



# Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

**Ringu Tulku Rinpoche**  
**Questions and Answers 2**  
**6th Chapter**  
**Stanzas 12-53**

April 13, 2013

Transcribed by Desi Lake and revised by Rinchen  
Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So we are going to answer some of the questions that were sent for chapter 6 on *Patience*.

So this is concerning stanzas 12 to 21, 'Forbearance of suffering':

***"Thank you for these teachings. I am already finding it helpful to remember to be patient at times when I would usually react to something.***

***I have a question about karma in connection with stanza 12. When you describe how suffering can have a positive aspect in that it creates renunciation, does that mean that amongst the negative causes and conditions that give rise to suffering, there must also be some positive causes and conditions that bring about the possibility of change?"***

Now this question comes from [the view that] understands that everything is totally pre-arranged and there's nothing you can do about anything. This [view] of karma [shows] that kind of misconception – but as we have been discussing again and again, there is nothing like that. Causes and conditions are always happening – different kinds of causes are happening, different kinds of conditions are happening. It's always moving, there is nothing like: *"This is the Karma"* – finished. *"This is the judgment – the judgment is given"* – now there's no way out and we have to go to the

gallows or something like that. It's not like that.

[We seek] the understanding of causes and conditions or whatever you call karma. That's why it's called karma which means *action*. Karma is action. So you do this or you act like this or react like this. It has its reactions, it has its conditions, it has its effects, and something happens. And then within that, every moment, you have the possibility to react in a positive way or a negative way, or more positive way or more negative way – or just in a neutral way.

So therefore, every time, every moment, you have a choice. So therefore even if you are suffering, if you are in a bad state of being, at that very moment you can act or react in a very positive way, and then change that situation or use that situation [to create] better consequences. Or even if you have a very good kind of situation going on now, you can use that in a bad way, in a negative way, and then create [further] negative consequences.

It's always changing, there's nothing like *"This is the karma"* – a kind of judgment has been given and it's written in red, and there's nothing you can do about it. There's nothing like that. That's the understanding, that's karma. So we need to learn to act and react [skilfully in] every moment, whether we are in a difficult situation or in a very happy situation. I think that is the main understanding, and I hope I have explained it clearly enough.

Second question is on stanzas 22-33:

***"Dear Rinpoche, I am struggling very hard to try to understand these stanzas! Do they imply that our usual way of perceiving other people is mostly deluded i.e. that we imagine others have harmful intentions towards us but there will be so many other factors involved that it does not make sense to be angry with them?"***

Now when somebody is trying to harm us or beat us up, we are not saying at that moment this person doesn't have the intention to harm us. Of course, they might have the intention to harm us - or maybe they don't have – that depends on circumstances. But, why did they get that intention? They were not born with an intention to harm us. Maybe a few hours ago, a few days ago, they were our best friends, but then something happened that disturbed their mind – a negative

emotion came up, and then that negative emotion – whether it is hatred, whether it is anger, whether it is jealousy, whether it's attachment or something – that emotion brewed up and brewed up and that emotion took them over and so that's why they came to want to harm us, if they really did want to harm us. Most of the time it's not that they want to harm us but just that they want to get what they want. And that's their main purpose. And either we don't want to give them that or we want to give them something they don't want - and that's why all the emotions come up.

So if you want to find out the real cause, you'll be able to find the anger in them, the hatred in them, the jealousy in them, whatever it is.

When somebody is using a stick to hit you, you are not angry with the stick, you are angry with the man behind. So in the same way, if you look a little deeper, you should not be angry with the man, but with the anger behind the man, because, when he was not angry, he was very nice, so that's the understanding.

***“I have a question about stanzas 48 and 49. If it is the case that those whom we feel are harming us are in fact creating negative karma for themselves so actually they are the ones who suffer more, should we not be trying to help them to understand their anger better? I ask this because yesterday I tried this approach and it did not work out at all well. So is it best if we do as advised in stanza 33 and ‘remain serene’ when friends get angry? Thank you Rinpoche for these teachings – they are extremely helpful. Kind regards.”***

Well when somebody is angry, I think it is very difficult to make them understand that they're the ones to suffer. They don't want to hear it – especially from you! But if there is a possibility for you to make them understand, then it will be very good but it will be difficult. It's always like this – this is our main approach, that if we can make people understand clearly, we have to do it, we should do it. You try to make them understand and change their way of reacting and give up their anger and their wrong way of acting and reacting – but if that doesn't happen, if that is not possible, if you don't have that set of circumstances or possibility to do that, at least we can be little bit calm and understanding and serene and try to understand for ourselves. Because, if we do not react in a very bad way, then, their anger will soon cool down, and that's the best way, to show them that

anger is not useful and anger is not good and you really don't mean anything negative to them. So therefore, sometimes your example is the best way to show them what is wrong [rather] than trying to tell them, especially in a heated discussion. So that is my answer.

Next question is regarding stanzas 34-49:

***“I have been listening again to your commentary on stanza 47 – that ultimately our own negative state of mind is created by ourself and that people harming me are like instruments that are used to inflict misery on me, actually created by my own karma. With regard to my question above, does this mean that my focus should only be on decreasing my own negative reactions by practicing patience?”***

To decrease my own negative actions or negative reactions should become my first priority because that's something **I can do** all the time, anytime, and I don't need to do anything to change somebody, which is much more difficult and much more unlikely. That doesn't mean to say that I cannot try to change some situations. If there is a conflict between me and somebody else, maybe I can find a way to resolve this conflict – if there is a way I can do this I should do it – but those things depend on many conditions. Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't happen for a long time. There have been conflicts, there have been wars, there've been senseless wars and conflicts that went on for hundreds of years and then suddenly ended – because nothing can go on forever and then somebody has the good sense to make an end. So therefore that's the only way. So to understand that something negative happening to me – seemingly or actually, and even if it is done through somebody or by somebody – is eventually a result of my own negative karma, makes it easier for me to compromise, or easier to forgive others. So if I really understand or feel that what is happening to me, or has been done by somebody to me, is eventually coming from a negative action that I have done myself, then it lessens the hatred, lessens the anger – there's less blaming of others. So therefore, I need to take the responsibility to end this as well because I could have been the one who started this - so I should be to one to end it also – so even if it seems difficult now, I must do something about it. So therefore this understanding becomes very important I think.

Then this is another question based on stanzas 50 to 53:

***“Even if one has good intentions, others misperceptions seem to form such a large part of the outcome of any communication or action, especially if one is emotional or unskilful in any way. How should one practice patience when one is misunderstood or misrepresented by another to others, and is said by them to have done or said something harmful, that one has not? If the misunderstanding or misrepresentation could harm others if uncorrected what should one do? Is it important to correct the misunderstanding and misrepresentation or simply to be passively patient?”***

I think one should do as much as possible to clear up a misunderstanding or misconception in whatever way is possible. But then it's sometimes not possible. Sometimes people don't want to discuss or clear things up or listen. This can also happen. This is a possibility. When this happens then usually one gets very agitated and very aggressive and very, very sad and totally disturbed. We have to understand that this is also a possibility. So therefore we have to be patient, we have to wait, we have to use time, skill and different methods and then slowly, slowly, maybe it can be corrected. But sometimes it's very difficult even if it seems very simple. There are many of these kinds of misconceptions or misunderstandings. Conflicts arise where there is absolutely no reason and really no basis, but they arise due to many different causes and effects. So therefore it is something that we need to understand. So that's the answer.

So I think I'll stop here. Maybe there are still more questions and I will answer them as soon as possible. I think this was video number 2 of the questions.

©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.