



# Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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**Proving the Benefits of Active Bodhichitta**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Chapter, Stanza 27-28**

BA16: Proving the Benefits of Active Bodhichitta by Reasoning. Chapter 1, Stanza 27-28  
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Now we come to stanza number 27 and this is about the benefit of action bodhichitta through reasoning. And it says:

*"If the simple thought to be of help to others  
Exceeds in worth the worship of the Buddhas,  
What need is there to speak of actual deeds  
That bring about the weal and benefit of beings?"*

I think we discussed this a little bit in our last session also. Buddha discussed, Buddha said this many times. There is also a quotation from the Samadhiraja Sutra, *do ting nge dzin gyalpo* [?]. He says that,

[Rinpoche quotes the text first in Tibetan]

*"In a thousand - hundreds of thousands - millions of universes filled with all sorts of immeasurable offerings, you make these offerings to the Buddhas everyday and throughout [the day], permanently all the time. That positive deed, the positive karma coming out of that, if you compare it with just a thought of helping others, or loving kindness, loving thought - the loving thought, helping thought towards other beings is much stronger and*

*much more beneficial - much more stronger positive karma”.*

That’s what Buddha said.

So therefore if just that kind of intention, or just loving - just a loving thought - is so important, so powerful, so good, then what to say about making a commitment, or making an actual deed of helping all the sentient beings throughout the universe? So therefore you can just think by reasoning and say how positive deed that would be.

I think we discussed this before also - intention and action - sometimes it is said that intention is like wanting to go and action is taking the first step. There’s another way of describing it because bodhichitta is a commitment, so there they say committing to the result is the intention bodhichitta and committing to the cause is the action bodhichitta. Committing to the result means that if I say, ‘I want to go to New York’, so I make a commitment to go to New York. That's the intention - I want to go, I will go, but I didn't [yet] do anything about the steps. Then - ‘I want to go to New York,’ - so I must go and get a ticket - so when I am committing myself to go and buy the ticket that's like action bodhichitta. So I want to do something about it, it's not just a kind of intention, not just a thought, but committing to some actions. Therefore it’s much stronger, it’s much more active, much more realistic. So that kind of working or wanting to work, wanting to do something or starting to do something - whatever that may be, it may be a very small action, a very insignificant thing - but inspired by that grand kind of will or aspiration it becomes such a special thing.

Then it continues on the next stanza which says,

*"For beings long to free themselves from misery,  
But misery itself they follow and pursue.  
They long for joy, but in their ignorance  
Destroy it, as they would their foe."*

So all these sentient beings in samsara, like myself, they all want to be free from all kind of miseries, sufferings and problems. But because we don't understand what is bringing more

happiness and more lasting peace - or more freedom from suffering - and what actions are bringing an end to them – so out of ignorance we follow those actions that bring more problems and more misery on ourselves and others. Like we commit more anger, more attachment, more negative deeds. We try to kill others, we try to rob others, we try to do all the negative deeds and through that we also get more and more in these negative habits, negative emotions, and we get soaked in that, so therefore all these people act - these samsaric beings - out of ignorance: they want to do something good for themselves, but they don't know how to do it. So, instead of doing something really good, really beneficial, that brings freedom from suffering and brings more lasting peace and happiness, they go into so much trouble to make actions which actually bring more trouble and more pain and more problems - and this is out of ignorance.

So the bodhisattvas would like to get rid of this ignorance from [all] people and would like to do something about that. When they see people who are doing negative things they don't get angry about them. They become more compassionate, because they see that [those people] are under the influence of delusion, ignorance, and therefore they actually don't know what's good for them – and they actually harm themselves. Instead of getting angry and feeling negative towards them they feel more compassionate. And the more negative deeds people are doing, the more kind of wrong things people are doing, the more compassionate we become, the more resolved we become to work for the benefit of others.

Such a person, with such an understanding, such a way of thinking - how wonderful it is, how powerful it is because when you have that way of seeing and that way of reacting, then you cannot do anything really negative. Therefore, it is good for you because you don't get caught by negative emotions and negative reactions too much and that is very good for others because you are continuously a friend to them even if you are not nice to them or you are not kind to them or you are not grateful or appreciative to them, they are always a friend. So therefore the bodhisattva is sometimes called an unacquainted friend.

How nice it would be, how great it would be, [to be] that unacquainted friend to everybody whether you know him, you know them, you know her, or not - you're a friend for everybody and always helping and helping and wanting to help and doing everything that is useful and good and helpful. So you think how nice, how great, how wonderful that kind of being would be. So, the

more you appreciate that - that kind of person, that kind of way of being - then you would also generate, [even] a little bit, the intentions and some kind of actions along that line. At this moment you are not saying that I can or even should sacrifice myself or sacrifice everything, because I am not ready for that maybe, I can't do it or I feel too afraid of doing that, but at least I can do something, at least there is nothing wrong to wish well to everybody, at least there's nothing wrong to do something that might be of help in one way or another for myself and others.

Therefore, it's not that I have to first become a totally great bodhisattva, totally, completely positive, and the intention bodhichitta has to be complete and then only I can act. It's not like that. I can act - why not? I should act, to try to do something that's good for me and good for others - why not? I don't need to wait till I become a great bodhisattva of intention first. We have to discover how nice it feels, how proud I become, how satisfied I feel when I can do something that's [even] a little bit helpful.

You need to find the satisfaction and pleasure of doing something good because you want to feel good and if you do something only for yourself how good would you feel afterwards? If I just entertain myself, I might feel a little bit nice at the time, but after I've finished I don't feel anything good. If I did something useful and beneficial to others maybe at the time of doing I feel not so good maybe - I think that maybe I should be enjoying myself other than doing this - but even most of the time, actually even while doing this, you feel good because you feel that at least I am doing something useful. And after you have done it, then you will feel good all the time - 'At least I did something'. Even when you die you can say that this little thing I did for the benefit of others. [But] whatever you enjoy yourself, when you're dying, I don't think you will feel so good. You can say 'I did whatever I could' but there's nothing you can be proud of, there's nothing you can really feel that you have done something useful, done something meaningful. So therefore it's so important to understand this.

Of course, generally, to have this bodhisattva's attitude of liberating all sentient beings is related with the understanding that I live for a long time, life after life after life - because it's not something you can do in one lifetime. It's related with the understanding of 'life after life'. If you have that understanding, then it works very well and that is very good, but even if you don't have that, even if you don't believe in life after life, there's nothing wrong to try to do something good

for others, because that is much better than not doing anything. Especially if you're going to be finished after you die then what's the use of doing something that will be over after just a few years? If you do something that will benefit society, [benefit] the world, that will remain for a longer period, it is much, much better - and that makes your life worthwhile.

I was just recently reading a book by Ian Stevenson, Dr Ian Stevenson, about his research on reincarnation. You should all read that. There are lots of stories of children remembering their past lives and his research not only on the memories but on the physical birthmarks and deformations - and then comparing that with the life before and seeing how strongly related they are in a more kind of perceivable, a more kind of scientifically identifiable way. So [that's] something that is, I think, good to read. It doesn't give any conclusions but maybe will give some indications.

So I think I will stop here. These two stanzas 27 and 28 - and it continues. Thank you very much.

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