



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche
Confession (Part 2)
2nd Chapter, Stanzas 32-46



BA2_32-46: Confession. Part 2: Power of Regret. 2nd Chapter, Stanzas 32 to 46.
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So, we continue the confession, the second chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara and we continue with the feeling of regret for the negative things that I have done and it is stanza number 32. Here, Shantideva says:

*"It may be that my death will come to me
Before my evil has been cleansed.
How then can I be freed from it?
I pray you, quickly grant me your protection!"*

So all these negative things that I have done in the past, if I do not purify them then I will have to carry the consequences of those actions and all the negative things that I cling to, that I kind of hold on to in myself. Then, if I don't let go of them, if I don't get rid of them they will be there and they will bring me lots of problems and pains and suffering. So I need to get rid of them, I need to get rid of them when I am able to get rid of them, when I am aware of them, when I can do something about them which will be now, in this life.

But, there's no certainty to this life, so it is possible that I could die before I can purify myself. Therefore, I need to do it quickly, as soon as possible, get rid of all the negative things, regret them, purify them, replace them with positive habitual tendencies, positive emotions, positive karma. Therefore, I pray to all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas to help me to get this purification done.

*"We cannot trust the wanton Lord of Death.
The task complete or still to do, he will not wait.
In health or sickness, therefore, none of us can trust
Our fleeting, momentary lives."*

So, it's a reminder of the impermanence: we cannot say that I will definitely not die today or this year or things like that. When the Lord of Death or the death will come, I cannot say. I cannot say that I have not finished my work, I've not finished this project, I'm too young or I have lots of things to do. Even when I'm in health, I can die also, if I'm sick I can die also. Therefore, this life is fleeting, changing always, an impermanent thing; it's a momentary thing. Therefore, I must understand this and I must get rid of my negative things as quickly as possible.

*"And we must pass away, forsaking all,
But I, devoid of understanding,
Have, for sake of friend and foe alike,*

Provoked and brought about so many wrongs.”

I must pass away, I must die; and when I die, there's nothing I can carry with me. I cannot carry with me the wealth, I cannot carry with me the people around me, the loved ones, I cannot carry with me my name, my fame, my popularity: nothing I can carry with me. But, without understanding this, I have done so many things. I have done so many bad things, so many negative things, some of them for myself, some of them for my friends, some of them for my enemies.

In order to [give] some kind of help or because of my attachment, or because of my wanting to help and through that, I did some not nice things, not ethical things, not good things that harmed other people. Because I don't like my enemies, I hate my enemies, I hold somebody or some people or some things as my enemies and I try to harm them, not knowing that all these things, the life itself, is a momentary thing. So therefore, I have done lots of negative things.

*“But all my foes will cease to be,
And all my friends will cease to be,
And I will also cease to be,
And likewise everything will cease to be.”*

But, what I did not realise, what I do not realise is my enemies are also temporary, momentary: they cease to be, they pass on, they're also impermanent and momentary. My friends are also the same way: they cease to be, they pass on, they're temporary - and I am also like this.

And not only that, but my enemies do not always necessarily remain my enemies. My enemies can also become my friends. If I try to make it in a skilful way I could make my enemies into my friends also and then they cease to be enemies. So, if I do lots of negative things and bad things for this life, because all the negative things that I do now, I do it for this life: I can't do it for all lives to come or the next lives. Therefore, it's useless to do negative things for this life because this life is so temporary and so transient. So, I have to do something in this life that, when I am dying I should feel that I have done nothing really too much wrong; and I can look back and say that whatever the life I have lived, I did it in the best way I could and I have done something that's positive, and that's good - not that I've done so many bad things for ever whoever it may be.

*"All that I possess and use
Is like the fleeting vision of a dream.
It fades into the realms of memory,
And fading, will be seen no more."*

Because, if I did something negative, something harmful, something not good, all that I have done, all the things that I've achieved, or I have thought to have achieved through these negative deeds are like dreams: what I did yesterday is like a dream to me now. It's gone and it's only in my memory, there's nothing else. Therefore, if I've harmed my enemies, if I've done something that's really wrong and negative, what if I had hated, if I had had negative emotions, negative actions? All these things are no use because they are gone. Once they are gone, then only the negative effect of those actions and emotions remain with me.

*"And even in the brief course of this present life,
So many friends and foes have passed away,
Because of whom, the evils I have done
Still lie, unbearable, before me."*

What really remains are these actions that I have done - their effects. If I have done very bad actions, cruel actions, harmful actions, then, that remains with me because they give a very strong impression on myself. Their reactions, their imprints are still on me and therefore the effects of those actions only I have to carry, nobody else will carry them.

*"The thought came never to my mind
That I too am a brief and passing thing.
And so, through hatred, lust and ignorance,
I have committed many sins."*

Now, the word "sin" - in this translation the word "sin" is used - usually, many Buddhist translators do not want to use the word "sin", they want to use "negative deed" or "unvirtuous deed" or something like that; because some translators feel that "sin" is too strong a word, like it is thoroughly kind of damning, kind of permanent. From the Buddhist point of view, whatever

negative deeds you have done they can be purified: there is no negative deed that cannot be purified. Therefore, they don't use the word "sin" too much. But what it means here is I am a kind of momentary thing, I am here for a brief moment. Life, in one way, is long, but, in another way, if you look deeply, it's very short.

So, in this short life, because of my negative emotions, my hatred, lust and ignorance, I do lots of things with body, speech and mind, which are very negative, which are very unjust, which is very harmful. I should not do that. If I have done it now, I must purify them, I must not keep them, I must forgive, I must promise not to do that again and do something more positive because the only way to get rid of the impact of a negative deed is to do positive things so that the impact of those negative things in me is changed to positive.

*"Never halting night or day,
My life drains constantly away,
And from no other source does increase come.
How can there not be death for such as me?"*

So, I am impermanent and every day, every night, I am nearing to my death. Therefore, my life is like a pond where there's no water coming in but always going out. It's bound to be empty soon. My life can only drain and go away but there's no way increase can come in. Therefore, that is certainly coming to me.

*"There I'll be, prostrate upon my bed,
And all around, my family and friends.
But I alone shall be the one to feel
The cutting of the thread of life."*

This situation will happen to everybody and it will happen to me, also. I'll be lying in my deathbed and all my family and friends will be around me, unhappy, mourning, trying to help but they cannot do anything. It's me and me alone who's going through "the cutting of the thread of life". That means I'm only dying and there's nothing that can help in this.

*“And when the heralds of the Deadly King have gripped me,
What help to me will be my friends and kin?
For then life’s virtue is my one defense,
And this, alas, is what I shrugged away.”*

At that time, when I am dying, then, what helps, what really helps? Nobody can help me: my friends, my family, they cannot do much to help me. If there is one thing that can really help me it’s my good karma. If I have done something to prepare for my death, if I have done lots of positive deeds, gained lots of virtue, if I have understood, experienced some wisdom and accumulated some wisdom and compassion and that I have some confidence in knowing what’s going to happen to me and that I don’t have to be afraid of the situation, that, only, can help me.

And that kind of positive deed, that kind of practice, that kind of preparation, alas, I have never done.

Therefore, it is very important that I should try to work on my preparations for the death, to really do something so that, even if death comes, there’s no problem, there’s no fear, I’m prepared. When death comes, then you can say that I have purified myself.

*“O protectors! I, so little heeding,
Hardly guessed at horror such as this –
And all for this brief, transient existence,
I have done so many evil things.”*

So, when I am on my deathbed and look back at the life, I would feel that it was a very short time, a very short moment; and then, if I look back and see what are the things that I have done in my life, did I do something that’s really useful, that’s really worthwhile, that’s really giving me some confidence, some fearlessness, some kind of thing that I can hold on to, at this moment? Then, if I find something like that, I can be without horror, without fear. But, if I haven’t done that then there’s nothing to help me to get through this horror of dying. And in this brief life when I remember that I’ve wasted by doing so many negative things, then it’s very sad.

This is stanza 43:

*“The day they take him to the scaffold,
Where they will tear off his limbs,
A man is changed, transfigured by his fear:
His mouth is dry, his eyes start from his brow.”*

So, it is a kind of example if someone is kind of sentenced to death then he’s being taken to the scaffold to be hanged. Then, what kind of a situation will this man be in? With so much fear, each step towards his death, he’ll be totally frightened, very sad and in a negative state of being.

*“No need to say how stricken I shall be
When overcome and sick with dreadful fear...”*

When I die, it should not be like that. I could also be like that if I don’t purify myself, if I don’t discontinue my negative deeds, if I don’t do something really positive now, I could also be like that. Therefore, I don’t need this.

*“No need to say how stricken I shall be
When overcome and sick with dreadful fear
I’m seized by forms so horrible to see,
The frightful servants of the Lord of Death.*

You can die very kind of fearful, in a very negative way; we can die in a very peaceful and positive way. How we die depends on what kind of life we led. Therefore, it is now we have to decide what kind of life we have to lead. When the time comes for death I should be very frightened, I should be full of remorse, full of regrets and very frightened: or, I should be peaceful, feel very encouraged, feel very light and ready because I’ve spent this life in as positive a way as possible and I have gained some confidence in how to go beyond also.

*“Who can give me safe protection
From this horror, from the frightful dread?”*

*And then I'll search the four directions,
Seeking help, with panic-stricken eyes."*

At that time, I could be doing this. Who can protect me from this dreadful, frightening state; and then I would search and I would try to find help everywhere? But, I would not find any help at that time because the only help that I can [get] is by myself.

*"But in those four directions no protection shall I find.
And I shall sink into despairing woe.
No refuge will there be for me;
At such a time, what shall I do?"*

So, if I have not done anything now, if I have not purified myself, if I have not accumulated some positive deeds, if I have not done some training so that I can have confidence to die in the proper way, at that time, there will be no protection from anywhere. Therefore, I will not find any refuge there, I will have to [be] in the most horrible and despairing state. That, I should not do. So, my understanding by knowing in what kind of negative situation I shall be if I do not do something positive now and if I do not get rid of my negative deeds or purify my negative deeds or confess my negative deeds, then I should do now what is most useful and what is most beneficial for me in the future, for my death, for my next life, and for all the times to come that in what way I can help myself best, I can help other people [in the best way]. Those kinds of situations and methods I have to find and I have to work on it at this very moment.

So this is the end of the section of regret. That's stanza number 46. Now, this regret is important, but guilt is not a very good thing because regret is to recognise the negative deeds as negative deeds; negative emotions as negative emotions; what actions are causing pain and problems for ourselves. We have to recognise them, then we chose not to do that. We choose to get rid of them; we choose to not cling to them: that's regret. Guilt is [that] I kind of wrongly see myself identified as something bad. So therefore, I am bad, I'm a sinner, I've done wrong, I'm finished. That's not the situation, that's not the right way to see it because that's not the condition, that's not the situation, that's not the proper way of being. Because however many negative deeds that I have done with ignorance and with the negative emotions overpowering me, I can always purify

them, I can always change: I can always train myself to do more positive [things] and to be more positive, to feel more positive and to react more positively. Therefore, it's not necessary to feel guilty but it is important to act and purify now.

So this is the understanding. So thank you very much and this is from Amsterdam in Rager's place so I hope the recording is clear enough and thank you very much.

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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.