



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche *Questions and Answers 1 (Chapter 3)*



BA3Q1: Questions and Answers 1 (Chapter 3)

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So this is some questions that I would like to answer regarding the first teaching of the third chapter. The first question is,

“Dear Rinpoche, thank you for your very clear and practical explanation of these stanzas. When we find jealousy and envy in ourselves, should we apply the purification practices which you explained in the previous chapter?”

You can do that also, but the most important thing is to really understand very clearly that jealousy and envy is not good, not useful, not right. There's no reason to react like that, there's no reason to feel like that. It's completely wrong and completely unreasonable and illogical. It's neither good for me or for others. To understand that and then remind yourself that this I think is the most

important thing to do. Of course you can do the purifications also.

The second question is,

“Hi Rinpoche (sorry, this is quite long). Thank you for your teaching videos, you are giving me much to work on!”

Well [Rinpoche laughs] I mean, yeah, we need to work on ourselves, but it's not that you have to work too kind of stressfully, you can do it lightly, a little by little.

“Would you help me to understand something about the first stanza of chapter 3? During the last year, I saw another translation of this chapter; the first stanza is translated as below;

*'In the spiritual energy that relieves
The anguish of beings in misery and
Places depressed beings in eternal joy
I lift up my heart and rejoice.’”*

Well, this is a kind of free translation I think.

“When I read this it seemed simple to understand, I thought it was about rejoicing in the potential in all of us to come to eternal joy, the power of spiritual energy, and the impermanence of anguish, misery and other sufferings.

This was before I heard your kind instruction. You seem to be saying that stanza 1 is talking about rejoicing in the positive deeds of the most ordinary beings, which brings temporary relief from suffering. I accept we rejoice in ordinary beings doing positive deeds even though they may not be aware of the dharma.

I'm interested as I found the reminder that spiritual energy has the power to transform and bring suffering beings to eternal joy, even to beings in the most suffering, to be inspirational and helpful for my practice. This seems effective for me at cutting through negativity and I have found it simple

for me to use to invoke feelings of rejoicing. I also believe it to be true (from the little I have glimpsed through my own practice) when I am rejoicing there is not so much space in my mind for the jealousy! It seems a shame I have come to the wrong interpretation.

Can I continue to use this practice?"

No, I think it is like this, these 3 stanzas or 3, you know, what Shantideva has explained [as] these 3 stages for rejoicing, it all points out to this - this spiritual energy, you can call it, if you like - that there is a possibility to be free from suffering and so I rejoice at every level of that. You can call it spiritual energy. So therefore, you can rejoice in whatever way you can, it's not that you have to do it only in the very kind of strictest sense of the words that's given in the book. Actually Shantideva has made it very broad, from the least kind of simple little positive things that would help a little bit or help a little bit of rest or little bit, what can you say, relief from some sufferings or problems, to the enlightenment. So it's kind of, you know, very inclusive, so it's not exclusive of anything if you can understand this, and therefore, we rejoice at everything. Even very little things, or big things, simple things, worldly things, like if someone is in good mood, you rejoice by that, if someone is smiling, you rejoice at that, if somebody does something a little bit positive you rejoice at that, if somebody has received a little bit kind of a nice thing, positive thing, good thing and they are enjoying, you rejoice at that. And there's lots of things you find you can rejoice, so it's a very good practice. Of course you can always use any thing, any practice.

Then the next question is:

"Dear Rinpoche, I understand that to practice "rejoicing" we need to change the tendency of our mind towards jealousy."

That's very true, you know the jealousy is not right, not useful, not beneficial, we need to understand that very, very clearly because it is a fact. Then she continues:

"Then I understand this means that in each daily situation (when others do good things), we should remember this particular teaching and try to rejoice."

That's right.

"But sometimes, we can remember the teaching but maybe it's difficult to really rejoice from the heart."

Well, of course, that's why we need to train. If it happened all the time without any problem, then there's no need to train. But therefore it is always said that understanding is not enough - we need to practise. We need to train. Practise means training. So if, due to some reason, I am not able to rejoice at somebody's achievements or somebody's positive deeds today, then I try to do it tomorrow or some other times, I try to do it as many times as possible as often as possible and I try to remind myself of this and then, if I have too much jealousy and too much envy, then I try to purify that as we have discussed before, and then try to train in that.

"Is the recitation and meditation on the four sem-chen or great intention thoughts (immeasurables), as well as the seven branch prayer recitation a possible method?"

Well, you know, it's not about recitation, it's about remembering. So, in order to remember, if you want to recite, you can recite also. But this seven branch [practice] - this is the seven branch [practice], one of the seven branches, so therefore, whether you recite the text in your heart, or verbally, or you just remember those things, that's the practice. That's very good. That's the way. So therefore, we try and we kind of, if we don't do it once, that's OK - next time we try to be more positive. Because we know [that] what is important is to understand that feeling jealousy or envy is no use, no good. It does not help me, it doesn't help anybody. That doesn't mean to say that I should not have any feeling, or I should not have any desire or any kind of wish or any aspiration to do good, or to get good things or receive positive things. That's good, there's nothing wrong with that. But I don't have to be unhappy when people are doing good things and when people are receiving. I should be happy. Because usually many people think that if somebody has something good then it's as if they have taken it from me. It's not like that. They have not taken it from me. There's always space if you are good enough, if you work in a positive way. As some people say, *"There is always space at the top"*. I think it's some western people, some western economists or

administrators say this, that there is always space at the top. It's the bottom where all the, you know, too much competition is there. If you are really good at it, then there's always space for you. So therefore we need to kind of compete - we need to compete for our excellence, but not with our friends.

The next question is,

"I was struck by the teaching 'to rejoice for no reason at all.'"

I don't know what that means, for no reason at all...

"When I practice this from the heart, it feels relaxing, easy and open. But when I go back to my usual rational point of view, I quickly ask: "given the 3 types of suffering affecting all samsaric beings, including myself, I see very little reason to rejoice at all." I feel the benefit to myself when rejoicing for no reason at all, but it seems like playing ostrich, burying my head in the sand and forgetting the all-pervasive suffering – how is it possible to rejoice and see the suffering at the same time? Please would you kindly help me clarify all confusion? Thank you."

I think when I say rejoice for no reason, I think I mean that even if there is nothing that I particularly kind of get anything, still if somebody is doing something good or getting something nice, I should rejoice - that's the thing. Of course, there's lots of suffering in the samsara, but that doesn't mean I should not rejoice when somebody is doing something good that would help them to get a little bit better, you know. When there is kind of lots of general suffering, it doesn't mean that you should suffer more; you should suffer less. So if you have a little bit, even one minute of something good, that's also good, that's better than having continuous pain and problems.

So therefore even if there are three kinds of suffering, of course, the three kind of suffering is something that can be changed. This is the main understanding from the Buddhist point of view. Although there's lots of suffering in samsara, samsara can be ended. So therefore, that's possible; that's why we talk about these three stages of rejoicing. We rejoice at the Buddhas, we rejoice at

the bodhisattvas, rejoice at all the people who try to work on that, getting rid of suffering, or from the samsara, but even you are still in samsara, or within the samsara also if there is something little bit good happening - if somebody is being a little kind, somebody is a little good, somebody is doing something to help other beings or to help themselves also, why not rejoice. And actually rejoice means not to feel jealousy, not to feel envy, but feel good at it. I think there's no reason why we shouldn't do that. That there will be more suffering, or there can be more suffering or you're not completely out of suffering, is no reason that you do not rejoice at some good things. So that's all. 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.