



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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How to Get Rid of the Defilements
4th Chapter, Stanzas 43-48



BA4_43-48 How to Get Rid of the Defilements
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So, now we come to the last stage of chapter 4 which is how to get rid of these defilements or kleshas and this is from stanza number 43. The last time we said that we went through 43 but 43 actually is in this section. It says:

This shall be my all-consuming passion.

Filled with rancor I will wage my war!

Now, because I see how harmful these negative emotions or defilements are, so there should be my one-pointed all-consuming passion, my only goal to get rid of my poisons and I should work on it with great force, like waging a war, waging a war *“filled with rancor”*, with complete dedication and complete hatred, then you do that. So, this way, we should work to get rid of our negative emotions.

Then the question asked is, is it right that you should have that much of [an] aversion feeling towards these negative emotions because that, itself, is negative so therefore, it is not good?

There it says:

*Defilement of this kind will halt defilement
And for this reason it shall not be spurned. [4:43]*

Of course, eventually, we have to get rid of this kind of aversion or strong rancor or strong passion against negative emotions also. But, for time being, it's necessary that if I really have that kind of a strong passion or strong one-pointed dedication to wage a war against my defilements, then it helps. Therefore, that kind of passion, or that kind of dedication, I'm not going to spurn, I'm not going to get rid of for the time-being but eventually, when I understand how to actually work with my negative emotions in a clear way then, naturally, this will go away. Then these kinds of strong, negative – what can you say? – maybe you can't say 'negative' – but this kind of passion or rancor or maybe aversion will naturally cease. Therefore, it is not necessary that we have to be too careful that we should not have this kind of feeling of seeing the negativity of the negative emotions and fear that we have too much that. We don't have to fear that too much.

This is stanza number 44:

*Better if I perish in the fire,
Better that my head be severed from my body
Than ever I should serve or reverence
My mortal enemies, defiled emotions. [4:44]*

So, this is kind of consuming passionate attitude of waging war against these defiled emotions or negative emotions; that I would fight against it, I would work against it, I would get rid of it, I would eliminate it from me at whatever cost. It is *“better if I perish in the fire”* than submit to these defiled emotions: *“better that my head be severed from my body”* than submit and become the slave of mind poisons.

So, whatever may happen I’m not going to become the slave of mind poisons or negative emotions because if I become that then I will never be able to help myself and I will never be able to liberate myself from suffering and I will never be able to help anybody also. So therefore, it is extremely important that it is necessary to work one-pointedly in order to free myself from the influence and taking over of my kleshas.

Now then, the question becomes: that if it is that bad, if it is that negative, if it is that harmful to us – these negative emotions and kleshas – then it must be really difficult, maybe it’s impossible to get rid of them.

And then it says, in stanza number 45:

*Common foes, when driven from the state,
Retreat and base themselves in other lands,
And muster all their strength the better to return.
But enemy afflictions are without such stratagems. [4:45]*

Now, you know, these negative emotions – the kleshas – are not that difficult, actually, to get rid of. Like for common foes, common enemies, if I have a common human enemy for instance, and if I wage war against them or do something, even if I manage to drive them away from the state or the place where I live, usually what they do is they will retreat from this place, they will go away from this place where I am now if they’re defeated by me. But they go to another place, get another base for themselves in another land; and then there, they will again do something to *“muster all their strength”*, get all my enemies together or get friends together or muster their own kind of army, put their armies together and then, try to again return and attack me again. This

usually happens with human enemies.

But, my kleshas, although they are very harmful to me, if I submit to them and if I become their slave, then they are very, very harmful. But if I don't become a slave to them and I don't submit to them then these afflictions – my enemies who are these kleshas or afflictions – are not like these human beings. They have nowhere to go, there is nothing to [do], they don't stay somewhere else and try to kind of gather or muster their strength again. If I really am able to do something, if I can really understand their nature and I can eliminate it from my mind with the eyes or the sword of my wisdom, then they cannot return, there's nothing to return, there's nothing to make them strong again, there's no stratagem, there's nobody who's trying to gather their strength and attack me again and there's nothing there, they are actually very weak. They are very strong when I'm weak: when I'm strong, there's no strength of these negative emotions. Therefore, there's nothing working behind my back and trying to kind of attack me again and this kind of thing is not there. Actually, once I can eliminate them they are gone and do not necessarily return unless I don't know how to deal with them.

So therefore, it's stanza number 46:

Miserable defilements, scattered by the eye of wisdom!

Where will you now run, when driven from my mind?

Whence would you return to do me harm?

But oh, my mind is feeble. I am indolent! [4:46]

These defilements are actually, there's nothing there, there's nothing outside my mind, there's nothing inside my mind, they're not anywhere else, their nature is emptiness. So therefore, they are miserable, they're not strong, they actually seem very strong. They're made strong by myself, my own weakness, my own ignorance, my own wrong way of seeing. That is making my defilements or my negative emotions strong. Otherwise, there's no strength. They are miserable. Therefore, if I have the eye of wisdom, if I can have a little bit of wisdom then this wisdom can totally scatter them, totally uproot them, totally eliminate them. And where will they run? There is nowhere for them to run away, it's just gone because it's not there in a way.

So, once I drive it out of my mind, once I get rid of my fear of them, once I refuse to become their slave and get rid of this addiction I have to that then they have no strength. The strength of my negative emotions is my own addiction. So therefore, when I get rid of them from my mind then *“whence would you return to do me harm?”* They cannot return. They cannot return to do me any harm because they are not there. *“But oh, my mind is feeble.”* They are so strong, they make lots of problems to me and harm to me because *“my mind is feeble. I am indolent”*. Means I am not strong, I am stupid, I am ignorant. That’s why those negative emotions are so strong.

So therefore, how to get rid of them is through the eye of wisdom, seeing their nature. That’s why then we go to this stanza number 47:

*Defilements are not in the object,
Nor within the faculties, nor somewhere in between.
And if not elsewhere, where is their abode,
Whence they inflict their havoc on the world?
They are simple mirages, and so take heart!
Banish all your fear and strive to know their nature.
Why suffer needlessly the pains of hell?*

So, these defilements, these negative emotions, where are *they*? It’s not in the object, like object of anger, object of lust, or attachment. It’s not there because the same object will sometimes give you anger and sometimes not; sometimes gives you attachment and sometimes not; sometimes gives you jealousy and other things and sometimes not: so it’s not in object. *“Nor within the faculties”*, they’re not in my faculties also because my faculties are always there. If it is in my faculties then I should always have them but I don’t have them. And then, where else? It can’t be in between them also because there’s nothing in between them. *“And if not elsewhere, where is their abode”*. Where do they reside? There’s nowhere to reside. So therefore, they are like appearances and emptiness. They’re interdependently arising, they are coming out of my mind when all the negative causes and conditions are there but actually they don’t really exist, their nature is emptiness, they don’t really exist, they’re just a creation of my own mind coming out of the wrong way of reacting.

So therefore, actually, *“whence they inflict their havoc on the world”*, it’s a delusion, there’s nothing else, they’re simple mirages. It seems to be there but when you actually look it’s not there. The mirage is a kind of illusion. So, all these negative emotions are also an illusion, a delusion. There’s nothing there, it’s a wrong way of seeing.

Therefore, if you really understand, it’s not so difficult to get rid of because it’s the wrong way of seeing, the wrong way of reacting, there’s nothing there so strong and so dominant and so concrete.

So therefore, *“take heart!”* We don’t have to be so afraid because we know how negative they are, how harmful they are: but, it’s not that they are so strong if we really know how to understand, how to really look at their true nature.

Therefore, *“banish all your fear and strive to know their nature.”* You have to *“know their nature”*, because if you know their nature, if you know it’s like that then there’s no reason why we can’t let them go because we don’t have to be afraid, we don’t have to become a slave of something that’s not there. So *“why suffer needlessly the pains of hell?”* We don’t need to suffer, there’s no need to. And even the sufferings of hell are created by these negative emotions. So, we don’t have to go through that.

This is the last stanza 48:

*This is how I should reflect and labor,
That I might apply the precepts thus set forth.*

So, this is how I should understand [it]. And then I should not just have this as a view, as an understanding, but I must use this understanding, I must train on this understanding, I must meditate on this understanding, I must really apply this understanding and then take it as my way of life, as my precept; and if I do that, if I work on that, if I train on that with the same dedication and passion that we discussed before then there will be no problem, actually overcoming this problem, therefore, the suffering of the samsara.

What invalids in need of medicine

Ignored their doctor's words and gained their health? [4:48]

So this is the teachings of the Buddha and this is the truth. Therefore, we need to understand this and we need to use this because when a patient goes to see the doctor, a good doctor gives them medicines and instructions on how to get rid of their disease; and if they really want to get help and get rid of this disease, then they cannot ignore the medicines or the instructions of the doctor but they should do as the doctor says and take the medicines and then they will become cured of their disease.

So, in the same way, if you really take these instructions and these methods that have been prescribed by the great masters who have actually gone through these experiences of uprooting the defilements, then there will be no problems, there will be no difficulties, no obstructions or obstacles to actually uproot our negative emotions. But, we have to work on it with carefulness. We have to be present. That's why this carefulness, or *pag yü* is very, very important. You have to have the presence of the mind – pre-sense – you have to have senses always there; the mind has to be there. With that kind of understanding and experience and training then it is possible to be able to accomplish this great task of freeing ourselves from the suffering of the samsara and get lasting peace and happiness.

Now this is the fourth chapter, the chapter on *pag yü* which is translated here is the carefulness, but this is more like the presence of the mind. So, that's it. Thank you.

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