



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche
No Reason to Be Angry With Those Who Harm Us
6th Chapter, Stanzas 34-49



March 16, 2013
Transcribed by Carolyn Dong
Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So now we come to the stanza number 34. In generating patience we talked about three ways. First one was on how to take on and accept the sufferings and pain, and forbear them — the reasons why we should not be impatient and angry and upset about them. We talked about that. Second is through understanding the nature of all the phenomena, the situations, how I am, how everything is, and through that, how it is not right, how it is not worthy, how it is not right to feel angry and upset and hateful.

Now we come to the third point. That is, why we should not be angry at people who are harming us, or people who do negative things, or who are angry with us. Why this is not right. Why it is not reasonable to be angry and upset and hateful to them. Now this starts with stanza number 34. It says:

*If things could be according to their wish,
No suffering would ever come
To anyone of all embodied beings,
For none of them wants pain of any kind. [6:34]*

So we do not get everything that we want. Because everybody, all sentient beings, want happiness. We do not want suffering. We do not want pain. And if what we wanted happens, then nobody who will be suffering in this world. But that is not how it is happening. There is a lot of suffering, lot of pain, and problem. So how does that come?

*Yet carelessly, all unaware,
They tear themselves on thorns;
And ardent in pursuit of wives and goods,
They starve themselves of nourishment. [6:35]*

*Some hang themselves or leap into the void,
Take poison or consume unhealthy food,
Or by their evil conduct
Bring destruction on themselves. [6:36]*

Because of people's ignorance, because of negative emotions – like too much attachment, or too much aversion or hatred or anger – or just because of their unawareness, people do things which actually bring suffering and pain on themselves. Like through unawareness, they could just hit something, or put a nail or thorn in their place which gives them lots of pain. All sorts of accidents can happen just because they are not aware enough, or careful enough. But then sometimes, when they are overpowered by their negative emotions – like too much attachment or too much aversion – they can even kill themselves. You know, lots of people who have hung themselves, or have jumped over the cliff, or have taken poison, and lots of things like that. Actually, people want the best for themselves, but when they are under this influence, overpowered by negative emotions, they even harm themselves.

*For when affliction seizes them,
They even slay themselves, the selves they love so much,
So how can they not be the cause
Of others' bodily distress? [6:37]*

"For when affliction seizes them, they even slay themselves, the selves they love so much." Usually I defend with everything I have to save my life. I am angry with anybody who tries to harm me. I fight with everybody who wants to harm me. I do everything to save myself, to secure myself, to get rid of all things that harm me. But, when I am overpowered, seized by these negative emotions and afflictions, then I even harm myself.

This we can see. This is happening all the time. "*So how can they not be cause of others' bodily distress?*" Then if you can harm yourself, whom you so much love, then how is it not possible when they are under the power, or under the influence of negative emotions that they do not harm others?

So when somebody is harming me, I need to understand this, that "*Oh, this person is under the influence of negative emotions, under the negative influence, is taken over by something like a demon.*" So in this state of mind, this person can even harm himself, or herself. So it is not a big deal that he is trying to harm me. I just have to be careful; I just have to protect myself. There is no need, there is no use, there is no reason for me to hate this person, because this person is in a very difficult situation, in a very bad situation, and under a very difficult and negative influence.

So then, when I can see like that, and when I can react like that, probably I don't need to get angry with him.

*Although we almost never feel compassion
For those who, through defilement,
Bring about their own perdition,
What purpose does our anger serve? [6:38]*

Usually toward those who do negative deeds and harm others and harm themselves, even if we cannot become compassionate to them, even if we don't feel empathy and sympathy towards them, even if we don't feel kind to them, there is no space to be angry. We cannot get angry at them. Because when somebody is so kind of mad, under so much kind of negative influence, that they can even harm themselves, whom they love most – they want to usually do anything to protect themselves from harm – but even that they can harm themselves, then it is nothing that they harm others. So therefore, it is not because they are bad, or they are especially wanting to do something wrong to you, but just because they are under a very dark influence.

If those who are like wanton children

Are by nature prone to injure others,

There's no reason for our rage;

It's like resenting fire for being hot. [6:39]

Now, there are two ways of looking at this. These people who are doing negative things, who are angry, upset, and destructive, are they naturally like that? Or they are only sometimes, or temporarily like that? If they are naturally like that, then we can't be angry at them because they are like some children, very wanton. Wanton means like spoiled children, not controlled. And they just run around, they make pranks, and they jump over things because they are wild. They are not disciplined. So most of the time they injure themselves, and they can injure others, because they are like that.

So when you meet somebody who is like that, or if for example, you meet somebody who is mentally not stable, or somebody who is totally drunk, then what would you do? You try to protect them. You try to see that they are not causing so much trouble to themselves and others. You don't get angry at them. You don't resent them. You know what is going on. They are sick.

So in the same way, to hate somebody who is in that situation, because they can harm you, because they are in that state of being, is like hating fire because it can burn. The nature of fire is hot; it is not its fault that it is hot. So when you know that, and if you put your finger inside the fire, [you will be burnt]. You can't hate fire. You can't be angry at fire, because you know fire is by nature hot. And there is no business for you to put your finger in it.

So in this same way, with people who are under the influence of negative emotions, you don't have to engage. You try to stay away from them. You try to protect yourself. And also, try to protect them, if you can. But there is no place for anger and resentment and things like that.

*And if their faults are fleeting and contingent,
If living beings are by nature mild,
It's likewise senseless to resent them—
As well as be angry at the sky when it is full of smoke! [6:40]*

But if you think that this negative influence is temporary – when somebody is taken over by negative emotions, then they can cause trouble and problems but when they are not, then they are not like that. They can be nice and good and do some positive things also. Then, there is even less reason to be angry and upset with them because temporarily they are defiled. They are affected by these negative emotions and that is why they are doing this.

It is like, when there is smoke in the air, you don't like the smoke, but you don't hate the space because space has nothing to do with the smoke. Smoke is there temporarily because of certain reasons. Of course you don't like the smoke that is polluting space. But you don't get angry at the space because there is smoke. You can't. They are two different things.

So in the same way, if people are generally okay, but when they are possessed by negative emotions they can do negative things – then, also, there is no reason to be angry at them, be upset with them, and hate them. So there is really no good reason, or really if you are wise, there is no good reason to be angry and upset with the people, even those who are doing negative things.

*Although it is their sticks that hurt me,
I am angry at the ones who wield them, striking me.
But they in turn are driven by their hatred;
Therefore with their hatred I should take offence. [6:41]*

But if you say that *"I am angry with this person, because this person hit me. This person harmed me. This person did this, or did that to bring pain and suffering and problems for me."* If you think like that, then you say, *"If this person hit me, how did he hit me?"* If he hit you with a stick, then you can say that actually this person didn't hit you, the stick hit you. You should be angry with the stick. Why are you angry with the person?

But then you say that, yes but the stick did not hit by itself. Because the stick does not stand up, and come and hit me on the head. This person took it in his hand and hit me. Oh. Then, you are not angry with the stick, but you are angry with the person, because this person is the cause who used the stick to hit you. So therefore, you want to get angry with the cause of the process, that gave you pain, and made you suffer. If that is the case, then even this person is not the real cause. This person's anger is the real cause. This person's negative emotions are the real cause. This person's ignorance is the real cause. Because, if this person was not overtaken by negative emotions, then he would not be angry. And if he were not angry, he would not want to harm you. If he didn't want to harm you, he would not pick up the stick, and he would not hit you. So, actually, eventually, it is the hatred, the negative emotions that is the real cause of all the problems. So, in that case, you should be angry at the anger, not at the person who has been used by the anger to harm you, and also himself.

In just the same way in the past

I it was who injured living beings.

Therefore it is right that injury

Should come to me their torturer. [6:42]

And eventually, if you want to go even further, it is possible that I have created the action, and maybe an action that harmed this person or somebody, and that made a karmic causation that I would be hurt also. So, if that is the case, then eventually it comes to a negative action that I have performed. Therefore, this person is just a medium, or just an agent, or kind of a cog in the sequence of causes and conditions. So there is no reason to specify this person and get very angry.

*Their weapons and my body---
Both are causes of my torment!
They their weapons, I my body brandished;
Who then is more worthy of my rage? [6:43]*

There are many causes and conditions. If I am hurt, it is not just because of one cause, one condition. There are many causes and many conditions. I am, myself, one of the conditions. If somebody hit me with a weapon, then the weapon is one of the causes. The anger of the person who is wielding the weapon is one of the causes. And then, all the causes and conditions that led to this person getting angry, holding the weapon, and hitting me with it, are the sequence of causes and conditions. But, also my body. If my body was not as sensitive as it is, then it wouldn't hurt me that much. So, because I have a very sensitive body, it is easily hurt. This is also one of the causes.

So therefore: "*They their weapons and I my body brandished.*" They – their anger, their weapons; I – my being there, also a little perpetrating their anger, and also my being so vulnerable and unable to defend myself – all these are causes. So then, who then is more worthy of my rage? I should be either angry at all of them, or not necessarily be angry at any of them.

*This body—running sore in human form—
Merely touched, it cannot stand the pain!
I'm the one who grasped it in my blind attachment,
Whom should I resent when pain occurs? [6:44]*

One of the main reasons is also because I am so attached to this body. I am grasping so much to the body. And if it is a little hurt, I feel so bad, so hurt, so feeling bad. That is why my strong attachment, my strong holding on, my sensitivity of myself and my body, is also one of the causes of the suffering.

*We who are like children
Shrink from pain, but love its causes.
We hurt ourselves through our misdeeds!*

So why should others be the object of our rage? [6:45]

So, we are like children. We don't want pain but we want to play, and run wild, and do wild things. We jump, we do all sorts of things that might cause us pain, but we don't like pain. We hurt ourselves through our own misdeeds, through our own wrong ways of seeing, wrong ways of doing, wrong ways we think, because actually, when we analyze like this, there is no reason to be angry and upset. And then, if you really understood this, we would not be upset about that. We could laugh at problems, and sufferings and things like that. "*So why should others be objects of our rage?*" Why should we be so angry and upset and so hateful to others when it is mostly ourselves who are creating all these problems?

And who indeed should I be angry with?

This pain is all my own contriving—

Likewise all the janitors of hell

And all the groves of razor trees! [6:46]

Basically, everything is the way I grasp. Because of my aversion too much, because of my sensitivity of myself, my pride, my clinging, and because I hate. I grasp so much — my body, my pride, my identity, my things. And then when something is happening, I feel this is something really hurting me. Even if sometimes it is not hurting me I think it is really harmful to me. And then, when I say this is bad, I kind of hold on to it as something really bad, with so much aversion, that it becomes the cause of so much trouble and pain, and things like that. So I create my own pain. I create my own suffering. In the long run, everything, even the hell, is created in my own mind. So it is said, "*Who made this burning ground?*" "*Who made the yamarajas, or the janitors of hell?*" And all these instruments of burning and these kinds of things? Nobody. Just my own negative state of mind. So therefore, eventually it is created by myself. And there is nobody to blame for creating all these problems for me. It is my own negative state of mind.

Those who harm me rise against me—

It's my karma that has summoned them.

And if through this these beings go to hell,

Is it not I who bring their ruin? [6:47]

So this is important. Actually, all these things that harm me are actually created by myself, by my own karma. But these people who are harming me are being used as instruments. They become instruments to inflict this negativity on me, which are actually created by my own negative karma. So it's my own creation. But then, these people who did these negative things to me, thereby actually created negative actions for themselves. They created negative karma for themselves, the results of which they will have to go through in the long run.

*Because of them, and through my patience,
All my many sins are cleansed and purified.
But they will be the ones who, thanks to me,
Will have the long-drawn agonies of hell. [6:48]*

So if I am practicing patience, then the things that these people do to harm me become very good things. Because they become a remedy for me to purify myself and get rid of all my negative karma. So it benefits me immensely if I use these in a good way. But they are very much harmed, because these actions cause them to go to hell. Not because of their fault but mainly because it is my fault, because of my own negative karma. So actually, I should be very grateful to them, not hate them.

*Therefore I am their tormentor!
Therefore it is they who bring me benefit!
Thus with what perversity, pernicious mind,
Will you be angry with your enemies? [6:49]*

So actually I cannot be angry with my enemies. I should be grateful to my enemies. So it is very important to understand this, and see that actually my enemies are my real friends. If I know how to use them, if I am patient, if I can practice patience, then actually, what enemies do can be a source of great benefit for myself. So therefore, there is nothing really to be angry and upset about that.

How much harm they do depends on how I react, how I take it, whether I am skillful, whether I am not skillful, whether I am able to take it in the right way or the wrong way. So it is important to understand this.

This is stanza number forty-nine. 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.