think that in the Kind of society we have here in California here, this area here particularly, I think there's sometimes an over over concern for the what having the right career or the you know, doing the thing, that's our thing or the thing that's going to, you know, create world peace do something so people are very concerned about the what the career and that's fine and some people find a what that's really meaningful for them. But there are some people who find themselves fulfilled and find what's right for them in what has the most meaning is not the what they do but how they are with whatever they're doing. And they find a way the How is their their ethical, the How

is their kind, the How is that they are practicing with all this with you know, finding the path finding their freedom, finding their goodness and how they are Doing it becomes a real task. So, you know, if you have a career and you're engaged, and so good, good career and good work, please keep it up. But maybe you can make it your monastery. Meaning that maybe that's the place where you study yourself, where you find yourself where you kind of look and go deeper and deeper to figure out how you can do it in a way that the how you do it is as much a message as what you do. You

You mentioned your memory of when you were younger under the table. If you're having those kind of memories are you not being pulled away from the present? moment? Well, you know, this present moment thing is a little bit overrated in

the mean, so it's kind of like the name of the game we're trying to do is develop a greater capacity to be present for sure. And but some sometimes I, you know, you know, this is, sometimes sometimes people think that they're all they're allowed to do is be present. And anything that departs from it is somehow wrong and knowing, you know, a rich, multifaceted life includes our past and our memories, includes the future and what's going to come and thinking about it to some degree. So we're not trying to erase the past or be the unconcerned for the future we will want to do is to the degree to which we are thinking about the past in the future, to do it wisely and to do it we're not so we're not caught by it. And so one of the reasons we practice being in the present moment is to help us learn what it's like not to be caught. Once we really learned how to do that, and then we've kind of lessen some of the forces of attachment within us, then it's possible to think about the past and think about the future and not be a problem. There's no attachment to it, and we're not caught by it. But the other thing that happens is that when people it's quite a profound process, to do regular meditation and really going deep inside and, and sometimes what happens is we touch in more more deeply in ourselves. It's kind of like we're touching into places stored memories. we're touching into unresolved issues. We're touching into things that were quite important and formative to us. And they arise in our memory, unbidden. And that arising into memory, unbidden. Sometimes it actually important part of the process for for some things, it's part of the part of the cleansing process purification process, it needs to come up to consciousness in order to be resolved and work through. And it's also some of the freeing process is going to be learn some of the, remember some of the beautiful potential beautiful capacities we have. So these good memories and, you know, refer repressed memories are no bad. There's also good ones that can mean the repressed with, but there's things that we forget. And sometimes we claiming them and, and having them return is part of the process of reconnecting to these aspects of ourselves. Maybe we have lost touch With So, you know, so don't don't worry so much about these memories, just don't be caught by them. So in meditation, what I like to do is if memories arise unbidden, I just kind of take it as important part of the process. I don't know how it's important, but I just kind of assume it's there. And then I go back to the breathing. I don't try to linger with it. I don't try to think about it. I don't try to analyze it. I don't feel bad about it. I just feel contento Okay, it probably needed this probably needed to arise. And now let's go back and stay in the present moment with the breathing. And that way there's space for these kinds of things to arise. And if it's part of some deeper something's working itself out. Is there space for that? That makes sense is that Are you content with that answer? But do you have something else in mind? Okay. Probably have time for one more if you have question or comment.

Well, I hope that this kind of Dharma that the Buddha was pointing to, which is not really something that's foreign or mysterious. It's something that's in yourself. That it's a can be a nice path for you to move towards greater peace and freedom. have greater contributions to this world and the Dharma live in you. Thank you