



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Questions and Answers 4
6th Chapter



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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

The first question is:

“In relation of chapter 6, I understand the importance of being patient in our daily life, and not allowing ourselves to be hurt by others. In work, I deal with lots of people that are not very patient, and they expect things to be resolved quickly. It seems we have to be 100% available for them. How can we deal with this in a calm way and not allow ourselves be contaminated with all this anger? I try to think they are angry because of something that is not a real problem, because I can solve it. But when I deal with them I cannot transmit this calm, and I feel hurt because they are being unfair. Can you kindly give some suggestions on how we can deal with

this? Is it important to try to calm people and try to make them realize it is not a big problem? Or should we just focus on us and our own mind?"

I think I have said it before, that it is almost impossible to fulfill everybody's wishes, or everybody's expectations. It is also not possible to change everybody. We can try and we can sometimes bring some sense. And if I am really calm and kind, many people react to it in a positive way. That is there. It is also possible, sometimes, that if you keep on being calm and kind, people will slowly have more trust in you and change. That is also possible. But we cannot expect this to happen all the time. But by getting, ourselves, angry and hurt and feeling bad, does it help really? Does it help? What good does it do?

So, if somebody says something bad, and then I say, "*That is really really bad! I am very hurt. I am very upset. I am very hurt.*" What should I do? Should I go and beat them up? That doesn't solve the problem either. Should I go and cry and cry and cry, and make myself totally miserable? Does that help? That doesn't help either. Even if I cry and cry and cry, at one point I have to stop crying and then go on in my life. So what else can I do?

I feel that the only thing I can really do is that I can say that these things are there. It is like that. If you go to the market where lots of people are there, naturally there will be lots of noise. You cannot expect to be without noise. You cannot say, "*This noise is too bad. I am so hurt because there is so much noise.*" You can't do that. You have to learn how to deal with this noise. So in spite of this noise going on, we have to continue our activities and get things done and go home.

So in the same way, if we can understand this and then deal with these situations with other people – if and when there are people like that – then we are not so much affected by that. We can be little bit more able to carry those things as they come and not be so much affected, so much hurt.

It depends on how I react. So if I can do that, it is much better for me. And when I learn how to do that, then I think I will feel much better. I think, "*Oh, I can deal with this.*" So the next time you are not so afraid when people are saying bad things or doing bad things too much to you. Then

you are more kind of strong because you know how to deal with that. You know how to carry it. You don't get so affected by that. You don't have to be so sensitive.

It is about your own sensitivity. I think I talked about two kinds of sensitivities. One is "Am I hurt? Am I not hurt? Am I feeling good? Am I not feeling good?" That is one sensitivity. Another is to see how people are feeling, how people are thinking, and to be more sensitive to that. That sensitivity we need to have and need to develop. And this sensitivity that "I am feeling okay or not, good or not," this sensitivity I think we need to reduce a little bit. That is my understanding.

Then the second question is – maybe it is also a little bit similar:

"First I would like to thank you once again for these fantastic teachings. I am learning a lot. It has been a challenge every day. The most difficult thing for me, in the practice of patience, is to learn how to deal, in a compassionate way, with people who harm us or do wrong things that can bring us problems. What do you mean by compassion? We need to stop these actions because they can bring us future problems. But to do it without getting angry we need to be patient, which sometimes mean we need to wait and understand people have their problems to resolve. However, this can brings us extra problems because people can take advantage of us and think we are weak. For me it is very difficult to find the best way of dealing with this without getting angry and to act in a compassionate way, while at the same time to not allow people to take advantage of us."

I think some people have this wrong understanding. That if I don't attack immediately if somebody says something, then I am weak and they will not respect me. It doesn't have to be like that. I don't have to attack in order to defend all the time. I can be kind and not attack, but also not allow them to take undue advantage of me. I have to be clear. I have to be present and strong, and things like that. Because just getting angry and upset is not a defense. That is your weakness. Then you get crumbled immediately when they attack. That does not mean to say that I do not take action. I can be compassionate, but also take action to not allow people to do things which are harmful to me. If I can prevent people doing negative things, I should do it. Then I don't need to be angry. I should do those things.

If I cannot do anything to prevent them doing negative things, then getting angry and upset is only harmful for me. Only I am making myself unhappy and upset. It doesn't help. So therefore, to understand this, I think, is very important.

Getting angry is not the question. What I can do to prevent the problems from increasing more and more, and the situation becoming worse and worse is the problem. That is the problem.

So if I do not get only involved in my anger and upsetness, but really look for how to solve this problem in a way that is good for me and good for others, I think most of the time, many times, you will find ways that is good for everybody. And it is easier that way. It is better that way, than to say, *"I don't talk to anybody. I get upset and angry,"* and things like that. And then the other person also responds the same way. And then we never talk, we never try to resolve this problem. Maybe sometimes it is a small problem; sometimes it is a big problem. Then the negative feelings grows bigger and bigger; and then we try to harm each other; and then lots of harm is done. Many generations get harmed sometimes. And that is foolish and not good for anybody. So therefore, to think carefully, and patiently, and sometimes a little bit with understanding and compassion would be, I think, very helpful.

Then this next question is:

"Dear Rinpoche, I have a question about stanza 52. It is about the fact that the mind can't be harmed. I feel I need more explanations about that. I understand that our buddha nature can't be harmed. But the mind, as I experiment, it can be harmed in my experience. Aren't all the mental illnesses like injuries of the mind? How can we say that drugs don't shatter its balance? I think it could be a problem of definition."

Yes, the mind, our memories, can be more and less. Our feelings, we can feel better, we can feel worse. That can be. We can see things clearly. We can see things unclearly. And those things can change. There are always these ups and downs, and ups and downs. But the true nature of our mind is the clarity. And there, there is nothing that can harm it. That is the main understanding here. You can call it buddha nature if you like.

So my essence cannot be harmed. Other activities are always up and down anyway, even without anybody doing anything. When I get old, I lose my memory. My mind becomes more senile and then I die. And then I get another rebirth and another type of mind. Exactly I don't know how it is. So that is the idea.

So if somebody says something, or does something, and it gets you hurt, or unhappy – how much hurt or unhappiness it makes depends not on the other person's doings, but on me and how I react to it. That is the main question here.

Other person doing something or saying something is one effect, one element. But how I take it, how I react to it, is another element. And these two elements are almost of equal importance. And sometimes how I react to it is more important. So if I understand that, then I understand that it is up to me and how I react how much I am affected by what others say and do. That is the understanding I think.

So I think that is all. Thank you very much. And all the best.

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