



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche:
The General Benefits of Bodhichitta
1st Chapter, Stanzas 7 and 8

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

Now we come to the seventh stanza of the first chapter of Bodhicharyavatara. And here it says:

*“For many aeons deeply pondering,
The mighty Sages saw its benefits,
Whereby unnumbered multitudes
Are brought with ease to supreme joy”*

It says that – ‘the mighty Sages’ – [it] means like sages and great beings, like buddhas and bodhisattvas and wise men – they have been thinking about this, they have been experimenting with this, they’ve been researching on this, for not just a few years or a few centuries but, as according to the Buddha, aeons after aeons, and found that the bodhichitta is the most strongest and the most important thing that would bring the good things for yourself and others.

As said before in this last stanza also, that bodhichitta is a very strong way of purification – it’s the most strongest thing that would purify the negative actions of the past – because when you have this bodhichitta, great compassion, the resolution to work for the benefit of all the beings, then your motivation would be not do any negative things, to have a strong aspiration, strong motivation - to purify. So therefore the best way to purify past deeds is to stop continuing these

negative actions and negative emotions. And the most important element to do that is that you really have the intention to do this because whatever we do - my actions - my actions are basically my own responsibility. If I really deeply want to stop one of my activities - how to act or how to react - then I will do it. So therefore this intention, this aspiration of bodhichitta, becomes the strongest purification of past deeds. And not only that but the strongest way to stop doing negative things in the future - because if I really act and react with the attitude of bodhichitta - that I do things that's good for me and good for others, and I find out how to do that, and [get] really deeply involved in that - then I will also stop doing negative things.

The Buddha said 'Do no evil and try to do more positive things' - these two can come only if you have a really strong aspiration, intention and commitment to do this. So therefore the bodhichitta becomes very important here - actually indispensable. And not only that but if you really have a great motivation, compassion, then you can also deal with all your negative emotions - you can work directly on your negative emotions because most of the negative emotions, actually all the negative emotions, come from the opposite of compassion. Compassion is the direct remedy, direct opposite, of all the negative emotions. So therefore when you generate compassion, when you have this aspiration based on, inspired by compassion, you are practically and directly working on your negative emotions. Anger is the opposite of compassion. Greed is also the opposite of compassion because greed is 'I want' - what others have I want - I want to take the things for myself and myself alone. And compassion is 'I want things for everybody' - so that is the opposite of greed. Jealousy is 'I'm unhappy that somebody has something good or somebody has achieved something good'. And compassion is rejoicing at others' positive things, others' achievements and happy that others have something good. Pride, arrogance is 'I'm great' or 'I want to be the best'. I'm puffed up with whatever qualities I have, and compassion is wanting others to have the same, and humbling myself - I want to share what I have, I wish others as much as I have and I'm willing and I wish good things for others. So all the negative emotions are [uncompassionate]. So therefore it's the most important way of working on my negative emotions and thereby negative habitual tendencies as well.

So if I have that intention of bodhichitta, if I have that real aspiration of bodhichitta, then I'm naturally, almost kind of automatically, enhancing my positive activities, my positive actions.

Because if I'm doing something that's good for others, that's good for me, that's positive, that's more beneficial for all others then I'm happy, I'm rejoicing, I'm more interested in doing that. So therefore, naturally, even small positive things I enhance, I encourage - it becomes stronger and stronger, my positive things, and therefore eventually it directly leads to the perfect enlightenment - because the enlightenment is nothing more than somebody who has generated the limitless compassion and limitless wisdom - that's the enlightenment. So therefore if we have that, bodhichitta, or the compassion and wisdom seed, or inspiration, or aspiration or motivation it needs to, it has to lead to that - the enlightened state for myself. And because I'm working for others so it's necessarily also working for the benefit of others.

That's why it leads to the second, next stanza, which is the stanza number eight:

*“Those who wish to crush the many sorrows of existence,
Who wish to quell the pain of living beings,
Who wish to have experience of a myriad joys
Should never turn away from bodhichitta.”*

So those people, those of us who want to get rid of and crush all the sufferings and pain - problems of our samsaric state of being, samsaric existence - we need to generate bodhichitta and work on that. Those who wish to, not only for ourselves, but also [to] quell or get rid of the pains and the sufferings of all other beings – [this is] also the starting point, the most important base, or the first thing that we should generate - this intention, aspiration, this motivation of bodhichitta. And also those who want to, who need to, who wish to experience the highest peace and joy of enlightenment - need to learn to experience in such a way there is no more fear, there is no more dissatisfaction, there's no more ignorance and unclarity - they need to generate the bodhichitta and work through bodhichitta. So therefore the compassion and wisdom is the essence - the enlightenment is the essence for the benefit of beings - the way to attain that. So therefore to have this bodhichitta becomes the required basic or basis - to work towards this.

So therefore nobody should turn away from the bodhichitta. It is so important. And it's so indispensable. So therefore we need to try to generate that – it's something that we can

generate. Because how we see things, our attitude is based on how we understand things, how we see things, how we see what is good for me and what's the most important thing for me. So if I know, if I have this way of seeing, if I don't have this misunderstanding of only wishing things for me, only craving things for my own self, and only for myself – [that path] will not lead to any real good thing for myself alone. But if I really understand, you know, of course I wish good things for me, but doing good things for me, or positive things for my good future and for my benefit now is not contrary if I don't do it at the expense of others. I don't have to do that. The more I wish good for others, I work for the benefit of others also - that's good for me. I need to see this understanding that doing something good for me is not at the expense of or [instead of] doing anything good for others. It's not like that. Doing good for me is together with doing good things for other people, wishing good things for other people - all the beings - having compassion. Having compassion is not that if I have compassion I cannot do anything good for myself - that's the wrong view. If I have compassion and if I act with compassion that will be the best thing for me - not only best for others but also for myself - the best thing.

If I understand like that then having compassion and acting with bodhichitta doesn't become something that I'm doing at the expense of myself - that I'm sacrificing myself because then I have compassion - [it's] not like that. If I see, if I understand clearly that if I have compassion, and I do something with compassion that's the best thing for myself also – that's the most beneficial thing for myself also. So therefore when I see these together - because sometimes people say 'Oh I've been trying to be compassionate all the time, now is the time that I look after myself'. How do you look after yourself? Being not compassionate? How do you look after yourself? You can't look after yourself just being not compassionate. There's no way to look after yourself without having compassion - then you become only full of dissatisfaction – full of wanting more, [full of] unhappiness. How do you look after yourself without compassion? Is there any way that you can really look after yourself without compassion? There's no way. So this understanding becomes extremely important.

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