

Love (27) Metta Samadhi 2

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Hello and welcome to this continuous series on love in the Buddhist meanings of the word love.

And so one of the forms of love in Buddhism is *mettā*, usually translated as loving-kindness. I often translate it as goodwill. And the... So, one of the things to appreciate is that goodwill, love takes many different forms. So whatever ways I talk about it or someone else talks about it, it might not be the good fit for how you do it. And so I try to talk about all the different component ways that might come into play, so that even just one of those might be your way.

For some people, it's more a feeling. For some people, it's more an intention. For some people, it's more a form of way of thinking. For some people, it involves more a kind of feeling of a certain kind of healthy desire. For some people it's a glow, some people it feels like a light, some people it's just a kind of wonderful kind of tingling something. There are all kinds of ways in which it's felt. There's many aspects of it.

And in order to go into the *samādhi* of *mettā*... Meaning, in order to really immerse oneself deeply in the whole experience, the whole capacity for *mettā*, so that it becomes the unified, continuous place that we rest, we abide. An amazing thing that that's possible, so that our whole being somehow is suffused with some degree of goodwill, like this is what we're centered on, this is what we're about in the course of the *samādhi* itself. And there's a lot of learning that happens in this state.

And two of them that I wanted to emphasize today, one is a *samādhi* is a state where we're somehow self-contained, self-unified, we're at home, we're centered on ourselves, so that the mind or the heart, we are not reaching forward for something, expecting something,

wanting something, trying to get something, trying to avoid something, trying to push something away. That whole movement of being pushing and grabbing, getting and taking and avoiding, all that quiets down because in *samādhi* we're becoming deeply centered here and now. I'd like to say almost centered on oneself, but there's something about self that kind of begins to become kind of amorphous or kind of intangible as we get more and more centered here on ourselves, paradoxically. So we're really here.

And often when people love and conventional love in our society, it's transactional. It comes with expectations. It comes with things that we want to have. We want to be with the person we love more. We want to be appreciated by them. We want them to be committed to us. We want them to somehow reciprocate and with loving us in all kinds of ways. We want to have pleasure. We want to have time. We want, we want, we want. And some of that's fine. Some of that is healthy. Okay. But clearly in a *samādhi* state, that is not there. There's no reaching out or wanting.

And this is a revolutionary way for some people to experience, because from some people, their mind is incessantly wanting something or not wanting something. Every thought is involved, some desire or aversion, some preoccupation, and that we're concerned with. But in *samādhi*, we're coming home to ourselves. There's no more kind of clinging desire, no desire reaching out beyond ourselves or wanting something. If there's a desire, the desire is to be fully at home here, to relax into this experience here, to open up into this experience here.

And so to learn that in *samādhi* and have the *samādhi* be centered on *mettā*, on love, begins to show us that there's a capacity for love we have that can be non-transactional, that can be independent of what other people are doing, independent of what we get in return, even independent of whether people are doing something that we disapprove of or strongly disapprove of. If it's transactional, we feel like, well, I can't love them if they're doing something awful. We don't have to approve what they're doing. We can sometimes even stand and say, no, you can't do that. But what we learn in *samādhi* is that we are harming ourselves or harming our *samādhi*, harming our capacity for love, if we limit our love, if we exclude people from it.

And the wisdom of being able to feel kindness, feel goodwill, non-transactionally, and have the wisdom take care of things in the world. This is one of the gifts that we could learn from *samādhi*, sitting in meditation and discovering this centered, grounded kind of goodwill, which is complete in itself. It needs nothing else. Even if it has the wish, may someone be happy. The wish is not a desire that needs to be fulfilled. So that's one aspect that is kind

of universal when we're talking about a *samādhi*.

The other is that *samādhi* is pleasant. There's pleasure in a *samādhi*. And healthy love has pleasure in it. It's pleasant to have it. And one of the ways to become grounded and centered in *samādhi* is to really feel the welcoming, nurturing sensations of pleasure that is there as part of it.

Different people experience that pleasure very different ways. And some people, it might be more cognitive, more mental. Some people, it might be more emotional, more heartfelt. Some people, it might be somatic, kind of radiating through the body. And in other ways as well. But to feel some kind of pleasure, pleasantness, in our whole psychophysical system someplace. It could be in one little spot. It could be kind of a wider area. It could be the whole body.

But to recognize that and really allow the gathering, the unification, the centering ourselves in the experience here to include that pleasure, to include that pleasure, so that pleasure can kind of begin to suffuse or pervade or spread, is the language of the Buddha, so that it can kind of have an influence that spreads through our body to help bring more of this pleasure around. So when the *samādhi* has to do with *mettā*, then it's the pleasure that comes from having love, the pleasure that comes from having goodwill. You're allowed to have that pleasure. If we're too concerned with a should, we're supposed to be kind, we're supposed to do it right, we're supposed to have this, this, this. Then we're not centered on ourselves, we're not kind of relaxed and being here. And then it's hard to feel the pleasure.

And so to begin feeling that pleasure, and letting that pleasure and that centeredness not be tricked away or hijacked by beliefs that you don't deserve this, you shouldn't be this way, this is not something that good people do, that this is too selfish. There's all kinds of things that would take us away to center here, to relax here, to be here in a full way.

And... So, these two qualities that can support the *samādhi* of *mettā*, the quality of being really centered here in yourself, and the quality of feeling the pleasure of being here, being pleasure of having goodwill. And as we stay with goodwill, stay with that, stay with that pleasure. Some people can just simply stay with it and radiate it, that pleasure, that pleasure of goodwill, kind of becomes the focal point as we breathe, we breathe through it. And the feeling that love then spreads. And that allows our thinking mind to get quieter and quieter.

Other people find that it's really useful to have the thinking mind engaged very, very simply, with expressing this goodwill. So sometimes I use the word yes, that just yes to this love. Sometimes I use it just say happy, joy, peace. And sometimes more classically, is to, well-

wishing has a wish. And that is saying, may you be happy, may you be happy, safe, may you be peaceful, may you be free.

And so each person is going to have to find their own way through some of these different component parts of loving-kindness. But the guide is to do so very simply in such a way that we start feeling the invitation to become centered here in our experience, feeling the pleasure of it all, just being with it.

So I hope that makes sense for all of you. And we'll continue this series on *Mettā Samādhi* tomorrow. And I saw there were some chats about the low volume here. And so maybe something has changed in the settings. We had trouble last week with this last while on the recording system here. So I appreciate the chats, and I'll go check now if there's anything to do with the settings.

But I have been wondering whether it's actually my voice. I've been maybe this topic, maybe a little bit too close to this meditative stay way. And so my voice is getting even lower than usual. So I'll look into it, and I hope that my voice will be loud enough for all of you tomorrow. Thank you.