



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche *Questions and Answers 2 (Chapter 4)*

BA4Q2: Questions and Answers 2 (Chapter 4)

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The first question is,

“Dear Rinpoche, in your reply to the first question in BA3QA, you said, ‘whatever happens has to happen.’ And the first of the Famous Fierce Mantras is: ‘Let whatever has to happen, happen.’ On one level it sounds fatalistic and passive, however I know that’s not the meaning and intention. Would you say more about how to think about and relate to this instruction?”

I think this is a very good question because many times when things like *“whatever happens to happen happen,”* or *“whatever happens has to happen”* are said, people think it’s completely fatalistic and passive. But it is not. It’s very important to understand in this way.

There are lots of times when people think, *“It has to happen in the way that I want, and cannot be anything else”*. Of course you try your best to make things happen as you want, but most of the time, or many times, things do not happen exactly as you want.

And when that happens, then some people totally break down. They lose hope. They say that it *“should have happened this way, it doesn’t happen so there’s no hope, it’s finished, there’s nothing I can do, I’m totally lost.”* And they get into a very, very bad situation. That’s not the right thing to

do.

Sometimes people think *"I want it this way so I have to get it this way and anything else is not good."* That's not the way.

First, we have to see very clearly what is the most important thing. We have to see that even if you wish something or you want something to happen, you have to look into it a little bit and examine whether this is really worthwhile, whether it's really the best thing, whether there is nothing more important or more positive or more beneficial than this.

So it's very important to examine what we wish or what we want, whether they are really something worthwhile or not. That's the first thing. But once we understand that what I wish is really important and really good and really necessary to have, then of course we have to try our best and do whatever we can to make that happen. But, with the understanding that things don't always happen the way we want them.

If everything goes as I want it or I wish it, that's great. That's very, very good. But if it doesn't happen, that does not mean that I have to be completely lost or defeated or hopeless. Lots of times things do not happen as I wanted them to happen, but that's not the end of the story.

Now at this point, what I have to say is, *"I have to let that happen,"* I have to say, *"what has happened has happened and I cannot change it."* I can try to change the future, but I cannot change the past.

So therefore, if something happened that is not what I wished or is not really the most positive thing, that's not necessarily the end of it. I have to accept it, I have to acknowledge that, I have to face that and then see what can be done now, what I can do within that situation.

Sometimes there is a possibility that you can actually work on one part of the situation. There may be an opportunity to work on that. Sometimes maybe, you need to work on something other than exactly that thing. You never lose hope, you never completely give up, or you never have to feel that this is completely finished and lost.

Because you haven't failed in a completely hopeless way. There is still hope and there are still things you can do. There are still things that can improve and things you can work on. In order to do that, it's very, very important to have that strength. To have the understanding, that *"Okay, things don't happen always as I want them to happen, but that is not the end, that's no problem,"* is extremely important. I need to accept that. I need to even expect that in a way and even if everything is the exact opposite of what I wished or what I wanted, still, there's lots of things which can go right and it's not hopeless.

So it's very, very important to have that understanding and not have this very small kind of limited thing like, you know, *"I want this, or it must happen and if it doesn't happen like that then I am finished"*. It's not like that.

It's always important to learn to accept, learn to recognize, learn to acknowledge what happens. And - this is very, very important - people think that that's fatalistic. It's not fatalistic. People think that's passive. But it's not passive. Not passive in the sense that it's completely gone and everything is lost and I'm totally broken and there's nothing I can do anymore, it's finished. It's not like that.

Although, that thing that I wanted it to happen didn't happen like that, there are many other things and I have to look around. I have to think, I have to try, I have to find different ways. Maybe I can even find something more positive within that situation. Sometimes we can find an opportunity within that very thing that supposedly didn't work.

So this understanding has to be there. Otherwise, you know, you will be a little bit lost and really in a very bad shape when that happens. Because nobody can always have only success and only things happening as they wish all the time.

So this is the understanding.

The second question is,

"Thank you for this teaching, I find it very salutary. It has made me examine my practice very

carefully to see if I am really being true to the bodhicitta aspiration. Although I certainly have a strong intention, I have the following question about my action. Recently I have felt very angry towards someone I work with and no matter how hard I try I can't transform this anger (yet) although I am polite to the person. I can wish her lasting peace and happiness in my heart and when I am not with her I can feel compassionate towards her and full of good intentions, but it is still the case that when I see her I feel angry. Is it possible to still have a true bodhicitta aspiration in this situation?"

I think you are expecting too much from yourself. Of course we get angry, we get upset, we get all kind of negative emotions until we are totally, completely enlightened. So therefore, you cannot expect yourself to be totally free of any kleshas or negative emotions. That's too much expectation. But as you have already said, you can sometimes feel compassion, you can wish good for this person. So that's very good. Of course, it is not so nice, it's not so good for you to feel angry, so therefore, you have to slowly see what you can do about the anger.

There's a whole chapter coming up on how to work with anger and how to work with patience, because it is so very important and it's one of the most difficult things for many people. So therefore I think we'll talk about this more at that time.

I think we need to see what is our expectation. I feel that there are lots of problems with the way we expect. If we expect that everybody has to do everything completely the right way, has to be completely nice, has to be completely kind, has to be completely good and everything is perfect, then you get very angry and upset when something doesn't happen like that or somebody is not like that.

But we have to understand that people are very much samsaric, have very many problems, are very much under the power of negative emotions and negative intentions. All the people around us are samsaric beings. When I understand it deeply then I can see that there's no need to get so angry, because I don't have to expect them to be so good. And this brings acceptance and this brings also compassion and a little bit more patience.

So I think you need to slowly work on that. But you have to accept that as long as you are not

completely enlightened you have anger and you can become angry.

It's not necessary that you have to get angry but you can become angry and that is a fact. You know, it's like "let whatever has to happen happen," or "whatever happens has to happen," so therefore that anger happens. However, it's very important that you know it's not good for you. Not because of the other person, but it's for yourself. It is for myself that I need to let go of my anger. I think that's the important thing.

So thank you very much.

This is video number 2 of Bodhicharyavatara, Chapter number 4.

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