



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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The Sufferings of Samsara & the Need to Seize the Opportunity
4th Chapter, Stanzas 21-27



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So we continue the chapter of carefulness, and the first are stanzas number 21 and 22: thinking about the sufferings of the samsara, sufferings from the negative actions or the negative result of the negative actions, we need to try to practise mindfulness and carefulness at this very moment.

If through the evil action of a single instant

I must spend an aeon in the hell of Unrelenting Pain,

The evils in samsāra stored from time without beginning –

No need to say that they will keep me from the states of bliss! [21]

Like when we are overpowered by certain kinds of hatred or anger or any of these negative

emotions, and then in one single instant I can commit a murder or something really so bad. I can make such a strong negative action if I'm not careful and if I'm not mindful, that [because of] that action alone that I have done in an instant of unmindfulness or carelessness or when I allowed myself to be taken over by a certain kind of negativity, I can be suffering the result of that, a great kind of unrelenting pain even in the hells, for a long, long time: according to some sutras, even for one aeon.

And then, if that is the case, then I have done those kinds of negative things before also. I was in samsara for so long – so many lifetimes, countless lifetimes – therefore, there must be a kind of a store of so many negative actions that I've committed from beginningless time.

So therefore, if I need to go through those negative results of those negative actions, then I can accept that I am in this kind of samasarcic negative state of problematic suffering for a long, long time. Therefore, when I have this opportunity as a human being, as a human life, where I have the opportunity and the freedom to purify that, to get out of that, to create a new way of life, to create a new beginning, I must totally dedicate myself towards that and be extremely mindful and extremely careful that I actually take action in this and not delay, not be lazy and not ignore it or just to let it go by.

And sometimes we say and we think - this is the twenty-second - ,

And mere experience of such pain

Does not result in being freed from it.

If I think that I have lots of pain and I suffered a lot before and maybe I'll go to different kinds of negative realms and then I suffer, and then all this negativity is finished, according to the Buddhist way of understanding that is not correct. It's not just suffering that would get rid of our negative karma, our negative actions. Because, the reason why is:

For in the very suffering of such states,

More evil will occur, and then in great abundance. [22]

Because when we are suffering, when we are in the negative state, our negative actions will grow because, then, lots of negative emotions will come. Negative actions or negative karma is not just committed, [it does] not just happen or [is] accumulated by one negative action and then while we are going through the result of that we don't accumulate any negativity. That's not true because when we are suffering then we get angry, we get annoyed and we get upset. Therefore, it goes on and on and it kind of creates more and more negativity. Therefore, just suffering does not necessarily get rid of the negative karma. So therefore, in order to get rid of the negative karma and to gain something positive, we must actually start to being positive and acting positive and feeling positive and do things with our body speech and mind carefully and mindfully to cultivate and accumulate these positive actions and experiences. So this is extremely important.

And then 23:

Thus, having found this moment of reprieve,

If I now fail to train myself in virtue,

What greater folly could there ever be?

How more could I betray myself? [23]

So now, as a human being in this very special kind of a state of being, so kind of wonderful circumstances, and when I understand what is right, what is wrong, what should be done, what to train in and all these kinds of things, then, if I fail to train myself, if I fail to accumulate a more positive way of being, more positive habitual tendencies and really liberate myself from all my negativity then what a great folly would that be. There cannot be anything more foolish and more of a folly than that.

And if I do that, if I don't do this at this time and I let this great and sublime opportunity to go by then I would have betrayed myself; I would have not only betrayed the promise that I made to bring all the sentient beings to everlasting happiness, but I would have betrayed myself also because who knows when I would get this kind of opportunity again?

*If having understood all this,
I'm stupidly despondent still,
Then at the moment of my death,
My sorrows will be black indeed. [24]*

So, even when I understand that, and even then I'm so stupid that I don't take any action or I don't do anything positive and I don't train in this path of bodhisattva, then, when I die, at the moment of my death, not only will I have lots of a kind of pain and I will get the result of my negativity - so therefore I might suffer lots of problems with the samsara, including hell realm - but I will regret so much, I will have so much sorrow, I will feel so bad that I have missed this chance that my sorrows will be black, dark and very difficult to recover from.

*And when my body burns so long
In fires of hell so unendurable,
My mind, there is no doubt, will also be tormented,
Burned in fires of unendurable regret. [25]*

So, at that time, if I go to hell or any other negative realms, my body will suffer that: but more than that or as much as that, my mind will suffer with so much regret that I have lost the chance to get rid of all the sufferings of myself and also, I could do something for the benefit of all the sentient beings. So I will extremely regret that time.

*For it's as if by chance that I have gained
This state so hard to find, wherein to help myself.
If now, while having such discernment,
I am once again consigned to hell, [26]*

I will think like that, that when I have this, you know, by some chance - it's not because I'm so intelligent or I'm so great or something like that, but by some chance - by some blessings, I have

got this great human life and not only human life, but I have some understanding of what is right and what is wrong, what to do and how to practise the right path so that I can kind of train myself to become more and more positive and get rid of my negativity; when I have that, and then, if I have to kind of lose this and waste this time and then if I have to go down again, what a waste!

I am as if benumbed by sorcery,

As if reduced to total mindlessness.

I do not know what dulls my wits.

O what is it that has me in its grip? [27]

So if I am not careful at this time, if I don't put my mind in the right state, if I don't train myself and if I don't do something about my own liberation and my own training, not only for others, but also for myself, then my mind must be totally benumbed or made senseless by some kind of a sorcery. It is not possible, otherwise. I've lost my brain or I have become totally drunk or drugged or something like that; or I have lost my wits, my brain is totally damaged or something like that. I must be under the grip of something really evil or something kind of totally...so, I must be mad, I must be mad, otherwise I would not waste this time.

So this is the moment and there is no excuse. I need to work on my own mind, on my own negativity, on my own negative habitual tendencies and I have to be mindful and be careful and be aware that I do not waste this time and I do not lose this opportunity.

So this is from stanza number 21 to 27. Thank you!

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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.