

Dharmete: Love (75) Generosity as Love

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Okay, so with this day we turn a corner with this long series on love. And now, with six months of love, loving behind us, the next stage of love is to express it in the world. Okay. To not just let it be a private affair, not just be something that happens in meditation or in our own hearts.

And there is a way of genuine, deep feeling of love that contains within it an expression, a movement to speak or to act or to orient ourselves, to give rise to a way to live, to give rise to a deep motivation and intention. Love is not static. Love is not fixed. It is connected from a deep source inside that is a source of how we live and how we express ourselves and how we orient ourselves, and the values and the purpose and the orientation for which we can center our whole life.

And some people might call it a life of love. Some people might call it a life of practice. A life of freedom. A life of generosity. A life of a vow. A life of a commitment to living freely without attachment, without clinging. To living with concern for the welfare and well-being of others. A life of gratitude.

There are many different expressions that can come from this deeper place of love. And it wants to be expressed. If love is not expressed, then certain kinds of love, if not expressed, are curtailed. Only half of it comes alive. Part of what love is, is how it lives through us and through our speech and our eyes and our behavior.

And the fulfillment of love, or the flourishing or the maturing of love, has a lot to do with how we live it in our lives. Not just how we receive it, not just how we are inspired by it, but really in a deep way how we live it. And there are many expressions of love that can flow from us. And the one I want to emphasize now is generosity.

That one of the, in Buddhism, foremost and first expressions of practice, of love, of being on the path of Buddhism, is to allow that to flow from us: a generosity, a giving, a gifting, a freeing, in a way that our hands release into the world something that is beneficial for the world. And it can be our kind words, our appreciation of others, our friendly feeling of a hello, where we release our fear to do that. We release our hesitation or our caution, or we release our preoccupation with other things, in a genuine way. Because we would like to. We just... that's what's coming from deep inside, from the love itself.

Where living from that love is more important than living from the surface desires, the surface aversions, the surface anxieties that we have. There can be a very strong pull into those surface reactivities and concerns. And for some people, that's who they think they are. They are their desires. They are their fears.

But what we learn in this practice is that these surface desires, surface fears, surface aversions are certainly there, but they don't have to define us. They don't have to govern us. We can allow them to be in the wide space of awareness so that they don't predominate. There's more space. There's more of us here than just those things. We don't get locked in or narrowed by them.

And in that more spacious, open presence, we can begin dropping into a deeper source within, of what is it that the heart most wants to do. And maybe it's even deeper than the heart. And maybe there's some deeper place, maybe the heart of the heart. Maybe in Buddhism there's a very strong association that some of the deepest places within us are not necessarily the heart, but deep in the belly. That that's the source, like where the womb is almost.

And what is it that wants to be expressed from there? From that place that knows freedom, from that place that knows freedom, unruffled love, from the place that knows, that can't really be disturbed by what goes on in the world. It's kind of insulated, or kind of safe, or confident, or at ease in such a way that all kinds of things can happen around us that are challenging to our surface mind. But that's like the place of peace or well-being.

And from there, there's generosity. From there, there are movements to support other people, to give to other people, give our smile, give our kind words, our greetings, to give our support, give our help, give gifts maybe sometimes, give our time to help other people. And it isn't because we should do this. There's no sense of obligation there, which is how many people come from that they're supposed to, they should, they've learned growing up that this is what they're supposed to do.

And some people live in that surface sense of duty, obligation, responsibility. But now we're talking about a whole different orientation, a different operating system within, where there's no should, there's no we have to. It's more, it's this is what love wants to do, this is the expression of freedom. This is the expression of the deepest vow, the deepest sense of commitment, the deepest sense of the heart's true wish.

And so one of the ways to stay close to that, to remind ourselves of it, is to take time every day to ask ourselves, what is your deepest wish? What's the deepest wish of your heart? What's your deepest intention for yourself? What's the deepest place you know when all the surface concerns are not present?

Every day, spend time with that. Have tea, look out the window, after meditation, just be quiet. What is the deepest wish? What's there? And just asking that question can be an expression of that deep love. Stay connected.

You're so important. We're so valuable. There's so much preciousness within us. Let's take time to find out what is it it wants. What wants to be expressed?

And then we have to navigate these deeper expressions versus the surface of fears, anxieties, desires, wants, concerns, and where do we want to come from? What's important for us? Is there some place deep inside that's different than the surface concerns?

And one of the thought exercises to do is to ask yourself something like, if you had all the financial security, the relational security, the security with relationships with people, if your health was good, if everything was kind of settled and you weren't navigating, trying to figure out those things, and your intentions of how to live are mostly to overcome the difficulties and make yourself comfortable. But if you already have that, then what is the heart's deepest wish? What would you do? What comes out of this deeper place? How would you express it in the world?

And the proposal here from Buddhism is that the deepest heart, the deepest source within us, will animate our life in a positive way, in a good way. It will animate our life from this place of love and give us purpose, give us meaning, give us dedication, give us joy, give us a deep sense of harmony for how to be in this very difficult, non-harmonious world.

So, generosity. So, you might spend the day, maybe not, you don't have to be generous, unless you want, but to see, is there some way, if you give yourself a little space, time, maybe periodically through the day, just sit quietly in different situations. No one needs to know you're doing this. And take that three-breath journey. Just stay with three breaths to feel each breath deeper inside of you.

And see, at the end of three breaths, is there something inside that wants to be generous, that could be generous? And how can that generosity be a deep, natural expression rather than an obligation? It could simply be how you delight in someone, your sparkle in your eye as you kind of appreciate them, and they're a little bit more present, and maybe you become a better listener. Your gift is to listen. Your gift is to be present.

There's so many different ways of doing this. But find ways today to see if you can find where a natural generosity wells up in different circumstances. And may it nourish your deepest place. So, thank you.