



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche *Questions and Answers 1* 6th Chapter

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Now I'm going to answer some of the questions on Chapter 6. This is the question and answer video number 1 for Chapter 6. The first question is,

"I am trying to understand something you say in your commentary on stanza three on patience. I can see that feelings of hurt can give rise to anger, but are you saying that it is the aversion to feeling hurt that causes anger? If it is the latter, could you kindly say a little more about this? Could you also clarify the way in which Shantideva is using the concept of patience, as I am not sure that I understand this?"

I think we've talked a lot about this since stanza number 3, so maybe this is already answered. But if it is not then you can ask some more specific questions and I will answer them, because I think we have talked a lot about this before in the [commentary on this] chapter.

The next question is:

"I realize we are just starting chapter 6, and therefore perhaps it's too early to ask for clarifications about whether patience is always the answer to anger. The reason I'm confused stems from earlier verses in chapter 3, such as 3:29 – "They dwell within my mind, And at their pleasure injure me. All

this I suffer meekly, unresenting – Thus my abject patience, all displaced!” and 3:43 – “This shall be my all-consuming passion. Filled with rancor I will wage my war! Defilement of this kind will halt defilement, and for this reason it shall not be spurned.” *I had interpreted these verses as a call to use emotions like disgust, wrath, rancor and revolt as attitudes to adopt against emerging afflictive emotions... but perhaps it’s a matter of discernment, of knowing when to use patience and when to use wrath? I associate patience to the gentleness and forbearance of a long-term approach, whereas wrath and rancor seem more immediate and uncompromising. Please would you comment – thank you?”*

When you are saying these things you are not saying you have to become mad and totally out of control and angry! It’s just saying you know what’s going on, what is good for you and what is not good for you – who is your friend and who is your enemy – what is your friend and what is your enemy - what are the things that are good for you and for others in the long run – what are the things that are not good for you. And you treat [all these things] accordingly. It’s not saying that you go rampant, or [hold] rancor [within you], it’s just to become wiser and understand clearly. It’s not becoming out of control. ‘Out of control’ is always not good and that is not what is recommended. It’s the same when you say ‘patience’ – I think we talked about this – it’s that you really understand that to get hurt, to get upset, is not useful - and you do not see any benefit in it, so therefore you don’t react like that. It’s not that you are holding onto [the thought] *“I cannot be angry, I cannot be angry”*. It’s not only forbearing – not just holding on – *“because I don’t want to or can’t be [angry]”*. It’s that you really deeply understand. I think that’s the main understanding.

“Dear Rinpoche, thank you for this valuable teaching, which I hope I will be able to keep in mind in my daily life. I have two questions. Firstly, if I suddenly find that I have become angry, is it helpful or necessary to try to find out what has led to the anger in my mind, for instance, hurt, upset, disturbance, or is it best just to let go of the anger? Secondly, when Shantideva speaks of patience, does he mean this capacity to maintain a joyful, peaceful state of mind, refusing to let this be destroyed by hurt and upset feelings?”

Yes I think that that is true. Of course when you are angry maybe you know why you are upset and angry. Maybe it’s not so clear but really it’s not so difficult to find out why you are upset! But just finding that out doesn’t mean the anger goes – just by finding why you are upset or why you are

angry – so therefore the important thing is, whatever may be the reason, it is best for you to let go of the anger because you have to deal with the problem [anyway] but you don't necessarily have to deal with the anger. That's the first thing to do. And also because you want to have a peace of mind – a peaceful state of mind is very important for you - [just so you are able to] solve the problems. So therefore to maintain the peaceful state of mind becomes an important element in order to solve the problem in the right way. So it's important to do that – you don't want your mind to be disturbed by hurt and anger and all sorts of feelings – and it doesn't do any good anyway so that's why you should first let go – whatever may be the reason that's the important thing. And then if there's an [issue] you have to deal with then you can deal with that and it's no problem. It's not to say that everybody is right. [The fact] you don't get angry doesn't mean you can't do anything to solve the problem – you have to do something to solve the problem if it is solvable. But that doesn't mean you have to get angry all the time.

“Could you please clarify the difference between anger and hate, as I am not sure that I understand how it is that you use each of them in slightly different contexts?”

I understand anger as just getting angry. Hate is keeping that anger in me – like *“I hate that person”*. I have a constant bad feeling toward that person – constantly I want that person to have some bad experience – I wish bad to that person constantly and I really wish to hurt them and I really wish to do something that would make them very miserable. And that is hate. Anger can be of many different levels but it's not as strong as hatred. There is hatred in anger but hatred is more concentrated and more continuous – that's why it's a little bit different. You can be angry – just flare up, and it's finished - you don't need to hold onto it. Hatred is a little bit more long term.

“Regarding the objects of anger: I am quite often angry with myself, and work with a lot of people for whom themselves seem to be the main object of their anger. Is it that maybe in a roundabout way I am still angry with external objects? I think sometimes I am, or both at the same time. And should I apply the same means to work with this as with external objects of anger?”

Why not! I think sometimes you're angry with yourself because you expect too much from yourself and then when those expectations are not fulfilled you're a little bit upset with yourself – I

think that's what you mean by 'angry with yourself'. So therefore reducing the expectations you have for yourself is, I think, a good way – it's very important to allow yourself to be what you are. Of course we should try to become better, but we cannot expect to be something that we are not. And then getting angry does not make [you as you would like to be]. So I have to accept how things are.

Whether it is something from outside or from inside you don't usually get angry with things but instead it's with people most of the time. To understand that it's not useful [to get angry] – to see [this] clearly – actually the main way of patience is to see clearly – the wisdom that is the opposite of anger is clarity, discernment – that's how it is.

“Thank you for these great teachings, they are incredibly helpful and I wish everybody will receive them and be able to use them. My question may be out of context but here it is: Practicing patience, or working directly on other emotions, not only anger and aversion, can be difficult as we all know. Suffering can have a positive side if we can use it well. But we have seen that often experiences of suffering result in closed hearts rather than more compassion and less pride. The common reaction to pain and suffering is rejection. That we, however, do have the ability and choice to face it and use it for opening the heart rather than closing ourselves even more, seems to indicate something that's not mentioned directly here. Is that bodhichitta, or in other words compassion-wisdom, blessing due to our devotion; our basic goodness? The basis that we always work from but aren't always aware of?”

When I suffer, when I have problems, then there are usually two ways of looking at it. One is *“Oh, I suffer, this is so bad, this is so miserable, how can this be, why is it that I am the one who is suffering, why doesn't anybody suffer like me?”* – something like that – *“Why does this have to happen to me all the time, why do people have to react like this to me? - I am the poor guy”* – something like that. So if you concentrate too much [on yourself in this way] then you kind of close yourself up, you look at everyone else as not your friend but somebody causing you pain – or if not causing you pain then not helping you – *“They're indifferent to my problems and pain”* and [other similar thoughts]. So I distance myself from others, I close myself up.

Another way is when I suffer and I have problems then I see I have a problem – but everybody has problems. There are lots of people who have many more problems than me and suffer much more than me so I feel really bad for these people. I can feel how negative and painful their suffering is so therefore I wish I could do something about the other people as well. At least I can pray that their sufferings be less or that they may not have suffering. *“What can I do to reduce the suffering - not only in me but everyone else’s as well?”* So when I look I start to look out at others’ sufferings as well – I take these into account. Also I find that even if I have this problem it is comparatively smaller than many others. So how we look at things is always in comparative ways so if I can see that my problem is much smaller than many other peoples’ then I feel even better. I feel I don’t have to be so upset by this because it’s not that bad after all – it’s bad enough but not that bad. So therefore it even helps to cheer me up a little bit – so I think this is a very important thing to consider. That’s I think the main reason [for our suffering] – you concentrate on yourself alone and don’t think about others – or, [alternatively], you think about others’ sufferings also and see them and try to find out [about them]. It’s a different perspective. It’s all about perspective I think.

“Patience is clearly beneficial on a very deep level. However the descriptions of the objects of patience includes situations that if responded to in a passively patient way could lead to one having an unsuccessful worldly life. Being a winner or loser on the level of the heart and emotional intelligence, seems can be very different from worldly success. Can one be simultaneously successful in both worldly life and spiritual life? For instance be successful in and an aggressive business world while developing a wise patient and emotionally intelligent heart to its highest level?”

Why not? I think it can be [done]. Of course you can be very rich, or you can be successful in business or a worldly venture, and not so successful in an emotional way. You can have lots of emotional problems – that is possible. It is also possible that you are very successful in your emotional [life] and you don’t care too much about the business and so you are really not so very successful in that because even if you [achieved] a little bit you didn’t really put all your concentration on that – that is also possible. But it can be that you are really quite intelligent in the business – because how successful you are in worldly matters, business and similar things is also to do with your clarity of mind, calmness of mind, intelligence, cleverness and dealing with people and similar things. So when you are in a calm and clear and compassionate state of mind –

this does not exclude being clear about your mind and knowing what others like and what they don't like and how to approach them. You can be very clever and still have a very kind heart – you can be very successful in business and also have a very good heart – I think that's very possible and that's what we have to develop together.

[But] maybe you don't want to do that – that's a possibility. There are lots of people who think that peace of mind and developing your wisdom and compassion is much more important than developing a big business or something like that and then they may not really try – they may not want too much the hustle and bustle of business and similar things – that's another matter – but if they want that it is not a problem I think. This is just my idea, I don't know.

So thank you very much. So that's question and answer video number 1 on the 6th chapter on patience. Thank you very much.

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