The Dhamma of Global Climate Change

Rob Burbea · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Rob Burbea · 59:55

How about now? Excellent. Thank you. How's everyone doing tonight? It's an interesting day. Yes. Different. How many people found parts of today challenging? Yeah. Yes. These human relationships. It's so much easier when we're just like this.

So this is the talk now. How many times have you heard yourself ask this, or another student? They'll say, "Why should I pay attention to this? Or what's the reason for paying attention to this?" And the teacher says, "Because it's happening. Because that's what's happening." Have you heard that? It's a very common thing. We're aware of what's present. Why? Because it's what's happening. It's what's presenting itself to us in our life at that moment. It could be anything.

There's one thing that's happening now, and it's not unique to any one of us. It is and will be impacting us for a long time. And that thing that's happening that I'd like to talk about tonight is global climate change.

Just this idea, just to frame the talk: it's the same reason on one level that you would be aware of pain in your knee. Why? Because it's what's happening in it. And in order to have a correct relationship with it, or a helpful relationship with it, it's good to get to know it and to connect with it and learn about it and learn about what our relationship to it might be. So we do that with everything—with a thought, with the sound of a cricket. And so because it's happening, then the practice tells us it would be good to do that with global climate change as well.

So this can be a little bit of an interesting subject, sometimes maybe hard. So I want you to just keep checking in with your bodies. Perhaps notice any reactivity you might have. It's not going to be a doom and gloom talk, so don't worry about that. But it might be good to just stay connected and feel into, "Oh, how am I actually relating to this?"

I'm not going to go into a lot of statistics here—how many feet sea level is going to rise, or how many degrees Celsius the average temperature is going to go up, or by what date will there be no ice in the Arctic, that kind of stuff. That information is out there. It's available. It's easy to find. And if that interests you, you can do that. So this talk isn't going to go down that road.

This is more about beginning to talk about and grapple with this situation that is currently impacting us and will continue to impact us on a greater and greater level far into the future. This is going to keep going. So it's very important to consciously turn towards what's occurring.

The reason that it's important to consciously do it is there's this interesting study that I read about where the study subjects were put into a room and told to fill out some form. That's what they thought they were

doing. What they did—there was an air vent and they pumped in smoke through the air vent. When that happened, the people would see that and go, "Wow, something's wrong. We're out of here." They'd go out of the room and they'd go to the researchers and say, "Hey, there's something wrong in that room. Smoke's coming out of the vent." So kind of very natural and appropriate behavior.

Then they would have, so let's say there would be six people...

Then they repeated the experiment with five subjects and one plant—one person who wasn't a real subject but was in on what was going on. They would pump smoke in again, and the plant wouldn't notice it. They would keep filling out their forms. Even as the smoke poured into the room, they would just keep working as if nothing was happening.

They did this many, many times. People would look at the person who wasn't reacting and would keep doing what they were doing. They wouldn't get up and leave until much, much later. There was a really strong impact of that one person carrying on with business as usual. In the face of someone carrying on with business as usual, when people were faced with that, their own natural response to what was difficult went right out the window.

I tell that story because this is actually where we're at with climate change. The smoke is coming through the vents. It's very clear. But there are strong forces—which I'll talk about later—that are carrying on with business as usual. We all get caught up in it. We get frozen. There's not really a national dialogue about it. We're like those other people who see, "Well, someone's not reacting to this. Well, okay."

For that reason alone, it's helpful to consciously turn toward this and start talking about it so we break the freeze. For us as dharma practitioners, this talk is to show how the teachings we've all been studying and practicing can shed light both on how we've gotten to this point and what an appropriate response might be.

Just to be clear: climate change is not a political issue. I'm not sitting up here talking politically from one side or another. Of course, climate change does end up being talked about in politics, but it's not inherently a political thing. It's about the truth of what's happening right now, what's going to happen in the near future, and what is going to happen in fifty or one hundred years.

The biosphere—that layer of life on earth from a few inches down in the soil up to the atmosphere where birds and insects live, very thin, quite thin—is rapidly changing. Faster than it ever has in history. The species that live in this biosphere, and in turn make up part of it, are suffering and dying off. We are currently in the midst of the largest species die-off, or mass extinction, since the dinosaurs died out sixty-five million years ago.

People are suffering, and they will continue to suffer at an exponentially increasing rate as time goes by. This is not a political issue—it's a moral issue. It transcends political, cultural, and religious boundaries because it's happening to the whole planet.

Even though all people will be impacted and will be increasingly impacted by climate change, not everyone will be impacted in the same way. Unfortunately, as with other crises—political turmoil, economic turmoil—people who are most advantaged tend to be more buffered, while people who are more disadvantaged take the brunt of it. It's going to be the same way, at least to some degree, with climate change. People who are more advantaged will have some buffering. The disenfranchised people are going to bear the brunt of it.

But everyone will be impacted. Even people who might be quite buffered from it—it's going to depend on how they work with that gap between themselves and disenfranchised people. If they don't bridge that gap somehow consciously and just stay in their white castle or whatever, they may not be impacted so much on a physical level, at least for some time. But to do that, the level of cutting off one would have to do—they're going to be impacted by that. They're going to have to live with that.

The analogy that came to me was when the Titanic sank. The people in first class were in the lifeboats, and the people in second and third class didn't get to be in the lifeboats. There they were in the lifeboats while the ship was sinking and people were suffering. Yes, they were safe and dry in their lifeboats, but they had to live with the knowledge that maybe they didn't row back. They didn't bridge that gap. They didn't row back for the people. "We're safe over here."

So everyone's going to be impacted. Everyone's going to have to deal with this, even if in slightly different ways. For some it might be more physical. Some people might be dealing with it more on the heart-mind level.

Just to say, that's about as grim as it's going to get in this talk.

Two fundamental questions emerge from this recognition: How do the teachings of the dharma shed light on global climate change? And how can we respond skillfully to such an immense challenge?

One of the first dharma teachings that illuminates our climate crisis is the deeply ingrained habit pattern we have for craving sense pleasures. We are naturally drawn to what feels pleasant and recoil from what feels unpleasant. This fundamental tendency lies at the heart of the Four Noble Truths—particularly the second truth, which identifies the cause of suffering as our desire for sense pleasures. This same craving that creates personal suffering also serves as a root cause of global climate change.

We inhabit a world of constant flux, where conditions perpetually shift between pleasant and unpleasant, comfortable and uncomfortable. Sound emerges and dissolves into silence. Some experiences delight our senses and feel genuinely enjoyable. Others feel disagreeable or painful. This is simply the nature of our existence—the fundamental truth of our world.

Yet we carry within us a profound habit pattern of wanting only what brings pleasure while rejecting what causes discomfort. Here lies the discord—a fundamental misalignment with the way things actually are.

Maintaining this discord requires tremendous energy. Consider holding an object against gravity's natural pull. Initially manageable, this resistance becomes increasingly taxing. You can feel your arms beginning to shake as the effort intensifies. The longer we remain out of alignment with natural forces, the more energy we must expend to sustain our position.

As a species, particularly in Western societies, we have organized our entire civilization around this discord with natural conditions. We maintain this misalignment through massive expenditures of literal energy—burning coal, oil, and gas to power our resistance to what is.

On a warm day when it's eighty-five degrees outside, we create seventy-degree environments indoors. The cooler, drier conditions feel more pleasant, more agreeable to our preferences. We actively manufacture these conditions, and something must power those air conditioners—electricity generated somewhere, somehow. When winter brings temperatures ten degrees below zero, we maintain those same seventy-degree indoor environments. This isn't about promoting discomfort or suggesting we should all suffer in harsh conditions as some path to enlightenment or climate salvation. Rather, I'm illustrating how our fundamental unwillingness to be present with natural conditions requires enormous energetic resources to maintain the gap between what is and what we prefer.

The natural tendency seeks equilibrium. Houses want to reach the outside temperature; left to their own devices, they would simply come into balance with their surroundings.

Consider cities in the desert—vast amounts of energy required to sustain them. The Colorado River, once mighty, no longer reaches the ocean. It runs dry one hundred miles before the sea, so much water pumped out to sustain cities where cities were never meant to be. We prefer sunny and eighty degrees in January to the snow and cold of northern winters, so we move to the desert. Our technology makes this possible, but it still requires enormous energy.

Houses built solely for views rather than thoughtful placement on the land that might capture solar gain from south-facing windows. Repainting interiors simply because we no longer like the color, though no repainting is needed—paint that comes from oil. None of these choices are inherently wrong or bad. But when our society's primary paradigm becomes maximizing the pleasant while minimizing the unpleasant, we consume tremendous energy in the process. This approach runs counter to the truth of how things actually are.

Some say the Buddha was the first environmentalist—not because he carried protest signs or campaigned against drilling, but because he was an activist for seeing things as they truly are. This was his mission: walking from village to village, teaching people to follow practices that would reveal the truth of existence. When we see things as they are, we can live in accord with reality. Living in accord with reality requires far less energy.

The Tibetan teacher Atisha offers this wisdom: "Friends, the things you desire give no more satisfaction

than drinking seawater. Therefore, practice contentment." Contentment with the way things are—whether pleasant or unpleasant, we simply say, "Okay."

Practicing contentment naturally lowers our carbon footprint. You won't hear this on the evening news alongside advice about compact fluorescent bulbs, but it's profoundly true: contentment reduces our environmental impact.

This first dharma principle—our addiction, our deeply ingrained habit patterns of craving sense pleasures—forms one of the pillars supporting our climate crisis.

A second principle emerges from sila practice, our ethical conduct. I want to examine this from one particular angle: the notion that human beings can own land, that the earth's gifts can become "ours." This belief contradicts the fundamental truth of how things are. We simply made this up—invented the concept of ownership because it serves our purposes, particularly our desire for sense pleasures.

Everything connects to everything else. All phenomena arise in dependence upon all other phenomena, while simultaneously giving rise to everything else. Given this profound level of complex interdependence, how could we possibly extract something from this web and declare it "mine"?

How can we own this? Another really important question we need to ask ourselves is: given such depth and breadth of interdependence, how could it be possible to harm a certain aspect of this world and in turn not harm ourselves?

Of course, the answer to that question is we can't. At least intellectually, it's not much of a stretch to see that we can't. Yet one of the big reasons we've gotten ourselves into this mess is that this wisdom that knows we can't—it's not always present for us when we're making our decisions about our lives and decisions about the things of the world. It's not right there, fully present and necessarily steering the ship.

Our dominant cultural narrative—and that could be the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Europe to some degree, maybe a little bit less—the cultures that tend to have the largest impact on the resources of the world, but also politically and socially, they tend to ripple out into the world. Our dominant cultural narrative is that each of us deserves everything we want, and anything that gets in the way of that is just wrong.

Americans—we deserve whatever we want, and anything that gets in the way of that is not a good thing.

This reminds me of a quote by David Korten, an economist and author who has written extensively about sustainable economics and community development. He points to this very issue—how our cultural assumptions about deserving and entitlement create the conditions for environmental destruction. When we believe we deserve unlimited access to resources, when we see the natural world as existing primarily to serve our desires, we inevitably create systems that cannot sustain themselves.

The Buddhist understanding of interdependence offers us a radically different way of seeing. When we

truly understand that we are not separate from the web of life, that harming the earth is harming ourselves, our relationship to consumption and desire naturally begins to shift. We start to see that what we call "our" desires are actually arising from conditions—cultural conditioning, advertising, social pressure—rather than from some inherent truth about what we need to be happy.

When the stories a society shares are out of tune with its circumstances, they can become self-limiting, even a threat to survival. That is our current situation - stories out of tune with our circumstances, not in alignment with the way things are.

It can be difficult, though, to stay connected to basic truths. Our garbage and waste goes somewhere - it doesn't just disappear. Our electronics require an increasing amount of electricity to run. They have to be manufactured somewhere, in factories powered by electricity produced from fossil fuels. It takes electricity to charge the batteries that run them. This all happens - it doesn't happen magically, disconnected from everything else. Yet it's hard to remember this in the moment.

It's hard to remember that every time we get in our car and drive, we're putting carbon dioxide into the air. Every time we board a plane, we're releasing massive amounts of carbon dioxide into the worst part of the atmosphere. It's hard to remember that the strawberry we eat in January probably traveled two or three thousand miles to reach us. This is simply how we live. In the fast pace of our lives - with families, children, jobs - it's difficult to have these truths be present with us much of the time.

These impacts are also physically invisible, at least in this culture, because we are privileged to have them be invisible. In other cultures, they're not invisible. But until now, at least here, they've been invisible. Though we're starting to feel and see the effects of climate change, aren't we? It's not just theory anymore. It's actually happening. It's becoming visible.

I want to point out one example of this wisdom that recognizes we can't harm one part of this interconnected web without harming ourselves - one way we've actually acted on this understanding wisely. In the nuclear arms race, it was clearly known that in an all-out nuclear confrontation, no side would win. The amount of radiation released would be devastating for everyone. Everyone would suffer terribly. So this was one example where we understood that harming one part of the population or system would harm everything. We knew this, and when we know something clearly, we act on it.

Very consciously, there has not been a major nuclear war for this reason - because of that wisdom. It's self-protecting, but it's still wisdom. It's that clear knowledge present as we make our decisions. We can act appropriately when we have the right information, when it's present for us as we're making decisions.

Our task as human beings and as dharma practitioners is to reflect on the understanding that we're all connected. Not only reflect, but by being mindful of things as they are, as they arise, understand through our own experience that we're all connected. We see how conditional things are. Some of you have experienced this and reported it - "Oh, that thought happened because of this. That thought preceded that

emotion." It's like recognizing that things are actually connected, not happening in isolation.

To the degree that we start tuning into this cause and effect - which I'll discuss more - it becomes less possible to harm the environment and therefore ourselves. Again, that very natural morality arises from this understanding. This is a deep and undeniable truth, and it's one of the main insights we begin to open to as we walk this path.

Cause and effect - you could call it karma, though they're not exactly the same, but very similar. This is like this because that is like that. As that changes, it affects this. As this changes, it affects that. When we think and act in accordance with this law of cause and effect, the outcome is one of harmony and peace, because again, we're congruent with how things are.

There's no friction. We're going with the flow. When we think and act in opposition to this law, then the outcome is one of disharmony and much suffering.

Let me give you an example of how we got in accord with this law. Back in the 1960s, it was discovered that DDT—I think it was a pesticide—was extremely harmful to living beings and that human beings would suffer if we kept using it. Once that connection was clearly made, DDT was banned. It's very simple. We see cause and effect clearly, so we stop using it.

Now you might be wondering: aren't we making the connection now between CO2 and temperature rise? Aren't we getting that? The more CO2, the higher the temperature. Aren't we seeing that cause and effect? And aren't we even making the connection between temperature increase and human suffering? Isn't that cause and effect starting to dawn?

Well, yes and no. Remember that study I mentioned where people were ignoring the smoke coming through the vents? There are strong forces at play keeping us from making this cause and effect connection. Some of these forces are outside of us and have to do with the industrial political complex that basically runs the show these days. How much airtime global climate change gets on the news is a very calculated, conscious, controlled thing—not just how much, but what gets reported.

Yet there are forces at play inside of us that can keep us from really clearly seeing the cause and effect truths of global climate change. And it is these internal forces—and how to work with them—that our dharma practice can really effectively address. I'm not saying not to address the outer forces, but in terms of looking at our own lives, looking inward at our own hearts and minds, it's the inner forces that our dharma practice will really illuminate.

I'm going to read you an introduction from a wonderful book by Bob Doppelt called *From Me to We*. If you're at all interested in climate change, it's excellent:

"Economic breakdown, rising unemployment, and escalating political hostility, coming at a time of intensifying climate upheaval—storms, floods, heat waves, and droughts—have left us all confused and

despondent. Everywhere we look, the systems we depend on seem to be collapsing.

"Our first reaction is to blame others for these problems, be they greedy Wall Street bankers, rapacious corporations, or dishonest politicians of either the conservative or liberal persuasion. But here's some news for you: Playing the blame game is merely an ingenious avoidance technique. It allows us to place the focus outside of ourselves and steer clear of having to look at our own contribution to today's troubling situations.

"Don't get me wrong—I know some people and organizations do bad things. But we often project onto others the very things we need to examine in ourselves. The economic, social, and environmental ills we face today are of our own making. They are the outcomes of how we see and respond to the world. Unethical corporations and disreputable politicians might seem to cause the most egregious harm, but they are merely taking today's dominant cultural perspectives to the extreme. The challenges our society faces today illuminate the changes each of us needs to make in ourselves."

By the way, he's a dharma practitioner. You can hear some of the dharma wisdom coming through in that.

How does our dharma practice help us to look at ourselves in this way that he's describing? I'm going to read a quote from the *Dhammapada*, a collection of Buddhist sayings of the Buddha. It's a pithy collection of the most essential teachings, and this is the very first quote of this collection. So you might say it has some weight or importance to it.

This is the Buddha speaking: "All experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind. Speak or act with a corrupted mind and suffering follows as the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox. All experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind."

Speak or act with a peaceful mind and happiness follows like a never departing shadow.

But what is a corrupted mind? What is a peaceful mind that the Buddha was speaking to? How do I know what a corrupted mind or a peaceful mind is? How do I know what actually leads to happiness and what actually leads to suffering?

Well, you've been doing it this week. This is how we know. This is how we come to find out in our own experience, not from me or another teacher saying it or something you read in a book. You know for yourselves what actually leads to happiness and what leads to suffering.

Ajahn Chah said, "If you want to understand your own mind, then sit down and look at it." It's that simple. And this is exactly what we're doing here. We're learning to see that we create the world we live in moment by moment.

When I say create, I don't mean like poof—you create the paper. Not so much like that. But if there's a lot of fear in my mind and I'm not aware of it and I'm just really identified with it, I'm living in a fearful world. I'm creating a fearful world in that moment. If there are strong feelings of love and compassion,

then the world I live in in that moment is a very loving and compassionate world. That's what they mean by us creating the world, not necessarily physically.

Although we created this retreat center through generosity. Global climate change got created by the mind—it got created by strong greed and sense desire and fear, which I'll talk about in a moment.

This takes us to the last dharma principle I want to discuss. If you dig down to the bottom of why human beings suffer, what we discover is that we mistakenly take ourselves to be solid, unchanging entities that exist separately from everything else. This is what the Buddha said. This is a deep ignorance, called a root defilement.

If we look closely—and that's what we're here for, that's what we're learning to do here, what you've been doing all week—to connect with and look at our experience and understand our experience. If we look closely, we can see that to the degree our thoughts and actions revolve around what I want, what's good for me, what would be most pleasurable for me, and conversely, what I don't want—to the degree that this is the predominant paradigm in our mind running the show—is to the degree that we don't see or understand how we live impacts all of life, that we're deeply connected.

Why? Because we're not looking. I can't see that I'm connected to you if I'm so involved with me. It's not rocket science. If we're so involved with ourselves, we're not going to know, we're not going to understand that we're connected.

This intense focus on self and this belief in this separate self also supports tremendous fear that I won't get what I want or what I need. So a strong sense of a separate self and fear—they're bound together, inseparable. The more our world revolves around a solid, separate sense of self, the more afraid we are. And then the more we consume and try to manipulate our environment to quell that fear.

We're basically acting out of fear. It is this consumption and manipulation of our environment in reaction to being afraid that we won't get what we want and need—which itself stems from this mistaken view that we're separate—that is at the core of why humanity has gotten to this point. Not just in climate change, but in all sorts of difficulties that we're having. When you dig down and ask why, that's the core reason. And it's at the core of why global climate change is happening.

This is by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, a wonderful, beautiful being, Tibetan master from the last century: "One sees that all human suffering results from one's own and others' fundamental ignorance which misconstrues the infinite display of illusory appearances as being composed of separate permanently existing entities."

Remember right view? Well, this is wrong view—this view of separate self. This wrong view is a self-centered view of the world and not seeing clearly how we create our own suffering.

But when we connect through training our hearts and minds to connect, to be present, by connecting with

our own experience, then we can come to know: How does it actually feel to focus so much on ourselves? By spending our resources of time, attention, creativity, money, so as to just make ourselves more comfortable, have more pleasant experiences, and keep away unpleasant experiences?

What is that actual experience like? We want to look and see—for ourselves, each of us. You'll see what you see, but when I look, for me, if I get caught in that self-centered approach, or when I do get caught in it, it feels isolating, deadening, cut off, not connected to life.

And then we want to look and see: How does it actually feel to share our time, energy, money, and other resources with others—basically what Spring was talking about? How does it feel when we're generous? We want to look and see. It feels good. It feels right. It feels enlivening, connecting, open. We love that, even when we're not used to it.

One real simple example that I've noticed, and other people have mentioned too, is very simple. Maybe after a significant weather event like a blizzard or a hurricane, let's say there's your neighbor that you just really never talk to. It's not that you're avoiding them, but whatever—you don't really communicate much. But maybe after the blizzard or the hurricane, you go over and you ask them, "Are you okay? You need anything? Electricity's out. I have a generator and a freezer. If you want to keep your food over there, please bring it over." We feel ourselves open and be generous with our resources. It feels so lovely to do that.

What something like a big weather event does is take us out of our little world. And in a way, it tells us it's okay to do that now. It's okay to reach out now. This is kind of what's called for now. It gives us permission. And we jump on it because we love it.

So based on all of this, how can we respond to global climate change? What would be an appropriate response? This response needs to include a change in worldview from each individual thinking only for themselves to one where we're all in it together. And as Bob wrote in his book, *From Me to We*—such a great title.

This is supported by neuroscience that tells us we're wired to cooperate. That's how we're actually put together. And also evolutionary science that says, yes, we went through a time—a natural evolutionary time—where it was kind of survival as a species, every person or maybe every small band for themselves. We needed to do that to survive. It was appropriate then, 10,000 years ago. But that time has passed. We are evolutionarily in a different time, where what's appropriate now is to be mutually supportive and cooperative.

Listen to what Joanna Macy has to say about this change in worldview in her book *Active Hope*:

"What inspires people to embark on projects or support campaigns that are not of immediate personal benefit? At the core of our consciousness is a wellspring of caring and compassion. This aspect of ourselves, which we might think of as our connected self, can be nurtured and developed. We can deepen

our sense of belonging in the world. Like trees extending their root systems, we can grow into connection, thus allowing ourselves to draw from a deeper pool of strength, accessing the courage and intelligence that we so greatly need right now.

This dimension of the great turning arises from shifts taking place in our hearts and minds and our views of reality. It involves insights and practices that resonate with venerable spiritual traditions while in alignment with revolutionary new understandings from science."

It's not that we don't have a wellspring of caring and compassion. You do. We all do. That isn't the problem. The problem is that these minds that we are constantly creating the world with, moment by moment, are often deluded and not seeing things as they actually are. From not seeing cause and effect, to not seeing the incredible interdependence of things, to believing in a solid separate self, we project this mistaken reality onto life and then live life as though it were real. And we make decisions individually and collectively based on that.

This is Nyosho Kempo Rinpoche, a Tibetan teacher:

We live in illusion and the appearance of things. There is a reality. We are that reality. When we understand this, we see that we are nothing. And being nothing, we see that we are everything. That is all.

So the result of this delusion in the human heart and mind is widespread feelings of fear, isolation and disconnection from life. The result in the outer world is simply a manifestation of this collective, deluded and fearful inner world.

I want to suggest that a very appropriate way—the appropriate way—to address global climate change is to look at the root issues of why we do what we do. Understand it, each of us, for ourselves.

If we can summon up the courage to look closely at our hearts and minds and see for ourselves how the mind gets fooled into thinking things are a certain way, how we mistakenly create our own and others' suffering, then not only will we begin to mitigate the causes and therefore the effects of global climate change, but we will spontaneously open to that wellspring of caring and compassion that Joanna Macy spoke of. We'll open to a level of energy and creativity that has not been known to us. And although when we feel that, we'll know it was already there.

We'll begin to get in touch with the depth of our natural love and compassion for all of life. And the mind's natural radiance that maybe we touched into this morning a little bit in the meditation—the mind's natural radiance that shines the light on the truth of suffering and its causes and on the truth of happiness and its causes—that will dawn. It will begin to be clear to us.

If you think about it, if there ever were a more perfect situation for Dharma practice than global climate change, I don't know what it would be. It's actually a great situation to practice with. It's demanding us to engage in Dharma practice, to see things as they are. It's screaming for us to do that. And if we do, we can

completely turn this impending human tragedy into a vehicle for awakening of the human heart and mind. Because it's such an intense thing, that the power of that intensity can be transformed into power of awakening. That's what Joanna Macy is talking about in her book.

And it all starts by learning to be present with ourselves and just what is in the moment. It all starts with that and it actually all ends with that.

I want to end with a quote that speaks to this wonderful transformation that can happen from taking something that's difficult and having it be this jewel for awakening. It's by Jennifer Wellwood, and the title of the poem is "Unconditional."

Willing to discover, willing to experience aloneness,
I discover connection everywhere.
Turning to face my fear,
I meet the warrior who lives within.
Opening to my loss,
I gain the embrace of the universe.
Surrendering into emptiness,
I find fullness without end.
Each condition I flee from pursues me.
Each condition I welcome transforms me
and becomes itself transformed
into its radiant jewel-like essence.
I bow to the one who has made it so,
who has crafted this master game.
To play it is purest delight.
To honor its form, true devotion.

So through the training of our hearts and minds to connect ever more deeply with life, may we turn global climate change into its radiant, jewel-like essence.

Thank you for listening.

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