



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Enduring the Hardships
4th Chapter, Stanzas 36-43

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So now we come to stanza number 36 of Bodicharyavatara – the forth chapter. And this is about how much I should really forbear, or be ready to go through difficult times, or difficult situations, in order to eliminate my negative emotions.

This starts from stanza number 36:

*I will not leave the fight until, before my eyes,
These enemies of mine are all destroyed.*

So these enemies of mine, which are negative emotions and kleshas, would, whatever I do, always be my enemies and harm me. I must really do everything and forbear all the troubles and difficulties until they are totally destroyed because

*For if, aroused to fury by the merest slight,
Incapable of sleep until the scores are settled, [36]*

Usually even by some small kind of matter, my anger is aroused - I am hurt. Then in order to pay back, in order to settle that account, score that account, I sometimes cannot even sleep. And I do everything - even if I am hurt - I do everything - even if I have to go through lots of difficulties I do everything to defeat that enemy. But this is no such thing - it's a much more urgent enemy - and something that harms me all the time and not only me but everybody.

Then next is:

*Proud but wretched rivals, destined all to suffer when they die,
Will draw the battle lines and do their best to win,
And careless of the pain of cut and thrust,
Will stand their ground refusing to give way, [37]*

My usual kind of enemies - the human enemies - if I will wait a little bit, they will all die. My human enemies - they never can remain for long - they will all die. So even if it's like that, and then they all suffer, they will die - they are full of problems themselves - full of weaknesses. Even with those enemies, when I am angry or when I hate them, then I draw a battle line and do my best to defeat them and get the victory for myself. And in that process sometimes I will be harmed, I will be injured, I'll be - and my people will be - sometimes killed. But even when these things happen I do not care - I [couldn't] care less. I go through those pains and problems and sufferings and stand my ground because I want to defeat my enemies so much that I refuse to give way, even if I am hurt, even if I am injured, or even killed - and I try to get the victory over these enemies. Even if these enemies are not so important - they are temporary enemies - they die anyway - they have lots of problems themselves. They are bound to decay and go away and then there are also ways to make them so that they cannot harm me too much. But even then I act like that. If that's the case then

No need to say that I will not lose heart,

I don't need to say [anything] - it's clear, it's certain, that I will not lose heart fighting with my kleshas - my negative emotions,

Regardless of the hardships of the fray.

However hard it may be.

From this day forth I'll strive to crush

These foes whose very nature is to bring me pain. [38]

So I have no other choice - I will stand my ground. Nothing will stop me, nothing will deter me from working in this way so that I will completely destroy my negative emotions and my kleshas because they are my enemies by nature. Other enemies, other human beings, or non human beings, who harm me are not by nature my enemies. But because maybe I offended them - maybe because of certain reasons they become my enemy - but they are not by nature my enemy - they do not harm me all the time for no reason. But these negative emotions are by nature my enemy because they harm me even if I don't do anything wrong to them. So therefore this is something I must work on. I cannot submit, I cannot be under the control of my kleshas - negative emotions.

The wounds inflicted by the enemy in futile wars

Are flaunted by the soldier as a prize.

So in the high endeavor, for so great a thing,

Why should I be dismayed by hurt or injury? [39]

In the process of getting victory or eliminating my negative emotions - destroying my negative emotions - even if I am hurt a little bit, even if I am injured, even if it is extremely difficult and I have to go through lots of pain and hardship - I must not deter from this because even in our small fights or useless wars against human beings, who actually can become my friends, I fight so much and I try to be so brave that even if they inflict on me injuries and wounds and things like that. And these wounds later on I take as a kind of prize - I show them off and say that in this war this is the injury I had - I did so and so and things like that. And so I take these wounds or the marks of the injuries as my trophies. I show them off. So if that is the case then by fighting with my natural enemy, which is the mind poisons, and which are always giving trouble and harm to me, then in

the process if I am hurt or I feel some pain or I have difficulties there is nothing - there is no reason to stop working on that or fighting with it - or no reason that I should give up or get discouraged. I should keep on with my diligence and endeavor.

*When fishers, butchers, farmers and the like,
Intending just to gain their livelihood,
Will suffer all the miseries of heat and cold,
Why for beings' happiness should those like me not bear the same? [40]*

When the common people - the fishers, the butchers, the farmers and many others from all different walks of life and professions - just in order to get a livelihood, just in order to feed themselves and their family - they have to go through so many hardships day and night - the cold and heat and labour and hardships and worries and they have to go through so many hardships and hard work and all different kinds of problems - and they take it - they go through it without complaining - they never give up. They go on doing those things. So if that is the case then I will work or I will fight against my negative emotions and kleshas for the lasting peace and happiness of myself and lasting peace and happiness of all beings. And while working for that big a cause - my lasting happiness and the happiness of all sentient beings - why should I not be more patient and more diligent and more forbearing and go through every problem, every trouble without discouragement - that's the most reasonable thing to do.

*When I pledge myself to free from their afflictions
Beings who abide in every region,
Stretching to the limits of the sky,
I was myself not free from such defilements. [41]*

When I pledged myself, I made the promise of the Bodhisattvas and pledged to free all beings from afflictions, from sufferings, and bring lasting peace and happiness to all beings throughout space - and when I made this promise, I myself was not free from defilements. So I must first make myself free from defilements – otherwise,

*To speak like that, not knowing my capacity,
Were these not, truly, but a madman's words?*

Because if I don't do it myself first how can I help others do it? It's an empty promise – it's just words. I must start to work on myself right now. This promise of being a bodhisattva should not be just words but I must keep it - take it - by action. I must act on it.

*More reason than for never drawing back
Abandoning the fight against defiled affliction. [42]*

More reason than for never drawing back - so therefore I should never draw back in fighting against my defilements against my negative emotions and afflictions. I should always be ready to face and work and fight to do everything to destroy my negative emotions.

*This shall be my all-consuming passion.
Filled with rancor I will wage my war! [43]*

So therefore, *"This shall be my all consuming passion / filled with rancor I will wage my war"* - I will not give up on this. *"This shall be my all consuming passion / filled with rancor I will wage my war"* - my war on my own defilements. So this is promising myself that I will endure any kind of difficulties and hardships and problems and pain in order to destroy - get rid of - my defilements, negative emotions and kleshas. I think that's the first two lines of stanza number 43. I think I will stop here. 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.