



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche:
The General Benefit of Bodhichitta
1st Chapter, Stanza 6

Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra
BA 7: Chapter 1 Stanza 6 The General Benefit of Bodhichitta
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We come to the sixth stanza of *Bodhicharyavatara* and this is talking about the general benefit of bodhichitta. We start to talk about the general benefit of the bodhichitta; and in the specific, the benefits of the aspiration bodhichitta and the action bodhichitta separately. Then also to talk about the importance of those beings who have generated bodhichitta.

So first to talk about the general benefits of the bodhichitta, then it is said:

*Virtue, thus, is weak; and always
Evil is of great and overwhelming strength.
Except for perfect bodhichitta,
What other virtue is there that can lay it low?*

Now, we already discussed in the former stanza and the stanza before how negativity, negative emotions in people—the aggression, the greed, ignorance in me as well as in other beings of the samsara—can be very strong. Therefore, we cannot overlook that. We have to understand that, we have to accept that. It's not an easy task to get out of the control, to get free from the negative emotions, negative habitual tendencies and therefore the influence of negativity in my life, in my mind and body also. It's not an easy thing. That is a very important thing to understand.

So when all these negative conditions and negative emotions, negative habitual tendencies in myself and in all other beings in this samsara are so strong, then, is there no hope? That's the main question, is there no hope?

There *has* to be hope. If there is no hope then there is nothing we can do, and then we suffer all the time and there's no need to do anything. But, we have hope. We want to change, we want to get rid of these sufferings and problems and pain. Therefore, if we want to do something...if we have to do something about that...if there is willingness, if there is a determination, a hope to do something about that, then what can be the most important thing? What can bring us the strength, the hope, the wisdom? What can change this? What is needed in us that can face this challenge and work within this situation?

Here it says there's only one thing, the most important thing that we need, the need of the hour, the need: the most important thing is bodhichitta, he said. Only bodhichitta, if we have bodhichitta, if you can generate bodhichitta, then only there is a chance that we will work towards this: otherwise not. So what is bodhichitta then?

Bodhichitta is compassion, a limitless compassion, meaning, it's a saying, it's an understanding, a way of really deeply knowing and deeply feeling that I need to be free from suffering and I need to something [so] that every being can be free from suffering. That kind of resolution, that kind of determination, that kind of conviction, that kind of compassion, limitless to everybody. That I really commit myself. Because this is needed to be done, this must happen, that compassion. Not just that I wish that happens. But I need to have a certain amount of understanding. You can call it wisdom, you can call it understanding that there is a possibility for me to transform. Take the example of the enlightened beings like Buddha Sakyamuni or great bodhisattvas of the past, those who lived during Buddha's time, before Buddha's time, after Buddha's

time, in this very age, during our lifetimes, the great bodhisattvas who lived, who worked for the benefit of beings throughout their lives and still maintained their inner peace, inner joy; who worked so hard and still remained free from any tension, any suffering—no breakdown. We can take the example of His Holiness the Dalai Lama probably, and many other beings like that. Take the case of Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi and many others. Therefore, there is a possibility to be free and work for the benefit of others. So, when you have bodhichitta, that determination, compassion and that wisdom and that resolution that “I want to do something! I must do something! I know there is a possibility,” it’s also understanding that this possibility of transformation is not just in me, not just in Buddhas of the past, not really in great beings but in each and every being.

Therefore, it may be difficult, it may take a long time, it is not easy, but it is possible and therefore I must work on it however long it takes or however hard it may be, however little progress, and it might happen step by step. There is nothing more important for me to do than that.

When somebody has this understanding, this clarity, this determination, there is nothing more important than that. This is the mission of my life. This is the purpose of my life, not only this life but the life after life. When somebody has that understanding, that kind of way of thinking, that direction, then that is called bodhichitta. And that’s a very strong thing, because when you have that, then nothing can stop you, nothing will discourage you because you know the problems, you know the difficulties, you know the hindrances, you know the enormity of the hurdles, obstacles and problems and you know it cannot be achieved soon, easily, but you know there is no other way, it has to be done and I must do it, there’s nothing more important than that and I have no other direction but that.

So when that kind of clarity, that kind of certainty, that kind of determination happens, generates in one’s heart, that this must be done—then you are on that way. [Then] it becomes extremely clear, completely strong, it becomes unstoppable. That kind of commitment, that kind of determination, that kind of clarity is necessary to work against all these odds. So, when that is there, then whatever may happen, sometimes things go well, sometimes things go not so well, sometimes you can do more, sometimes you can do less, you try to help people and they may appreciate and they may not appreciate. But it doesn’t matter. You have your direction; you have your determination. You need to work on it, you will keep on working on it. That is what we call bodhichitta. So once a person has that direction, has that clarity and that determination, then there’s nothing. There’s no negativity that cannot eventually be overcome.

If one person gets that bodhichitta in them it is the greatest thing, it is more important, more beneficial than anything. And if two people, three people, lots of people, the majority of people get that, and then there is no problem, that is the end of the suffering in the world. Therefore, it is so important, it is so useful, so beneficial to have that kind of understanding and clarity and determination and that commitment.

If somebody has even a little bit of that understanding we need to appreciate that, we need to really acknowledge that and make a big deal about it. If that kind of understanding and clarity and determination happens a little bit in ourselves also we need to make a big deal about it, we need to really appreciate it, need to be happy and joyful, rejoice at that because it is really the most important thing and because that kind of determination will eventually lead to the most positive results for my own good, for my own liberation, for my own ending of suffering, for my own enlightenment and purpose, for my own good as well as for the good of all others. Therefore, it is the most important thing to have that understanding, determination and commitment.

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