

2020-04-06: Compassion and the Passion for Practice

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SPEAKERS

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I often feel grateful at the end of his setting, and often feel grateful for the people who I've meditated with. And so I express my thanks for this opportunity and to be with you this way. And for this evening, I would like to give a talk or talk a little bit about this topic of compassion. And certainly we live in a time now, where there is a lot of suffering. A lot of suffering that is now shared by many people shared either because of the difficulties of the time affects people personally so many people or shared and that there's so many people who care now and who are acting in response And somewhere other to try to make a difference or offer their support. And it's quite a phenomenal event that the globe as a whole that we should really be sharing this degree of personal challenge, collective challenge. This degree of suffering this degree of concern for people who are dying people that who die, people who are in the hospital in the intensive care people who are not sick, but having trouble finding enough food or not cost their work and now don't have enough money to take care of themselves and their family and just goes on and on. The challenges so many people have right now. And so how do we live with all these challenges? How do we live in the middle of this suffering? It's personal or shared with everyone else on this globe by our knowledge and understanding Have it and Buddhism kind of, in a sense, Buddhist practice begins with suffering. And a certain way Buddhist practice ends or is destroyed with suffering. And a lot depends about how we relate to the suffering and how we respond to it and how we live with it. And there are two basic movements that a human being can have when they encounter suffering in themselves or suffering in the world around them. And one is somehow movement out into the world. And the other one is a movement in to one's inner world to oneself. And both those movements inward and outwards, can be either healthy or unhealthy. Any one of those two movements can be involve affliction. Or it can involve the alleviation of affliction can involve causing more harm or suffering or can involve the end of suffering. So there's two movements. So the afflictive one's the suffering that brings more suffering, to suffer and produce and perpetuate suffering in ourselves in the world has to do with when we meet our suffering with resistance, we meet it with

despair or angst or kind of getting contracted or, or somehow we get caught in the grip of the discomfort and the fear and the distress and the preoccupation the weight of it all. And it's easy enough to do that. It's such a natural thing and there's so much challenges that people have and things are so difficult but it's possible in in And kind of being under the weight of one's own suffering, to produce more suffering. And outward is to assign blame or attack or to push away, or to create an other people not going to having to do with or the people who are wrong, the, the, or to the other is to pull in to carry the burden of this suffering of the world on one shoulders and feel overwhelmed by it and feel collapsing. I had to feel pity and to feel caught up in the grip of our fear and anxiety, what's coming. These are all very natural human tendencies to do this. And so it's not like to condemn it exactly. But to recognize that there is a way of being with suffering, that just brings more suffering, sometimes it spills over and we suck cause suffering harm to others. Sometimes it moves into words and we cause harm to ourselves. Sometimes it's natural enough to do these things because it's so confusing. People feel helpless and, and it's feel so threatened by all what's happening. And so there's these movements that can be afflictive that involve. And then there's the other movements. Also pointing outwards and going inwards. And the outward one that doesn't produce more suffering has to do with our care for the world, to feel the suffering in the world, feel our own suffering, and to care for it, to step forward, rather than fight or flight. It's to approach and soothe, to open up to to find some way, our way it's appropriate for us to step forward and care. And it's so important the more of the suffering we experience in the world. And the more we suffer inside of ourselves, to find some way to offer our care, our kindness, our support our generosity, feeling helpless in the face of these kinds of challenges, just makes it more difficult and helplessness is often a condition that leads to some of the afflictive ways in which we relate to suffering. And so to, to be able to do something to care in the SP even the smallest little ways, even if it's just with our good thoughts in our goodwill towards ourselves and to others. But to care in one form that care takes is compassion. The heart's desire height, when definition of compassion of Karuna is the tremble of the heart of good people. So the vibe, the vibrations are the trembling, the shaking of the heart, the empathy of the heart, and the languages of good people. We're all good people, we're all capable of being good people. And so to be able to relax and rest and our goodness, to find that goodness, and to care from there to feel the trembling and to care for the world from there, and then out of that trembling, to suffuse the world, to spread into our world, are with eyes of kindness, speech of kindness, actions of kindness, that show the world we care. And I mentioned earlier doing it at the speed of love. And I think this is a very important idea that love is actually quite slow compared to other things we call the speed of it's a lot slower in the Speed of light, it's a lot slower in the speed of sound, it's probably a lot slower sometimes then, you know the traffic on the freeway. Love takes its time, compassion takes its time, so that there can be a calmness about it a groundedness in it, so that it can be made contact. So you can see clearly what's there. You don't want to rush your love you because rush love probably trips over itself. But take your time to find a way to gently open to it and feel it and do it in a way that feels safe for you to offer compassion. So that's one of the great movements outwards. And in this sense, I also refer to that as outwards is also outwards to yourself from that light in your heart. You can also bring love and compassion to yourself. And it might be that you're the most And Procore important recipient of your compassion. There's a teaching that you are that every individual is worthy of their own love and care. And one of the reasons

for this is that this light of compassion that we have, if it doesn't really go through a clear being ourselves, when it's going to go out in the world, it often gets kind of mucked up, but often gets kind of tripped up or it gets dimmed a little bit or even goes dark, even though we're trying to be compassionate. But without somehow learning to care for ourselves, not necessarily so that our suffering goes away. But that's how there's space or ability for compassion, to somehow go through our own pain or our own challenges and own difficulties. And hold it with care and kindness, not struggle with it so much not condemn it, not run away from it. But somehow the question capacity to open to it in a kind, supportive way. And it might still be there. But that creates the capacity for love to go further and go out. And then perhaps our love for the world or compassion for the world can be more useful. And one of the ways it can be useful when we are suffering ourselves is that we can sometimes understand much better their suffering and others, if it's similar to our own, that our own broken heart our own pain and challenges and struggles is almost like the ways in which we can have more empathy, the ways we can have more understanding, and the ways that our compassion and care is not going to be conceited or arrogant or indifferent to others. There's maybe a kind of in in compassion, it's better to have a little bit of humbleness humility amounted then to step forward with confidence and boy doze yourself into caring for everybody else. And so there is some some kind of value of offering compassion and care to yourself, so you can better offer it to others. So that's, you know, that's the movement outwards. In a sense, the movement inward, that's healthy and is how we can suffer to become free of suffering is to experience suffering in ourselves or in the world. And then, rather than having Karuna compassion, have an emotion or a motivation. That's called some big some way ago. And there's different definitions of this concept. But I and I kind of interpret it as being the strong motivation, to practice, to engage in mindfulness to engage in the practice of concentration, loving kindness, compassion to enter into path of practice, to free ourselves from suffering, to discover for ourselves, how not to be carrying the burden of our stress or distress or grief or fear or resentment, our angers, our greed, our disappointments, all things that can happen in this life to everyone. But how not to be burdened by it and caught in it and, and carried and pushed down by it, how to move in the opposite direction, how to become liberated, how to be able to lessen the suffering and dissolve the suffering and find that find the other side of that suffering. This is one of the great noble tasks of a lifetime. This is a noble task, a dignified task of tremendous value. To really have some big got to really be motivated. Yes, I want to suffer I want to find the path out of suffering. I want to practice now. This is a time to practice. There are certainly times when we can do both we can have compassion for the world and a strong motivation to practice. One way that works together is that some people because they have all this compassion for the world, they really want to make a difference for the world and help other people not suffer. They realize I have to do the work first. If I don't know how to come to the end of suffering, if I don't know how to be wise and how to compost suffering into the freedom from suffering, how can I ever offer that to other people I can I even support that and other people are or recognize that that's a possibility for other people. One of the greatest gifts to give and one of the greatest possibilities is to really discover a heart An inner life a mind that doesn't suffer, that knows how to be at peace, that no matter what happens around us, does not get into contracted or resistant or doesn't feel the weight of it or get closed down. But to be able to stay open and transparent and porous, to be able to feel clearly and deeply what goes on in the world, but to not suffer more because

of it. And, and to do that, so that we can better serve the world. So this is a way that compassion and some big acronyms and they can work together. It's also it depends on our circumstances. There are times when one seems more important than the other. Perhaps if you're in the medical field right now, that maybe this is a time where your compassion for the world really is really needed. So you can get go To work and support so many people. If you're sheltered at home, and you have a lot of time there are such people. Maybe this is the time for some bigger. This is the time to really practice more to meditate more, study the Dharma more, study the Dharma of your heart more, really kind of understand what's going on here be motivated. This is important. Not to watch more Netflix, not to just be distracted and read endless news and just feel the trouble with the weight of it. But rather say this is that this is important, the noble path of freedom from suffering. I've been waiting for a long time to have enough time to meditate after work, I have all these things I have to do. And now I'm not working now. I'm home a lot. I have extra time. Maybe this is a time to have the some big ideas, this passion or this strong sense of Some people call it some vague urgency, that sense of urgency, this is a time to practice. And so these are these two are healthy movements, in relationship, in our encounter with suffering, to meet it with to meet it with compassion, and act accordingly, whatever way that's appropriate for you. Or to meet it with our desire, our aspiration, our strong intention, to find the end of suffering to find the alleviation of suffering, not just for ourselves, but also for others as well. It's one of the I think one of the greatest things a person can do in their life is to do this practice in a deep way. And, and to really get to the bottom of suffering, the bottom of our conceit, the arrogance, bottom of our attachments, and really kind of discover with that, see it experienced him Dissolve and disappear and experience a possibility of a liberated heart. A peaceful heart to heart that finally is at home in itself is at ease and safe, and then carries that safety out into the world, into the world where things are not so safe. Imagine that. So these two great movements there's two noble movements and to use Buddhist language there's two ignoble movements. The ignoble movement of anger, hostility, attacking, pushing away closing down the ways that suffering causes more suffering, the ignoble way of collapsing or blaming or getting contracted or getting more and more wrapped up in fear or distress or self criticism or condemnation or self pity in many ways, it's so painful To have this kind of collapse internally. And it's not really healthy to do that. It's very easy to do that. And it's not easy to say that pull out of it. It needs a lot of care, a lot of compassion, a lot of self valuing. Almost not believe the negative voices about, you know, that say that you're somehow wrong or bad or inadequate or incapable. Everyone is capable. Everyone is capable of beginning to take the noble path, the noble path of compassion, or the noble path of the path of liberation, everyone's capable. But in this theme of the speed of love, the speed of practice speed is maybe also quite slow. Don't feel like you have to do it too fast. Don't feel like you have to make big steps and strides and in this, this is Maybe you're always slow, but slow and steady. The tortoise wins the race, slow and steady. And that's what I've seen in my practice in life is not big steps and dramatic, you know, leaps into some kind of great resolution of suffering. I've seen the slow, steady growth and slow movement sometimes in perceptible day by day, week by week. But the ongoing dedication is some vague to practice it this is important is, you know, we're all capable of that. And then we have to find what way works for us in our life. And then finally, I want to say that that this marriage is bringing together of Karuna on some big compassion and the sense of the compassion, suffering with others and the passion for practice the strong zeal,

motivation, desire for freedom and liberation, to bring these two together and have them work together and support each other, is probably the noblest of the noble ways. This is the path of the Buddha, this is the path of the people who are most wise is to bring together these two and be practice for the welfare embedded benefit of all beings everywhere to practice for the welfare and benefit of yourself. Absolutely. And practice for the welfare and benefit of all beings everywhere, and all the ones you encounter along the way. So, thank you so much for participating and for listening, and I hope that you'll give some consideration to this, these two movements of inward and outward and how to suffer we're all going to suffer and all this helps To suffer, so that it's the end of suffering, not suffer. So there's more suffering, may you come to the end of suffering. And until that day when your suffering ends, may it be lessened. And may you experience and know that there are many, many people in this world who care about you care about your welfare, and want to support you, as you find your way. Thank you very much. And in one announcement, some of you come here on Mondays. And so next Monday, I'm teaching a retreat. So I won't be here Monday night to give this talk. And, but I will be back here in two weeks. So be well and, and I will during this retreat that I'm teaching, continue with the early morning 7am here in California. Little teaching was 30 minutes sitting in the 15 minute talk so if you want to continue kind of coming time see or like this this way, next week when the retreat starts on Saturday, but so next week, I'll still continue that morning teaching. So May you be well and thank you