



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche *Questions and Answers 7 (Chapter 3)*

BA3Q7: Questions and Answers 7 (Chapter 3)

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There are three questions in this video number seven of the third chapter. The first question is:

“My question is regarding merit. Is it possible to destroy the merit with anger or hatred once it has been dedicated? I’m sorry if this question is late, as I know you have already taught and answered questions on merit.”

It’s true we discussed this before but it doesn’t matter. Generally, it is said that if, after you make a very positive deed or positive inspiration, positive emotion, you do a very strong negative thing like hatred, then the impact of that most recent thing, of something that is completely controlling your self is the strongest. So therefore it undermines all the things that you have done before. It doesn’t totally get rid of, but it kind of overshadows. That’s why it is said that it’s good to dedicate.

Dedication is like giving away or sharing it. So once you share something then you don't have it with you so nobody can take it away from you. It’s like you receive lots of money and then you immediately distribute it or invest it or maybe buy something. And then a thief comes and tries to get it from you. The thief can get only what is left with you. They cannot get what you have already distributed, or invested or whatever. So therefore, dedication is very important.

But dedication is also itself a very positive thing. It is a way to enhance our positive deeds and it multiply them. Because if I do something really great and then say this is for all the sentient beings till they become enlightened, that effect remains in a way. It cannot be taken away. That's why it is always said that dedication is a very important part of the practice. So therefore, you try to do dedication as much as possible. All the time. Not only after you have done something great. We can dedicate the positive deed of our past, future and present. And it's better to do that way. That's the dedication.

Next question is,

"My question concerns the three types of Bodhisattvas motivation. No matter which Bodhisattva motivation you have, to bring happiness and enlightenment to others before you reach enlightenment, together or first, don't you have to have an element of realisation/skilful means (compassion & wisdom) yourself in order to truly help others?"

Of course. The more I have wisdom and compassion, the more I can help others. So therefore, when I have or make the motivation of "shepherd-like bodhisattva" it doesn't mean that I don't do anything for myself now. It means that I will do everything to develop my wisdom and compassion and, at the same, also will try to help other beings. It's not that working on your own positive things, positive karma, positive wisdom and compassion and your development is ever stopped. That's not the case. It's that you wish others much more positive things than yourself. Therefore it becomes much more stronger. Actually the greater the motivation, the stronger your positive deed and your actual practice becomes because then you are less concerned about yourself and more concerned about others. That's the main understanding. It's not that you don't do anything to develop your own wisdom and compassion and positive deeds.

Then the next part of the question is,

"On the other hand, as the Dharma teaches us, we are the only ones who can change our samsaric state of mind. No one can do that for us, so by our own efforts we can reach enlightenment. Although we may receive great teachings, help, advice along the way by great teachers and masters, they can only point us to the right direction. Doesn't it have to come from our own experience, from us? Hope you understand what I'm trying to ask, your thoughts would be most welcome."

Now there are two things here. Of course, when I develop myself, I must do it myself, nobody can do it for me. But everything exists because of many causes and conditions and there's nothing which is just one thing, one reason, one cause, one condition. It is necessary to have lots of different causes and conditions. So therefore, I can create positive conditions. And that's why good teachers are very important, a good situation, a good life is very important. That's why we pray to Buddhas and bodhisattvas and great beings to help us.

There's lots of influence. We can influence each other so much. Although, if I become a good person or a bad person is up to me. But if I am in a society which is very negative, then I tend to become that way and if I am in a society, or an environment which is very positive then I can be in that situation also. Everything helps. That's why the help of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and teachers and sangha and everything is very, very important. So therefore, you pray to be born in a positive situation.

We also have to appreciate our friends and spiritual friends. The Buddhas and bodhisattvas and their prayers and their connections with us can very much help so therefore it is not like only me and nothing else. It is not that if you are really good then that's enough. You also need the support. You also need the environment. So therefore, as bodhisattvas, we try to create those kind of environments, those kind of influences, those kind of positive help and aspiration and blessing and all sorts of things. You can say "help". I think that's the best word.

So therefore it is many facets, it's not just one way. That's why it's not only that I have to do only myself and nobody can help and nobody can do anything. Of course that's why we pray and why we do all positive things and that's why we try to get all the positive conditions together. That's what the bodhisattvas are trying to do also. So therefore, it all has to click together. That's the understanding.

Then, last question is:

"My question is about daily practice, making the Dharma central in my every day life. What is the best way to keep the Bodhisattva vow in the front of my mind, whatever I am doing? I am also just starting to do the Ngondro practice so I am aspiring to think about the precious human life as much as possible. Is it all right to put these two together in my mind, bodhisattva vows and

precious human life, so that whenever I think of one, I also think of the other?"

All these come to one thing. This, I think you have to understand clearly. There is no separation. It's not two things, it's just one thing. That's very, very important to understand. I see that everybody needs to be free from suffering and wants to be happy and therefore I want myself to be free from suffering and want to be happy. That, I know. I also know that everybody is like that. So I wish and I want and I'm dedicated to do something about that, for all the people. And that's bodhichitta.

And now I see that in this situation, the one that I'm in now, I am a human being. As a human being I understand that I might have some strength and some kind of capacity to help. So therefore, you know, I must appreciate this. I must appreciate this human life. Because of being a human I can understand this, understand why I need to aspire to be born as a bodhisattva and also that I have some capacities to help myself, practice myself and help others in many different ways. So therefore, I need to appreciate this human life even more.

But this human life is not permanent so therefore I must work on it diligently and must not cling to it too much also because it will change. I must try to create causes and conditions so that I will get this kind of positive environment, this kind of human life and other positive conditions in the future as well. So all these kinds of things come together and this is very important to understand. All the four thoughts and bodhichitta and refuge - everything that is there in the ngöndro - comes together and that's the way of putting the dharma into your life.

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