



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Reflecting on the Faults of Negative Emotions
4th Chapter, Stanzas 28-32



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BA4_28-32 Reflecting on the Faults of the Negative Emotions
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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Online Shedra

So now we come to the third point in the fourth chapter of Bodhicharyavatara - a chapter on carefulness or heedfulness. And here we're talking about how important it is to carefully consider the kleshas or the negative emotions that we need to free ourselves from. Now this has three sections - three points.

The first is how negative or how problematic the kleshas or the negative emotions are. The

second is that we need to go through lots of difficulties - that we need to be patient in working on the ways to free ourselves from these klehsas. And the third is how to free ourselves from these kleshas - the ways and means on how to deal with the kleshas. So these [are the] three points - so we first go through the first one, which is to try to reflect on the shortcomings or the faults or the problems of the negative emotions - and that is from stanza number 28 to stanza number 35. I'm not sure whether we'll be able to go through the whole section this time but let us see.

First - it says in verse 28:

*Anger, lust, these enemies of mine,
Are limbless and devoid of faculties,
They have no bravery, no cleverness;
How then have they reduced me to such slavery?*

Now the kleshas are like anger - they always talk about a group of emotions which are included in the group of anger - like anger, hatred, feeling hurt, revenge, rage - there's lots of things [associated with] anger. And when one is overpowered by anger, then of course it's a disturbed state of mind - it's a painful state of mind, it's not a happy situation - but also out of anger and hatred, we create lots of harm to others. We create situations or actions that will bring harm and lots of difficulties or problems to others and to ourselves as well. So this is anger. And it's the same way with lust - [it's another] big group - lust, greed, too much clinging, attachment, things like that. And these - anger, lust, ignorance, jealousy and arrogance - these that we call the kleshas - these are enemies of mine.

We usually don't see them as enemies, but they are enemies, because as long as they are overpowering me, then they're keeping me in suffering, in pain, in problems - creating problems for me and creating problems for others. But when you look at them, they are limbless - they don't have heads or legs or hands or very fearful kind of mouths or teeth like fangs or [other] things like that. And they don't have the faculties of eyes or ears or hands or wings or things like that. They have no bravery and they are not courageous, they are not brave and courageous and diligent, because all these are very much in the nature of laziness. When a klesha arises there is no courage, there is always some kind of laziness - devoid of courage - something that I submit to - I allow myself to be carried away. So therefore there is no bravery, no cleverness - there is no cleverness, because if you have cleverness, if you think properly, you can reflect on what is the right thing to do - what is the thing that is really useful and what is

really of benefit to yourself and others and what is not - then you wouldn't [come] under the influence of those negative emotions. So therefore the kleshas are always [arising] together with ignorance. So therefore there is no cleverness.

'How then have they reduced me to such slavery?' So therefore how come that I am always like a slave of these kleshas and negative emotions? This should not be - I should not be the slave of these negative emotions or kleshas. It should not be like that, but I am.

Then it says in [stanza] 29:

*They dwell within my mind
And at their pleasure injure me.
All this I suffer meekly, unresenting -
Thus my abject patience, all displaced!*

I have to know this - I have to know [that] these negative emotions or kleshas are harmful to me because they enslave me, and they enslave me [so that I don't] do something - [I don't] bring happiness or joy or something really beneficial to me in the long run - or wellbeing - but they always bring something not nice - they bring destruction, bring pain, bring sorrow, bring a disturbance of my mind - no peace - and also lots of problems and difficulties to others. So therefore I should not take them as something really helping me. But they dwell within my mind, they are within my mind - they reside in my mind. They are within me, within my mind and they always injure me and at their pleasure they injure me. They easily and without any problems and without any difficulties do lots of injuries and harm to me. And what do I do? *'All this I suffer meekly unresenting.'* I've been suffering from this, the negative effect or slavery of the kleshas, not only the whole of this life, but all lives before that - since immemorial time. And if I don't do anything now about it, I will suffer continuously in future also. [Yet] I take it very meekly, I take it without any resistance, I take it without revolting against it. How can that be? When I really understand this [I realize] there must be something totally wrong with me. There's something that is inside my mind, that is not even so powerful, that is not very clever and brave and things like that - that is entered into my mind and then continuously injures me and I just suffer it and I don't even complain. I suffer meekly and I don't even repent or resent it. I don't even protest, I don't do anything, I don't say anything. I just willingly suffer this big, big problem all the time. And this must be something totally wrong - thus *'my abject patience, all displaced'*. So this patience that is in me - patience for my kleshas - is a totally displaced patience. I should not be patient. I should be patient for something that is useful and that I should be patient about

but I should not be patient for some things. If somebody is enslaving me and taking charge of me, and does all bad things to me, and brings continuous suffering and pain and sorrow and disturbance and all these negative things to me - and also making me do lots of negative things and harm and creating destruction and problems for others, which will create a negative karma for me so that I will also suffer long term - how can I be so meek and unresenting for that? I must stand up against it. I must have the courage to stand up against it and do something. I cannot just continuously submit myself and surrender myself to this kind of harmful lord.

*If all the gods and demigods besides
Together came against me as my foes,
They would be powerless to throw me down
To fires of hell of Unrelenting Pain. [30]*

Now we can look at it in another way. How harmful these kleshas or negative emotions are. For instance even if 'all the gods and demigods' or not only gods and demigods but all the men and animals and everybody in the world came together against me and they wanted to harm me - they become my enemy or my foe - what can they do? The most they can do is kill me, torture me in this life and kill me and after I die they cannot do anything more. They can inflict injuries to my body, they can torture me as long as I live in this life and then they can kill me. However, even if all the people in the world became my foe, my enemy, what can they do? They can kill me, they can hurt me - my body - till death and they cannot do anything more. They cannot throw me into the hell realm - they have no power to throw me down into the hell realm - the hell realm that will give me unrelenting pain. But these negative emotions can. If I am totally overpowered by hatred, by greed, by negativity - very, very strong negativity - then I can create a situation for myself where there will be unbearable pain for myself - unbearable negativity. So therefore only my own negative emotions, my own kleshas, can throw me into hell - nobody else can. So therefore these negative emotions in me are so negatively powerful.

*And yet the mighty fiend of my afflictions
Flings me in an instant headlong down
To where the mighty lord of mountains
Would be burned, its very ashes all consumed. [31]*

Now this is exactly what has already been said. All the people, all the gods and demigods and everybody in the universe coming together as my enemy cannot throw me into the hell realm - but my afflictions, my negative emotions, my kleshas - they can do it. As I said before, I can

create my own hell. So therefore these negative emotions are stronger, more harmful, more negative enemies to me than all others enemies put together - even if all the whole world came together as my enemy.

*O my enemy, afflictive passion,
Endless and beginningless companion!
No other enemy indeed
Is able to endure so long! [32]*

So this enemy - my own kleshas - afflictive emotions or passions - this is something which has been with me all the time. That's why I'm in samsara. That's why I suffer so much. That's why I didn't attain enlightenment. That's why I'm still suffering pain in samsara. And if I don't do something now it will keep on ruling me. As long as I [don't] free myself from it, there's no end. And so therefore, no other enemy is as [enduringly] inflicting pain and problems as these afflictive emotions - so I have to see how negative, how heinous, how injuring and how grave this enemy of afflictive emotions is to me.

That's the 32nd [stanza]. So I think I will stop here. That's from 28 to 32 - stanza number 28 to stanza number 32. So I think I will leave here. Thank you very much.

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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.