

## Guided Meditation: Metta and Freedom

**Gil Fronsdal**

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Hello and welcome. And to continue our reflections and practice of love, *mettā*, loving-kindness. And some of the deeper, the deepest maybe opportunity with a really deep, delving into love and absorbing ourselves in it, being immersed in it, especially in the in the context of meditation where we can give all of ourselves over to it. There's no distractions, nothing to do, that we get really absorbed in the experience of *mettā*. The opportunity there is to discover something about freedom, to discover something about how the heart, the mind can be liberated, freed from, freed. It's certainly its opposite, hatred, resentments, angers, annoyances, grievances, the grieving mind, grievance mind.

And to understand that to be very sensitive to the qualities and characteristics of what we normally would call love, to begin appreciating how there's often attachment, clinging, fear, attachments to self, attachments to security and safety. There's a lot of attachments that come along with how we love other people. And to be able to free love from that, to have an uncomplicated love, to have a love which is not diminished through any attachment is a phenomenal thing. And then to go further... and to experience a liberation even from love. Not to diminish it or ignore it, or to undervalue it, but to discover a thoroughgoing, full freedom, liberation, awakening. But to do so with the help of love, the support of it.

Love can take us a long way, *mettā*. So for this meditation, to maybe appreciate a little bit love, *mettā*, goodwill as a radiance, as a glow, as a possibility that can exist without any attachment or clinging. I would like to evoke the idea of a very satisfying form of stillness, the stillness of an early morning, just as the light begins to come up. The stillness of a mountain lake early in the morning. As the sun rises, not a wind, not a movement, everything completely glass still, maybe the reflections of the mountains in the distance, and everything is quiet, everything is still. And then we feel, we see the first breeze, the first bird song, the first something, and pretty soon the day has begun, but before that, the stillness and the quiet.

So it's possible to become very still, find the stillness place inside where *mettā*, goodwill, is not generated, is not thought about, is not, doesn't require thinking. But because still is placed within where it simply vibrates, there's a gentleness, a tenderness, a warmth, that is almost the same as a deep stillness but surrounded by stillness. And whatever is not still, whatever the movement is, that might represent some way in which your whole system is not yet free. The final freedom, and don't be against that or troubled by that, but see if you can align yourself back to the place of stillness.

So, to assume a meditation posture, a posture that you are going to be able to stay very still in this soft, gentle stillness, where you're not holding yourself still, but you're allowing the body to be soft and still, unmoving, maybe so the body can rest, and doing nothing special with your breathing, except to ease your awareness into the experience of breathing. And with the exhales, relaxing the body, with the exhale softening the body, with the exhale, settling the body into a quiet still place within, softening the mind, letting the mind settle into its own quiet still place within the mind, resting almost as if the mind itself can rest with the pull of gravity. And then finding your way into the some center places in your body where you feel the most still. There might be movements of your body, especially with breathing. That feels more like a peripheral to that central spot, center spot, that's soft and still.

And is there, in that inner stillness and softness, is there any... gentle, tenderness, warm. Is there any feeling in that spot safety and goodness? Maybe the movements of the body breathing can be like a gentle wind, gentle stroking of that still, quiet place. And might there be at the center of all things in you, some *mettā* or love that's very simple, maybe has no object. It just is a warmth that glows, a tenderness that's sweet, a calm that appreciates, gently, together with a rhythm of breathing, gently touch in to the quietest, stillest place within, to feel, to notice, to feel, that right there in the stillness there may be no attachment, nothing to cling to.

Each time during the breath that you touch into the stillness, allow yourself to feel the goodness, the freedom, the peace of a place that has no attachments, preoccupations, being nothing for and against, just some place that is a refuge, a peace, maybe a place of love with no object touching into the deepest stillness you have. A stillness which is receptive, undefended, that would respond with kindness if kindness is called for. But when kindness is not called for, is content in itself to be still, quiet, at ease, as if all the work and responsibilities have been done and for a few minutes there's the bliss of peace, of non-attachment, non-responsibility and in the middle of the stillness. If you let go fully, what opens in you?

And then coming to the end of this sitting to allow the deepest stillness quiet within to turn

outwards into the world, to be still and gaze upon everything kindly. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.