



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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The Power of Antidote
2nd Chapter, Stanzas 54-59



BA2_54-59: The Power of Antidote. 2nd Chapter, Stanzas 54 to 59.

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So, we continue the second chapter, *The Confession*, and out of the four powers, four ways of purification we come to the third one: that is, *using the antidotes*.

First, we need to think about the karma – the results of our actions – which brings positive things as well as negative things. Therefore, if we did something negative we have to experience the negative result, the suffering from that. And also, to think about impermanence of a life. We cannot just feel that maybe one day we'll get rid of it, there's no need to hurry. Otherwise, we would never do it again, we'll never do this purification. So, I must do the purification now, do something positive now. So therefore, it says in stanza number 54:

“For if, alarmed by common ailments.

I must implement the doctor’s words,

What need to speak of when I’m constantly brought low

By ills like lust and faults a hundredfold?”

So, even if I had a small illness like some cold or a headache or things like that, in order to get rid of it I must go to see the doctor and then I must do whatever the doctor says even if I have to take lots of medicine, I have to be on a diet, I have to go through different kinds of operations – hardships and things like that. So, what to talk about this? I have these negative actions, negative causes to bring me down into the lowest kind of realms and all sorts of long-lasting sufferings because of my negative emotions and negative addictions like lust, like anger and hatred and all sorts of negative things. Then, when I see that my actions, my negative actions, negative emotions, my negative addictions are so strong that they will definitely bring me lots of suffering and pain, then immediately I should go to the refuge of the great doctor - like the Buddha - who can help me to bring me out of this misery and I have to do exactly what he says.

And then, 55:

“And if, by one of these alone,

The dwellers in the world are all thrown down,

And if no other remedy exists,

No other healing elsewhere to be found”

And these negative emotions, the negative addictions, negative things that we do or have done, even one of them, like a very strong hatred, will throw us into great trouble, great problems that will not get us out for a long, long time. And also, if we are totally overpowered by hatred or very strong jealousy, very strong greed or something like that, out of that we do harm to so many people. Also, if somebody is overpowered by even one of these negative emotions, then [that person] can do great harm for oneself which will last for a long time, great harm to lots of people

which will also last a long time, and then we can't really find any other way to get out of this other than the dharma: no other medicine, no other methods can we find to work on our negative emotions, negative addictions other than the teachings of an enlightened being. So, if that is the case, then why should we not very kind of deliberately and wholeheartedly do something about this? Why not purify our negative deeds?

Now it is like this, we need to recognise our negative deeds, we need to regret the negative deeds that we are doing and what we have done and we need to want to get rid of negative things with great urgency. Once we have that motivation, strong motivation, then we need to do lots of positive actions and whatever kind of positive actions and dharma practice and negative emotions and things like that we do, we deliberately think or we deliberately try to work on that, not just doing something positive but deliberately dedicate or target our negative karma and negative emotions to work on that. And then, even after we have done some positive things, we dedicate that so that we can be purified of all our negative karma and things like that.

So, in this way, we need to target the negative karma and actually purify them. It's not enough just to do something positive, we need to target the purification, target to purify ourselves to get rid of all the things that we hold on to and all the negative emotions, negative karma. Then only we purify them.

*"Then words of the all-knowing doctor,
Which uproot our every ill,
The thought to turn on him deaf ears
Is abject and contemptible stupidity". [Stanza 56]*

So when it is like that, that this kind of negativity, negative actions, negative karma, if we kind of hold on to it, if we don't purify it, if they overpower us, then even one of them can throw us into the depths of suffering and causes of much suffering for us, and cause lots of problems for others also - if we know that, and then, we also know that we have lots of causes of negative actions, like

negative emotions and negative ways of being and seeing; we have ignorance, we have aversion, we have attachment, we have all sorts of things. So, if that is like that, then we know we have all the problems and sufferings and all these illnesses. When we have all these illnesses and we also know that there is a doctor who can [know the remedies] and who has the remedies for these illnesses, the word that's the all-knowing doctor, that's the Buddha. And if we really do according to what he recommends – the actual dharma practice – then, and then only, we can totally get rid of all these illnesses or the causes of these sufferings.

When we know this, when we understand this, even then, if we don't listen to him, if we turn our deaf ear to him, is there any more stupid way of doing than that? We should understand ourselves as one of the most stupid people because even if we know that the negative actions are causing negative results, suffering and pain for ourselves and others; and even when we know that we have lots of these illnesses, lots of this negativity, that will cause these actions like negative emotions, ignorance and all sorts of things and we even know that there is a remedy for that and there is somebody who knows those remedies like the Buddha and the great enlightened beings, and even then, we do not listen to them, we do not do what they recommend us to do, we do not practise the dharma, we turn a deaf ear to them, then how can we be so stupid? There can't be anything more stupid than that.

“Along a small and ordinary cliff

If I must pick my way with special care,

What need to speak of that long-lasting chasm

Plunging to the depths a thousand leagues? [Stanza 57]

So, if I am walking on a balcony or on the stairs, an ordinary kind of cliff, if I fall I may break one of my limbs or something, or get a little bit hurt. I should pick my way with special care, even then I should be very careful, I must pick my way with special care, I should be very careful. But, indulging in negative actions is not like that. It's the cliff which is very, very deep, it's a long-lasting chasm, it throws me down into a kind of endless pit from where it's very difficult to get out. So,

how come that we should not be so careful about that - we should be even more careful, we should be very, very careful that we do not do negative actions. But if we have done negative actions, we have the negative karma and the negative emotions that causes them, we should immediately do something so that that danger does not arise. We should do everything to purify all the negative actions and negative karma so that we don't have any danger of falling into this kind of bottomless pit.

Then, we think that, *"Ok, we have to do that: but we will do that when we have time."* If we think like that, then this is the 58th stanza:

*"Today, at least, I shall not die,
So rash to lull myself with words like these!
My dissolution and my hour of death
Will come to me, of this there is no doubt."*

To think that, *"Today, definitely, I will not die."* Can you say that? Nobody can definitely say that because we don't know: nobody knows when we are going to die. Everybody knows we are going to die, there's no doubt about it because nobody, so far, has lived more than a hundred or so years. We cannot see anybody throughout the world who has lived more than a hundred odd years. So, everybody who was born on this earth has died.

Therefore, we don't even have a doubt that we will not die. When we will die, there's no certainty. People have died in old age, people have died in a young age, people have died as a child, people have died as they were born: there's absolutely no certainty. So then, how can I say that I shall not die today? So, before I die, if I don't do something, if I don't get rid of my negative karma, if I don't get rid of my negative things, then it is the worst thing because it will cause great suffering and problems and pain for countless – maybe - lifetimes and we will never know when this kind of opportunity will happen that I know I can do something, I can practise dharma, I have the understanding and opportunities and all the facilities. So, therefore, I must do it now, I must purify

now, I must do every possible thing that's possible and I must use all these positive actions to target and purify my negative emotions, negative actions, negative karma.

"Who can give me fearlessness,

What sure escape is there from this?

It's certain that I'm going to die,

So how can I relax, my mind at ease?" [Stanza 59]

So, *"Who can give me fearlessness?"* Only if I am really free from all negativity then only can I get fearlessness. *"What sure escape is there from this?"* Except my true realisation, my complete purification I can't find it. Therefore, this I cannot say. *"It's certain that I'm going to die..."* I know that I'm going to die and we don't know when exactly. So, how can I relax myself and just waste my time just doing nothing or doing something stupid while I'm certain that I'm going to die and if I don't get rid of my negative karma I will land into more trouble and lots of problems so I should try to practise dharma, I should try to purify myself, now, as soon as possible without wasting time. If I understand this way and if I do that way, then that's the most important thing for me, the most meaningful way of living life, and the most meaningful way of spending my time: otherwise, I will regret afterwards.

This is the understanding so I'll stop here at stanza number 59.

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