**Six Principles of Cordiality**

May 31, 2020

George Floyd. The upheaval in Minneapolis and Oakland and Atlanta. So much of the world is taking refuge in divisiveness and fear. So many are taking refuge in

external things which have no real value, and which provide no lasting peace. We live in a time and in a place where hard-heartedness is seen as a refuge which only results in separation and suffering. Yes, there is suffering in the world. And yes, the Buddha’s teaching continues its relevance. And yes we have a choice.

The Buddha spoke of the **Six Principles of Cordiality** and may I offer them as particularly relevant for us today. He articulated them at Ananda’s request. Ananda became dismayed when he heard of the challenges that faced the *Nigaṇṭhas* after the death of their teacher:

*On his death the Nigaṇṭhas divided, split into two; and they had taken to quarrelling and brawling and were deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers: “You do not understand this Dhamma and Discipline. I understand this Dhamma and Discipline. How could you understand this Dhamma and Discipline? Your way is wrong. My way is right. I am consistent. You are inconsistent. What should have been said first you said last. What should have been said last you said first. What you had so carefully thought up has been turned inside out. Your assertion has been shown up. You are refuted. Go and learn better, or disentangle yourself if you can!”* It was a mess.

*… Then the venerable Ānanda and the novice Cunda went together to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, they sat down at one side, and the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “This novice Cunda, venerable sir, says thus: ‘Venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta has just died. On his death the Nigaṇṭhas divided, split into two … and is now with its shrine broken, left without a refuge.’* ***I thought, venerable sir: ‘Let no dispute arise in the Sangha when the Blessed One has gone. For such a dispute would be for the harm and unhappiness of many, for the loss, harm, and suffering of gods and humans.’****”*

The Buddha then offers guidance for what happens after he dies. He offers wise and particularly relevant counsel, but I would particularly like to bring your attention to **the Six Principles of Cordiality** contained therein.He is talking particularly to monks but they have relevance to all of us. He says:

*Ānanda, there are these six principles of cordiality that create love and respect, and conduce to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity. What are the six?  
  
Here a bhikkhu* ***maintains bodily acts of loving-kindness*** *both in public and in private towards his companions in the holy life. This is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord,* and to unity.

What do **bodily acts of loving-kindness** look like for us?   
Active patience, perhaps? A smile? Support of a cause?

*Again, a bhikkhu maintains* ***verbal acts of loving-kindness*** *both in public and in private towards his companions in the holy life. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to … unity.*  
What do **verbal acts of loving-kindness** look like for us?  
Tenderness? Right speech? Silence? Restraint?  
  
*Again, a bhikkhu maintains* ***mental acts of loving-kindness*** *both in public and in private towards his companions in the holy life. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to … unity.*  
What do **mental acts of loving-kindness** look like for us?  
Tenderness? Right thought? Stillness? Meditation?  
  
*Again, a bhikkhu enjoys things in common with his virtuous companions in the holy life;* ***without making reservations, he shares with them any gain of a kind that******accords with the Dhamma and has been obtained in a way that accords with the Dhamma, including even what is in his bowl****. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to … unity.*  
What does it mean for us to **share any gain of a kind that** **accords with the Dhamma and has been obtained in a way that accords with the Dhamma, including even what is in his bowl?**  
Generosity? Giving without strings? Giving by restraining?  
  
*Again, a bhikkhu dwells both in public and in private* ***possessing*** *in common with his companions in the holy life* ***those virtues that are unbroken, untorn****,* ***unblotched, unmottled, liberating, commended by the wise, not misapprehended, and conducive to concentration.*** *This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect and conduces to … unity.*  
What does it mean for us to possess **those virtues that are unbroken, untorn**, **unblotched, unmottled, liberating, commended by the wise, not misapprehended, and conducive to concentration?**The Precepts? Theat we’ve just read.  
The Four Wisdoms? Charity, tenderness, benevolence and sympathy  
The Four BrahmaViharas? Loving kindness, compassion, equanimity and joy  
  
*Again, a bhikkhu dwells both in public and in private* ***possessing*** *in common with his companions in the holy* ***life that view that is noble and emancipating, and******leads the one who practises in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering****. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity.*  
What does it mean for us to possess **that view that is noble and emancipating, and** **leads the one who practises in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering**?  
The Three Characteristics: dukkha, anicca, anatta

The Noble Eightfold Path – particularly Right View?  
Loving-kindness

    “These are the six principles of cordiality that create love and respect, and conduce to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity.

*If, Ānanda, you undertake and maintain these six principles of cordiality, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?   
  
No, venerable sir.  
  
Therefore, Ānanda, undertake and maintain these six principles of cordiality. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.  
  
That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.*

Perhaps we may consider taking these ***6 Principles of Cordiality*** as a small step in honoring and remembering the life of George Floyd and offering merit for Derek Chauvin and his colleagues.