



# Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

**Ringu Tulku Rinpoche**  
***The Mind is the Source of All Positive Things***  
***5th Chapter, Stanzas 13-17***



BA5\_13-17 The Mind Is the Source of All Positive Things  
5th Chapter, Stanzas 13-17. May 5<sup>th</sup> 2012. Transcribed by Albert Harris.  
Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So, to continue on the fifth chapter of Bodhicharyavatara – and we are now talking about how all the positive things also come from the mind. We were talking about the six pāramitās. All the six pāramitās are very much based on a state of mind the mind or training of the mind, not on the body and speech actions. So, stanza number 12, we were beginning to discuss how patience, pāramitā of patience, comes out of a state of mind, and to continue that to other stanzas, stanzas numbers 13 and 14:

*To cover all the earth with sheets of leather –  
Where could such amounts of skin be found?  
But the leather soles of just my shoes  
It is as though I cover all the earth! [5:13]*

So, this is a very classical example: if I have to get rid of everything that annoys me or that makes me upset or makes me angry or that makes me feel bad or that I feel harms me, that is impossible, I cannot do that. But if I find a way of experiencing myself where there is no anger, where there is no negative feeling, if I find a certain way of experiencing myself, if I find the secret of patience, you can say in a way, or if I have loving kindness and compassion, if I really generate bodhichitta or loving kindness or compassion, then it's as if I've found, or I've kind of covered, or I've got rid of all these things and people that annoy me or harm me or makes me feel bad.

The example is that if you have to cover all the land with leather, otherwise you think that it will prick your feet, so, that is not possible. You cannot find that much of leather, and even if you find leather, you cannot actually cover the whole world with leather. But, instead, if you put on a shoe on your feet, then it is the same, it is as if you've covered the whole earth with leather, because then wherever you go you don't get hurt, your feet don't get hurt. So this is the example.

*And thus the outer course of things*

*I myself cannot restrain.*

*But let me just restrain my mind,*

*And what is left to be restrained? [5:14]*

So this is the meaning of stanza number 14. I cannot restrain everything that's happening and all the causes of happenings and different kinds of happenings and situations and what people do and ought to do. But if I change my way of reaction, if I really develop complete calmness, complete loving kindness and compassion, if I understand this, if I understand why it is not necessary that I get angry, why it's not necessary that I get worried, why it's not necessary that I fear, and that is if I understand practically and I do that, then nothing can make me angry or unhappy or feel harmed. So therefore, it is essentially my mind, it is essentially the way I experience, the way I see, the way I react; that's where the secret is, the key is in order to work on these kind of negative emotions, worry and fear and all these things.

Therefore, if I can do that then I accomplish the pāramitā of patience. Not just enduring, not just saying that I must take this on, it's hard to me but I must hold on to this pain, I should not

complain, but actually it's very bad: it's not like that. So when I really understand and when I change my way of seeing, my way of reacting – my way of seeing things – then the patience becomes something natural, it's not something I have to really endure.

[It's the same way with] the pāramitā of diligence also. Diligence of course is translated in a different language, in different terms in this book later on, but here it says, in stanza number 15:

*A clear intent can fructify  
And bring us birth in such as Brahmā's realm.  
The acts of body and of speech are less-  
They do not generate a like result. [5:15]*

Sometimes, when you say diligence you understand that you have to really work hard and have to make lots of effort and you have to [work] day and night, day and night without any kind of gaps and without any holidays, without any resting, drudging, drudging: but that's not the understanding of diligence from the Buddhist point of view. The Buddhist point of view is that diligence is the joy of doing positive things – that is diligence.

So therefore, if your mind is inspired, has joy in the understanding, in the practice, in the experience of the positive side, that's diligence. It's not about how much I do, how much I work hard or how I drudge.

There's even a story, the story that there were a mother and her daughter. Both of them were trying to cross a big river and the river was too strong for them so they both were carried away by the stream. And then the mother was feeling that, *"I wish that my daughter is saved, I wish that she gets out of this river and she's not drowned."* And she had a very strong feeling of kindness, compassion and love to her daughter. The daughter was only feeling, *"How can I save my mother from this? If she's saved, I don't mind if [I drown]."* So when they both died in this process trying to save each other. They couldn't save each other, but because of that loving intention, both of them had a great kind of loving kindness toward each other, so even if they couldn't do anything or they really didn't do anything, both of them actually took birth in the Brahma's realm, in the god's realm.

And that's the example to say that it's not what you do with your body and with your speech but how your mind reacts, that's where the diligence is. Therefore, the acts of body and speech are less important. Just by doing something with your body and with your speech, even persistently for a long time with lots of hardship, if your mind is not in that state of a joyful, inspired way of doing then it's not even proper diligence.

So therefore, to have the pāramitā of diligence, to accomplish the pāramitā of diligence you need to change your mind, you need to find that joyful inspiration in the mind. Even the diligence has to do more with mind than with your body and speech, and [less with] actual activity but more with activity of the mind.

Then in the same way, the fifth pāramitā, the pāramitā of meditation, is also the same. This is stanza number 16. It says:

*Recitations and austerities,  
Long though they may prove to be,  
If practiced with distracted mind,  
Are futile, so the Knower of Reality has said. [5:16]*

The "Knower of Reality" means it refers to the Buddha, the Buddha who understands the nature of everything, the ultimate, the way the things really are so therefore it's sometimes known as "the Knower of Reality". And the Buddha said that even if you are doing lots of austerities like not eating, sitting in meditation, not having much to eat, no kind of luxuries, lots of difficulties like [being in] very difficult places, in the caves or in the mountains, and then you are doing that for a long time with lots of hardships and austerities; and also if you're doing lots of recitations of mantras; even if you're found seemingly doing lots of meditation sitting, year after year, not connecting with people, doing retreat and things like that, even if you are doing that, but your mind is distracted, even if your body is in meditation and if your speech is making recitations of mantras etc, then it doesn't give the result of meditation because meditation is about your mind. And if your mind is not settled, if your mind is not calm, if your mind is not under control, if your mind doesn't become flexible and if your mind doesn't calm down or it is not seeing the reality or

the true nature of things – then whatever you do it is not real meditation.

So therefore, the true meditation or the pāramitā of meditation solely has to do with your mind and if your mind is in a mindful state, aware, calm and clear and undisturbed, then you have meditation. Whether you are in a retreat place, whether you are in a monastery, in a cave, or whether you are in the city or you are doing lots of activities, that doesn't matter. But, how your mind is, that's what it's all about – the meditation. So therefore, to do meditation, of course, the mind is the only thing, only the mind can do meditation. Body and speech don't count in that matter. Sometimes, of course, if you create good, suitable circumstances through a suitable environment to make your mind more undistracted and more calm and more clear that might help to make your mind get meditation. But, eventually, it's the mind, not what your body and speech do.

So that's about mind, and then,

*All those who fail to understand  
The secret of the mind, the greatest of all things,  
Although they wish for joy and sorrow's end,  
Will wander to no purpose, uselessly. [5:17]*

So this is about the wisdom, and, it says, those [who fail to understand] need to understand... You know, the wisdom is not about having all sorts of information about everything in the world. It's not that I know lots of things, and I have information about lots of things - that's not necessarily wisdom. That doesn't transform your state of mind, that doesn't bring the lasting peace and happiness, that doesn't end your suffering. So, to end your suffering and bring the lasting peace and happiness, then you need to know one thing – the secret of the mind, what the nature of your mind is, because actually, it is your mind that is experiencing the happiness and unhappiness. Therefore, you have to understand what are you because you are that mind, you are that experience, you are that awareness.

We call it “secret” because that is the way our mind is, it's always there, it's like that all the time. Everybody's mind is the same, the same way, it's the same nature. It's not that one person's mind

or the Buddha's mind is different from that of a sentient being's mind or the person who is in the lowest state of samsara. But, we suffer in the cycle of samsara because we don't understand it, we don't know, we don't see, we don't have the right way of looking at it, we don't understand how it really is, what we really are, and that's why we get into the cycle, the sufferings of the samsara. That's why it's a secret. It's not a secret in the sense that somebody is kind of holding the secret and not telling you. It's not like that. It's a secret because we don't understand. If we understood it, we would be free from all the sufferings and we could be totally enlightened. That would be the end of the problems. And we want to. We are constantly running after the lasting peace and happiness but we couldn't so far understand and that's why it's a secret. That secret is actually the way the nature of the mind is.

So, if you really understand the secret of the mind, the nature of the mind which is emptiness in nature, which is selfless, there's nothing there independently but which is also luminous and aware, whatever the nature of the mind is, the way the mind really is - if you understand that, then all the sorrows and problems and sufferings will finish and then we'll have the lasting joy and lasting peace. And if we don't understand that, if we don't understand or if we don't see what we are... Eventually, everything that we experience is experienced in the mind. Whatever we talk about, whatever we say this is like this, this is like that, all these are there, all these are not there, it exists, it doesn't exist, all these things, whatever we may decide, actually, if you say that all this world exists, or all this world doesn't exist, all this world is emptiness, all this world is existing on its own, all this world is made by god or made by our mind, or made by Big Bang or whatever, anything that we conclude is actually just an exercise of our mind.

So therefore, anything that I experience is an experience of the mind. Therefore, if I really understand my mind I understand the experiencer or the creator or the real source of all these experiences. And therefore, by actually understanding one thing I can have a grasp of the whole meaning. I can place everything. If I don't do that, it doesn't matter how much information I have about lots of things, it doesn't really change anything, it doesn't really transform me. And so I will keep on wandering in the samsara, I'll keep on experiencing the things - all different kinds of nice things and not nice things - as before and it will continue. So therefore, it doesn't really come to any true purpose of ending the sufferings and finding the lasting peace and happiness. So all these activities become, in a way, useless.

So therefore, when you look at it from any point of view, the state of the mind, the mind is the most important. If you really can use the mind in a positive way through wisdom, through meditation, through all the six pāramitās, actually that can be the most important thing for us that we can bring lasting peace and happiness to ourselves, by ourselves. Only by using our mind and changing our mind's way of seeing and understanding our mind through that. Therefore, the mind is the source of all the positive things as well. So this is the understanding.

So, we came from stanza number 13 to stanza number 17. Thank you!

©Ringu Tulku Rinpoche

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.