

# 2019-08-19 A Treasure House Within And Without

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world, people, mind, experience, meditating, garden, turned, compassion, suffering, important, feel, ideas, life, ox, monks, soft, sophistication, happiness, knots, buddhist

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good evening everyone and welcome to IMC. Thank you for meditating here meditating and community. I always think it's a contribution that everyone makes to each other to meditate together. For many people, the motivation to keep meditating for time for years, comes partly from knowing that other people do it and meditating with other people and being supported and, and knowing other people do it so that you're not the only one who's weird, or so. On so it doesn't seem so strange For some people, in their worlds that they live in places of work or something like that, meditation can seem quite strange. And people, some people can feel lonely or they'll be awkward, even mentioning they do it. So thank you for coming here. And I'm not exactly sure what I'm going to say today, but I'm inspired by to say something from a frequent experience I have when I sit down to meditate, and that is that I'll sit down and close my eyes. And soon as I often as soon as I close my eyes, the external world kind of recedes pretty quickly and the world that is vibrant or alive or present, is could be called this internal world, the world that I can have direct experience of and feel sense And, and I've been meditating for a long time. And I parklea the fruit of that is that when I sit down, that it's a delight, delightful place inside, that I sit down and the inside is like a treasure house or sometimes I feel like I've come home, but that's probably saying it to mildly that it feels like a treasure or a garden, to abundant with all kinds of wonderful flowers or something. And that the feeling of goodness, the feeling of happiness or well being or safety or all these things that I feel there's very few things that the world has to promise that two things that Probably are as good or if they are as good or less cheap

unless 45 years of work is you know considered expensive the you know that whatever happiness I saw I got we got to get these advertisements probably you do too at home in the mail. I don't know why they keep trying. And I back up this one had to do but winning a \$50,000 a Jaguar and I looked at that what a headache. If I won this job, well, you know, what would I do with that? You know, we don't even have a garage. street parking is where we have in. And, you know, what are the maintenance costs? It's getting an oil change in that. I don't know if I could even afford it, you know, it's just like, like, what would I do with this? You know that that's not going to make me happy. And or if it didn't make me I thought for one moment, I thought, well, maybe I'll go test drive it before I refuse it. Because it couldn't be me. It might be kind of fun to try sipping around. But, you know, maybe, but I'm pretty confident that I would not have the same pleasure, Joy delight as I have when I sit down and close my eyes. See what's inside. And, you know, I am aware of all these years of practice. I know that it was not always the case, this way. That when I started meditating, there was a lot of turmoil. There was lots of suffering. There was lots of difficult Memories experience of life that I had to work my work my way through. I remember my body was not a place of delight and wonder home, the body of didn't feel like a

treasure house, the body was on fire, tremendous amount of pain, knots, tensions, things that were there. And I felt quite fortunate Looking back, I feel fortunate that in my early years 1970s when I started meditating, it was both I was practicing in zen, which, back then and, you know, historically, is, in some ways, psychologically unsophisticated in the sense that there's not a lot of psychological understanding about how the mind works. And a lot of the psychological sophistication of India and Buddhist India was kind of dropped it porins in Zan and Mahayana for in favor of a very direct experience of awakening of presence or something. And certainly there were not a lot of teachings about this, what was going on internally, emotions and feelings and how to be with thoughts or how to be with my suffering and my psychological pain. And also, probably for me, because I'm kind of odd. It was. It was a time that when I was learning all this 1970s there was, you know, Paramount of psychological sophistication. But we know so much more now than we did in the 1970s about psychology and how the mind works. And I'm so glad I didn't know it. Because for me and how it worked for me was I did, I didn't know enough to make a big deal out of it. I think Didn't know enough to try to fix it or make it go away. I didn't know enough to kind of define myself by it or take it as a personal failing or I was kind of I was kind of naive. And sometimes it's pretty good to be naive if you're going to start meditation because it allowed me to suffer in an uncomplicated way. It allowed me to kind of not try to deal with it or focus on it singularly or get too alarmed by it or think it was too big of a deal or have all kinds of ideas of what's supposed to happen or who's supposed to do what or something. And certainly their sophistication. And what we know now has been so important for our society and for many, many individuals. And I'm very glad that we've come to where we are now and we know a lot more about trauma All kinds of issues.

So I'm not not putting that down. But it was very looking back for me in my particular path. I think it was really important for me to not know so much. And just to be able to keep showing up, keep being present for my experience, which was a lot of suffering, without knowing Cosmos to do anything about it, without trying to, you know, fix it or get away from it or make it better or something. I just suffered, simply. And because of that, I think it began to dissolve or unfold or, or one of the one of the remarkable things that happened and that was that because I believe because I suffered so much in so much pain, physical pain and emotional pain. I became compassion that somehow because I wasn't Fighting it. I was just trying to be present for it. That something bad is shifting inside. And I started feeling more and more this kind of compassion grew. I didn't really care about compassion. I remember I was pretty naive. And so I wasn't looking for compassion, right? I didn't do anything even think it was that important. But lo and behold, if you have simple presence for, at least for me with the suffering, it's something I tend to rise and softening, then something got awakened some kind of ability to be present and be soft with it. And that softness, something began to change shifting and changing. And this idea of, of having this compassion awakened in me, was probably you know, becoming compassion. Maybe it's more important for some of us than becoming enlightened. And so this compassion kind of came and in all these kinks that I had in my mind in my heart to all these knots, slowly you know to work with them and see them and work through them and make space for them and let them resolve themselves and the things started to settle away and settle away and fall away ran into great abyss of fear in the process of things falling away and at some point knowing really knowing seeing some of the things I had to let go of seeing seeing as some of the tendency of the mind my mind so in the conceit conceit I had some of the attachments I had to certain kind of forms of identity. We're not serving me, we're not even true. Some of the social games I played to try to get people to think I was great or to like me, just seem to be overrated, just didn't really see but I had a strong instinct you know, you know, this drive or this Fear not to do that. And it was a big deal to sit there at the Abyss and watch that and be with it. And then to finally see that drop away and that this didn't kill me. It was okay. was an amazing experience. And, and slowly, slowly, this idea that the inner life is a place of delight, a place of comfort, it's good in there. It's like, you know, what goes on inside of me is my best friend. You know, it's I like being there.

And I like you know, I like it that the mind gets quiet. I mean, some of the surface chatter of the mind that we can have is worth being worrying about things. And to not having to worry no, not really sit down here with you today and I didn't have anything really I had to worry about the You know, is this an in breath or an out breath you know, it's a felt felt really nice not to have that and not have to kind of go up into this discursive mind that the to think about things and figure things out and tell stories and to feel at ease and the rest of this, you know, safe to not be spinning, spinning tales and stories and having conversations in my head. So this turning inward, one of the consequences of this, Buddhism is a deep appreciation for what's called karma. That you know, simple way of teaching karma is that what you do see the seeds you plant has to do with the fruit that you harvest. And so if you plant seeds of greed, hate and delusion, you Harvest something that's has the some characteristics or some

suffering that is related to greed, hate and delusion is a fruit. If you plant seeds of generosity and love and kindness, that blossoms in some way, and some of the way that people will talk, they'll talk about the merit, that you get merit, good merit and bad merit. But those are those you know, I think, I don't know if that's the right translation into English or this ancient word. But there's a real understanding. I think that if you really kind of live in this interior life and start becoming wise and seeing how it works and seeing how the energies of your body move and inside and how that you can start seeing directly that that if you want to have a sense of, you know, treasure house within if you want to have the inner life be a place That feels a place where your best friend or delightful or it's a good place to be. You have to tend it's like a garden you have to attend. And this and if you plant noxious weeds in your garden you get noxious weeds, though, you know 10 noxious seeds you get noxious weeds. And if you plant stinging nettles, you know Watch out when you go you know, you better wear gloves when you go into your garden. So what we do what what what we think what we say what we do, what we live by inside, you can really feel how that can affect and what the inner garden and you can feel how some weeds some seeds, some weeds some plants in there are not really don't care. contribute to the beauty don't contribute to actually they contribute to the opposite. And some things that go on inside are worse than just creating noxious weeds. Some things inside just parch the soil and the soil inside in which things can grow becomes hard panned and parched and dry and cracked. But to be able to let the inner soil which things can grow and develop, be a rich soil and soft and moist and something that really allows things to grow and then to grow the things that are really good. And feel it inside. You know, this is actually good. This is supporting this is nice, what's growing what's developing and into the interior at this inner life. And some people will think these Buddhists are so self centered are so you know, shutting themselves off from the world. But a remarkable things happens, I believe, at least in my vocabulary, which offer you in my vocabulary maybe doesn't really work this way of talking doesn't doesn't evoke something for you. But as what I found is that as my inner life became more harmonious, nicer, softer, freer, wonderful place to be that it became at some point, like this interior to get this going in like this was that I got turned inside out. And it's kind of like, you know, they, you know, if you go around, you know, your hand, your soft, sensitive part of your hand is your, your palm. And if you have your hand in a fist all the time, you know, that soft, tender sensitive palm is not available to the world. But imagine that somehow Something happened That turned everything inside out. And that salt palm was available to the world. And the sensitivity and the warmth and different things that have to happen this offers and this can be offered to the world. So the same way go inward. We're not meant to stay there you know and cutoff for the world, but it's a way of kind of being turned inside out and coming back into the world with with a whole different heart to whole different sensitivity, a whole different care, a whole different ability to hold different different orientation, or how we take in the experience of other people the experience of suffering of the world, the joys of the world. It's a whole different way because when it's insists being turned inside out this way happens. It's like we're less media we're ness net less experiencing the world through the filter of our learned it As the concepts and ideas of what we've learned,

I can learn about who's a republican and democrat. And I might have, you know, that's the, that's the filter through which I see things. You know, I certainly limit the people I see to just being Republican or Democrat, but I might have opinions about that party. And then that affects how I see people. So that's all my ideas is kind of like on surface kind of ideas, but to drop the surface thoughts and ideas and be able to kind of turn inside out and experience people in some deeper way than the ideas of whatever it might be. And to be able to touch and experience people feel people through the heart prior to the ideas prior to being republican or democrat or something else. Think as a profound way to experience the world to be able to experience the world inside out, you can only be turned inside out this way. If we don't cling, if we're not grasping or holding on tight to things, many times when people are relating to the world and they haven't done the inside out movement, and they think I'm in the world, you know, that's where it's important. There's so much clinging, so much attachment. And you know, and I've had people literally clutch my arm, because there's someone whether the other they were attached to me, and it was like, gripping so tight. And then when I was younger, and or we know people have such attachment to a relationship being a certain way or, or work being sucked away or their Jaguar being such a way you know, But that's, you know, all these things. And, and so they so we're exteriorly focused, but it's through the filter of our clings and desires and our fears that go on. And it's the kind of natural to do that. It's part of our, you know, efforts to become safe and secure. Often for good reason because the world can be quite an unsafe place for many people. But to somehow have the ability to kind of put aside the world for a little while and sit down and meditate, close your eyes and eventually have this inside out movement. We come back into the world a whole different way. And, and then to stay true to that, to stay connected to that as part of the art of how we are we live our life in this idea of the interior, interior, interior, Already over life being kind of where the center of Buddhism is, is a kind of an important point. And if there's a, if there's a kind of a beginning of the Buddhist scriptures, it's the first two verses in the Dhammapada. And it kind of remarkable what it says. And it's remarkable kind of this is the beginning of the Buddhist Bible, to compare it to the beginning of, you know, the Torah or the Old Testament. Where the beginning has to do with God and depends what God is to you when you make the comparison. But still, it's kind of points maybe to a different direction. So the beginning of the Buddhist scriptures goes something like this, it goes like this. All experience and the word experiences are very important. One experience has to do with the highway perceive how we live in the middle of our life and perceive it take it in how we experience it. It's not a statement about the world and say everything in the world reality doesn't stark reality is it starts with something that's very personal, very direct and very immediate for each of us. Experience the something that happens in the present moment. So immediately all experience it's about your experience what's happening to you now how you're perceiving now how you take in now, all experiences quite a beginning. All experience is preceded my mind by mind led by mind made by mind so instead of God, we have mind

as the beginning, the world of experience, the world that we experience begins in the mind, led by mind shaped by mind. And if the world, the world out there, maybe, who knows where it comes from, but the world of experience, the world of experiences the world in which we take in the world, process it, cling to it, free ourselves from the clinging, get entangled with it, or inside skate up entangled and nodded in it. And it's also the world in which we unravel the knots, who we release and resolve and dissolve what's there. And this has a lot to do with the quality of what goes on in our mind. And so Buddhism keeps pointing back into the mind. Look at that, understand it, that's where your experience is. In a certain kind of way, in a very particular way, that's where your experience is born. All experience is preceded by mind. Led by mind, made by mind. I'm sure many of you are kind of already ready to debate this this idea. I mean, how did that be? I mean, this is no, this wouldn't. platform is. It was here before you showed up. You know, your experience of the platform Didn't you know, but the experience of the platform did not begin before you came. It occurred when you showed up. I heard a wonderful

read read wonderful story recently. I heard a wonderful little story. I never heard it before, but the person was a student of Ajahn Chah, and told her like everyone knows it, too. Maybe you've heard the story. Ajahn Chah was a famous Thai meditation teacher, who a lot of Westerners practice with Jack Kornfield and others, and many people. And, and he was offering an alms round monks go out in the bowl and people, villagers would give them food for the day to eat. And he was a leading procession of his monks and through the woods of the jungle, and they came across a very large Boulder. And I just stopped, and he pointed to the boulder and said to his monks, is that boulder heavy? And his monk said, yeah, it's really heavy. It's a big boulder. And he said, it's only heavy if you try to lift it.

So that's a very interesting question. Effective. Now, you know if you're new, scientifically inclined, you might say, wait a minute, the weight of it doesn't change. It's still heavy. The experience of heavy that you have only occurs if you lift it. What if you don't lift it? How many of your problems that you have exists because you're lifting it? I think someone said some but someone said was Mark Twain, but I don't know. I've had a lot of problems and problems, man. I've had a lot of problems man in my life, most of which never happened. And I know that's true for me. I mean, I have, I have a tremendously poor track record in predicting what's going to happen to my life. And the number of times that I predicted disaster was so often so many eventually, because I'm a slow learner. And eventually I said, Wait a minute, Gil, you keep predicting, it doesn't work out that way. And then I began to, maybe it's them, I don't seem to have, you know, I started to doubt my predictions after a while of imminent disaster. And that helped me a little bit. That kind of led up and relaxed. So, this idea of our experience, so then it goes on. So all experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind, speak, or act with a corrupted mind. And suffering follows, like the wheel, the hoof of the ox, the cartwheel, the hook of the ox. So I think the image here is that poor ox Probably is laboring under tremendous effort, because the cart is heavy. And the experience of the ox is hard to pull it. And so the wheel follows. So there it's yoke together, there's a connected, the, the ox is tied to the cart, pulling it. So if you act and speak with a corrupted mind, you're creating the conditions inside of you. We're suffering follows your yoke to it. Then it goes to the second verse. First half is the same. Always all experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind, speak, or act with a pure mind. So when it says Oh, no speaking act, I translate Speaking act with a peaceful mind. And happiness follows, like a never departing shadow. So here a shadow is a good thing. Shadow has no weight. Compared to the cart, the ox is pulling. I don't know few of us are exhausted by the shadow that we're pulling along behind us as we walk through this, you know, an open sun or something. It doesn't interfere with anything. It doesn't bother us. It's, it has no weight light, but it's always with us. Imagine if your happiness was that way. It had no weight, no burden to have, it doesn't hire you. But it never leaves you. It's always there. When a nice I think it's a great image. So it gets a little bit more radical, this whole Buddhist stuff. And the Buddhism I think has a very different orientation to our lives. Then most with most orientations most worldviews most philosophies have here in the West, I think. So it's a little bit outside of what people expect, maybe from religion. But what you get a sense of this from another passage from the Buddha, where he talks about what the world is, and I talked about being turned inside out so we can experience the world be connected to the world. But why don't we really connected to when we're connected to the world, this quote from the Dhammapada all experience is preceded by the mind our experience of the world also somehow mediated by our minds, interpretation of in our minds, processing of the minds, you know, preferences around it, all kinds of things that the mind has some role some role, not the final role, but it has has an important role.

And so the Buddha define the world. He said, what I call the world is this fathom long body. So the world is this body. So that's a strange thing to say. But it's not so strange if you understand that it's through this all the senses and the experience of the body, that we mediate the world that we



experience. It's almost like the our senses have to be there first. For us to have an experience of the world. Of course, the world's there before you were born, I think before I was born, I suspect who was there before I was born. I wasn't there, but I've heard I've heard about it. And, but my experience of the world is intimately inseparably connected. to how I sense it, feel that experience it through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, the body, and how the mind processes it the ideas and through through which I interpreted the concepts that I've culturally learned are these are important ways to see things or understand what coming into my experience. The values I have all kinds of things. And so this being turned inside out the world out there is not so out there. The world in here is not so in here. Inside and outside don't really some point. There's not a hard and fast line between inside and outside. It's all here it's all part and parcel the same kind of the same kind of I don't know field of experience or process of things coming and going. And even to, to reify to coagulate around some notion of self, the myself in mind. It's not really needed. Really kind of, it's kind of a stepping out. It's kind of losing something precious and losing an intimacy, a connectivity, losing a capacity to really be wise and intelligent incense and feel in some deeper, fuller way. What's really happening here and going on here. So to do this interiority thing I talked about closing your eyes and really starting to attend to your inner garden. care for yourself, be your own best friend. You can be your best friend for yourself with all your foibles, all your chat inner challenges that you have. Try to be your friend for yourself. Be compassionate, take your time. Don't jump into your deepest suffering and deepest challenge quickly but to kind of befriend yourself and create the conditions where your inner life begins to feel like you are a friend. And if you're a friend for your interiority, whatever, it's in there, it'll become your friend one day. And you'll you'll really enjoy going there. And your inner life will really enjoy showing up for you. And if that deep friendship and care and for the inner life for oneself is mutuality of inner and oneself can transform itself into this turning inside out. And really to then have a capacity to feel or sense The world, people in the world experience what's happening in the world, all the suffering of the world, the challenges of the world to experience it, without the clinging, or the anxiety, or the, or the despair or the discouragement that can come so easily, when we haven't kind of discovered what this inner heart can do freedom that this inner heart can have. And then to be animated by that compassion and hopefully to have very little resistance, to responding to what we see and what needs our attention in our world and what, what's important. And I certainly hope that

this practice that we do, and I certainly hope that the teachings that I teach are not just for so people can be, you know, close their eyes and just feel like this is good in there and this is a garden but that you create this beautiful garden inside, and then realize the garden doesn't stop at the edges of your skin, that garden spreads out. And your garden is not just your inner garden, your garden is the whole world. And it's up to you to take care of this world. And I think that's what for me that's one of the conclusions from this Buddhist idea that all experience preceded by mind led by mind and made by mind is we stopped living too excessively or too naively or something. It's their problem. They have to fix the world. They have to do it better. Of course, they should. But but so should you. And if you're kind of waiting for someone else to do make the world a better place, but you're not doing it even in small ways, then I don't think we've managed through this thing turned inside out. Then if anything if we do have a garden, maybe we were keeping it too much our inner garden take down the walls, turn yourself inside out and understand that the garden you're tending is the whole world that you are the world that way. All experience is your experience. So that's what I didn't know I was going to say. And inspired by sitting down and close my eyes and appreciating this hug It is in there. And I don't take that light. I don't take that for granted, I don't take it to be something that's easy to accomplish. I don't kind of feel I don't kind of

I don't want to imply that it's something easy to experience. But I thought maybe it'd be okay to tell you that it is years of practice, that these things are possible. And it's worthwhile to really worthwhile to be

on this path really worthwhile to do this work and, and discover and come to this place where all these different issues and ways of being resolved and dealt with and just kind of here and happy, peaceful. That'd be your North Star as you go inward. And get turned inside out and go out. May you be a gift for this world. Okay. Thank you