



October 25, 2023 Wednesday Evening with Aaron

(This talk has not been reviewed by Barbara and Aaron)

Saying no with compassion from the heart of love; Washing the windows—clearing our obscurations to clear seeing; Finding a bigger container; The karma of preventing harm or not

Barbara: I'm guessing that most of you have been watching the news, as I have. I'm watching it more than I ordinarily would, because my husband, Hal, is glued to CNN—I can't say 24/7, but maybe 20/7. So, if I want to go in and sit with him, the news is on.

It's hard to watch; there is so much pain in the world, so much suffering for people. Ukraine right now is taking a back seat to Israel and Palestine, but we know that the bombings are still going on in Ukraine—and Russia, also.

So many of you have written to me or written to Aaron saying, "How can we help? What do we do?" So, I'm just going to give you Aaron and let him speak to his thoughts about this.

Aaron: My blessings and love to you. I am Aaron. It is a joy to be with you tonight. Thank you for joining us.

As Barbara said, many of you have been writing and asking, "How can we help? Why is there so much suffering? Is it all going downhill? Why do humans experience pain, anger, heavy emotions, at all?" These are some of your questions.

So, I just want to speak to this a bit tonight. I'm not usually so keyed to current events, but so many of you are very caught up in what's happening in the world, and with reason.

And it's not just the hatred and the anger; it's the environment. I have not yet heard the results of what happened in Acapulco, but I know there was a very severe hurricane there this morning. I assume many are affected. And all over the world.

First, you may think you are the names I see on the screen. And, of course, that's part of who you are. In one past life, I was named Aaron, and I've picked up that name to use, because Aaron was a kind man and a wise teacher. That doesn't mean that I, as Aaron, am a wise teacher, but I hope to be, at least a wise friend. But I was also Nathaniel. I was a Buddhist monk whose name need not be shared, and hundreds of other beings. And I am none of those beings.

You, right now, are an expression of the essence of your being, which in itself is an expression of the Divine Essence, All That Is, God, Goddess, Unconditioned, however you would name it. So, your higher self, if we might call it that, is an expression of the Divine and you are one expression of that higher self.



You come into the incarnation with physical, mental, emotional and spirit bodies. They are temporary; they are the expression of this moment. And yet, they are grounded in karma. You are expressing in this way for a reason.

You have come in, all of you, with certain primary intentions, and because you are old souls, those intentions usually include being of service in the world. Opening more deeply to love and finding the power of the love expressed through yourselves. Helping to support others who are lost in fear, pain or anger. Living with more wisdom and kindness. These are some of the intentions that brought you here.

Then you say to me, moaning, "Aaron, why do we have these heavy emotions?" Well, how can you help to resolve heavy emotions throughout the world and bring in more light, more loving kindness and compassion, if you do not have the heavy emotion in yourself as catalyst? You have to practice responding to what evolves through you and the world. And it is truly an evolution from darkness into light.

And yet, that evolution is on a linear place. On the ultimate level, you are, and everything always has been, light. There is nothing but light in the ultimate sense. But in the relative sense, of course, there is darkness, fear, anger, hatred, pain and confusion.

Your world has been blessed for thousands of years with loving beings who are able to demonstrate loving kindness in the face of darkness and hate. They are the teachers. *You* are the teachers, because you are learning to hold loving kindness where there has been hatred.

Sometimes heavy emotions in the Buddha dharma are referred to as poisons, and I understand how they can be felt as poisons. No one wants to feel terror, anger or greed.

And yet, they are also teachers. You have agreed to come into a human body, experience what the human experiences. If you had not thusly agreed, you would have stayed on the higher planes; you would not have come into a body. You knew when you came into a body that you were going to experience human feelings—joy and sorrow, but also greed and anger, hatred and fear, and joy, generosity, happiness.

The human experience is like no other in this respect, in that you are on a plane, the earth plane, in which there is the potential truly for full liberation: to know without any question what you are in essence. What is temporary arising out of conditions and passing away, and what remains, the essence of all being.

Occasionally, there is a human who has a sudden awakening experience and has the capacity to carry that awakening experience through into the human lifetime and truly live it. The Buddha was one such being, Siddhartha Gautama. He was not born awake, but born with a readiness to awaken. And in this, he inspires, because you are also born with the readiness to awaken.



The Buddha opened to full awakening in that lifetime. It would be pleasant, certainly, wonderful, if each and every one of us opened to that full awakening. The wonderful thing is that you do not have to for the human lifetime still to be beautiful, rich and filled with wonder, filled with joyous gifts.

Barbara's windows, now at the end of the summer, are somewhat covered with dust, dirt from the rains, and so forth. And today some time was spent by Barbara and others washing the windows, washing them so that the glass becomes clear again.

This, in effect, is what you are doing. At a certain point you notice how smudged the windows are becoming and you make the decision, "I choose clarity. I choose depth of understanding which leads me to depth of the open heart. And so, I will wash the windows."

You wash the windows through mindfulness, seeing what obscures clear seeing, and seeing, with that obscuration, right there the window is already clear. You notice that Barbara did not have to break out the glass today and install new glass, only to bring the cleanser and wipe the dirt off, the obscurations.

This is all you are invited to do in lifetimes: to pay attention to the obscurations that bring up fear, hatred, greed, and other such heavy emotions. To gently inquire, from whence has this arisen? Even without knowing from where it arose, to hold the intention to clear it, because the clear glass is always there.

Barbara was talking to a friend earlier this week who was born in Israel. Many of her family are still living in Israel, so she has close connections there, but she has lived for many decades here in this country. And she has a background of being a dharma teacher so she has deepened in a lot of wisdom, has "washed the windows." And yet, she pointed out this week, "I know the presence of the clear windows, but as soon as I wipe them clean, they're spattered with mud again because I close up with anger, with fear." She asked me, "Aaron, how do I move past the fear?" The way all of you move past the fear, the anger and the heavy emotions: practice!

You probably know that joke of the young man with the violin on the subway. He is tapping a bystander and saying, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" And the bystander says, "Practice, my friend, practice!" How do you get to Carnegie Hall? How do you get to awakened mind? Practice.

Let's look at some of the facets of such practice. First, it's the intention to live your life in a harmless way, with kindness to all beings, wishing harm to no being.

Now, I understand that it can be challenging. Without wishing harm to any being, how do you say no to a being? How do you say no to Hamas coming in and murdering in such a terrible way? How do you say no to the Nazis, who came in filling the world with



their hatred? Can we find ways to say no without wishing such beings harm? It's a complex question. What is harm?

Some years ago, people raised the question to me, "Aaron, if you were sitting in the back of a schoolroom of children behind some kind of screen, invisible, and a gunman came into the room with an automatic weapon and said to the children, to the teacher, to the class, 'I am going to kill you all,' and you could really tell that he was seething with hatred and he meant it, and these are powerless five-, six-, seven—year-olds—if you had a gun, what would you do?"

I didn't really have to think about it: I would have shot him. Now, I am an awakened being and have the capacity within me to shoot and kill him without hatred. And yet, I still carry the karma of killing him and I am responsible for that act, even if I act out of a desire to protect. It's complex. You have to have examined every other option.

For Israelis right now, there is both the deep intention to protect their homeland and there is anger. The karma born out of anger simply breeds more karma, more negativity. The karma born out of loving kindness that says no—with that question in me, recognizing that this gunman would have terrible karma if he killed thirty children. I can't say that I'm killing him for his own good; I'm killing him because I must not allow him to kill thirty innocent children. I am responsible for killing him, and that responsibility goes long and broad.

On other planes, I would be responsible to become one of his teachers. To try to befriend him. To try to help him to understand why he had hated and why I had killed, not to justify the killing, but to help him take responsibility for himself being killed. Unfortunately, most gunmen in the world are not ready to understand that. They simply hate and go out and kill, whether it's killing one person or a nation.

What we are left with then is our responsibility: coming into this Earth plane as awakening beings with a deep desire to do no harm. To purify the heavy emotions in ourselves, so that when we speak up and say no to negativity, we are not saying it from a place of hatred, but from a place of deep compassion.

We see this beautifully in Gandhi and his actions. His actions, for the most part, did not create unwholesome karma for himself or for any other beings. Other beings may have had unwholesome karma through hatred of Gandhi, but that was not Gandhi's doing. They are responsible for their hatred.

Coming back to the more practical, we started with the question, "Why are we in these human bodies with physical, mental, and emotional pain? Does life really need to be this challenging?"

And I say, yes, it does, because without these challenges, how would you practice? Each time you face such a catalyst and find a bit more spaciousness in your heart, not



damning the other person, not hating the other person, not even fearing the other person, but still knowing it is my responsibility both to say no and to say no from a place of clarity, of love. And that does not excuse any acts I do that harm another; I am still responsible for those. But the more I can act and speak from a place of deep wisdom and compassion, the less likely I am to get my own karmic field entangled in it and to bring their karma and karmic field into it. But rather, to be able to speak to them, face to face, heart to heart, saying, "No. You may not do that."

And they might say, "Who's gonna stop me?"

"I am, because I love you, and I love the people that you would attack."

You all know the difference between feeling great anger in another person and feeling deep peacefulness, even love, in another person.

For me, perhaps one of the greatest teachers was watching Yeshua say no to people who were getting ready to be violent to other people or to animals, to anything. And I cannot say never, but I almost never watched him say no with anger. He never judged another. Instead, he spoke to that which was clearest in them, to the love that was right there in their hearts along with the anger.

And this is what was so powerful, because when somebody speaks to you, not shaming you, not hating you or putting you down in any way, but respectfully, speaking to the love within you that's right there behind the anger and inviting it out, you may still commit that violent act, but gradually, if it happens time after time, you move your way through it.

There's an interesting story about the Quaker William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. At first, he was a soldier and he became a Quaker. Somebody who was becoming a Quaker asked him, "When do I have to put down my sword?" And William Penn looked at this man and said, "When you cannot carry it anymore."

This is a wonderful metaphor for us all. When do I have to put down my hatred, my prejudices and judgments? When you cannot carry them anymore.

What allows us to not carry them anymore is a deepening wisdom in the non-duality of all that is; not just of beings, but of the states like love and fear, joy and sorrow.

When we go through these seeming dualities and find the deepest place in the heart that is simply filled with awe at the variety of presentations into human and other living form and can rejoice in the differences, we begin to see how people become led into deeper and deeper fear and reactivity, and we become increasingly able to rest in a place that simply says, "No."



Barbara would certainly acknowledge that she is not an awakened being—awakening, yes, as many of you are, but not awakened. And fifty years ago she was far from that.

But in the 1960s, as some of you know, she went on Freedom Rides, and with another situation, sit-ins and so forth, where she needed to face people who were murderously angry, and who would happily have killed her if they could have gotten to her.

On the Freedom Rides there was not so much a person to person expression, but the whole bus of people. But at times, she tells one story of a sit-in in a small, very southern restaurant, where people other than white people were not permitted. She tells how four of them went in, she and another white young man and a black couple. They simply walked in the door very early in the morning with nobody there to stop them, no breakfast crowd yet. Some people saw them go in and a crowd gathered. They had stones and bricks and sticks. They were roaring with anger. "Come out," and waving their sticks.

The four of them sat there and meditated for almost half an hour. They knew that their only protection was love, and that love might not be enough to protect them physically. They could still be killed.

According to Gandhi's teachings of *satyagraha*, soul force, they understood that it was vital for them to forgive those who would kill them and have compassion for them before they even undertook this task, or they were simply creating more unwholesome karma for themselves and others.

So, these four people sat in the restaurant for half an hour meditating and making sure that they were centered in that place of compassion for those screaming outside, literally for their lives.

At a certain point, in agreement, they just looked at each other and stood up, took hands and walked to the door. Their love would protect them karmically from any negative or unwholesome karma, but it could not necessarily protect their lives.

But when they walked to the door, Barbara tells how she was able to make eye contact with some of the crowd, not in a judgmental way or "stare them down" way, but just compassionately looking into those eyes and loving them as best she could. And yes, there was fear. Of course there was fear; she was human. Not only human, but simply a twenty-, twenty-one-year-old human. So there was fear.

People looked at the four of them and just dropped their stones, their bricks, and cast their eyes down. They were ashamed, some of them. It was not Barbara's intention to create shame in others, but they could not meet her love. But they learned something.

The four of them walked down the steps from the restaurant and the crowd just parted. They walked through and into the waiting car and drove away.

I'm sorry Barbara can't tell you this story, but it's too hard for her to come back into the body and then to have me take it over again, so I'm telling it for her. But she tells how she learned that day, without any doubt, that love is the strongest force in the universe. And yes, that there's no guarantee that that would keep her alive. And that was okay; she did what she needed to do. So, this was different than the Freedom Rides, where there was not so much direct eye contact, one on one.

Each of you has been in a situation in your life, or many situations, where you were faced with people who were very angry, very afraid. Some of you have dealt with that in highly skillful ways and some in ways that were less practiced and therefore less skillful. But of course, you had to do it time and again, and again, to learn to be skillful. For Barbara, it was an early presentation in this lifetime, but she understood it from past lives. Some of you may understand it already deep in your being; others may not yet understand it.

You chose to be human and allow the experience of human emotions to learn how to be present in a spacious way with those emotions and not condemn yourself. Because until you can not condemn yourself for anger, how can you not condemn others?

There is nothing wrong with what's happening on Earth. It's a learning place. You knew when you came that it was going to be a very tough course of learning. But you agreed to come. You knew that you had wonderful helpers, your guidance and your human friends, the great masters, so many to help you to remember you have the capacity for love. No matter what terrible things may happen, you have the capacity for love. It's so important for you to remember that capacity and to live that capacity as best you are able.

Amongst some dharma teachers, the idea has come forth of what they have called "A Bigger Container (ABC)," the ABCs of living. I picked up on that phrase long ago, but I did not coin the phrase.

How do we create a bigger container? The example I've often used is if you sat in a four by four foot box, just three foot high walls, and you sat on the floor, and I walked up with a tarantula in my hand, a *big* tarantula, and I reached in and put it on the floor, most of you would leap out of the box. A few of you might say, "Oh, how lovely—a tarantula." But most would leap out of the box. For those who happen to love spiders, picture a poisonous snake, or a rat with sharp teeth, whatever scares you.

You're living your life in a four by four foot box and fear comes up. But then we move the whole exploration, move you into a twenty by twenty foot room. There's a door on either side. I walk in one door with a tarantula, and I put him down on the floor. You'd probably be able to stay put for at least five seconds, or so. Once he started crawling toward you, you might get up and run to the other side of the room, or you might run out the door.

Now, let's change it again—a gymnasium-sized room. Picture yourself sitting against one wall, and I come into the far side and put the tarantula down on the floor. No promises about this spider, that it will or won't bite, will or won't harm. I leave it to you.

So you watch it start to crawl, and it's a *big* container. Perhaps two-thirds of the way across the room, he comes. At that point you stand up, and if he comes towards you, you walk around the edge of the room and over to the other far wall. You watch him go to the wall where you were sitting, wander around there a bit, and then he walks back towards you. When it feels like he's getting too close, you get up and move again. You keep watching him.

There are others in the room. Some of them have no fear of him. You see him climb up on some laps and you see people stroke him. Then he climbs down off the lap and goes somewhere else. So you begin to get a sense that maybe this spider does not mean to kill me or harm me. Maybe I can meet him with compassion. Maybe I can understand that he might also be afraid.

Whether it takes you an hour, or a day, or a month, can you see that eventually you would probably learn to just sit still and allow him to climb on you, and explore what it's like to be there with a tarantula? Can you see that? A bigger container.

Your meditation practice gives you the tool for a bigger container. Mindfulness of fear, feeling the body contraction; perhaps mindfulness of anger or vulnerability. And from that vulnerability, fear and wanting to strike out at the other.

So it's very useful when there is something on the news that causes contraction and fear or anger to just take a deep breath and ask yourself, "In what ways can I invite the experience of a bigger container?"

Right here with wanting to get away, what will invite more presence and an open heart? We remember that this presence is your true being and the open heart is your true being. You don't have to get or create it. You simply move past the contracting emotions, slip through into the place of love.

This is the essential learning for most of you in this human lifetime.

I noted before that there is both the linear awakening and the already present awareness of the awakened heart-mind. Gradually, you learn to trust that this heart is here and has always been here. You thus do not negate yourself, don't judge yourself when there is fear or when heavy emotion arises, but remember how to make space for that fear, for that anger, or even greed, or impatience, or jealousy or any emotion. It does not mean you won't feel the emotion.

Sharing a bit from Barbara again. Last month, with no fault to any caregiver, Hal was standing, as he often does at the bar in his gym room where they change his clothes, holding himself up while they put on some clothes for him. And he just could not hold himself up. He gave no indication; he just collapsed onto the floor, his right leg folding under him. His right leg is the paralyzed and weak one. This created a severe sprain and a lot of pain. He could not stand on the leg. X-rays showed nothing broken, but there was soft tissue injury.

Meanwhile, he could not stand. Usually, they help him to dress by his standing while the caregiver washes, bathes and cleans him. They can clean him lying down in his bed, but it's much harder. If he can stand and can lift one foot to put it into the trouser leg, and then lift the other foot, it's much easier and faster. That's how he's done it for the past five years.

So Barbara, at considerable cost, and with the recommendation of several knowledgeable people, bought a lift with a vest that goes around his upper body to lift him up so all the weight is not on his feet, so if his leg would buckle under him again, he won't fall. He's meant to stand with it, not dangle like a fish on a fishing rod. But if he loses his balance and caregivers are busy with their hands bathing him and can't catch him in time, he won't fall. All the caregivers learned how to use this lift—all but one, who said, "Oh yes, I've used this in the hospital and in the nursing home. I know how to use it.

So last week, this caregiver came in for her shift to take care of Hal, and it was her night to put him to bed. Barbara asked her again, as she had asked her earlier in the evening, "Do you need one of the others who has been using it to come in and show you?"

And she said, "No, I've got it."

She asked her again at bedtime, "Do you need help?"

And she said, "No, I've got it."

"You know how to use the lift?"

"Yes."

So, half an hour passed and the caregiver had not come out to tell Barbara, "Hal is ready for bed." Barbara went into Hal's bedroom and found him lying on the floor and the caregiver was putting his pajamas on with him on the floor. Barbara asked, "Why is he on the floor?"

"Well, he fell, so I'm just getting him dressed here, and then I'll get him into bed."

"How did he fall? How could he fall with the lift?" She didn't see the lift in the room.

And the caregiver replied, "Oh, I wasn't using the lift; I was just holding him."

I don't think in Barbara's lifetime—because clearly I've known her since she was a baby—I don't think I've ever seen her this angry. Her whole body shook with anger because she felt that she had been lied to and deceived. And it was putting Hal at terrible risk. She felt helpless; she felt enraged.

She simply walked out of the room. She knew that she could not speak from that place of anger. She called downstairs to the caregiver who lives in the house downstairs. He is not always on duty, but he was home. He came running up. He was angrier than Barbara! He said to the caregiver, "Your Uber is in the driveway—go! I'll get Hal to bed." He sat Hal up. He lifted him gently onto the bed. He finished getting him dressed and put him to bed.

He then came to Barbara and said, "Please tell me that you're going to fire her." And Barbara said, "Yes, but not while I'm so angry." Barbara needed twenty-four hours to get past that anger. This woman was not due back for another twenty-four hours, and she knew she couldn't speak to her from that place of anger without creating very unwholesome karma for both of them.

I meditated with her, inviting a bigger container, and she said, "I can't find a bigger container, Aaron. I'm still filled with anger. Just metta, first for herself and then for Hal. Chanting; the different tools you have. The ways that open your heart and ground you into that already existent bigger container.

She had to forgive herself for her anger, because she was judging herself for the anger. She had to recognize that when certain conditions are present, anger will arise. And to acknowledge she did not act or speak out of that anger; she did not do harm. But also, she had to stop it right there. She couldn't just say, "Oh, it's okay. Go ahead and take care of him on the floor." So, she wasn't able to go back into the room and tell the caregiver to leave, but the other man was able to do that.

Finding the bigger container. Finding the love in your heart. In that moment, not the love for this caregiver who was careless with Hal, but with the love for Hal and the love for herself, self-respect, the kindness.

Each of you contains this in yourselves. It's a powerful force within you, this force of love. And from this place of love you are able to say, "No. This may not continue." But it's a different "No"—from the heart: "This may not continue," as I saw Yeshua do so many times. Not "NO!!" with rage and feelings of hatred towards the other, feelings of wishing the other ill.



So, how do we carry this view to the world situation? We must say no to aggression. What Hamas did is inexcusable in any human context. We must say no. We must say no to hatred wherever it appears.

But we must find the place in our heart that can speak truth, speak love, not speak hatred back to hatred. We find this through the dharma practice, through the practices that so many of you have learned with me and Barbara and John for over thirty years. We find it through the dharma. Quoting the Buddha, "Hatred never resolves hatred. Only love will resolve hatred."

And we find it through the confidence that no matter how much anger, fear and hatred may arise, love is still there because it is your essence. You cannot lose that love. It is your essence.

It may be very hard to break through to it at times. As I said, that day it took Barbara thirty-six hours, until that caregiver came back and she was able to speak to her about how upset she was and that the caregiver was going to have to leave her employ, that she did not feel that she could trust her with Hal anymore. But she said it without hatred and without rancor.

This is what we do. How do we say no to the Nazis of the world, to the Hamas of the world, to the murderers of the world with their machine guns shooting in schoolrooms of children? How do we say no without hatred? But it is the only way.

Mindfulness. Remembering the beautiful emotions of generosity and gratitude, loving kindness, patience, and more. Deepening in compassion. Taking each heavy emotion that you are assaulted with and saying, "Thank you, Teacher. In this moment, what have you come to teach me?" And being able to find the place of spaciousness right there with the contracted anger.

You find it through looking at those who you deeply love, respect and admire. Beings like Yeshua, like Gandhi or Martin Luther King and other great spiritual teachers. Beings who have modeled non-hatred in this world where there is so much hatred. You go to them with earnestness, asking to be taught. You go there in meditation, acknowledging your pain and helplessness and opening yourself, making yourself vulnerable and asking to be taught.

You all have so much courage to be here in human incarnation at this time, so much love. And I recognize that it is hard, very hard work. But it is what you came for.

As you reach deep within yourself, into this heart of love, you connect with the loving kindness of the world. You find that you are there with all the great beings of the world who have practiced and learned love, and that, yes, you can carry this. Not perfectly, of course, but increasingly with clarity and spaciousness, with this bigger container.



You learn how to forgive yourself first, and then how to forgive others. You learn how to have compassion for yourself, and then how to have compassion for others. You turn to the great beings and say, "Help me."

From the love of your heart you are grounding love into this earth plane, changing the vibration of the earth plane. Raising the Earth into a higher consciousness, wherein increasingly---and this is not a prediction; this is said from a place of knowing. I cannot tell you how long it will take, only that it will happen. Raising consciousness on the Earth so that those of a much lower vibration, deeply filled with hatred and with intent to destroy others, find the Earth's vibration so uncomfortable that they choose not to come here in incarnation, and thus, helping raise the Earth into a higher density, a higher level of consciousness, a vibration of love.

I know you've heard me speak of Yeshua, and most of you have heard him speak, and Mary also, and that Yeshua came to ground this high vibration of love into the earth plane because Earth was devolving into a lower vibration, caught in increasing negativity. And he came, willing to put himself on the line completely, to say, "No. Love shall prevail on Earth, not hatred."

That said, I'd like to close my talk by screensharing the Heart Sutra and having us recite it together. I find this sutra very beautiful. It is deeply filled with instruction on how to live with an open heart. So let's just enjoy saying it together.

(They read the Heart Sutra together; not recorded)

Maha Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra (Heart Sutra)

The Bodhisattva of Great Compassion
from the deep practice of Prajnaparamita
perceived the emptiness of all five skandhas
and delivered all beings from their suffering.

O Sariputra, form is no other than emptiness,
emptiness no other than form.
Form is emptiness, emptiness form.
The same is true of feeling, thought, impulse and consciousness.

O Sariputra, all dharmas are empty.
They are not born nor annihilated.
They are not defiled nor immaculate.
They do not increase nor decrease.
So in emptiness no form, no feeling, no thought, no impulse, no consciousness.

No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no form, sound, smell, taste, touch or objects of mind.
No realm of sight; no realm of consciousness.

No ignorance nor extinction of ignorance,
no old age and death, nor extinction of them.



No suffering, no cause of suffering, no path to lead out of suffering;
no knowledge, no attainment, no realization
for there is nothing to attain.

The Bodhisattva holds on to nothing but Prajnaparamita.
Therefore his mind is clear of any delusive hindrance.
Without hindrance, there is no fear.
Away from all perverted views he reaches final Nirvana.

All Buddhas of past, present and future
through faith in Prajnaparamita
attain to the highest perfect enlightenment.

Know then the Prajnaparamita is the great dharani,
the radiant, peerless mantram, the utmost supreme mantram,
which is capable of allaying all pain.
This is true beyond all doubt.

Proclaim now the highest wisdom, the Prajnaparamita:

Gate, Gate / Paragate / Parasamgate Bodhi, Svaha!

We've just read the Heart Sutra. You are not trying to stop negativity from arising, but seeing clearly it has arisen from conditions and is not the essence of your being, and you have the capacity to let it go and instead to replace that ill will with compassion and loving kindness for all beings.

(break)

Q: *(comment in progress)* . . . unethically, and immediately it came to my consciousness. And I managed the situation, and now it's the aftermath and it's the provider. And do I do a bad review for them, or how do I do it? So, I'm talking it over with L, who is on the call and figuring out a way to best—like with karma—how to (do it) best for everybody's highest good. Because I don't want someone else to have to suffer with the unscrupulousness or injustice, and yet I want to have good karma for me, good karma for them. Give them the opportunity to maybe choose a higher course. And if not, then I need to say no and I need to do a bad review that could hurt them, hurt their business. But not with the intention of being cruel, but with the intention that maybe they'll see, but also to save other people from getting hurt, not with a gun, but with using their service and having them take advantage of people. So I love this message today. It's teaching me some ideas and then I have to figure out how to exercise this. So, thank you.

Barbara: Thank you. I'm sure that question resonates for others, if others would like to share related to it.

Q : Yes, I had a similar situation where I was supposed to have minor surgery and I wound up having a lot of complications after it. And the doctor told me that I should be okay within a certain amount of time, but I wasn't. I was feeling a lot of pain, but I couldn't get to see him for three months. And finally, when I saw him he said, "I don't understand. This shouldn't happen." And he really just didn't want to deal with it.

So, I wrestled with this whole idea of sending him a bad review, too. And the problem is that he's in this practice where he's totally overwhelmed; he has to see so many clients that he just can't handle it. So, I think he's actually a nice guy and a good doctor. And so, I just wonder what to do. If I wrote a bad review, I wouldn't really criticize him, but I would criticize this system where they see so many clients that they can't take care of all of them. So, for me, I haven't gotten rid of all my annoyance with this, so that I think that if I do write a review, I have to write it from a clean slate and not to get back at him.

Barbara: Thank you. Exactly! As soon as you're getting back at him, it doesn't matter what you do to him, it's your karma. You're creating unwholesome karma for yourself. When you're able to speak from a place of clarity and respect for him that's respectful enough to say, "You're doing damage to yourself and to others, and I have to say so. And I don't say it with malice but with clarity: what's happening here is harming people. Please pay attention."

When you say it that way, then it's not doing harm to him or to you. Remember, the practice is in a hard place and maybe it needs to be pointed out to them, that they can either keep trying to see everybody so everybody gets a little bit, but it's not all very good, or they can say no to some people and turn them away. You can't decide which is the most wholesome, only to point out, "This is a dilemma; I understand. Please consider it and choose what your wisdom tells you. And please warn others you're not going to be able to give them the kind of care they might want, because you're so overwhelmed."

What's important here: is what I am doing coming from a clear place within me that's not creating more unwholesome karma for myself and others, or am I responding from a contracted place that's going to create and continue the unwholesome karma?

John: In his talk Aaron spoke about giving the example of being in a classroom where there was someone who had the intention to murder the students in the class. And Aaron realized that he would need to shoot this person so there wouldn't be mass murder.

Aaron said that there would be karma for him if he shot this person. However, it seemed like Aaron was going to shoot this person out of compassion for the students and also compassion for the murderer, because if Aaron did not shoot this person who was going to murder the students then this person would be accumulating even more unwholesome karma.



So, my question is, what karma was Aaron accumulating or making by shooting this person? My understanding of karma is that it's based on intention. So, if the intention is to stop this person from harming others and also from harming himself by killing others, than what is the karma involved for Aaron in this situation? That's all.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Thank you, John. First, only for the most fully enlightened person can there be an action that stops another's life—in other words, imposes on their free will to take away their life—without some kind of karma.

Karma is not always unwholesome. For me, if it happened to me now, if I had come back to Earth and was awakened, there would be wholesome karma, largely. And yet, I cannot say, even as an awakened being, that there would not be any contraction in that act of pulling the trigger. And if there was some contraction, some smallest bit of judgment or anger at him for forcing me to pull the trigger, any kind of anger, any kind of contracted energy, then the karma will carry itself within that contracted energy. It will not be hard karma to resolve; it will be seen clearly and balanced. But it will still need my attention. I cannot just let it go. Does that answer your question?

John: Yes. Thank you, Aaron.

Q: You have said that we are here to express our love and our light despite the darkness. And when we learn to do that, we will bring love throughout the Universe. However, some of us are unsure about this, because we can't see how this Earth experience will translate when we graduate from the Earth plane. Perhaps we envision ourselves rejoining with God. But then, what good is our experience from Earth when all there is is love? Where will we bring love when we leave the Earth plane? Are we going to go to places with even more darkness than Earth?

Aaron: Thank you for your question. It's an interesting question. First, where will you go? I can't tell you where you'll go, only that awareness will continue. And if there is intention to help alleviate suffering in the multiverse, you will move your energy into a new form in which you'll have an opportunity again to offer love out where there is darkness.

There will always be places of darkness no matter how much light there will be. Some of you may take a long break and simply move into a plane of light for great lengths of time, seemingly impossible lengths of time, but eventually you will come through that and choose to move back into a place where you can teach and learn.

You *can* see how the Earth experience will have impact because you can look in your daily life and see that as you've learned to ground yourself in a place that is not so reactive, that is more compassionate, you're less likely to strike out at others.

I would offer by way of example a story of a friend who was filling his gas tank at a gas station late at night. Another car pulled up and two men stepped out. They walked up to

his car as if to confront him. He saw their angry energy. He kept his hands visible on the gas nozzle. He breathed and saw his fear. He looked at them and said, "Can I help you in any way?" And they just glared at him. And he said, "Well, my tank is full, so I'm leaving." And he very quickly put the nozzle back on the tank, got in his car and drove away.

They could have had a gun and shot him. He was taking a gamble on that. He decided that he could not confront them. But he also did not want to get ensnarled with them. He was shaken up. He recognized that his energy field was shaking enough that he could not really talk to them at that point, so the kindest thing he could do for himself and them was just to end it—hang up the nozzle, get in his car, and leave. And they were a few feet from him and possibly could have reached to grab him, if that was their intention, or could have shot him. But he just left them there.

So, when we spoke about it afterward, he said, "What should I have done?"

And I said, "What else do you think you *could* have done?"

And he said, "I could have talked to them."

And I said, "Could you have talked to them with a great deal of loving kindness and spaciousness and accepted that if they killed you, that you could forgive them for killing you?"

And he said, "No. No way!"

So, I said, "Then you did exactly what you needed to do. You left them seeds. You have to understand where you are and not imagine that you should be some place higher than you are. Give yourself credit for not reacting in a negative way, not bristling with defensiveness."

Perhaps that speaks to your question. I pause. I am Aaron. Are there other questions?

I was going to introduce the Heart Sutra because of the statement, "This is not other than that." Love is not other than hatred. Form is not other than emptiness. It's all part of each other. And this is a very valuable teaching but perhaps is best saved for another time, because it's beyond what we've talked about. But if you are so moved, please read the Heart Sutra and reflect on, what does it mean, "Form is no other than emptiness."? What do I mean when I say, "Love is no other than fear. Love is no other than hate."? Where there is hate, there is the potential for love. Where is the potential, it's because love already exists. Where is that love?

I pause. Again, I am inviting questions.

Q: I'm thinking of the example with the man behind the screen, watching a man coming with a gun and threatening to kill children. And I'm thinking that if that was me behind the screen, I'm not thinking, "Well, if I shoot him, will this create karma for me or not?" That would just be way too theoretical.

I think I would envision, "Should I do this and intervene to stop this, or should I not? This is not my business." It's the same as watching somebody get mugged on a street corner. Do you intervene at a certain risk to yourself, or do you say, "This is not my business."? And what is the karma when you know that someone's going to get hurt and you don't intervene, you take yourself away and you say, "This is not my business."? Because I think that there is a karma there if you do that. And I think that if you don't stop that man from shooting the children, that there's a negative karma that accrues with that.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Yes, if you do not stop him shooting the children, there is definitely unwholesome karma. If you do stop him, there's a possibility of stopping him without hatred. If there is hatred, there will be some unwholesome karma and that will in part be balanced by the wholesome karma of protecting the children, number one, and also protecting this man from the terrible karma of killing so many children.

But as you said, that's too theoretical. In the moment, if you are committed to do no harm, you ask yourself, "What is the least harmful thing I can do in this moment?" One might think "I can step out and confront him," but then if he shoots you and then shoots the children, were you overconfident that you could stop him by talking to him?

There's no right or wrong answer. Karma is energy. If you are holding the intention to do no harm, for the most part whatever you choose to do will have positive results, even though it may also have negative results.

Then you ask yourself, for what am I responsible here? And this is a very special question to ask yourself in an ongoing way when there's a situation that's uncomfortable: for what am I responsible here? What is *my* part in this?

Perhaps seeing in yourself that you have judged the other person and allowed that judgment to come out of you a bit. Perhaps seeing that you feared getting involved. For what am I responsible here? And am I ready to step up and be present, holding the intention for the highest good of all beings and with harm to none? And that does not mean that you will not be harmed. There's no guarantee. I pause.

Q: Aaron, I think we spoke about this before, but the whole idea of having the intention for the greatest good and with no harm to others, I just feel like it's so theoretical. And that it's a worthwhile goal at a certain stage of our practice; it's like an aspiration. But certainly, in the spur of the moment I wouldn't be able to figure out what's the greatest good for everybody and what causes the least harm. I just think that my heart knows somehow, my heart knows what to do. And I think that's to prepare ourselves to open



our heart. And when we do that, then when the situation arises, our heart knows what to do.

Aaron: Thank you. Yes, to allow yourself to be vulnerable. So, taking this to the concrete, what would have happened in WWII, in Nazi Germany, if millions of Germans who did not hate had stepped up and said, "No. We will not betray the Jews. We will not betray..." whatever other peoples were being killed by the Nazis. "We will not do this."

I don't have an answer to this next question. I can't tell you what's right or wrong. But what if all the people in Israel who understand that the Palestinians—not Hamas, but Palestinians—are also fighting for their lives, just as the Israelis are fighting for a place to live and to raise their children? What if instead of being combative with each other, if both sides could truly talk to each other, hear each other's needs and find ways to live in peace together?

Surely that's not any easy task, but it certainly would seem to be a doable task if enough people were willing to allow themselves to be openhearted and vulnerable and deeply care for others. To hear each other. And this is perhaps the deepest issue in the world today. So many people are so defended from *their* view that they cannot hear others' views.

So, there's not a right or wrong side. Each side is in terrible pain. I understand the perspective of each side. But the question remains, where does the road for peace open? Only with truly hearing each other with compassion.

I pause. We have time for one more question or sharing.

There is no easy path for this. I want to remind you you are here in incarnation to help bring love, light, and high vibration into this earth plane. The challenges are just that—challenges and teachers. "Hello, Teacher, what have you come to teach me?"

And if you can remember when you feel pushed, instead of pushing back, to just stop and say, "Hello, Teacher. You're unpleasant. I wish you weren't here, but here you are. What can I learn here? In what ways can I open my heart more fully? In what ways can I live with more love, and yet still be very clear that I must say no to that which would do harm in the world?"

If you're persistent with this, just doing that dance with negativity, not pushing back but finding the power of love within you that can engage with negativity in clear ways, yes, it could get you killed. But it won't necessarily get you killed. It may teach you a lot and teach others around you so much, too.

How do we love when everything we love in the world seems to be on the line? How do we hold to the decision to do no harm? And what *is* harm? To allow that man to shoot



the children, that's doing harm. Perplexing! But you're all living it with much beauty and love. I applaud you.

Thank you. I am Aaron. I'm going to give the body back to Barbara.

Barbara: Thank you, Aaron. That's it for tonight. We meet again in November with Aaron telling some Thanksgiving stories—that's his usual topic before Thanksgiving.

That's all. Good night to you all.