



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche *Questions and Answers 5 (Chapter 4)*

BA4Q5: Questions and Answers 5 (Chapter 4)

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Transcribed by Pat Murphy

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I'm very sorry that I was not able to send any videos for a long time because I was in Bodhgaya for Kagyu Monlam and I didn't have the right circumstances to send any videos from there. Now I'll start with answering some of the questions.

And the first question is, "I have a question about anger. As a child I was forbidden to express any anger when I was victim of unjust attitudes. So I was deeply depressed. As an adult, I need to authorize myself to feel and express anger when something unjust happens. So I have lots of difficulties to consider that anger is always a negative emotion, especially to get rid of depressive state of mind. Can you please tell us if this attitude is compatible with the Buddhist point of view?"

I think this is a very important question because many people have this question in the West and I think it is important that I try to explain it as clearly as possible. I don't mean to say that I know everything about the subject, but I have thought a lot about these kind of questions and I would like to submit my view about this as clearly as possible.

First, about expressing my anger. When I was a child I was a very angry person, as maybe you all know. I talked about this before. When I got angry I never waited for anybody's permission to express it. There was no question of getting permission to express my anger. When I really got

angry I didn't even care for my life so why should I care for anybody's permission? So that "getting permission to be angry" was never a question for me. And I think it's the same with everybody. When you have an emotion, you don't wait for permission. It just happens. You just express it. You do what your emotions dictate.

Now, you can say there are two ways of expressing it. One way is the way I did. I would just put my fist in somebody's face. I would fight. I would hit that person. Or whatever. I would express it that way.

Another way of expressing it is to internalize it. I don't fight. I don't bloody somebody's nose, but I keep this, I express it within me. I become very sad, I become very annoyed. I hold it on to that feeling of anger, feeling of resentment, feeling of victimization, as you have said here. All that, I keep inside.

I think, from the Buddhist point of view that this is an expression of anger. It is anger. It's not that because somebody, your parents, told you not to get angry and you didn't get angry. I think it's wrong way of saying. Because your parents maybe punished you or didn't give you love if you express it externally, so therefore you internalized it.

You can never say "I didn't express." You expressed it, but you expressed it within yourself, not showing outside. And that way of expressing is worse, in a way.

Of course, in some cases it's different. If you express it outside, then you fight and maybe you get wounded. You get defeated, you get thrashed, maybe you get punished. And maybe you cause problems for others.

By expressing that anger outside there are lots of problems, but when you express your anger inside, then you get depressed. You are mentally torturing yourself. If you make it very strong it affects you much more. So, from my point of view, this is one way of expressing anger.

Now I think this is the way. When I was around ten, eleven maybe, I had very good teachers and then I studied Bodhicharyavatara and I had a little understanding that it's not good, it's not useful

to hold onto that anger, to feel that resentment. To express it outside is also not good, useless, doesn't really work.

This doesn't mean to say that you can't, you know, sometimes you call it "fighting to get something done." Fighting for justice you call it. Like get something done. Yes, you fight, but not with too much anger because that would not make it a good fight, a sustainable fight, especially with keeping too much anger inside. Resentment and all these kind of things are extremely harmful to yourself.

The main reason to get angry is because I don't want to hurt myself. And if I hurt myself more by keeping that resentment, keeping that feeling of too much negativity, too much anger, too much feeling of victimization, or feeling of sadness, or too much kind of you know, negative feeling, sad feeling, bad feeling, it doesn't work, it doesn't make things any better for me.

So when I understand this, it's not a question of whether I have the right to express my anger or not, it's more about what is the best way for me? What is the best thing for me?

So therefore, when I understood this a little bit, then I said - you know, it's a little bit like making a meeting with myself, counselling with myself. One part of my mind says, *"I must get angry because that's very bad, that whatever he or she or they are doing is not good. I must get angry, I must fight for justice, I must do this, I must do that, or I might feel bad."*

But then another part of my mind says, *"Yes, that's correct, but just getting angry and sad, just getting, annoyed and resentful doesn't make any sense. It doesn't do any good for me."*

So therefore I have to maintain my balance, I have to maintain my peace. I want to maintain my joy, I don't need to harm myself. So therefore I need to do something to get my way. I need to get whatever justice I can, but I have to do it in a skillful way. I have to do it in a way that's not harmful to me, in a way that would be useful and successful and beneficial to myself and maybe not so bad for others also. Because if I do something that would be good for everybody then I would feel much better.

So when I have that understanding, then I see very clearly and deeply that feeling all these negative feelings related with anger, resentment and vengeance and all these things is not good. It's no use. It doesn't bring any benefit to me.

When I understand this deeply, then there's no question of whether somebody has given me permission or not given me permission, you know. It's not because of the permission. It's not because of the authorization. It's because I see what is best for me. The thing that is most useful and good for me, that is what I would have to choose.

So even now, when you get angry, when you get depressed, when you get sad, is it really good for you or not? Of course, nobody needs to give any permission, you know. It's your feeling. Your feeling is never because of somebody's permission. You don't need permission, you know. The permission is irrelevant, but what is good for me, you know.

The more I get angry, the more I get resentful. The more hatred I have, the more I get depressed.

Of course you get angry. We cannot say that I'm not getting angry and then finish with the anger. That's not possible. Because the emotion is very much there and when something triggers it, you feel it. But then you have to think, you have to understand, you have remind yourself that maybe this is not the best way for me to react.

Of course depression is a very deep thing, it doesn't go away just like that. But if I change my attitude to it and if I look at things in a slightly different way, then maybe I can build up a certain attitude, certain way of seeing, certain way of being, so that slowly, slowly, I can feel much more positive.

Again, it's okay to express [your anger] a little bit because you cannot help it anyway. Because that's the way you have been doing it for so long. But, you know, when you really see that it doesn't do much good to yourself and doesn't do much good for others, then I think you start to almost automatically react a little bit differently. That's what I understand. And if this is not clear, please ask again, because this is a very important question. Because it's not actually about permission. That's what I think.

There are many questions here. The second question is also, I think, very, very important. But I think this second question also will take lots of time to explain because I think it needs to be explained also very clearly. So I will say this. I will read out this question because you know what is the question next time. But I wouldn't have time to explain this.

The question is *"How is it possible to reconcile dispassionate mind, that is, a mind which is completely calm, open and insightful, with a compassionate mind. I know it is said that these are like two sides of the same coin or two wings of the bird, but how is it possible to be both dispassionate and compassionate at one and the same time? What does it actually mean?"* This is very, very important. I can explain this, I think, a little bit, it needs to be explained. I think there are lots of misunderstandings of this so please, that will be my next answer. So, thank you for now.

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