



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche *Questions and Answers 4 (Chapter 3)*



BA3Q4: Questions and Answers 4 (Chapter 3)

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So here's some of the more recent questions. The first question is,

"For me, it's not difficult to rejoice and I can be happy for no special reason. But, sometimes, I feel that people are jealous of this attitude, and it makes me feel belittled. Can you help me with that?"

I think we can never make everybody happy. If we are jealous, people will be unhappy. If we rejoice, some people will be unhappy too. So, we have to do what is good for us, and what we feel is the best of the choices in the circumstances. So because if we rejoice, we feel happy, we do no harm to anybody and actually, it helps both sides. So I think it's better to rejoice whether some people like it or not. I think that's my understanding.

The second question is a bit long:

"These teachings are helping immensely to flush out incorrect concepts, that for us, colour evaluation of practice progress. Our appreciation is immense and deep. Our wishes are for your ease and health.

– Now the question starts:

"Karma is frequently understood as either punishment or reward. Meaning if we have 'good' karma, in the next moment or life, a more comfortable set of circumstances is at that moment, coming together for us as interdependence.

Could you please expound more deeply in your teaching that karma is our 'perception' of what arises rather than our tendency to judge what we think is happening to us at the moment, calling it 'our karma' and allowing self praise or self condemnation to follow.

Could it be said that if one can perceive purely, the whole issue of karma dissolves?

Again Rinpoche, please accept heartfelt appreciation and deepening devotion to these teachings."

Actually, karma is our own, you know, our own perception, yes – perception, habitual tendency, the way we have built ourselves. So if we can perceive purely or if we can perceive everything in the right way or in the way that the way things really are, then, of course, karma dissolves. Karma can dissolve when we have the wisdom. That's the idea, that's the understanding.

So therefore, the karma is not something outside, it's within us. It's very important to understand these two together. Karma is of course our perception, our habitual tendency, the way we are, the way we see, the way we experience. But, how we are – you know, we experience how we are, we don't experience something different. So the Karma is the way we do, we act, we are, actually. So therefore, when you talk about punishment and reward, it has to be an outside agent. The karma is nothing outside agent, it's our own. So therefore, it can't be a punishment and a reward. But it's a creation, how I create myself, how I create my future – that's up to me. So therefore, that understanding I think is very important. It doesn't mean that we should not do anything about it;

we have to do more, first more positive karma, then also transcend the karma, that's the general understanding.

Then, another question.

"I understand giving one's possessions and good deeds and I understand the importance of looking after one's body, but I don't understand giving one's body to all sentient beings. Could you please give some examples?"

The example is that if you dedicate your life for the wellbeing of all beings, that's giving your body to all beings. I think you might misunderstand this or kind of confuse it with giving our positive deeds. There, I dedicate my life in doing things which would be helpful to all beings and then, whatever positive kind of karma you can call it, positive energy you can call it, whatever you call it, the result that comes out of that, then, I give that also for all the sentient beings. That's giving my positive deeds. So this is, I think, I hope I have made it clear.

Next question is:

"The practice of offering Mandala, it seems to me that can be a training in giving our possessions, but also in praising to the Buddhas therefore also a way of purifying our minds. Can you say a little bit about the purpose of this practice and its benefits?"

Well, the Mandala offering is basically a training to let go of all the positive things. Because the main source of our sufferings is aversion and attachment; fear and too much attachment, too much clinging. And Vajrasattva practice, if you will talk about the Ngöndro, is about letting go of negative things, and Mandala offering is training in letting go of all positive things, so that we don't neither have fear nor have clinging. Actually, we can also cling sometimes, not sometimes but very much all the time, to the negative things also. So Mandala offering is to learn and to kind of train in letting go. This is the Mandala offering. Anything that is good, anything I am attached to.

Then, the next question is,

"Everything I have learned has come from an awareness of my body's sensations and feelings. Remembering the humble origins of the body as particles of dust, makes me a good disciple of life, sharing with others in the most positive way. In every loss of health and possessions, may I find new ways to give more than I have received – is that the meaning of the wish to give my body and possessions? I'm not prepared to give up all that I have built."

[Rinpoche laughs.] Well, you know, the thing is like this: whether I am prepared to give all my things that I built or not, I will have to let go, when the time comes for me. When I die, I cannot hold on to anything. If I try to hold on to my body or possessions, it will just give me more trouble, more suffering. It doesn't give me anything more. So therefore, it is better that I train myself to not to be so much clinging or attached neither to my possessions nor to my body, so that when it comes for me the time to let them go, I can let them go also. And, actually, the more I can let that go now, the more I have less problem now. It doesn't mean that I will insult it, I will do something that will harm my body, or harm my possessions or harm me and harm others also, of course not. But, the more I am kind of easy about that – because actually, what is mine? Nothing can be really mine, when my body itself is not mine that I can really be in control of it. So how can anything be really mine? So therefore it is important that we just have to see the true nature of it, the way things really are.

Next question is,

"Rinpoche, when I first read these stanzas it seemed to me that they implied an attitude of self-sacrifice, something very extreme, but when I listened to your explanations it seemed as if you are talking about a middle way; that you give everything to others but at the same time you take care of yourself. Is that a correct understanding? Maybe the idea of self-sacrifice is more implicit in Western culture and religion, and in Buddhism there is a more balanced view?"

Well, I mean, Buddhism is basically middle way. That's what Buddha talked again and again. The middle way. But, you know, to give yourself or to give your body, your mind, even your kind of positive things, your possessions – how much you see as a sacrifice is the issue. If you see that my body is a transient thing, it's not really mine. Me – who is me? Actually, first we have to look at what is me. Where is me, something that's different from the body and from the mind and from

everything else? You know, we have this strong kind of identification or kind of very strong holding, clinging to a me which is never found. So therefore, you know, if I have that, then I feel that I can't sacrifice my body because I must have it, it's me, you know, it's my thing. But if you really understand what is the relationship between me and my body and where is actually me, then I don't think you will see as a great sacrifice anyway.

But, the understanding of the practice of the Dharma is that as long as you have this strong clinging or strong sense of sacrifice to do something or to give something, then, it is not good to give that way. It is better to learn to understand the way things are. And therefore, it becomes more easier, more kind of reasonable, more common sense that you do things for others, you kind of help others. Because the question is not *"Why should I sacrifice"*, but *"Why should I cling to things"*, *"Why should I be selfish?"* If you answer this question, the only reason why I think that I should be selfish, is because of there is me, which is separate from everything else, and which is [the] only [reason why] I have to be concerned with myself . But when you look deeply, it's not like that. Therefore there is no reason that I have to cling to myself and I have to be selfish only to myself. You will find that it is as much needed and as much necessary, and as much reasonable to care, to help, to be of use to all the beings as it is to myself. And when I see this, when you see this clearly, then, to do something for the benefit of all beings or [?] to the beings or many beings doesn't become a sacrifice, doesn't become something else, you know, unreasonable, I think.

So that's the end of the question, this time, so thank you very very much .

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