



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche Questions and Answers 9



QA9: Questions and Answers 9 (after the teaching BA13)
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So, I'm going to answer some of the questions and the first question is:

"It seems to me that in order to progress from bodhichitta of intention to action bodhichitta I need to have 100% conviction about the bodhisattva path. I am not sure that I have truly achieved this yet. Is the right attitude to keep studying and practicing and hope that this will eventually happen? It is not that I consciously have doubts about the path, but rather that I am unsure whether it has really permeated my whole being."

I think both intention as well as action bodhichitta has to develop, it has to grow, it has to progress. If everybody has, immediately you hear the teachings, you have the 100% intention and

100% action, then why do we talk about training in the Bodhisattva path for countless aeons? So, this is not to be expected. If you have a little bit of kindness, if you have a little bit of concern for others, if you feel that I need to work for the benefit of others even a little bit and you try do something a little bit, that is, I think, the right way. It is not to be expected to be perfect. If you do that, then something is wrong and it means that you don't understand; you expect too much

Then the second question is:

"I want to read ahead in the text to learn about the 6 paramitas. I thought the first paramita was generosity but I could not see a chapter with this heading. Could you kindly clarify?"

It's true. There is no chapter called 'generosity', but the first chapter and the last chapter -- that is the dedication -- is about generosity because it is about the intention of helping others and then dedicating all your positive deeds towards others. So these two are about the giving or the generosity.

Next question is:

"Could you please say something about developing bodhichitta in steps? It is difficult for most of us to even conceive of "all sentient beings" let alone feel empathy for them. How do we move from a small circle of empathy, to make it wider so that it eventually covers all sentient beings? Although we must work for their enlightenment shouldn't we also wish them all forms of "mundane" happiness – as long as this is not destructive to them or others?"

I think that you didn't hear me saying, again and again, that just wishing that people be free from any kind, *any kind* of suffering. I think I emphasized this over and over again: *any kind* of suffering. And to have *any kind* of happiness. So, that means not only enlightenment, that means any kind of... you know, we have lots of problems everybody has lots of problems that we see and so therefore when we see them having sickness and we want to get them out of that sickness that's compassion. If we see them hungry and we want them to be free from hunger; if they are under a great atrocity and we want to free them from that, that is [compassion] also. So it is not necessary... of course if you go deeply then you will find that unless you have a way of

understanding and experience of how to free yourself from any kind of problems and pains, an inner understanding, inner experience, other than, solving problems of hunger, solving problems of this and that, is not a permanent solution. Therefore, when we understand *that*, then we would like to wish for enlightenment. But it's not only for enlightenment, I mean, enlightenment is a big thing. That's it.

So we wish *any* good. And that's Bodhisattva, Bodhisattvas sometimes work for the benefit of a certain... like to give food to give drink or to give from certain kind of problems, they can spend life after life on that... and only for a small number of people, it is not that... You *wish* them to all the beings who are like us wherever they may be, whoever they may be, and that's nothing difficult to imagine, all the beings like us. Whether they are animals, whether they are human beings, whether they are other beings, wherever they are, maybe they are, but the main thing is to start. Generosity starts at your home with yourself, with the closest person to you, so this is also very important to understand. It is said that the most important thing to do is to try to help the person who is next to you. You don't have to go very far and starting from that, that's the most important thing.

Then the next question is:

"If there is a direct way, then exactly how do we "just be free from suffering", without always going in circles around it?"

I think what you mean is, "if there is a direct way" means if you can become enlightened and then get rid of all the problems. Of course that's not easy to understand -- people don't even want that, people even don't *know* that there's something called enlightenment. We think that to get rid of poverty, to get rid of hunger, to get rid of illiteracy, and illness, is very, very important. It *is* important. It is important. But, eventually, we need something that gives us the kind of understanding *how to* and a way of knowing [and] experiencing of how to liberate our own emotions and our own experience and that's what enlightenment is all about. But this is not what most people understand so, therefore, not even wish. So it's not necessary that you have to start with that.

Then, next question is:

"Isn't the question 'What do we all really want?' as important as the answer? It may be true for every being that 'I want to be free from suffering', but if one has not found that out experientially then one will not understand the power and consequences of that finding."

It's very true. It's very true, and it's very important to find that because we all think that *this* is the [thing]...I need to have a car, a big car, and *that* is the most important thing for me. And there are lots of people who think like that. Or I need to have lots of money and that's the most important thing for me and if I have money then anything and everything is OK. So, I can spend all my life doing that, harming others, going through all sorts of pain and problems for myself, and maybe I don't even find that, but even if I find that, I find some money, then you find afterwards that that's not the thing; it doesn't bring everything you want from that. So, then, you miss the point. So, therefore if you know, if you know that it's not this thing or that thing but what we really want is to be free from suffering, pain, problems. So we have to look where that pain, problem and suffering comes from. Then we have found a *way* to look at, it's not that that's the solution, but we at least find where the problem is, so this is also important. It doesn't mean to say that we should not solve any problem that we have.

"'Experientially' does not necessarily mean by suffering even more --"

What does this mean?

"'Experientially' does not necessarily mean by suffering even more. But maybe it is by making effort to honestly find out what I really want, through working with bodhichitta of intention, and then work for it through active bodhichitta."

I mean... It's not that to find out what you really want, there you don't need bodhichitta, you don't need bodhichitta action or bodhichitta intention. That you just have to look [for] in yourself in a kind of usual way. It's nothing to do with the dharma or nothing to do... you don't have to look with a certain kind of Buddhist perspective, that's totally wrong. There's no Buddhist perspective here. Everything in Buddhism has no Buddhist perspective. You have to look in a logical way, in a

commonsense way through our own experience. We are not talking about becoming a Buddhist and then looking from a Buddhist way of looking: that's not right. We have to look from our own experience, from the human way, or as a sentient being way of looking. Just to look directly and clearly and not, kind of, blinded by any unnecessary philosophy or any, kind of, way of looking: just genuinely and honestly.

"Then maybe through this experience we clearly see there is nothing to stop us except our own confusion."

This is another matter. This also maybe we will also find through looking, but this is the solution, this is the solution and this is a much more deeper thing to understand. But first to find out what we really want. What / really want. What everybody, really, is looking for. What is the most important thing for us? And then, try to look for how that happens, how that might come. Because, what is the real problem? What is the thing that is stopping us experiencing the freedom from suffering? What is bringing suffering? To understand that and then [go] slowly. So, this is not necessarily easy. Nobody is saying that all these things are completely easy or simple or things like that.

Next question:

"It seems, to be free – to have peace of mind and joy - we have to leave behind a certain old state of mind, a mental and emotional clinging to a small world with habitual limits."

This you have to find out. This one has to find out oneself. It's not that somebody tells you and you believe it.

"Is this what we are trying to make eventually happen when we start to ask ourselves what I really want? So we see beyond the limit, and want to improve. So then once we really experience this new way of being very strongly we finally just break free and the biggest problem just fades with no further confusion. Is the practice, that we pose this question and reflect on it again and again, step by step, as long as necessary?"

Some of these questions ask the end from the beginning. You cannot ask a question of the end when you have not yet started from the beginning. So it's not easy to give that kind of answer, but so far, we are talking about the bodhichitta intention and how important that is so, let us consider that, let us work on that, let us concentrate on that. Let us not jump to the end of the text. So, concentrate on how important the compassion is, how important a good will is, how important to feel that you want to work for the benefit of others is, how important compassion is, this is what we concentrate on now.

"Is one of the ways to develop active bodhichitta to continually try to overcome aversion?"

We are going to talk about these things when we come to this. So, I think I must remind everybody that you should not go to the end and ask questions from there when we are in the beginning. So, let's concentrate on the text that we are teaching now. Just concentrate on the stanza that we are going through and don't go to the end. So, therefore, yes, aversion is a very important thing but we will talk about it later.

"For example, when we find a situation difficult, like in the rush hour in a tube train when it is very crowded, would that be a good opportunity? Or in a social or work situation if someone is irritating, to make a strong effort to overcome that aversion?"

Yes, that's very important. We have to work on our actual experience. We have to work on our actual experience. If we have to work on patience then we have to work on when we are becoming impatient, then we have to work on that. We have to remind how important not to be so impatient, that it doesn't work, it is not good for me, it is not good for others. So, this way, you have to learn that being impatient doesn't do any good anyway, so, by understanding this, you allow yourself to let be. So this way, step by step. So, you can't expect to progress too quickly also, this is important.

And also I must say here that when people are debating, like they are doing now, also try to debate on something you *understand*, don't debate on something you don't understand at all. So, go *down*, down to the ground. Don't talk about too high things and too complicated things and too much deep things that we don't know anything about. If I don't know anything about anything

then how can I debate on it? How can I discuss it? So try to come down and talk about things that we understand that are on the ground level: things that we can actually understand and see. And then use logic, don't say that I *think* like this or I *like* to see like this or I like this because it must be like this. No, it's not like that. We should use *logic*, we should use *reasons*. And those things that we don't understand we should use the experience of others, like quotations from the texts and from the scriptures, from the experience of Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas. That's the way to discuss and that's the way to work.

So thank you very much, this is question number nine that I've answered.

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This is a transcript of a video talk given for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche. The transcript has only been lightly edited and is meant to be used within the Online Shedra study context.