



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Having Patience When People Do Good to Our Enemies
6th Chapter, Stanzas 76-86



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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

First of all I must apologise for not being able to send any videos for the last few months. I was travelling in Europe – sixteen countries and about thirty different places – and since I was travelling very fast and teaching everywhere and then seeing people, I was not having the time or energy to make any videos. So, I would like to seek your forgiveness for this.

Now I would like to go back to the Sixth Chapter of Bodhicharyavatara which is on patience. We have finished stanza 75 and now we go to 76.

This is about how to practise patience when my enemies start to get good things, like praise and positive things. How do I react? Usually when my enemies, or people who harm me or who obstruct me to get what

I want – good things – then when people start to give them wonderful and nice things, I become unhappy and angry.

So here it says:

When others take delight

In giving praise to those endowed with talents,

Why, O mind, do you not find

A joy likewise in praising them? [6:76]

When people praise my enemies, what they are doing is that they are seeing some positive things in my enemy or whoever it may be. And, therefore, they feel good. They feel good that they are seeing something positive or their mind is turning to something positive, and then they are giving them praise. So when they are doing that, they are feeling happy, they are taking delight, they feel good.

So if they feel good by praising my enemy, why should I not feel good that at least somebody is feeling good? *“Why, O mind, do you not find / A joy likewise in praising them?”* I should also feel good; I should also not get angry and upset because those people are seeing something positive, something good. That is why they are praising. So there is no reason for me to feel unhappy, hurt and angry when people do that.

The pleasure that is gained therefrom

Itself gives rise to blameless happiness.

It’s urged on us by all the holy ones,

And is the perfect way of winning others. [6:77]

When people are happy because they see some positive or good things in somebody, and then they feel good about it, they feel happy, that is a very good way of feeling happy. It’s much better than feeling happy by seeing that somebody is suffering or somebody is hurt or somebody is poor, or feeling happy because they have indulged in intoxication or in gambling or drugs and so on.

Therefore, being happy because they see something good or something positive or something worth praising, is a positive thing, it is *“blameless happiness”*. And that kind of joy – rejoicing at others’ good

things, rejoicing at somebody having something good or attaining something good or doing something good – is always regarded by all the holy people as very positive and very good; as something that we should increase and we should develop – rejoicing at somebody's happiness, somebody's achievement, or somebody's having a good time.

And also, if I rejoice when someone is pleasing someone, doing something good, or having something, then it is the best way to become friends with them. If somebody is saying something good about somebody, and then if I get upset and if I get angry, what does that do? It's not only that I feel bad and unhappy by doing this; that I feel hurt, I feel angry, and I feel unhappy; but also those people become distant from me and I have upset them, made them unhappy. I have made them like an enemy also. When somebody is saying something good about somebody and they see some of the good qualities of this person, then if I am happy about that, if I appreciate that, if I rejoice at that, then I become friends with those people also; and it is the best way to bring closer to me those people and make them my friends. They become closer to me and I become closer to them. It is a perfect way for many other people to become close to me and on my side. So, it is much better to rejoice than to be jealous or upset when people are saying good things and doing positive things, even for my enemy.

"But they're the ones who'll have the happiness," you say.

If this then is a joy you would resent,

Abandon paying wages and returning favors.

You will be the loser – both in this life and the next! [6:78]

I may feel that if good things are said about my enemies and about other people that I don't like, then they will have happiness, and I resent that. This is not good because then I'm not happy when somebody is happy. This is not right.

I should be happy when somebody is happy. I should not resent when somebody is doing something positive or seeing something positive, in whoever it could be, whether it is my enemies or my friends or anybody else. It is good that people rejoice and feel happy when somebody does something good to others.

If you feel unhappy when somebody is happy then that is making yourself unhappy all the time. For instance, if I pay wages to somebody who has done something, I should be happy about that. I should

happily pay them and if they feel good about the wages they have received, I should feel very good about that. And if somebody does something good to me I should return that favour and I should be very happy to do that, I should not be unhappy doing those things. Because if I don't do that, if I'm unhappy for doing something for others, by myself or by others, that would bring some good and positive things to them, then it is wrong. I should be happy, I should rejoice; otherwise I will be a loser. If I don't rejoice, if I am unhappy, if I feel upset, if I feel resentment that somebody is getting something good then who will be the loser for that? I will be the loser for that. Not only now, not only in this life, but also in my future lives; because if I feel resentment, if I feel unhappy, if I feel hurt, if I feel upset, if I feel angry, then I am unhappy, I feel pain, I feel not good. And because of that I also make everybody around me unhappy about that and I will also make people who are involved unhappy about that. So therefore, it's not good for me now.

In addition, because of that I create negative karma, I create negative habitual tendencies in myself, so it is very bad for my next life and lives to come. Therefore, who is the loser? I am the loser, not only now, in this life, but also in the future. I should not get angry, I should not get upset. I should feel good about it and rejoice with others' positive things.

*When praise is heaped upon your qualities,
You're keen that others should be pleased thereby.
But when the compliment is paid to others,
You feel no inclination to rejoice as well. [6:79]*

Sometimes this is the way we do. When I am praised, I feel that not only I should be happy but everybody should be happy also. When they praise others, then it is not only that I should not be unhappy, I should be happy – as I will be hurt and unhappy and feel bad – but I want others to be also unhappy: that's not good.

*You who want the happiness of beings
Have wished to be enlightened for their sake.
So why should others irk you when
They find some pleasure for themselves? [6:80]*

We are supposed to be bodhisattvas. I have said that I want to be enlightened also in order to help other beings. If that is the case, I should not be unhappy when some people get even a little bit of delight or a little bit of pleasure in themselves.

*And if you claim to wish that beings
Be enlightened, honored by the triple world,
When petty marks of favor come their way,
Why are you so discomfited? [6:81]*

We, as bodhisattvas, say that we wish the best, the highest freedom from all sufferings, and the highest and the best well-being and happiness for all the sentient beings: and that also not only for the short time but forever. If that is what I want, then, if somebody gets some good thing, like a little praise from somebody, a little thing, a petty thing, even for that if I resent then that is very bad, it is not good. That is the wrong way. That is not the way how a bodhisattva should act.

*When dependents who rely on you,
To whom you are obliged to give support,
Find for themselves the means of livelihood,
Will you not be happy, will you once again be angry? [6:82]*

As bodhisattvas we have said, *"I would like to help all sentient beings, not only to get something positive, a little bit of good in this life, but that they become fully enlightened and all their problems are solved. So I want to work towards that."*

So, in a way, I have made an obligation. I took on the responsibility, or took on the vow, to give support to all beings. If I have done that, then why should I be unhappy if somebody gets something a little good, or if they can stand on their feet a little bit? I should feel very good because it relieves my burden. If one person becomes independent, that much is lighter on me, that much is helping me, because otherwise I would have to help them. So, when people are able to work for themselves, if people are able to find some good

and some positive things and happiness for themselves there is no reason for me to be unhappy but reason for me to be very happy. I can't be angry about that.

If even this you do not want for beings,

How could you want Buddhahood for them?

And how can anyone have bodhichitta

Who is angry when another prospers? [6:83]

So, if I don't even want or don't even feel good that somebody is having some little positive thing, then how can I say that I wish that person to become a buddha; and how can I have any bodhichitta if I am angry if somebody is having some little prosperity and I am angry or upset about that or not happy about that? I can't say I have bodhichitta. There is no bodhichitta.

If someone else receives a gift,

Or if that gift stays in the benefactor's house,

In neither case will it be yours –

So, given or withheld, why is it your concern? [6:84]

If somebody gets something, a present or some gain, and I am unhappy because I am jealous, that is very wrong. It is very wrong because if this other person A gives a gift to this person B, then if person B receives, then he receives. If person B does not receive that thing, then that thing remains with person A. I'm not going to get it anyway. Why should I feel unhappy because person A gives a gift to person B? I am not going to get it anyway. So, it is absolutely wrong, it's an absolutely wrong way of thinking, that if somebody is getting something good, whatever it may be, that I feel envious and unhappy. I should not feel jealous. I should not feel envious, I should rejoice because that way is good for me and good for everybody.

*All your merit and the faith of others,
All your sterling qualities – why throw them all away?
Not holding onto what might bring you riches,
Tell me, why are you not angry at yourself? [6:85]*

If I do this – I am jealous and unhappy and angry because somebody is getting something good – that is like I was myself throwing away all my positive qualities. If I throw away all my positive qualities and create situations that will cause me suffering in this life and suffering in the next life, will I be angry? If I should be angry at anybody, I should be angry at my foolish way of doing things. I should not be angry at anybody else.

*Not only do you feel no sorrow
For the evils you have done,
You even wish to match yourself
With those whose merit has been earned! [6:86]*

If we do like this, then it is not only that I feel no sorrow for the negative things that I have done, but I also try to compete with others who have earned those positive things, and I have done nothing positive but still want to compete with them. That cannot be! If I have to compete with those who have more positive things, then I have to earn it, and for that I should actually do more positive things. Doing positive things is not getting angry, not getting hurt; it is rejoicing and transforming my negative emotions into a more positive way of thinking.

Therefore, forgiving, rejoicing when others are getting positive things, feeling happy and joyful in helping people when somebody is getting something good, I will also feel good, feel kind, compassionate, and forgiving. This is how I am actually helping myself, now and in the long run.

So, we have to understand very clearly how I am helping myself and how I am harming myself; and I should not harm myself but help myself and all other people also. I need to become a little bit wiser and react accordingly.

I have covered up to stanza number 86 so we go to stanza 87 the next time. 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.