

2019-06-17 No Garbage No Buddha

Tue, 8/11 8:04PM • 41:47

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

buddha, kindness, mala, story, people, stopped, walking, sorrow, deepest, sides, bandit, fable, catch, feel, unruly, hold, suffering, person, thought, lighter

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdaal

So Good evening. On Friday, I heard the story about a newlywed couple who did decided to go travelling as the honeymoon to South America. And they were a week after their wedding they were driving on a bus in somewhat rural Colombia when the bus was held up at gunpoint and everything that they had was taken from them except the clothes they had with them. And one person on the bus was shot. Native Colombian left on the side of the road and They were allowed to go at some point with the bus. And at some point they were dropped off at a small town with nothing, no passport, no money, nothing but their clothes. And so

the man decided to hitchhike to a larger town, just getting some help. And the woman was left behind and sitting in a courtyard and turned out she had something in her back pocket. She had a little notebook, and a pencil. She sat down with a notebook and a pencil. And she said, I was kind of a secretary, because I started hearing this voice and I just wrote it down. And this is what you this is what was written down. beef. Oh, there's one more part of the story. So when they got off the bus they were looked looking apparently quite dazed. Imagine something like that happening. And there was a man who noticed that they were in distress and apparently was very supportive, very kind. I don't know exactly what he did for them but his kindness was quite powerful balm for them at that time. And so then she sat in the courtyard and, and this is what she wrote. Before you know what kindness it really is, you must lose things. Feel the future dissolve in a moment like salt in a weekend brought what you held in your hand what you counted and carefully saved. All this all this mosquito. So you know how desolate will Escape can be between the regions of kindness. How you ride and ride, thinking the bus will never stop. The passengers eating maze and chicken will stare out the window forever. Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness, you must travel where the Indian in a white Poncho lies dead by the side of the road. You must see how you You must see how this could be you how he too was someone who journey through the night with plans and the simple breath that kept him alive. Before you know kindness has the deepest thing inside. You must know sorrow as the other deepest thing. You must wake up with sorrow you must speak to it till your voice catches the thread of all sorrows. You see the size of the cloth then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore on the kindness that ties your shoes and send you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread on the kindness that raises its head from the crowd of the world to say it is I you have been looking for and then goes with you everywhere, like a shadow or friend. I'm sure many of you have heard that pop calm. It is apparently in 2018 it was the most quoted poem in the United States or somewhere. And by Palestinian American name now me Shaheed Nye. And that was her experience. And so but and the person who was telling the story on Friday, I think he was a little bit misquoting it because maybe he's steeped in Buddhism. He said before, you know, kindness as the deepest thing inside, you must know, you must know suffering as the other deepest thing. And the poem says sorrow. And so that's quite a powerful idea that it can be these two things inside one, maybe in some ways depends on the other. I certainly have been

and I know people who have experienced great challenges. And it was so deeply meaningful to be touched by other people, their compassion or their kindness, their support, in a way that wouldn't have carried the same depth of meaning. If I was just happy go lucky going around my my day as if nothing special was happening. And so, you know, the depth inside of our capacity for sorrow and for suffering for a loss, you know, and now me Shaheed now she lost everything on the bus, kept her clothes in her little notebook to write the poem. And to lose everything.

And that opens up or touches something or a tenderness, hurt to sorrow that maybe allows for something different to be to come and touch us. So I heard the poem on Friday and I read it today. And you know, it made me wonder what lives inside of us with lives inside of me. And what is it to plumb into the depth to reach deep inside and touch What's in there? And if we touch the depth inside of us, why don't we find some of us would like to just find enlightenment, love and just all this wonderful stuff. But is that all that's there and what's the role? of touching what's inside and it being suffering sorrow loss, the challenges of life and to touch that in such a way that it opens the possibility of something much deeper. Maybe these two goes together, tick, not Han, he written about little POM or whatever, saying that without mud no Buddha, no mud, no Buddha. So the mud is kind of the mud of the world, the dirt or all the complications of the world. Without that there's no awakening up as if you know awakening or freedom or the path of Buddhism is not divorced from this world. It arises out of it. And here in Redwood City, we some of us, very few of us have a saying, no garbage, no Buddha and the reason for that is that some of you driven down Highway 101 Redwood City, if you're driving south on your right, there's the Buddha looking at you. Even though you should have fought between Whipple and Woodside road, about a third of the way down, I think, going south, there's this big Buddha that looks down on the freeway to eight foot tall Buddha. And we should go visit the Buddha someday to go into the comb you know, get off and find find it, you know, in the parking lots, you know, sits there in a parking lot. And he sits on top of a big cinderblock built little room, like a shed or something, but cinder blocks with a big open entryway on one side. It's probably I don't know it's probably eight by eight or 10 by 10 or something. And the Buddha is probably eight foot tall he seated as cross legged he probably so it's a bit big Buddha you know, and underneath that and that cinderblock shed or whatever I want to call it is one of those really big rolling garbage cans? The Buddha sitting on garbage in Redwood City. Isn't that great? Looking on a freeway I went down to see the Buddha few weeks ago and it was a beautiful day with a beautiful You know, as beautiful kind of beautiful blue sky with beautiful fluffy white clouds and I got up there close to the Buddha, you know, climbed up on the cinderblock thing and I was looking up at this guy not noticing not looking at the freeway. Wow. You know, it's this big mind clouds in the sky floating by was spectacular. And then I kind of looked at the Buddha and I walked around to the back of the Buddha and looked over his shoulder and looks down upon have a one to one and a cars driving by the juxtaposition of the big empty sky like my mind. And the freeway was quite something. And the juxtaposition of the Buddha and the garbage is quite was quite something, I think is something profound about it. So that's why in Redwood City, no garbage, no Buddha. So, this polarity or this thing is working together. So I want to tell you another story. And this is a fable or a myth of Buddhism. And, and the way I'd like to tell the story, there's two main characters in the story. I'd like to suggest that we listen to you listen to the story, as if the two characters are really one person. Maybe the two characters are you and two aspects of you or two aspects of a single person. Rather than thinking of it as just two different people who are interacting, it's really a two sides of one person that's meeting and finding their way together. So

it's a, it's a gruesomely violent piece of three part parts of it. When my son was in first grade kindergarten in first grade kindergarten, the teachers would teach stories from a Hans Christian Andersen stories. He says, you know, fables, and some of them are really violent. And I thought, wow, what are they doing telling us to our kids? And that pedagogical theory was that the kids process if

you're, if it's only verbal, the kids take it in just to the degree to which they can understand it. It's not a problem for them and it kind of teaches some kind of moral morality or teaching or something? So I don't know if that's true, but maybe it's true. Maybe it'll be true for us as I go through this story. So it's a story of the Buddha and I'm unduly mala now on that occasion there was a bandit, in the realm of Qing by sanity of Castilla named unruly mala, who was murderous, bloody handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings, villages, towns and districts were laid waste by him. He was constantly murdering people and he wore their fingers as a garland and ongole mala means mala means like a like a necklace. And Goulet means finger so you so that's the end of the gruesome part. Then now you can relax. So then that morning, the Buddha went off for alms and He was walking along and that people said, don't go on that road to the Buddha. on that road is the bended angulimala who is murderous, bloody handed, given to blows and violence, merciless in living being to living beings. He's constantly murdering people. Men have come along this road in groups of 10 2030 and even 40. But still they have fallen into unruly malice hands. When this was said, The Buddha Went, went on in silence. He took that road anyway. And the people kept saying the same thing to him. Many different people don't go there. Don't go there. Don't go there. But the Buddha went on in silence. So here we have two sides, we have the extreme side of a murder. And this man who religious man who keep walks on in silence, to Towards the danger. It's interesting idea to walk towards what's difficult to walk towards what's challenging. Maybe walk towards what we don't want to admit about ourselves. The bandit angulimala saw the blessing one coming in the distance when you saw me thought. It's wonderful. It's marvelous. Men have come along this road in groups of 10 2030, even 40. But still, they're falling into my hands. And now this recluse comes alone unaccompanied it as if driven by faith. Why shouldn't I take this reclusive life? He sees easy picking. an equally valid and took up his sword and a shield buckled on his bow and quiver and followed close behind the Buddha. Then the blessing one performs such a feat of supernatural power, that the bended undegraded mana Under the mala, the walking as fast as he could, could not catch up with a blessing one who was walking at his normal pace. Then the bandit unruly Amala thought it is marvelous It is wonderful. Formally I could catch up even with a swift elephant and sees it. I could catch up even with a swift horse and seize it. I could catch up even with a swift chariot and seize it. I could catch up even with a swift deer and seize it. But now I'm walking as fast as I can. I cannot catch up with this reckless who's walking it as normal pace. So then annuity Amala stopped and he called out to the Buddha, stop reckless, stop reckless and Ramallah kept walking. But he said back to angulimala. I have stopped you should stop too.

Then the bended ugly mala thought, these necklaces, speak truth, assert truth. But though this recolors is still walking, he says, I have stopped. You stopped to suppose I question this reckless. So he's going to question him rather than kill him. Then the abandoned congoleum I'll address the Blessed One in the following verse. While you were walking wreck loose, you tell me you have stopped. But now when I have stopped, you say I have not stopped. I asked you now read clues about the meaning. How is it that you have stopped and I have not? The Buddha said I niggly mala, I have stopped forever. I abstain. I abstain from violence towards living beings, but you have no restraint towards things that live That is why I have stopped and you have not And then when the boss says this, oh, at long last this reckless, venerated stage has come to this great forest for my sake. Having heard your verse, teaching me the Dhamma I will indeed renounce evil forever. So saying the bandit took his sword and weapons and flung them in a gapping chasms pit. The bandit worshipped the Buddha at the Buddhist feet. And then they're asked for going forth as a monk, the Buddha, the sage, have great compassion, the teacher of the world with all its God's addressed him with these words, come Bhiku and that is how he came to be a monk. So that's, so that's beginning of the story. And I'll skip a whole part of it. But then, so it becomes among congoleum Allah and he becomes enlightened. In spite of the fact of all the terrible things he did then when it was morning, the venerable unruly mullet dressed and taking his bowl and outer robe, went to town for arms. Now on that occasion someone threw a clod and hit the venerable

uncle the mother's body. Someone else threw a stick and hit his body and someone else threw a punch shirt Potts, shred, and hit his body. I said people I guess he remembered he, his past right. Then with blood running down his cut head and loose ball broken in his outer robe torn. The venerable uncle the mala went to the Buddha, the Buddha so I'm coming in the distance and told it and told Angela mala Barrett, Barrett, you were experiencing here and now the results of deeds because of which you might have been tortured and held for many years. For many hundreds of years for many thousands of years. So it's a little bit, you know, it's a myth, right or a little fable. So if you try to kind of argue the logic of it, but the idea is that, that he's still, even though he did terrible things, he still has to experience the repercussions of what he did. But they're not going to be as bad as they were going to be. Because what he was going to be was going to be reborn in hell. But he's now he's freed of hell, because he's enlightened. But he's still in this world has to live the repercussions of his past actions and people are, are, you know, throwing things at him and cutting him. So that's the story. And that story gets told a lot in Buddhism and then India, back in the ancient times, there's many versions of this story that are told it was popular by storytellers. And they would embellish it in different ways and fill it with different teachings so that were being expressed in different values. And in our tradition, we have just this version here. And it's another time I don't know if I'll ever teach this. But one of the primary themes that runs through the story is the speaking of the truth. So even though it's about this murderer and the Buddha, then it's a kind of a fable that keeps pointing back to what is true and speaking what's true. And you see that in the beginning, where the Buddha literally doesn't say what's true, it's figuratively true, he says, I've stopped even though he keeps walking, but you haven't. But I hear, but what if we see this as being different aspects of one person? I don't know if you want to look at it at yourself, not that you're murderers. But, but maybe you have some minor foibles in there.

And, and you have also in you, the Buddha, you have that part of you that's capable of walking on in silence towards the Danger, that part of you that doesn't get afraid, by the other part of you, the part of you that can be wise and can address the part of you that's not wise. The part of you that is at peace, that can somehow meet and touch, the part of you that is at war is troubled and turmoil and conflict. And so these two sides you cannot know that kindness is the deepest thing inside until you know that sorrow is the other deepest thing. So, what happens if we interpret this story, metaphorically this way about ourselves and, and there's two sides of ourselves that can meet and work it out, or somehow the wisdom side can have something to teach something to offer, to that part of us that's troubled or challenged. What happens then? What do you think? What are your thoughts now about this story? And what comments do you have about it? Was it useful to interpret the story in this way as being a fable about two sides of ourselves? So if you could use the mic up there on the stage, she's so she had to push the button that's in the middle of it.

Okay, yes. So I found the most interesting was, I think I definitely see myself in times experiencing and accepting kindness when it's both offered by me but also when I can receive it. And the same thing with I guess, suffering in the story, like I feel those things separately, but what was hard for me to connect in the story was like, when they come face to face it's very, there's very few times where like, I'm in a situation where I see kindness and suffering at the same time. And I'm trying to experience them and kind of a coexisting sort of way. I think I see that in other people a lot when they're struggling with kind of bringing kindness into a situation that they're suffering in their lives. But it's so hard for me to reflect in, like my own light. bringing those two things together. And one I know it happens very often, but I never really recognize the moments when I see that

especially in the complexity of daily life and what goes on. But Has there ever been an occasion in your life? Maybe a rare special time when you actually felt you could approximate that or do that?

When I could like see them together? Yeah. Um,

I guess like,

yeah, like a time. Like, I guess more recently, when like this has happened was I lost a really, really close Like that I've had since I was like, six months old, like your best friends for a really long time. And we got in one altercation where like, I guess we both just kind of dropped it, like walked away. And I think for the longest time, I was really suffering. And I was really focusing on that one friend and I was letting a lot of other friendships go because I was letting it really consumed me. Because I was suffering. And I realized that I was losing a lot of like kindness or like to my friends that like really were there for me and like, deserved it. So I think there was like a moment recently where it came face to face. And my mom said, you're focusing on the one red light when there's a line of greens. And she's like, you need to bring those like greens to the red light and let them meet each other so that like you can overcome the red light. Right? So yeah, that was my mom's advice. And she's the one that kind of made me see it. But yeah, I think that was more recently when I started to be more kind to my friends into the people in my life, because I realized I lost my one chance with her. Great,

thank you so you can do it. Now. So the idea is now to kind of grow it. Someone else?

Okay, Is this better?

I was thinking about the big, scary guy who was murdering and is never sated. Right. There's always more people to murder and more things to do and more things to kill and more gruesome ways. And for me personally, it resonated with do not take that which is not freely given. So let's say I want an apology from someone who's not ready to apologize, or maybe shouldn't even apologize. Right. And I keep seeking that. They may have stopped, but I'm continuing at a speed that will never be sated. And that's an example from my life and When I let go of I heard a deep hurt where I felt completely righteous. And I let things settle and see the truth of what was there. I did end up getting an apology, because I stopped. So I see it as you cannot catch up to the stillness if you're voraciously trying to you know, get resolution right, which is endless, endless devouring. So we

got to stop some time. So meditation is one of those ways we learn to stop. Thank you

with the theme of the two aspects existing in yourself.

I see.

big part of it is being kind to yourself when you discover the nasty stuff In yourself,

for you for years saying sometimes, if you learn to be kind and compassionate, then maybe it's possible to discover some of the nasty stuff

on more than that it's

I often catch myself

being angry at myself for doing some blunder not just maybe just something in the kitchen or, or how I dealt with somebody or something like and, and sort of charity begins at home by being kind to myself. Nice.

Very nice. Thank you.

Jim over there by the entryway

found

interesting the last part of the story as well.

I found interesting the last part of the story as well that I know for me, at least in the beginning of the journey was this idea of okay there is a lighter thing and you achieve with it. Check by indicating everything is good now and forever. But at least for me so far it's been more like so all I'm referring to is that like last part of the story where he's at murder a person is leaving the world as a monk and they're still like people unless maybe skillful ways try to resolve their own emotions towards this person. And to me, it kind of resonates with I gather some deep insights about myself. It's not like all these neurological pathways, just like now forever gone. And there are still some plans and to be done there is still like, I can feel blessed content and peaceful, like right now in the moment is still the dinosaur and they'll be back in the whatever other states and they haven't come across. And it's just the constant

process rather than a checkpoint. So it's not that we just flip a switch and we suddenly go to become the Buddha. And now we're kind of forever but we still have all these other old habits or forces that keep coming sometimes. And so they Barrett, we have to practice with and we have to learn to hold it without getting caught by it and without picking up the violence again. So that's a little bit what you're saying. Yeah. So the Barrett is also another way of saying, stay present. Stay with what's here, stay present. And so a little bit for me this is and the story is that we have to also be willing to experience the repercussions of what we've done the consequences and live with them. And, and so you're pointing out some of those consequences or the continued challenges we find inside outside of ourselves. And so how do we sit still with that, and how do we treat that with kindness, as opposed to think we're all or nothing? I think one of the nice things for me about interpreting this story this way, is that too little bit of a medicine To the illness, of seeing ourselves all or nothing, you know, thinking we're supposed to be all good, or seeing yourself as all bad. But, you know these to live inside of us to some degree, no mud, no Buddha, no garbage, no Buddha, you know, what's what's in there? And how do we have the to meet? And work together? How do we see the parts of us that are challenging the sorrow, the suffering, the tendency towards anger or violence or fear or whatever it might be? And how can we bring the Buddha inside of us to meet that and to hold that and, and maybe not to completely transform it, but maybe begin changing it in ways that transforms it from a bandit to a monastic? It's quite a quite a change. What would that look like inside of you to allow that transformation One of the remarkable things that mindfulness can teach is that when people have a lot of fear, many people have anxiety. And unless the anxieties a little bit, you know, too strong, one of the great tasks that mindfulness does that practice does and it's whether it's explicit or not. It's kind of this movement that we're trying to help our fear. feel safe. Have you ever thought Have you ever tried doing that with your fear? Help your fear, feel safe. Sometimes fear we don't like it or pushing it away. We're trying to fix it, we're trying to avoid it. We're trying to cover it over. You know, you do all these things to it. But this poor fear that isn't doesn't feel very happy if it's being attacked or fixed or, you know, and and, you know, the fear probably what it needs is to be left alone and feel safe. And then it's kind of like a fist that if you hold it, support it, it will open up. So if you can hold the fear with kindness, and help it feel safe, that's your job. That's the

Buddhist job to help the fear feel safe, then it can relax, and then it goes away. And that's a very different movement than fixing it, or pushing it away or letting it go or something like that. And so what about tendencies towards anger or violence? Maybe the same thing? Or what about the deep sorrows that we carry with us? I've gone through a lot of sorrow. And this practice has been phenomenal, to hold the sorrow and for that I like a different image. I like the image of cupping my hands together like a little nest or something. And, and then imagining my awareness is this is like that, and I hold that the sorrow and just hold it again, sort of feels Safe so it's allowed to allow to be and then just let it be and see what goes on. So in that sense, the cup awareness, a cup hands is the Buddha holding on to the Mala. You know that I've stopped, and I hold what is still active and moving. And so many things that are so challenging for us are moving and running and chasing, and it's trying to escape and agitated.

And to be able to meet that with a still heart or with a still mind or with a still hands and to be able to help it feel safe. And to understand that you're safe with it, because it goes in both directions. I think one of the reasons people are so reactive to the inner challenges they have is they don't feel safe with them. They feel identified with them or they feel like it casts the best light on them. themselves was trying to get the upper hand or it's gonna somehow it just a bad thing to be this way. But to be able to sit still in meditation, it's a great laboratory, it's a great discovery zone, to be able to sit still and feel all the challenges we have, and realize that we're safe with them. We make ourselves safe for them for we're safe by being nonreactive not doing anything with it, not identifying with it, just holding it and being present. And we make it safe for them. And don't underestimate the power of making it safe for them whenever the difficulties are inside. And part of the power is that what's inside that's what's difficult. It wants to resolve itself. There's a self healing and self liberating movement inside of us. We don't have to be in charge of the fixing. We don't have to be in charge of the healing or the liberation. We were in charge of meeting it and that's why I like this story so much of the Buddha. He go he goes towards the danger towards on koulamallah. But then he's and he goes in silence. That's what these tells the villagers and he squawks on the silence and, and then he just kind of steadily doesn't change his pace. He just keeps walking. And he's not threatening to angle the Mala. And he's not afraid of unruly mala and on Gumi mala has no way to catch him. So how can you make yourself that way? Maybe start in meditation. How can use steadily walk forward step by step with your awareness with your presence. And be be a person who say for all the things that are inside, but keep walking, keeping present in such a way that you don't have to you don't have to be afraid of anything that's inside. Then Wouldn't that be marvelous if you had nothing to fear of all the shenanigans that go on in there? And what happens when these two meet this way? And that's, you know, metaphorically, I think one of the things we tried to doing in meditation is we're taking the, you know, to use fancy language, we're taking the Buddha mind and help using the Buddha mind to meet the unbelievable the mind or the difficult mind or whatever it might be. And so what is your Buddha mind? What is the mind of awareness, so the mind of stillness or the mind that the mind that doesn't have to be afraid, that doesn't have to attack doesn't have to judge or criticize or make anything a problem, but in fact, stays present really close towards it, even what's there. And maybe it goes towards with this difficulty inside in order to hold it and it's covered Hands. Maybe it goes towards what's difficult inside and say I see you and you're safe right now. Maybe it's to go towards what's inside and offer kindness to it. Or maybe it's to go to what's difficult inside and get curious and curious about where is this going to go? How will this unravel? What is it what wants to happen here? And to have the humility or the not knowing mind that you don't really know why you have all these challenges. But maybe, if you have this Buddha mind that holds it, you'll find out that it has important function. And the function may be is to show you kindness, compassion, or maybe to show your freedom. So angulimala story. So now if you ever hear the story again, You might find you might listen to it from this perspective, these are two sides of the same person. And then that saves us all from a lot of protests. About You know, this story is crazy story. You know, how could this

be? So, any last comments any we have five minutes any last comments anyone wants to make about the story or

my interpretation of it or? Yes, there is a mic.

So, I find myself spending a lot of time with my heart on my chest or just you know, stroking my arm or something just kind of to tell myself that oh yeah this is okay. Um, I can hold this and also yeah this hurts and or yeah I did this thing, whatever it is and really just to really hold it only physically externally as well as whatever is going on inside. And it's been really nourishing to really be able to hold all of that.

For that that's a very wise thing to do. And as you feel nourished by it and feel a nourishment in the healing from it, at some point when it feels right to you because you're following your intuition with this. When you when you feels right. Do that. Hold the yourself with kindness this way physically and all that. Do it lighter and lighter

and tight and as it feels right because sometimes people do what you do they sometimes remember the strength in which we did it at the beginning I think that's all has to always be that way. But as it as it does it does it's medicine on you, it's actually becomes more and more nourishing the lighter you do it. Okay, so May your uncle the mala and your Buddha walk hand in hand. Thank you