



# Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

## Ringu Tulku Rinpoche **Questions and Answers 8 (Chapter 2)**

BA2Q8: Questions and Answers 8 (Chapter 2)

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

*“Self judgement enhances blaming thoughts and vulnerabilities, but I believe that self-evaluation is better done with an attitude of joy and gratefulness. Is it inadequate in relation to the teachings?”*

I think it is very good to do it with an attitude of joy and gratitude. The main thing is about the balance. There’s nothing that says that if you judge yourself you will blame yourself and you will feel bad. That’s not the idea. It doesn’t happen like that. We need to judge ourselves. We need to know what’s happening. We need to be aware of what actions I am doing and its consequences. But it is not that you have to be too judgemental. The whole thing is about being the balance, the Middle Way. Not too much judgement, not completely without any judgement. So therefore, you know, you don’t have to blame, you don’t have to be vulnerable, but you also have to understand and therefore you have to act accordingly. Because if we don’t know what’s happening we cannot know how to make it better or how to follow the right decision. It’s about knowing the limit and knowing the balance. I think that’s the most important thing.

And of course you can say it’s with joy and gratitude, because you make the judgement and you do the purifications by knowing that anything negative done has to be purified and will be purified and then you will be the positive thing, you know. It’s not that the negative thing is there all the time and you cannot do anything about it. That attitude is not there. This is very, very important. I think the problem of understanding is that you may think that if you’ve done a wrong thing once,

then you've done it and that you cannot do anything without being punished. That attitude is not there in the Buddhist way of thinking. That attitude, I feel, is a little bit in the western law also, that if you have done something wrong, you need to be punished even if you have done so many right things. That's a little bit wrong, I think. You have really transformed, you have done lots of good things, then if you have done something wrong, it has to be forgiven.

*"I think I understand why it is so important to be aware of karma and impermanence, but why is it so difficult to purify negative karma? If everything is impermanent and constantly changing why then is negative karma so intractable and so resistant to change?"*

This you can see yourself. It's not about the change, it's about the addictiveness. If you are addicted to something then, you know, it goes, but then it comes again and again and again and again, so therefore it's very difficult to get rid of. By knowing the impermanence, by understanding the impermanence, by understanding the changeable nature of things (that's the karma), the changeable nature of things that your actions can transform, can change. By doing that you get rid of your addiction to doing something or feeling something in a negative way. So therefore, you know, the more you have that understanding and clarity, the more you are able to really transform.

Things always change, but always change in the same way because if the causes and conditions the same way then the next instant will be the same way.

So therefore, because it changes doesn't mean that you will change your way of doing things. So you need to change your way of doing things. You need to change your way of holding onto things. You need to change your attitude towards the actions and your way of seeing things. Then it is easy. It's not difficult. That's the whole point. From Buddhist point of view it says it is not difficult to change if you really want to change and make the change in a one-pointed way. But if you kind of, *"Yeah I will do this thing. I want to purify, but I can't say I will not do it again. I will do it again."* If you really think like that, then of course you will not change because you will do it again and again and again and then, you know, same result.

So next question is *"How to regret and purify past lives negative karma? My superego doesn't*

*accept that I may have killed other people or done serious negative deeds in the past life. I am very confused about that.”*

If you think that you have never done anything bad in the past lives or in your life until now, maybe you haven't. So that's nothing wrong then, it's very good. You just have to say that *“If I have done something wrong”*, then you purify that. So then it's very good if you have none of this negative emotions or negative addictions, then maybe you haven't done anything, you know. Because your situation now - our emotions and our way of thinking and way of reacting, our way of being, that kind of shows a little bit what our past lives have been. So if you feel, you know, that I'm very pure and there's no negative reactions and not much negative emotion and I have a positive way of reacting most of the time, then maybe you haven't [done anything bad in past lives] , so therefore that's even better.

So these are the questions and I hope I've been able to answer them, I don't know. This is my way of understanding, so I can't say that this is exactly the way or truth or whatever, but this is what I understand. 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.