



6: PATIENCE

Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara, by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche

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EXPLANATION OF THE CHAPTER TITLE	2
CHAPTER STRUCTURE	2
I. GIVING UP ANGER	2
II. CULTIVATING PATIENCE	8
II.A. Identifying the objects of patience	8
II.B. Meditating on patience	9
II.B.1. Cultivating patience when we get something we don't want	9
II.B.1.1. Patience towards one's own suffering	9
II.B.1.1.a. The patience of accepting the suffering	9
II.B.1.1.b. The patience that comes from understanding the ultimate reality of things	15
II.B.1.1.c. The patience of not reacting negatively when one is harmed	17
II.B.1.2. Patience when one is insulted	21
II.B.1.3. Patience when unwanted events occur to one's friends	24
II.B.1.4. Patience when good things happen to one's enemy	28
II.B.2. Cultivating patience when we don't get something we do want	32
II.B.2.1. Patience towards obstacles that prevent unpleasant things to happen to one's enemy	32
II.B.2.2. Patience towards obstacles that prevent pleasant things to happen to ourselves and our friends	33
III. RESPECTING ALL SENTIENT BEINGS	42
III.A. When thinking of the field of merit	42
III.B. When thinking of how that rejoices the buddhas	46
III.C. When thinking of the benefit and harm of the fruits	46
QUESTIONS	46
<i>The more I work with compassion, the more irritated I get</i>	<i>46</i>

Explanation of the chapter title

The title of the sixth chapter is called *soe-pa* in Tibetan. It is usually translated as patience. Generating of patience is to work on anger, which is the opposite of bodhicitta. If you diminish the negative side, then the positive side naturally comes out.

Chapter structure

This chapter has three sections: giving up anger, cultivating patience, and respecting all sentient beings.

I. Giving up anger

The destructive power of anger

Good works gathered in a thousand ages,
Such as works of generosity,
Or offerings to the blissful ones—
A single flash of anger shatters them. (1)

When you're overpowered by anger and full of rage, in a way, you lose your mind. Because you don't know what you're doing. All your training and practice is just gone. That's how strongly negative and destructive it is.

In this state of mind you can really destroy things and do things that can not be easily repaired. This doesn't necessarily mean that every good deed that you have done so far is completely finished, and nothing is left. It's more like a warning of how destructive anger can be. Therefore it is important to watch out and be careful and take the necessary precautions so that you don't become completely overcome by the anger.

Khenpo Kunpal says that if it were the case that all your positive merit were wiped out in one moment of anger, then nobody ever will get enlightened, because there's nobody who doesn't get angry. He explains that it is the positive merit accumulated with our body and speech can be shattered in one moment of great anger. But the positive merit accumulated with our mind can not be destroyed.

For example, the merit that comes from making offerings or observing certain precepts can be destroyed. But the merit that comes from practicing patience, diligence, meditation, or wisdom cannot be destroyed. In addition, if the merit generated through body and speech is sealed with the Three Noble Principles¹, then that merit also cannot be destroyed. For example, if you make offerings with the motivation of bodhicitta and the view interdependence, and then you dedicate the merit properly, then the merit can never be lost.

The dedication in particular is very important. It is said in many texts that whatever positive deed we do, if we dedicate the merit, then that merit remains intact and cannot be destroyed. It is said to be like putting a drop of water in the ocean. The merit is never lost.

Example of mixing two bags of tsampa: demonstrating how dedication works

There is a story that demonstrates how dedication works. Once two Tibetans traveled to Lhasa together. One of them had just a small sack of yellow tsampa made of peas, which is not regarded as very good in Tibet. The other one had a big sack full of real good tsampa, which is white.

When they began their journey, the man with the small sack of pea tsampa said:

“Well, why do we carry these two different kinds of bags? Why don't we make it one bag so that it's easier to carry?”

¹ The three noble principles are the aspiration of bodhicitta, the view of interdependence, and dedication.

“But that’s not possible,” the man with the big sack of tsampa said, “because, I have a lot of tsampa, and you have only a little.”

“That’s no problem,” the first man said, “because my tsampa is yellow and yours is white. So when mine is finished I will stop eating, it’s very simple”.

“Well, alright,” the man with the big sack of tsampa said.

I think he was really not so wise! So they put the tsampa together in one bag and then they went and then they started eating from the same bag. Then after few days the one who had lots of tsampa said:

“You’ve eaten quite a lot. I think your tsampa must be finished by now.”

“Oh! Let’s look and see,” the one with the yellow tsampa said.

Then he looked into the sack and said, “Oh, look, there is still some yellow tsampa left.” Because the yellow tsampa had mixed in with the white tsampa, and changed the color of the white tsampa. In this way, the yellow tsampa didn’t finish till the whole sack was finished.

So making a dedication is said to be like that. You mix your small merit with the big purpose so that it never gets exhausted till this whole thing becomes true.

There is no evil similar to anger

No evil is there similar to anger,
No austerity to be compared with patience,
Steep yourself, therefore, in patience—
In all ways, urgently, with zeal. (2)

Your positive deeds are completely undermined when you are overcome with anger. In a moment of rage, you forget about everything and you let it carry on, you will do something that’s really negative and a great cause of suffering for yourself and for others too. Therefore it is said that there’s nothing more evil, or more negative, than anger. This includes hatred, which is a product of anger.

As we discussed previously, attachment has good sides and bad sides. And ignorance is the basis of attachment and aversion, but it doesn’t give that strong and immediate kind of negativity. But anger is the one that can completely destroy things and make something completely negative, burning, destroying yourself and others at the same time.

Therefore, because this anger is so destructive, it is regarded as the first, most important, and most urgent thing that we should work on as a practitioner of Buddhism.

Actually it doesn’t matter whether you are practicing Buddhism or not. Because with anger, you cannot be happy. As long as you have this anger and hatred in you, you are never happy, you are never peaceful, you are never joyful. It’s the greatest kind of pain. Therefore it’s something that we should not have, because it’s painful, it’s burning our own mind.

As long as you keep this anger, you have no peace for yourself, and you’re always suffering. And then it’s not just you who are suffering, but everyone around you is suffering also. And not just those whom you are angry at.

Of course, you will try your best to inflict all kinds of harm upon those who you are angry with. Whether or not it’s good to try and harm those you are angry with, at least this is understandable. But your enemies are not the only ones who are harmed by your anger. Everyone around you becomes a victim of your anger, including your family and friends. If I am totally angry, then I create this negative atmosphere, negative radiance, which makes everybody uneasy. No? So therefore it’s bad for you, it’s bad for the person to whom your anger is directed, and it’s bad for everybody around you, even though your anger is not directed at those close to you.

So anger is completely negative. There's nothing good about it. Therefore, patience is regarded as the most important. As it says here, *No austerity to be compared with patience*. There's nothing more positive to do than to practice patience, because anger is so bad. Anything that works on anger, anything that helps to reduce that, helps to prevent that, must be very important, must be very positive, must be really the greatest positive thing, the strongest practice. So, *Steep yourself, therefore, in patience—In all always urgently with zeal*.

So therefore whatever urgency you can give, whatever importance you can give, you should give this because without working on anger and hatred, then whatever else you do, it doesn't work. That's the main thing. Because we can't meditate, we can't do anything, the mind training can't work if you keep this anger in us.

As we said previously, we want to do something good for ourselves and good for others; but if we keep this anger and hatred and lack of forgiveness inside us, then this is bad for ourselves and others. It's totally opposite of what we want to do.

We cannot prevent ourselves from getting a little angry at times. Even if you get angry, become blue and red. That's excusable, that's alright. But the moment after that, it's useless. Then you say, "That's not necessary. This is no use."

Then if you can let it go, then you're not keeping the anger. That's what this is talking about. Because if you keep it, the longer you keep it, the worse it is. And while you are keeping this anger in you, you can't have peace, you can't have joy, you can't have any happiness in yourself. And because of that, because the nature of anger is wanting to harm, wanting to do something bad, therefore it can't be good for others. Therefore, this is the most important and urgent thing that we try to work on.

Those tormented by the pain of anger
Will never know tranquility of mind—
Strangers they will be to every pleasure;
Sleep departs them, they can never rest. (3)

Getting angry and keeping the anger brings us nothing but pain and torment. When we are angry, we become *strangers...to every pleasure*. We cannot enjoy anything. We cannot be angry and peaceful at the same time. When you are angry, you are always unhappy, you are always in pain. Sometimes when you are very angry you cannot even sleep.

Often people do not realize how harmful anger is. Sometime people think, "It's good for me to get a little angry, because it gives me energy. I need to have the energy!" To smash the door! To break the plates! I need energy! If not your companion's head.

So therefore this understanding that anger and especially keeping the anger, which is called hatred or keeping the feeling of hurt it's the same thing, no? That's what we try to get rid of.

Sometimes people think, "This person did such a bad thing to me. They did something very bad." And then we keep this hurt inside us and we make it big: "They should not have done! Why should they! It was not right for them to do this!"

Alright, it was not right for them to do this, they should not have done it, but they have done it, no? So why should you keep on suffering? Why should I keep on suffering because somebody has done something? Maybe they didn't want to hurt us. Then there is no reason why we should be angry. Maybe they did want to hurt us. In this case, we should not get hurt because then we are helping them, no?

If I take somebody as my enemy, if I hate somebody, if I don't like somebody, then I should do something that will make him or her unhappy. Or at least not make them happy. I should not make

my enemy succeed in harming me. But if I keep the anger and hatred in me, then I make them succeed in their effort.

Therefore if somebody really wanted to hurt me, then I should not keep this anger, because if I keep it I'm helping that person to hurt me and moreover I don't want to be hurt so I should not keep it. But if somebody didn't mean really to hurt me then there is no need to keep this anger because that person didn't really want to hurt me, but I got hurt because of a misunderstanding or due to other circumstances. Because the circumstances is important.

And then like that everybody in circumstances. So therefore it's not just you know, it's, we can do lots of hating but that doesn't help, neither way nor others. So therefore it's better not.

This doesn't mean that we should not try to correct a negative situation. Sometimes people think, "Oh, we should be tolerant, we should not get angry. Therefore whatever is happening, good things, bad things, we should not bother." This is not what we are saying here. Not getting angry doesn't mean that we should not fight for the right or try to change things for the better. Try to bring justice and things like that's totally different something.

The mistake people make is when they think that we need to fight for justice, therefore we should be angry.

In Buddhism, we say that if you see something happening which is not right, which is not good, then you can react in one of two ways: either with anger or with compassion. This means that if I see something happening which I know should not happen, one way is to think, "This person is doing something wrong! He is a bad person!" And then you get angry. The other way is to think, "This should not happen. This situation needs to be changed." Then compassion comes. The compassion is knowing that this should not happen and wanting to do something so that this doesn't happen. But your attention is not directed to one person or a few people, thinking that *these* are the bad people, *these* I need to vanquish, *these* I need to destroy, no that. Rather, your attention is directed at correcting the situation.

Noble chieftains full of hate
Will be attacked and slain
By even those who look to them
For honors and possessions. (4)

From family and friends estranged,
And shunned by those attracted by their bounty,
Men of anger have no joy,
Forsaken by all happiness and peace. (5)

If you're an angry person, if you have hatred, then even your best friend, even your nearest one, will not able to endure it for long. Because it's impossible to live with hatred. It's unpleasant to live with somebody who has lots of anger and hatred, no? So therefore it's impossible that you can have hatred and anger and then get somebody to love you very nicely and have a very nice, you know, because it's not possible. Nobody can bear this anger too long. So it not only hurts you, it hurts your near and dear ones too.

So even your family and friends whom you love or maybe they love you too very much but if you are always angry and always hateful they can not stay with you. Because if they stay, you will suffocate them and make them miserable. Even if you give lots of money and other incentives for people to stay, if you are really angry and full of hatred, people can't stay with you. Even in the workplace, most people would rather work with somebody who is nice rather than somebody who is angry, even if the angry person pays more. This is what is meant by *shunned by those attracted by their bounty, men of anger have no joy, forsaken by all happiness and peace.*

Therefore anger and hatred not only destroy your future happiness, they also destroy your current happiness. By destroying your positive merit of the past, your anger slowly leads you to the low realms where you will suffer in your future life. By driving away all those close to you, your anger causes you to suffer now. So your anger doesn't just harm others. We are not saying that you should be compassionate in order to help others. Here we're talking about helping ourselves. Even if you don't really care for anybody else but yourself, it's still not good to keep your anger, because your anger harms you the most. It causes the worst kind of pain and misery.

All these ills are brought about by wrath,
Our sorrow-bearing enemy.
But those whose seize and crush their anger down
Will find their joy in this and future lives. (6)

This anger is our *sorrow-bearing enemy*. If there is any enemy that can never become your friend, that is it! It's possible that even your worst human enemy can become your friend. But not this anger. With anger, no matter how much you try appease it, no matter much you submit yourself to it, it keeps on torturing and harming you. It can never become friendly. Therefore, if there is anyone that you need to recognize as your enemy, this is the one. Because with this enemy, whether you do its bidding or not, whether you submit yourself or not, it will harm you.

Therefore it's better to fight your anger. The only way to get out of the claws of this enemy is to stand firm and refuse to submit. *Those who seize and crush their anger down will find their joy in this in future lives*. Only those who have the courage to fight against their anger, the courage to do something about it, and the determination to work on it in all different ways, only they will find joy in this life and they will find joy in the next lives too. Therefore this is the most urgent thing we must do.

Getting what I do not want
And all that hinders my desire—
There my mind finds fuel for misery;
Anger springs from it, oppressing me. (7)

Therefore I will utterly destroy
The sustenance of this my enemy,
My foe, whose sole intention is
To bring me injury and sorrow. (8)

Yid is the uncomfortable mind, unease. This is regarded as the food for anger. The more this uneasiness, agitation, and lack of peacefulness is there in your mind, then the more food you give to the anger, and the anger becomes stronger and stronger.

Therefore the best way to work on anger is to bring peace to your mind. To let go of your negative thoughts and emotions. Let them come and let them go; don't hold onto them. Because when you see how important it is to not to get angry or not to cling on to this, then you need to work on it at a more subtle level, before it is completely matured.

Therefore, when there is some disturbance in you, some kind of unhappiness or something is not right, then you need to work on that; because when it is small, then it is easy to work on it. Therefore you try to sort out things, you try to reason with it, you try to let your mind be in peace, through meditation, through contemplation, through understanding, through whatever way we can. So therefore this is important, *yid mé dewa*, the uneasiness in the mind, thinking that, "Oh, this is happened!" Remaining your mind, dwelling your mind on all the things that happened or going to happen, too much, you know, dwelling on this mind. That's the source of this anger, the food for the anger.

So that's the understanding. Sometimes we forget the priority. So for a small thing, we react for it much stronger and worse and unnecessarily than for that thing.

So come what may, I'll never harm
My cheerful happiness of mind.
Depression never brings me what I want;
My virtue will be warped and marred by it. (9)

So I make a decision, saying that whatever may come, I will not let my cheerful mind go away. I will not let my cheerfulness and joy be disturbed because if I get, nothing what I get that I don't want or nothing what I don't get that I want, is not worthwhile to make me become angry and keep that anger. If I see that, then I can make this decision that, you know, because when I get depressed, when I get angry, when I keep this anger, that never brings what I want and why I, originally why I got angry is because I don't have, I am not getting what I want, but now if I get angry it gives more what I don't want which is suffering, which is hatred, which is, so therefore if I keep that one then not only that I become depressed, I become unhappy but all my virtues, all my good things, all my positive things will slowly lost, marred, warped.

If there is a remedy when trouble strikes,
What reason is there for despondency?
And if there is no help for it,
What use is there in being sad? (10)

This is my favorite stanza. If there is something you can do *when trouble strikes*, then there is no need to worry. And if there is nothing you can do, then there is no use worrying.

The main cause of getting angry is either getting something you don't want, or not getting something that you do want. So here Shantideva says that rather than getting angry, you can look at the situation and see if what is happening can be changed or not. If it can be changed, then you don't need to get angry, you don't need to get worried, you don't need to get unhappy. You just have to go and do it. Then after you have changed the situation, it's finished, and there is no need to be unhappy about it.

On the other hand, if you can't do anything about the situation, then it's useless to worry about it, or be angry or unhappy. In this case, it's better to concentrate on something else. Because worrying or becoming angry and unhappy about something that you can not change is just torturing yourself. And most of the time, there is something else you can do. So why should you get stuck and suffer just on that point?

I first heard this when I was about nine years old, and this really helped me to work on my anger. When I was a small child, I was really a very angry person. Really angry! I didn't see anything but red. I used to fight with bigger boys and go completely crazy. I beat them with my fists, I beat them with my foot, I beat them with my head. I would jump up and bite them with my teeth! When you get angry, you become very strong. So I beat lots of boys! I would get so angry at someone, that I wanted to crush their head with a big stone!

But then slowly, somehow, I changed. I became what they called like cow dung. What's cow dung like? It's this substance that is completely soft and mushy. It goes plump, plump. [It can't hurt anything.]

In Tibet, bravery is regarded as the number one quality. Intelligence is also valued, but bravery is the most important. Tibetan people want their boys especially to be very brave. And if they fight, people like it. So when a child is born, especially a boy, the first time you give meat, you give a piece of wild yak's heart. They gave me this to me also. But in my case, it didn't work!

So this stanza is very important to remember. You should remind yourself over and over again: when problems come, if it can be changed, there is no need to worry; if it cannot be changed, there is also no use worrying.

II. Cultivating patience

This section has two parts: A) The objects of patience; B) Meditating on patience.

II.A. Identifying the objects of patience

Pain, humiliation, insults or rebukes—
 We do not want them.
 Either for ourselves or those we love.
 For those we do not like, it's quite the opposite. (11)

Here, Shantideva lists the different causes for anger to arise. Generally speaking, we feel happy when good things happen to us or our friends, and we feel unhappy and become angry when bad things happen to us. And then it's the opposite for our enemies: we feel angry when good things happen to our enemies, and happy when bad things happen to them.

Khenpo Kunpal says that we can identify seventy-two causes of anger. The chart below shows twenty-four causes of anger to arise in the present:

<i>Twelve causes of getting what I don't want</i>	
Four causes relating to myself	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Someone speaks to me with harsh words 2. Someone slanders me behind my back 3. Someone insults me 4. Someone causes me pain
Four causes relating to my teachers, friends, or relatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Someone speaks to my friends with harsh words 6. Someone slanders my friends behind their back 7. Someone insults my friends 8. Someone causes my friends pain
Four causes of doing the opposite to my enemies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Someone speaks to my enemy with kind words 10. Someone spreads praise for the good qualities of my enemy 11. Someone gives respect to my enemy 12. Someone helps my enemy to avoid pain
<i>Twelve causes of not getting what I do want</i>	
Four causes relating to myself	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Someone obstructs other people from saying nice things to me 2. Someone obstructs me from getting respect 3. Someone does not say nice things about me 4. Someone obstructs me from having pleasure
Four causes relating to my teachers, friends, and relatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Someone obstructs other people from saying nice things about my friends 6. Someone obstructs my friends from getting respect 7. Someone does not say nice things about my friends 8. Someone obstructs my friends from having pleasure
Four causes of doing the opposite to my enemies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Someone obstructs other people from saying negative things about my enemy 10. Someone obstructs my enemy from getting a bad name 11. Someone says nice things about my enemy 12. Someone obstructs my enemy from having pain

These twenty-four causes can arise in the past, in the present, or in the future. Therefore, twenty-four causes multiplied by three becomes seventy-two causes of anger to arise, or seventy-two objects of patience.

II.B Meditating on patience

This section has two parts: 1) Cultivating patience when we get something we don't want; 2) Cultivating patience when don't get something that we want.

II.B.1 Cultivating patience when we get something we don't want

This section has four parts:

1. Patience towards one's own suffering.
2. Patience when one is insulted.
3. Patience when unwanted events occur to my friends.
4. Patience when good things happen to one's enemy.

II.B.1.1 Patience towards one's own suffering

This section is about how to cultivate patience towards your own suffering and pain. This section has three parts:

- a) The patience of accepting the suffering and pain.
- b) The patience that comes from understanding the ultimate reality of things.
- c) The patience of not reacting negatively when one is harmed.

II.B.1.1.a The patience of accepting the suffering

This section is about how to accept suffering, how to react in the right way when painful things happen. This is an important point, because if I can understand or work on this point, then I can also work the patience that comes from understanding the ultimate nature of things, and the patience of not reacting negatively when one is harmed.

The cause of happiness comes rarely.
And many are the seeds of suffering!
But if I have no pain, I'll never long for freedom;
Therefore, O my mind, be steadfast! (12)

Here we are looking at our situation now, and saying that in my current samsaric state of mind, there are so many causes of pain and suffering, and there are not many causes of happiness. We accept that in our current situation, there are new problems arising all the time, and we are prepared to face them. We understand that when one problem is solved, it does not mean the end of all problems. When second problem is solved, it does not mean the end of all problems.

As we discussed, as long as we react to things with attachment and aversion, as long as we run after what we want and we run away from what we don't want, then we will keep on suffering. Because as long as we have this feeling of *want*—wanting to get something—then there is always the feeling of not getting what we want. We never get what we want, because if you have already got it, that's not what you want, that is what you have. *And what you want is always something that you don't have.*

So we always have this problem of not getting what we want. And then whatever we have, we will eventually lose. Nothing is permanent. Everything changes. And even if we don't lose it, we have the fear of losing it. As long as we have this fear of not wanting to lose it, there is a problem.

Thus, as long as we have this samsaric state of mind, we will keep on having these problems. If you don't understand this, then you will become more and more agitated. Because whenever you have a problem, you will wish very strongly that this is the problem will go away or be solved somehow, and you think, "After this problem is solved, then I will relax and go to the beach and lie in the sun and have a nice time." But it doesn't happen like that, because there is always another problem.

Just developing this understanding is itself a way of dealing with suffering. Just not falling into the trap of thinking that after I solve this problem, then there will be no more trouble. Because we now understand that the problems will come and the problems will go. This is samsara. So if we can relax in that, if we can say, “This is samsara. Problems will come, and problems will go. In spite of this we have to find peace. We have to enjoy our life, do something that is purposeful and good.”

Example of the monk with the terang-friend

It’s a mistake to think that first I will finish all my problems, and only then will I practice Dharma. For example, there is a story about a man who had a friend that was a *terang*—a *terang* is a kind of spirit in Tibetan legends. And the terang gave him whatever he wanted. And the man said to the terang, “You have provided me with whatever I wanted, so I am very happy. But before I die, I must practice dharma to prepare for my death. So please tell me when I am nearing my death, so that I can devote my remaining time to dharma practice.” And the terang agreed.

Then many years later, the terang come to the man and said, “Do you know that you have white hair on your head.” And the man replied, “Of course I know that I have white hair on my head. I am growing older, aren’t I?”

Then after a few more years, the terang returned and said, “Do you know that your teeth are falling out?” And the man said, “What a stupid thing to say! Of course I know that my teeth are falling out. They are my teeth, aren’t they?”

Then after a few more years, the terang returned and said, “You are going to die tomorrow.” And the man said, “What? I asked you to warn me a long time before, so that I could really practice dharma and be prepared. Why didn’t you warn me?”

And the terang replied, “I warned you twice. I told you your hair is turning white, and you said you knew this. I told you that you teeth are falling out, and you said that you knew this too.”

Therefore, it’s not that now everything is well... When we understand this, then as long as we remain in samara, we have these samsaric problems coming. If we want to remain in samsara, we have to be ready to accept that.

Taking suffering as an instruction

This understanding does two things. Although the suffering and pain does not have anything good in it, this should make us realize that we should work on freeing ourselves from the samsaric state of mind. It’s a reminder. Every time we have a problem or painful state, we should take it as a gray hair, a falling tooth, a reminder that we should work basically on our samsaric state of mind.

In this way, we take the suffering as an instruction or teaching—not as something totally negative. And something that will always happen if we have this state of mind. As it says *I have no pain I will never long for freedom. Therefore o, my mind be steadfast.* When we experience suffering or pain, we have to look at it as a reminder or an instruction.

[In this way, we take the suffering as] a motivation for renunciation. Renunciation does not mean leaving everything and going to live in a cave. You can go live in a cave and not renounce at all. Renunciation means seeing very deeply that as long as we are in a samsaric state of mind, we will have constant pain and problems and suffering. And then to understand that there is a way out of this, that it is possible to change the situation. And then to decide, “I want to do this.” So renunciation must have these three aspects: seeing the problem, the samsaric state of mind, and seeing the possibility of changing this state, and then genuinely wanting to do that.

If this renunciation is not present, then Dharma practice will not lead to real freedom. In a way, it is not truly Dharma practice, because you are not really working on your mind. When this renunciation is present, then you are really working on your mind, because the samsaric state of mind is the state of mind you have. And by really knowing deeply that, if I’m in that state of mind then there is naturally

there is no escape from having this sense of dissatisfaction, the sense of not getting what I want and the fear of losing what I have. When you see this, you want to change this state of mind.

The Karna folk, devoted to the Goddess,
Endure the meaningless austerities
Of being cut and burned.
Why am I so timid on the path to freedom? (13)

From the Buddhist point of view, it's very important to check your motivation again and again, because you can originally have a good intention and a good motivation and do something, and then in the process you lose the right motivation and change. And then you become very stuck in that. It's very possible. I think that's happening most of the time, very easily. You start something with a very good motivation and very clear ...and then you get involved in it and then your ego comes up and then you are just stuck with your power struggle or just preserving your identity, or fighting for something trivial. This happens very often.

So we have to work on this and if we are working on this, then even if something painful happens, we have to forbear it, saying it is natural, it is all right. Because sometimes people go through so much hardship and pain for nothing. Therefore if other people endure so much trouble and hardship and pain even for nothing, or for very limited purposes, why should I not endure some little problems and things, while I am actually working on this total liberation from the whole state? As it says, *Why am I so timid on the path to freedom?*

There is nothing that does not become easy when you get used to it

There is nothing that does not grow light,
Through habit and familiarity.
Putting up with little cares
I'll train myself to bear with great adversity. (14)

This is a very important statement, which is quoted everywhere. *There is nothing that does not become easy if you get used to it.* If you do something again and again, if you become habituated, it becomes easier and easier. Therefore let me be patient; let me not get disturbed; let me not get angry. When any of these seventy-two problems comes up, let me not become overpowered by anger and hatred and other negative emotions. Because if I let myself fall into this trap of anger, then I lose everything. I suffer more. I get into this negative cycle.

Therefore let me forbear these little problems. Let me take each problem like a mosquito bite. Every time a mosquito bites, it irritates just a little bit, not too much. So you can't be angry and have a grudge of against a mosquito bite. A mosquito bit is never nice. If you live in India, you can't get used to it even after twenty years; but after some time, you stop getting angry, because you realize that getting angry is useless. If you get angry each time a mosquito bites, then you can go mad. So if you have a little bit less mosquitoes, then you feel very happy. That the getting-used-to, step by step.

This is the Buddhist way of practicing. First do something that's more easy, then that becomes a kind of natural. Then you do something a little more difficult. Then that becomes easier also. In this way, you slowly develop.

The main understanding is that if you want to work on something, then you need to work on it slowly, slowly, step by step. Therefore even when the problems that might cause anger come, you will understand it and you will think something like, "All right, let me just not get angry. As long as I am in samsara, there will be things that I *want* that I don't get, and things that I *don't want* that I will get. That happens all the time. So what is so special about this problem?" So let it be. If your mind a kind of sees this way, and can let things go, then you don't get angry.

This is what is meant by *Putting up with little cares, I'll train myself to bear with great adversity*. If I can take care of small problems and not get angry, and then I am used to it, so then maybe even big problems might come and I won't get disturbed too much.

[The immediate cause is when] you see something that should not happen. Then you have two choices: either you get angry or you have compassion. So when you see something that should not happen, which is unjust, which is not right, which is bad, then if you say that, well, this is something that should not happen, something which is very bad, lots of suffering, lots of problems, I wish I could do something to change this. This should not happen, what can I do? Then that's compassion, because it's directed towards the cause. You are not hating anybody. You are not angry at anybody. But you are concerned about the situation. You want to help, you want to change the situation, you want to elevate the situation.

Anger is when you just blame one or more people. Your thoughts are triggered by the seeing something that is not right, but your attention goes to blame someone or some group of people: "These people are really bad. These people need to be punished! They need to be killed! We need to be avenged!" And then you are angry. If you get going like this, then after some time you forget the cause and just get into a battle with these people. That's the difference between reacting with compassion and reacting with anger. Both reactions can come from the same cause.

[Extracted – question on getting irritated]

And do I not already bear with common irritations—
Bites and stings of snakes and flies,
Experiences of hunger and thirst,
And painful rashes on my skin? (15)

Heat and cold, the wind and rain,
Sickness, prison, beatings—
I'll not fret about such things.
To do so only aggravates my trouble. (16)

There are some whose bravery increases
At the site of their own blood,
While some lose all their strength and faint
When it's another's blood they see! (17)

This results from how the mind is set,
In steadfastness or cowardice.
And so I'll scorn all injury,
And hardships I will disregard! (18)

So therefore, to make our mind steadfast and kind of strong and brave so that, I mean if there are little things happening you would kind of be able to overlook and you know... So most of the time, this sadness, disturbance, anger, unhappiness, worries, all this come from, as we know from, when something happens and we completely get involved in this little problem, and then kind of make it too big in our mind you know. If we completely focus on this small problem, then that small problem becomes the all problem. And even this small problem can completely overwhelm us.

What we are trying to say is: let the small problems be small problems. Let us make our heart wide and spacious and big, so that we can see things in perspective. Because if we can't see in perspective, then even a small problem can become huge if we completely focus on that. Then this small thing can make us very sad and depressed and unhappy.

For example, if I look at my hand, it's not very big, relatively speaking. But if I put my hand in front of my eyes, then I can't see anything else. I can't even see the details of my hand properly. It completely blinds me, it's just darkness. But if I take my hand away from my eyes, the hand is still

there, but it is no longer a huge a problem. I can see my hand better, and I can see everything else better too. And now my hand is even useful to do other things.

In the same way, if there is something happening which I don't like, or something that prevents me from getting what I like, if I just completely focus on that one problem then I will become moody and depressed, and let one small problem completely destroy my happiness. It's just like putting your hand in front of your eyes. But if you put the problem into perspective, then the problem may not go away, but it may not become too big a problem. Maybe there are some bad things coming out of it, but there are other possibilities also. Maybe there are some good things that will come out. Maybe even something helpful.

That's why we need to be steadfast and not to be coward, not react with too much fear or worry. [Normally,] when all these seventy-two causes of anger come up we get fear and then we get upset and we panic, then we get angry and then we react in that way.

But then we have to look at what is the worst thing that can happen for us? At worst, maybe we will die. Nothing can be worse than that. But we have to die anyway, one day. So what? [Rinpoche laughs] It's said that within one lifetime, a coward dies hundred times, and a brave man dies just once. If you take this attitude, then there's no need to panic. Because we will all die anyway.

So that is the worst thing that can happen. And most of the time, our problems are not life-threatening. It's just that we are not getting what we want. Most of the problems that make us unhappy are not even serious.

I talk about this problem. I was very shocked so it never went out of my mind. I told this story here before. When I first came to Europe, I was staying in Samye Ling, and a university professor came up to me and said: "I'm about to commit suicide." I said, "Why do you want to commit suicide?" He said, "Because my university didn't allow me to go to America. They didn't allow me to go to America last year, and they didn't allow me to go to America this year also."

I couldn't understand! Why is that so upsetting? If I'm not allowed to go to America, so what? Can't we just go like that? I said: "What is your salary?" He told me, and it was quite a lot—many, many thousand of pounds. So I said, "What don't you go yourself?" He said, "Oh no, no, it's just something different. They should have let me go because I am the senior professor." That really shocked me, such a small thing like. I mean, if you don't go to America what will happen? At the worst you don't go to America. [laugh] So you can go afterwards if you like.

So, it happens like that. If we are stuck, then even small things become too big. Sometimes we can make ourselves completely unhappy and completely devastated just for nothing. Sometimes it becomes a matter of pride, or principle, or whatever. It's not truly important, but we make it very important. We make it so important that we can't really go around. That's why it's saying that you have to see that way.

When sorrows fall upon the wise,
Their minds remain serene and undisturbed.
For in their war against defiled emotion,
Many are the hardships, as in every battle. (19)

A practitioner should try to be like a wise person who remains *serene and undisturbed* even if something not so nice falls on ourselves. Wisdom is knowing that if we panic, it doesn't help. It's no use. The more undisturbed we are, the more we can accept it, the more we forebear it and go through it, the better it is. And when a problem arises, if there's something that we can change, we go and change it. We work on it, we settle it, we get out of it. And if this problem is something we cannot do anything about, so then we cannot do anything about it. So there is no use panicking, no use being afraid, no use being unhappy about it. Better accept it, because there is no other way. Therefore accept it happily. Because the more afraid you become, the more panicky you become, the

more suffering you get out of it. And we don't want suffering, we don't want pain, so therefore better accept it.

If we can do that, then we'll become wise, because we know how to work on our emotions. We are little bit on our control. And we should take it as if our main task is our *war against defiled emotion*. Our main priority to work on our defiled emotions or mind poison that are overpowering us and always giving us trouble, always leading us to more and more suffering and problems. [If we want to throw off this tyranny, we must resist, we must engage, we must wage war. –paraphrase] Anytime we try to achieve something great, that will bring us great benefit, we need to go through some hardships. So if we are trying to win a war, we have to fight many battles and endure many hardship. We don't win a war just doing nothing.

So therefore we should take it as a battle, as something that we are going through, we are working on this. So small hardships will come, but we will not let ourselves succumb to these hardships, to these problems. With this intention, with this kind of motivation, with this kind of mind, then we can take those things, we can look at these problems little bit more logically, with more awareness. And then see that whether this problem can be solved or not. And if we can solve it, then solve it. If we can't solve it, then we let it be. If we can do that, then we don't get completely overpowered by this problem.

Thinking scorn of every pain,
And vanquishing such foes as hatred:
These are exploits of a conquering hero.
The rest is slaying what is dead already! (20)

If we can gain victory over the hatred, then it is real victory. Because this hatred constantly causes us to suffer, much more than any other enemy. Therefore, if we can conquer our hatred, then we are a true hero.

Suffering also has its worth.
Through sorrow, pride is driven out
And pity felt for those who wander in samsara;
Evil is avoided, goodness seems delightful. (21)

We can also look at this way: when something happens which is not so nice, which causes suffering and pain, it also has some good qualities. Because we have this trouble, because we have this problem, then our mind gets kind of affected and then it reminds us that we have to work on this, on the Dharma. We have to get out of this samsaric state of mind if we want really to eradicate the sufferings. So it instigates our renunciation.

It also helps us to work on our pride and arrogance. If we don't have any problems for a long time, we can develop a great arrogance and start to think, "I'm not susceptible to any kind of problems."

These problems also help us to become more understanding and more sympathetic to others sufferings. Because the compassion comes from understanding. The compassion that we don't want suffering for the others basically comes from the understanding that "I don't want suffering". I don't want suffering, therefore I know that others also don't want suffering. So therefore I wish that others also don't suffer. Therefore when you have suffering and problems, if your mind is in the right direction, then it can become a help to generate compassion.

And also it will help you to change your life, your activities. That this kind of problem is coming from negative deeds, coming from letting myself be habituated in these negative emotions, so therefore I should now try to change myself, and do more positive things. So if we have this little bit more understanding of karma, then it will also instigate or help you to do more positive deeds. Therefore they say that the little problems, little sufferings and hardships are also sometimes good to have. When we can look in this way, then you don't get that much negatively affected, that much panicky about these things, so then you can take it in your stride.

II.B.1.1.b The patience that comes from understanding the ultimate reality of things

I am not angry with my bile and other humors—
Fertile source of pain and suffering!
So why should I resent my fellow creatures,
Victims, too, of like conditions? (22)

My bile and other humors refers to different types of illnesses. Here Shantideva is saying that if I get ill, I don't become angry at the illness. So why should I become angry at a living being when they do something to cause me harm?

[We behave as if the illness occurs due to circumstances, but that the person who harms us is acting independent of circumstances.] But Shantideva is saying this is not the case. He says that actually, the person who harms you is no more in control of the situation than the illness is in control. The person who harms you is not acting through free-will, but due to many causes and conditions.

Maybe this person is not consciously acting in a negative way. But even if this person is acting consciously, with a real intention of doing harm, he or she is still not completely free, because he or she is under the control of anger or hatred. And this anger comes not because this person wants it, but due to circumstances.

For though they are unlooked for, undesired,
These ills afflict us all the same.
And likewise, though unwanted and unsought,
Defilements nonetheless are quick to come. (23)

Never thinking, "Now I will be angry,"
People are impulsively caught up in anger,
Irritation, likewise, comes—
Though never plans to be experienced! (24)

Nobody plans to get angry. Nobody says, "I want to be angry, and then I will hurt someone." Somebody harms somebody only either under the power of anger, or greed, or ignorance. Nobody can harm anybody without one of these three poisons.

All these three poisons are in a way the same. Nobody wants them, but they are there. And when the mind poison is there, then the person is put in a situation that they can't avoid; they can't get out of it. And then whenever they act under the influence of the negative emotions, it is neither good for them nor good for others. So it's not just harming us, they are harming themselves too at the same time. If we can develop a deep understanding of this way of thinking, then we can feel sympathy for the person who is doing that, instead of getting really angry.

Every injury whatever,
The whole variety of evil deeds
Is brought about by circumstances.
None is independent, none autonomous. (25)

Everything is interdependent; everything is related; everything is caused by many things. If we understand this, then we understand that everyone is under the influence of their circumstances. No one is completely independent or autonomous. No one acts independently if their circumstances; rather they act under the influence or pressure of these circumstances. Therefore they are almost powerless.

Conditions, once assembled, have no thought
That now they will give rise to some result.
And that which is engendered does not think

That it has been produced by such conditions. (26)

Conditions come together and produce a result. But the conditions don't have thoughts and think, "Now we are coming together. And now we have given rise to this result." Rather, when the conditions come, then the conditions are there. And when the conditions are there, the result is there. When we see like this, which is seeing the interdependent way in which all things arise, then we see that it is not right to blame one person or a few people for whatever is happening.

[Excerpt from unknown text]

"In stanzas 22-26, Shantideva affirms that there is no such thing as an independent agent, i.e., acting in the absence of conditioning factors. Usually it is thought reasonable to resent the hostile behavior of another being, while it is generally recognized that anger against an inanimate object is futile and somehow irrational, since the object in question only harms us under the influence of other forces. But Shantideva argues that this is equally true of animate sources of our suffering. They, too, are impelled by the extrinsic factors of negative emotion. It is as irrational to g-hate a human aggressor, victim in turn of his own defilements, as it is to hate a tree that has been blown over by the wind and has flattened our car. Anger against an enemy cannot be justified, says Shantideva, because ultimately the enemy is both "himself" to blame. The point is repeated in stanza 41.

Of course, there is an obvious objection to this. Even admitting the power of emotion, it seems wrong to place animate and inanimate entities in the same category. A human aggressor, unlike a tree, is after all an accountable agent; and a person's actions cannot be defined simply in terms of other factors—as a mere interplay of impersonal forces. According to this line of reasoning, there must surely exist a proper object of resentment namely the aggressor "himself or, to put it another way, the "self" of the aggressor...if there were a such a thing as an independent, permanent self, temporary emotional states, such as hostility, could never be said to arise in it without denying the self's permanence."

It is not possible for something to be completely independent, even our mind. Because if something is independent, it should be permanent, and *permanent* means that it should not change. Therefore, if there is a time when the mind is not angry and then there is a time that it is angry, that means it has already changed. Therefore that comes out of circumstances. One moment you are not angry, then you are angry: how did this mind change from *not angry* to *angry*? Because of the circumstances. Therefore the state of mind is not independent, it changes due to the circumstances. Therefore the state of mind is created by the circumstances and under the power of the circumstances.

Of course, one of the main circumstances is your own negative emotions, and you allow yourself to be carried away by the negative emotions. Therefore, whenever someone does anything harmful to anybody else, it is because they are under the power of negative emotions, which arise in them because they are still in the samsaric state of mind. Therefore they still suffer, therefore they are constantly in problems, therefore they create negative karma, therefore they will suffer more. Thus when somebody does negative things, they are not an object of our hatred but an object of our concern and compassion.

Of course, developing this type of attitude is not easy. When something does something not so nice, you may still get angry at that moment. But when you think about events from the past, and then take this reasoning and think again and again, maybe it can clear away some of the problems of the past, which is very important. Because if we can keep our mind clean from the past experiences, if we can forgive and we can forget that, then we have the first level of peace. When you don't keep any grudge or hurt feeling from the past, then naturally there is peace. Therefore this is a very important way of reasoning.

The Buddhist way of doing is that we work on it, we think again and again and reason again and again. Then slowly, slowly, if our reasoning is really true, then slowly we'll have to accept it. Maybe we don't want to accept it the first time we hear it. Maybe second time we feel that, "They are just

talking. It's just a dry logic." Dry logic is dry as long as you don't let it come into your system. But when you let it come into your system, then it's no longer dry, it's quite powerful.

Question on the difference between forgiving and suppressing

Student: You said that if we can really forgive, then we can also forget completely. What is the difference between forgiving someone and suppressing your emotions, just pushing it away? What are the criteria to distinguish between the two?

RTR: When you say *suppress*, I think you mean that you don't express the emotion, but you still keep it. You still think that that person did a bad thing. You still think that that person has to be blamed for that. You still keep the all the emotion, you just don't express it outside. You don't shout at the person, you don't become red and blue, but you still keep the whole thing. Suppressing like this is not useful, because then you just don't deal with it, you don't work on it. You just keep it. So when you keep it, sometimes you don't remember about it, but sometimes you remember about it. And maybe you think, "This time it is alright, but next time..." Then, second time..., third time. So that's just keeping.

But when you really *forgive* someone, then you are not keeping it at all. You have the understanding that there's no use in keeping it. So therefore you have cleared your mind. So you are not kind of holding on to the thing, so therefore you can forgive. It's not necessarily maybe completely *forget*. That incident may not be forgotten, but even if when you remember this you don't feel completely bad. I think that's the understanding. But if you can forget, then it's even better. Then you have really forgiven.

II.B.1.1.c The patience of not reacting negatively when one is harmed

And when as victims of defilement,
Beings even cause their own destruction,
Even if compassion does not rise in us,
We can at least refrain from being angry. (38)

Once we have developed an understanding of the interdependent nature of phenomena, then when we see that people who become angry and wish to harm us are actually victims of their own mind poisons, and of the circumstances through which their mind poisons arise. They are victims because this negative state that they have fallen into will bring them nothing but suffering, and can even cause them to destroy themselves.

When we see it like that, then of course it is even more likely that we should have compassion for them. When somebody is suffering, when somebody is in a very difficult situation, then what emotion arises in us? Usually we feel sorry for them, isn't it? Usually we feel sorry for those people who are in very difficult positions. So we should try to feel compassion for those you try to harm us. But even if we cannot feel compassion, at least we should not feel angry with them.

Examining the nature of those that do harm

If those that are like wanton children
Are by nature prone to injure others,
What point is there in being angry—
Like resenting fire for its heat? (39)

Now Shantideva examines the nature of beings who are possessed with anger and other negative emotions. He asks: is it in their nature to harm others, or not? If we say that it is in their nature to harm others, then what is the use of being angry with them. For example, when you put your hand into a fire, you get burned, because it is the nature of the fire to burn. But you don't get angry at the fire because it burns you.

And if their faults are fleeting and contingent,
If living beings are by nature wholesome,
It's likewise senseless to resent them--
As well as be angry at the sky for having clouds! (40)

On the other hand, if you see that the beings are by nature non-harming, but their negative emotional states are caused by circumstances, then when these circumstances arise, they have to harm others, but otherwise not. If that is the case, then there is no need to get angry at these beings, because it's not because of the beings, but their negative emotions which is making it happen like that. Therefore, if we hate these people, it is like hating the sky because there are clouds in it. The cloud is not made by the sky, it's just there, and then comes and goes. In the same way, you can't hate the people because they are angry and cause harm. Because it's the anger which makes them hurt us and hurt themselves too.

Although indeed it is the stick that hurts me,
I am angry at the one who wields it, striking me.
But he is driven and impelled by anger--
So it is his wrath I should resent. (41)

If someone hits me with a stick, then I should hate the stick or hate the anger of the person who struck me. If it is really the agent with which I get hurt that I need to hate, then it is the stick, because the stick is the one that hit me. If I want to go deeper, and I want to get angry at the real source of this, then it is the anger of the person who strikes me which is the real cause.

I it was who in the past
Did harm to beings such as these.
And so, when others do me mischief,
It is only just that they should injure me. (42)

When others harm me, it's just a continuation of the cycle of anger and negativity. I do something negative, then that causes another negative, and that causes another negative, and then it returns to me. So if you need to really hate anything, you should hate the anger. You should hate the anger in the other person's mind, and also in your mind, because it is the anger in your mind that might have caused it from the beginning.

Their weapons and my body—
Both are causes of my suffering!
They their weapons drew, while I held out my body.
Who then is more worthy of my anger? (43)

It's not just the weapon or the stick in the hand of the others that is the only source of the problem, but also my body—my body which is very sensitive, very fragile, is also the cause of my suffering. So, *who then is more worthy of my anger?*

This human form is like a running sore;
Merely touched, it cannot stand the pain!
I'm the one who clings to it with blind attachment;
Who should I resent when pain occurs? (44)

The more attached I am to my body, the more painful it is when it is harmed. [The main point of these verses is that] everything that happens has many different causes. So if I get hurt by somebody, it is not just that one person that is the cause, but also all these factors coming together: the hatred in the person, all the causes that made him angry, and the stick that is in his hand, the body that I have, the sensitivity that I have, the attachment that I have, and many other circumstances. When all these causes and conditions come together, then a certain result is produced.

Therefore it's not right to blame everything on one person. As we said earlier, from the Buddhist point of view, if something happens which is not right, and if you just blame one thing or one person, then you get angry; but if you see the whole situation and want to change the whole situation, then the compassion arises.

Here we are saying that I am a victim, and my enemy who is harming me is also a victim; so everybody is a victim of the circumstances. And the main cause of these circumstances is these mind poisons. So therefore only thing we can do about it is to try to reduce these mind poisons. Then everybody will be much better off.

So if we want to make sure that this problem doesn't continue, that is doesn't snowball and become worse, then we should do something with our anger. Otherwise, if somebody hurt me, and I get angry, and I hurt back, and he gets more angry, and he strikes back and then I get more angry and I kill him. Then his people become very angry and they kill me, and my people get more angry, and they kill many of them, that's how the wars start. Isn't it? And if this continues, then there is no end to it, and the war never stops. So if we want to make an end to it, we have to make an end to our anger. That's the only way to break the cycle.

We who are like senseless children
Shrink from our suffering, but love its causes.
We hurt ourselves; our pain is self-inflicted!
Why should *others* be the object of our anger? (45)

We don't want suffering, but then we do what causes the suffering. The cause of the suffering is negative action, negative emotions. So we don't want to do anything about our negative emotions, our negative actions, but we don't want the result of these negative actions. Therefore we don't understand the cause and effect. If we want to really do something about our suffering, then we should also know what are the causes of this suffering and then work on that.

Otherwise it's like *our pain is self-inflicted*; we hurt ourselves, because we do negative things, we inculcate and cling to the negative emotions such as anger. We keep more and more anger and then we get more and more suffering. And then in trying to get rid of this suffering, we try to inflict harm on others. But that doesn't help us in anyway. That just makes us suffer more. Therefore, why should others be the object of our anger?

If we develop this understanding, then maybe we can reduce our anger. At first, it may be difficult to think and react this way, especially on the level of experience. But then when we look at it more closely, again and again, I think you can see the logic more and more clearly. Because we want something that is good for ourselves, and good for others, if everything goes well. But we want something good for ourselves.

So all this logic that we are going through is to say that getting angry brings nothing good for ourselves; it only brings suffering and pain for ourselves as well as others. It creates much *more* causes of problems and anger and suffering for *both* ourselves and others. Therefore if there is anything that we really want to get rid of and really want to get angry at—it's the anger and negative emotions itself. When we understand that strongly, then we at least have an understanding basis.

I think this understanding basis is very important, because on this understanding basis then we can slowly work. It may not happen that as soon as we have a certain understanding, then we never get angry. That's not possible. We will still get angry when the right kind of stimulation happens, no? We get angry. But when we get angry, then if in the next moment we remember, then it becomes easier to let go. And then when you can let go once or twice, then maybe you can become more confident that it's much better for us and everyone if we can let go.

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! (46)

This negative experience that I am having is actually my own doing, because it is brought about by my own negative karma. Even the hell realm is my own negative emotion. As Buddha said again and again, the hell realm is not something that is created by somebody else; it's created by my own negative mind. It is my anger that creates the hell realm.

For example I have a friend who is a psychiatrist, and he was telling me that there are some people who get this what you call it, this very deep paranoia in which you feel that everybody is your enemy. And you sometimes say that I am being chased by the CIA the KGB. And then you say that no there is no KGB, and then you can't convince this person because he actually sees KGB, and he hears the voices and he sees people coming with the rifles, or pistols. So whatever you say can't convince.

And he says that more recently they have found out that the causes of this is that when you project too much of your anger, then it becomes like that. So that's how the hell realm is created: when you project your anger and hatred too much, then everything becomes like a burning ground. Everybody has weapons. In the description of some hell realms, it is said that whatever you put your hand on becomes a weapon, because it's hurting. So all these things are created by our mind. Mind means this negative state.

Those who harm me come against me,
Summoned by my evil karma.
But they will be the ones who go to hell,
And so it is myself who bring *their* ruin. (47)

If we look this from yet another angle: if I am harmed by someone, it's because of my negative karma. But, because they harmed me, they will get the negative result; *they will be the ones who go to hell*. So it is me who is actually harming them, because it's my karma who is making them do this action that will cause them to go to hell. So I am the cause of their problem! Therefore when somebody harms you, then you should think, "Oh, I have done a bad thing to this person." [Laughter] Maybe that's not necessary, but...

Because of them, and through the exercise of patience,
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. (48)

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? (49)

For if a patient quality of mind
Is mine, I shall avoid the pains of hell.
But though indeed I save myself,
What of my foes, what fate's in store for them? (50)

If I repay them harm for harm,
Indeed they'll not be saved thereby;
And all my noble actions will be spoiled,
Austerity of patience brought to nothing. (51)

If I can maintain the right attitude when I am harmed, then *many sins are cleansed and purified*. If I meditate on patience, if I don't become angry, then this situation gives me the opportunity to purify my negative karma. So in a way that incident of somebody harming me has been good for me, because it was a great chance for me to practice patience. But it is not good for the person harmed

me; because of me, they got angry and committed negative actions. Now these negative actions will cause them a negative result. So it's all bad for them. *Therefore I am their tormentor.*

So if you see that way, you cannot get angry with your enemies. Therefore the best thing is that I try to be patient, and then at least stop the snowballing, stop this constant continuation of hatred. And if I do that, then maybe slowly, because of not my reacting negatively, their reaction could change, so therefore it comes to a good ending.

This is I think something which happens all the time. Many times, due to many misunderstandings, people sometimes feel that they are your enemy or something like that, and then they try to do negative things towards you. In this case, you don't need to allow yourself to be harmed, but if you don't harm back, then the cycle of anger can end right there. Because everything has to stop by somebody. The Ping-Pong has to be stopped by somebody. Somebody has to take off. So if somebody stops, then the whole thing stops.

I think whoever can stop it first gets the most out of it, because then you really did something with your anger. You worked on your anger. You can think, "I did it! I stopped it!" It's not defeat.

From the Buddhist point of view, not reacting with anger to something negative, is not cowardice, it is more strength. It's not defeat, but really wisdom. Mahatma Gandhi used to say: "When somebody is angry and does something negative, and then you get angry and do something negative, that's not greatness. Anybody can do that. But if somebody is angry and causes you harm, and then you resist that without becoming angry, *that's* bravery." That's really courage. And Gandhi showed this practically.

Question: Suppose that I'm attacked, and immediately I realize that both the attacker and myself are the victims of samsara and so I don't get angry; I remain calm, I have compassion, immediately I forgive. But at the same time, they keep on hitting me. They rob me, maybe they do something even worse. So I take everything onto myself. But that doesn't suit me.

Rinpoche: When we talk about not getting angry, we are not saying that we should let people hurt us. We should not let people hurt us if we can help it. Of course, not! Because if we let people hurt us, that is not good for us. And if we believe in karma, then it's also not good for the person who is hurting us. Therefore, the best thing to do is to prevent ourselves from getting hurt. So in your example, maybe the best way is to run away! Or maybe if you know Aikido or something like that, you can use that. I think it's alright. But the main thing is to not keep this anger, because that's not good for you and not good for anybody. If you can forgive, it's better for you and for everyone. Even if you can't forgive instantly, if you can forgive slowly, over time, then that is also good.

II.B.1.2 Patience when one is insulted

What reason do I have for resentment?

Scorn and hostile words,
And comments that I do not like to hear—
My body is not harmed by them.
What reason do you have, O mind, for your resentment? (53)

Contempt and scorn that others show me
Now and in my future lives—
Since none of it can bite and swallow me,
Why is it that I'm so averse to it? (54)

Perhaps I turn from it because
It hinders me from having what I want.
But all my property I'll leave behind,

While sins will keep me steady company. (55)

Here Shantideva is saying that I don't want to be insulted, because if I am insulted, if my bad name is spread, then I will not get what I want. I want to be important, I want to be famous, I want to be known. I want to be liked. And if people insult me and say bad things about me, this will not happen. I won't get what I want and I get angry.

But then, if you get angry and keep the anger, that will also not get you what you want. Because originally what we want is peace of mind and happiness. Why do I want to feel important? Why do I want to people like me? Because I feel that when I feel important and people like me then I will become happy. Then I will feel good. But if I keep this anger, then this is not going to make me feel good. It's doing the opposite. The more I get angry, the more negative things I do to others. And as it says, *all my property I'll leave behind, while sins will keep me steady company*. And then that will make me worse. And then even their allegations about you, would actually become more or less true.

It is actually very important how we react at what the people say. This is something that everyone needs to learn. Because we often feel hurt because somebody says something or somebody does something which we think is against us, and most of the time it is not really against us. Often the person who we feel has offended us is just doing something thinking about himself or herself.

When this person is doing something, saying "I'm just rushing". And I didn't look here or there. It's just I am rushing, thinking about me and my own problem. And I didn't look here or there. But the person here said that "O, he didn't want to acknowledge me, he didn't want to, you know...".

For example, I had an incident once that illustrated this very clearly. Some time ago I was in Bodhgaya and a Western couple that I knew came and I met them there. In Bodhgaya there are thousands of people, and I was leaving the next day and I didn't see them again. Then when I met the same couple again a few months later, the woman was quite concerned.

"Did I annoy you?" she asked.

"What?" I said.

"Are you angry with me?"

"No, why?"

"Because you did not shake hands with me last time".

"What?"

I forgot to shake hands with her when I met them in Bodhgaya. It seems that I shook hands with the man and didn't shake hands with the lady. And she said that she thought about it all night and didn't get any sleep. She was thinking, "Why is he angry with me?"

These kind of things happen all the time. We usually just go around thinking about ourselves and our problems. Then somebody else thinks that we are doing something against them. Or vice versa. That's how we often get hurt. Therefore we have to be very broad minded and try not to always see things as being against us.

Better to die today than live a long and evil life

Better far for me to die today,
Than live a long and evil life.
However great may be my length of days,
The pain of dying will be all the same. (56)

Here Shantideva says that whatever may happen, I should not live a life in which I allow myself to be consumed with hatred and anger. If I allow this to happen, I will have completely wasted my life. Because keeping the anger and being under its control will destroy myself and others, not only now,

but for all the future. That's the worst thing that I can do. I would rather die than let this happen. Everybody has to die anyway, and it is better to die in a positive way.

One man dreams he lives a hundred years
Of happiness, but then he wakes.
Another dreams an instant's joy,
But then he, likewise, wakes. (57)

And when they wake, the happiness of both
Is finished, never to return.
Likewise, when the hour of death comes round,
Our lives are over, whether brief or long. (58)

Though we be rich in worldly goods,
Delighting in our wealth for many years,
Despoiled and stripped as though by thieves,
We must go naked and with empty hands. (59)

So whatever happens in this life, at the end everything changes, and we must leave behind whatever we have gained. Because everybody dies, and when you die you cannot take anything with you. So you might think, "Well, because of these people, I didn't get this great position, and because of this I didn't get this much money, so now I am angry." But no money is worth that much disturbance in our mind. Even if you have all the money of the whole world, one day you will die and then you can take nothing with you. It is as if we *go naked and with empty hands*.

There is one thing that goes with us, and that is our state of mind. If there is continuation, that continuation will be in the state of mind. We can see very clearly, that when we die we cannot carry our worldly possessions with us.

Whether we die with a peaceful mind or with an agitated mind depends on our practice now, our training now, our exercise now, the attitude and the life that we have now. And circumstances we try to create now.

Perhaps we'll claim that by our wealth we live,
And living, gather merit, dissipating evil.
But if we're ruthless for the sake of gain,
It's evil we will gather, dissipating merit! (60)

We might say that we have to gather lots of wealth, and then by that we'll make good things and get married and things like that. But positive deeds are not necessarily done by the wealth, they are done by our mind. So if you gather wealth in a positive way, it's fine. But if try to gather wealth in a negative way, then *it's evil we will gather, dissipating merit*. The merit is not increased, but decreased for us.

What use then will our lives have been
When all is so degenerate and spoiled?
What use is there in living such a life
When evil is the only consequence? (61)

From the Buddhist point of view, karma means the state of mind, how your mind is habituated, familiarized. The more positive it is, the more positive karma, the more negative it is, the more negative karma. So what you will become in the future, is how you develop that. That's the positive karma and the negative karma, that's the strongest. What you actually do with the body and the speech is a reflection of that. If your mind is pure and if your mind is compassionate, generous, then your body will just follow that order, will reflect that. And if your mind is the other way, then your body will reflect that.

If, when others slander us, we claim
Our anger is because they harm themselves,
How is it we do not resent
Their slander when it is aimed at someone else? (62)

If we bear with such antipathy,
Remarking that it's due to other factors,
Why are we impatient when they slander us?
Emotion after all, has been the cause of it. (63)

[When other people say unpleasant things about us, it is due to the arising of negative emotions, and they have not control over it. Therefore we ought to bear with it. –Padmakara]

II.B.1.3 Patience when unwanted events occur to one's friends

Even those who vilify and undermine
The sacred Doctrine, images and stupas
Are not the proper objects of our anger;
The buddhas are themselves untouched thereby. (64)

Now, you might think that I should not get angry about something negative done to me, but if precious objects such as dharma texts or stupas or holy images are destroyed, then I should get really angry. But Shantideva says we should not get angry if these precious objects are harmed. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't do something to try to protect these things; but there is no need to get angry or hold a grudge in this case. Even if sacred objects are destroyed, it's not the Buddhas that are harmed, it's just the objects that are harmed. And whoever does such a negative thing will accumulate tremendous negative karma; so if anything, than we should have great compassion for them.

And even if our teachers, relatives, and friends
Are now the object of aggression,
All derives from factors just explained,
This we should perceive, and curb our wrath. (65)

If something negative happens to our teachers, relatives, friends, or family, it's very easy for us to get angry and then become violent and even keep the hatred and revenge going. But Shantideva says that this is not right either.

First we should try to do whatever we can to prevent any negative things from happening to ourselves and those we care about. But when negative events do arise, we should remember that these events are caused by many causes and conditions, and we should not blame on thing or one person.

Therefore if something has already happened, then we cannot do anything about it. Then we should try to get rid of our hatred and feeling of revenge. If it has not happened, and we can do something to prevent from that, then we should try to do that. Because the keeping revenge and the keeping of the act and hatred in the heart, is not going to help anybody. Therefore as much as possible, try not to keep negative thoughts and emotions in our mind, but try to do something beneficial.

If something negative happened to your friends or family, then instead of getting angry and doing something destructive towards those who supposedly caused the problem, try to do something to benefit the ones that you care about. Instead of doing something negative or harming someone, do something positive.

For example, if someone you know is harmed, you might want to go and buy a gun and shoot the person who harmed them. But it would be far better to help the person who was harmed, and try to help them be more secure in the future, to help create a better situation for them. It is always positive

to give a better security and better education. That is something more fruitful and more meaningful than leaving them to suffer and going off trying to shoot somebody.

Beings suffer injury alike
From lifeless things as well as living beings;
So why be angry only with the latter?
Rather than let us simply bear with harm. (66)

When naturally calamities occur, and we or those we care about are harmed, we typically don't get angry. Rather we try to do something to improve the situation, to bring normalcy and health. But if the harm seems to be caused by other beings, then we get angry, and instead of trying to improve the situation, we go and try to destroy the people we are angry at. Shantideva challenges this logic, and says whether the harm comes from nature or other beings, *why be angry?* Let us simply deal with the situation.

Some do evil things because of ignorance,
Some respond with anger, being ignorant.
Which of them is faultless in his acts?
To whom shall error be attributed? (67)

Rather, why did I do evil in the past,
That cause me harm at other's hands?
All that happens is the fruit of karma;
Why then should I now be angry? (68)

If I believe in the cause and effect, then if I experience something negative, then I should accept that it comes from my own past negative karma. Therefore why should I be angry with this particular person or persons?

This I see and therefore, come what may
I'll hold fast to the virtuous path
And foster in the hearts of all
The joy of mutual love (69)

[When I understand that negative experiences are a ripening of my own karma,] then I find that there is no purpose getting angry or holding that hatred for ourselves and for other beings. The more you hold onto the anger, the more destruction comes out of it: self-destruction as well as destruction for the others.

Seeing this, I will make this commitment: whatever may come, I will hold onto this understanding and this action—that I will not hold on to the anger anymore. Because it's completely senseless, it's completely useless, it is completely destructive, it's completely harmful to everyone: the one who holds the anger as well as those to whom it is directed. Therefore from now onwards, I will do everything possible, within my ability, to foster love and kindness—the mutual love to bring people together, to bring harmony in the people, to bring peace in my own mind. This is the only thing which is worthwhile, that is positive, really doing good to myself and to others.

As I said in the beginning, as a human being who has such great freedom and liberty and power, we need to do something that is good for ourselves and others. One of the main things that we can do is to bring peace and harmony to ourselves and others. Here we make a decision to do this.

It is very important, whether it is working on the positive things or working on the negative things, to make the decision, to decide. You have to make this decision for yourself. Nobody else can decide for you. Only you can decide this sort of thing. For myself, I know that if I really want to do something, first I decide, and then I will do.

As I have mentioned, sometimes people come to me and say: “Well, I have been trying to stop smoking, but I could not.” Or, “I’ve been trying to stop drinking, but I can not.” I often respond by saying: “Why do you try? You just do it!” Because if you try, you will never succeed. We have to make the decision. Those people who come and say that: “Now I’ve decided, I am not going to do this any more, they don’t do it any more. Those people who say, “I will try!” they will never succeed. Because they have not decided. Their state of mind is: “May be I can? Maybe I cannot?”

As long as you have these two minds, that means “not possible”, because you have not taken the real decision. It’s the same in any other decision. When you make a real decision, then it is much more likely that you will do it. That’s why all the time that you are here and there and everywhere. And making the decision, it is also the meaning of taking the vows, taking the precepts, “This is what I want to do. This is what I am going to do, and then I make this decision and make it kind of public. This is what I have decided.” So it makes it clear.

It is not a question of saying, “Did I really take this decision or did I not?” Sometimes we forget, but when we make this myself and then say it to somebody else, then you cannot really say, “I forget.”

For when a building is ablaze
And flames leap out from house to house,
The wise course is to take and fling away
The straw and anything that spreads the fire. (70)

In fear that merit might be all consumed,
We should at once cast far away
Our mind’s attachments:
Tinder for the fiery flames of hate. (71)

Is not a man relieved when, thought condemned to death,
He’s freed, his hand cut off in ransom for his life?
Enduring likewise merely human ills,
Am I not happy to avoid the pains of hell? (72)

If pains of even this, my present life,
Are now beyond my strength to bear,
Why do I not overthrow my anger,
Cause of future sorrows in infernal torment? (73)

For sake of gaining all that I desired,
A thousand times I underwent
The tortures of the realms of hell—
Achieving nothing for myself and others. (74)

All these hardships that we have gone through in order to gain what we want, it is driven by our lust and anger and so on. And it all came to nothing. But we have endured all these hardships almost for nothing. Now I know how to get something that is more tangible, like peace of mind or tranquility—a mind that is not disturbed by the negative thoughts. And that is by getting rid of anger and hatred.

So if that is the case, why should I not get through certain hardships in order to get that? Because if I do that, then I will really have something to show. Then I could say, “Well, I went through certain hardships and now I am peaceful. I have been able to get rid of my anger, my hatred, and my negative habits of holding onto feeling hurt and holding grudges and wanting revenge. I have learned how to forgive!”

Therefore, if you really decide to do that, it is still worth doing even if it is painful, even if you have to endure some hardship. Because that is really doing something good for us, and then by doing something good for us it is also doing something good for others. At least we are stopping from harming ourselves, and because we stop this, we stop ourselves from harming ourselves.

Therefore there is only one thing that can come out of it: that is helping ourselves and helping others. So why not start this? Because the other way failed.

The present aches have nothing to compare with those,
And yet great benefit may come from them.
These troubles may dispel the pain of wanderers—
How could I not rejoice in them? (75)

The aches and pains that I go through by forgiving, by stopping the hatred, by not letting myself to be disturbed when someone obstructs me from getting what I want—they are painful but they are less painful compared to the benefits that I am gaining. Because if I let my mind be disturbed by getting what I don't want, or by not getting what I want, then if I let my anger and all these things fester and grow, that would cause me much more pain and much more trouble than stopping this. Therefore if I am wise I should do that.

And if I do that, not only will I suffer less, but also I will be doing something positive—because now I am practicing patience, and practicing patience is one of the greatest practices of the Buddha. Because it is directly working against anger, which means it is working against harming myself and harming others. Therefore, it is not just something that is good for us, although it is comparatively better for us at the moment—even the pain you get is less by applying this patience—than going into the anger. But not only that, but by doing something even more purposeful: I'm working for the benefit of others and myself, because if I can stop that anger, if I can stop this sequence, then it's a great thing for me and for others.

When you talk about tolerance and things like that, when you talk from the book you talk from an ideal. This should be like this, this should be like this, ideally it should be like this. But when we practice, we don't practice the ideal; we can't be that ideal. So we practice from where we are. At the ground.

We talk about the Bodhisattva; the Bodhisattva is someone who has the wish to really eliminate the suffering of all sentient beings. But at the moment, we are not that strong. We are not great Bodhisattvas, we are beginners. I don't know whether we can call ourselves Bodhisattvas. But even if we want to call ourselves Bodhisattvas, we are not great Bodhisattvas, we are beginners. So, we don't do things that are done by great Bodhisattvas. We just train ourselves, step by step, slowly.

So in practicality, we do small things. For example, Shantideva says here, if you can give without any regret a cup of curry, you give a cup of curry. If you give that, and you have no regret at all, you have no problem, you really don't feel that bad, then you do that. But if you feel bad about it then you don't need to give that. If you have regret, you don't do it. You do whatever is easy to you, at the moment.

You have the intention and the aspiration to do very big things, but you have to know where you are at the moment. So, at the moment you do what is more easy to do. And then when you are used to doing that, then when you have no problem with that, then you can do something little bit more. And then slowly, slowly, you develop you capacity to help others. It's the same with all positive activity. You do first what is not too difficult, but on the right direction. Then you practice this and then this and it becomes your kind of second habitude. Then you do something a little bit more.

Therefore, if you feel that giving this parking place is difficult for you, don't give it. It's all right. But then if it is no problem for you, then give it. In this way, the practice of Dharma should not become a burden. Some people make the practice of compassion and so on too serious. Then it becomes, "Oh compassion!" and people develop aversion to practicing compassion. Because they feel it is too heavy. Because they think they have to feel deep compassion. It is not like that. As a beginner, you cannot be like Avalokiteshvara and have great compassionate. You have to accept that. So you are a little bit compassionate, and then when you become that then naturally, slowly, your capacity increases.

II.B.1.4 Patience when good things happen to one's enemy

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? (76)

When somebody praises someone for doing something positive, they are doing so because they feel pleasure in doing that. Therefore if somebody praises my enemy, why should it hurt me? I'm unhappy because I think that person is my enemy, and if my enemy or competitor gets something good, then that is bad for me.

This is the source of all our envy and jealousy, which actually becomes one of the greatest sources of disturbance of our mind. And this is completely unnecessary! This way of thinking causes so much pain for us. And even if by that pain, there was actually some benefit for ourselves, then it is all right. I'm jealous about something, I'm envious about somebody, and then if really that gives me a good thing, then it is all right. But it does not. Not even it makes me a better person, or better in that field.

Sometimes people say to me, "I understand that jealousy is not good, but you must have competitiveness. If you don't have a competitive urge, then you become lethargic, and then you can't do anything. You never make anything in your life. So therefore you must be very competitive."

You can still be very competitive, but you don't need to be jealous in being competitive. Usually what we do is we just become competitive to the next person that we know. We just try to be a little bit better than this one who is next to me. For example, when I was a child, they used to say that when you run in a race, you should not look back, otherwise you will lose time. While we are looking back, somebody will come in front of you. That is what happens when you try to be too competitive.

We spend most of the time with looking what the next person is doing or not doing. And at the best we become a little bit better than the next person, and at the worst we don't even become that. And that is not a very good way of competing. Because you are just competing mostly with your friend, people in the same community, people in the same family.

Many people in the West have told me that when your brother or sister is born, then you become jealous. And then people take it as almost natural, almost like they have to become jealous. And then I think they raise their children like that, being jealous, which I think is a very bad thing to do. No need to be. When you have these kind of small competitions between brothers and sisters, between families, between relatives, between friends, then you lose the real scope and perspective, and then the competition becomes very small.

Why not compete for excellence? Why not compete for the best? Then you don't have to look only for the next person or within the circle. You want to compete, you want to do the best, the excellence. Then you don't have to be hating, or feeling bad towards somebody who is doing better than you or as good as you or worse than you, or whatever.

It is said that, "There is always enough space at the top. There is only no space at the bottom." If you are really good at something, there is no problem getting jobs. When you are not good, then it is difficult to find a job.

In Buddhism, we talk about positive and negative deeds. What is a negative deed? We define something as negative--a deed or an emotion or whatever—because it brings unhappiness and pain. Whatever brings unhappiness and pain and suffering, that is called *negative*. It is defined by the result. And positive is those emotions, acts, aspirations whatever, which bring more happiness and more well-being.

Therefore this jealousy is regarded as one of the most negative things. So that is why rejoicing is emphasized so much. Because rejoicing is the opposite of jealousy. If somebody has something you

don't have, you make yourself feel good. You make yourself feel happy. And this is very natural if you have the bodhisattva's attitude a little bit. Like I want myself and all the sentient beings get rid of all the troubles, and I want them all to get the positive things. Then it becomes even easier, because it is your prayer or your wish that everybody becomes happy, and you feel "I want to do something about it." So if somebody gets something good without you doing something, it's as if your responsibility, your work is lessened. Somebody gave you a little bit of help: "I will do some of your job."

When we practice rejoicing, then we can be happy and joyful without doing anything ourselves, without needing to get something ourselves. Just being aware of others having good things, we can be happy. So, why not? If others find joy, then I should find it too, because that is the best thing I need.

The pleasure that you gain therefrom
Itself gives rise to stainless happiness.
It's urged on us by all the holy ones
And is the perfect way of winning others. (77)

The pleasure that you gain from rejoicing in other's good fortune gives rise to stainless happiness. It is not stained by anger or disturbed thoughts. *All the holy ones*—the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other great beings—say that to be happy at other's good fortune is a skillful way to gain happiness and joy for yourself. Because somebody has something good happening all the time. So if you can rejoice in the happiness of others, then you can be happy all the time! So why don't you take this attitude and then be a happy person?

Rejoicing is also *the perfect way of winning others*. If you are not jealous or envious, and if you only say good things about other people, and never say anything negative, then most people will like you. On the other hand, if somebody is always complaining and talking bad about other people, then how do we usually react? Do we like somebody who is always talking bad about other people? Or are we more inclined to like somebody who always is talking good about other people?

"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! (78)

When somebody says good things about someone, they say these good things because they are happy. So if you are unhappy because of that, that means you are unhappy that other people are happy. And that is not a good reason. You should try to be happy because other people are happy.

Otherwise, if you really decide that the happiness of others makes you unhappy, then you should never give happiness to anybody. You should not even pay somebody who works for you because they will be happy then. Or you should not do something good for somebody who has done something good to you—because you don't want them to be happy. If you take this attitude, *you will be the loser—both in this life and the next*.

When praise is heaped upon your merits,
You're keen that others should rejoice in them.
But when the compliment is paid to others,
Your joy is ho so slow and grudging. (79)

You want the happiness of beings,
Have wished to be enlightened for their sake.
So why should others irk you when
They find some little pleasure for themselves? (80)

If you truly wish that beings be enlightened,
Venerated by the triple world,

When petty marks of favor come their way,
Why, oh why, are you in torment? (81)

[Why indeed?]

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? (82)

Suppose you have lots of people who are dependent on you, and then somehow some of them get sponsors or support from somewhere else. Some of them win a lottery or something like that, and then your burden is lightened. In this case, you would be happy because your burden is lightened.

If you are a real practitioner, a bodhisattva, then you have invited all the sentient beings to enlightenment. That is the bodhisattva's vow. From now onwards, what I really wish, my real ultimate goal, is not only to make myself enlightened, but to make all sentient beings enlightened too. That is my final goal, so therefore from now onwards, I will train myself step by step, so that I can do that. That's the bodhisattva's attitude and practice.

When this is the case, then you have said, "I am going to help everybody, all the sentient beings." You have not said, "I'm just going to help those who are very nice to me." That is not the bodhisattva's attitude, that is everybody's attitude. Most people want to help those who are nice to them. Even the worst, most evil person, they would also like to help those who are around them.

If you have the real understanding and attitude of a bodhisattva, then if someone has done something to improve their situation, or if someone has made someone else happy, then even if he or she is your enemy, then you should be happy because of that.

If even this you do not want for beings,
How could you want buddhahood for them
And how can anyone have bodhicitta
And resent the good that others have? (83)

If you don't even want somebody to have a little bit of happiness by saying some good things about your enemy, if you don't want even these small, tiny things, then your saying, "I want all sentient beings to attain perfect enlightenment," is just a lie. It is meaningless.

If you have even a little bit of bodhicitta, you cannot resent the good things that anybody gets. The habitual tendency is very strong. We have all these negative habitual tendencies like becoming jealous, becoming envious, and becoming angry.

So this is the way how we try to remind ourselves. We need to remind ourselves again and again. That is the main practice. First we need to little bit revise our attitude, and think it over. That jealousy is a very strong thing. Everybody has it. Jealousy is a combination of attachment and aversion. That you want something for yourself and then there is a kind of danger of not having it, or a danger of losing it, and then you get angry.

Our jealousy often stems from the fear of losing somebody or something that we like. Many times it's very clear that we actually kill our love because of our jealousy. We become too possessive, we become too clinging, we make it so unmovable, we almost strangle somebody. Therefore we need to learn that jealousy is no use, that you cannot keep anybody through jealousy. If I like somebody, that is a good thing; but I can't make somebody like me. If someone doesn't like me, whatever I do, I can't force them. I cannot catch them and spank them and say "You must like me." The more you do it, the worse it becomes.

Although it is not easy, we need to learn that we can't force anything on others. If we understand this deeply, and then we say that I like somebody, I love somebody, but then it is not possible that I can force somebody to love me or like me. The most I can do is to improve my good qualities. Maybe I become a little bit more joyful, a little bit more understanding, a little bit more generous. Maybe then it is more likely that people like me more. That is the only thing I can do, I can't do anything else.

Then if somebody doesn't like me, or did like me but stopped liking me, then I just say, "It is all right," because there is nothing I can do. The worse I feel about it, the worse I torture myself, and the worse maybe I torture the other people also. So therefore this jealousy is something that is not useful to keep.

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? (84)

So this looks at the problem from yet another angle. Suppose someone you know receives a gift, and this makes you unhappy, because you feel that you should have received it. But then you would not have received it anyway. Unless the person who gave the gift likes and respects you, that person would not have given it to you.

So this other person is more likeable, maybe, so he or she received it. But if the other person did not receive it, it would have remained with the person who is the giver. So what does it have to do with me? I would not have received it anyway, because I was not qualified to receive it. So why should I be angry? Why should I be unhappy because somebody received it? If somebody received it, it is good for him. It is good for the giver, and it's good for the receiver. It is more a reason that I should improve myself; if I improve myself, then maybe more people will like me and give me more gifts. Maybe not, but what else to do.

Tell me, why don't you resent yourself,
You who throw your merit, faith
And all your qualities so far away?
Why do you not cultivate the cause of riches? (85)

If somebody is getting something good, and you feel unhappy, [who is to blame?] Maybe the reason why you are not getting any gifts is because you are getting angry at everything. *You who throw your merit, faith and all your qualities so far away.* By becoming unhappy and jealous when something good happens to someone else, you create negative karma which will result in not receiving good things in the future. Not only that, but even in the present moment, when you are unpleasant, when you become angry and unhappy all the time, why should anybody like you? You are very envious, you are very jealous, you are very unhappy about everything that is going on around you. Then why should people be happy about it. You are not giving any cause of happiness to others.

When I give a cause for happiness to others, then others will like me. If we believe in karma, in the law of cause and effect, then we must see our current situation as something that comes from our own past actions. When a negative situation arises, it is the result of our own negative actions in the past.

All the evil you have done
You cheerfully neglect to purify,
And do you further wish to match yourself
With others who have earned their merit? (86)

So if I really want to get rid of these unwanted things coming to me, then I have to purify my karma, and reform my own way of being, and my own way of seeing the world. But that I don't do. I *cheerfully neglect to purify* my karma. This means that not only do I neglect to purify my karma, but I am not at all bothered by my own negligence. In fact, I'm quite comfortable with my own stubborn

stupidity. I am even sort of pleased with myself. And then I go further and try to compete with other people who have done some positive things and *earned their merit*.

You don't need to compete with others. You need to compete with yourself! You need to improve your qualities, and compete with excellence, not with your next-door neighbor.

II.B.2 Cultivating patience when we don't get something we do want

II.B.2.1 Patience towards obstacles that prevent unpleasant things to happen to one's enemy

If unhappiness befalls your enemy,
Why should this be a cause for your rejoicing?
The wishes of your mind alone,
Will not in fact contrive his injury. (87)

Now I'm unhappy because some bad thing that was supposed to happen to my enemy has been obstructed. Now I ask, if I'm unhappy and I wish that it didn't stop [the negative thing on my enemy], would that really make it stop or not? Or make it happen, the negative thing on my enemy, or not? And if you say: "No, my wish doesn't really change anything. It has already stopped." Then you say: why should I just suffer for no reason, getting angry and unhappy. Because that would not help, or harm your enemy, anyway. It has already stopped harming him.

And if your hostile wishes *were* to bring them harm,
Again, what cause of joy is that to you?
"Why, then I should be satisfied!"—are these your thoughts?
Is anything more ruinous than that? (88)

Now you might say, "Well, my wishing a negative thing might somehow help that negative thing fall on my enemy." But even if your negative thoughts could bring them harm, why should you be so happy about it? It doesn't help you if somebody else is harmed. So why should you be so happy?

Then you might say, "Well, it doesn't really help me, but he is my enemy. So therefore if he is harmed, my anger will be quenched, so I feel good. I will feel satisfied." But Shantideva says that there is nothing worse than this—because you are just happy because somebody else is experiencing pain or suffering.

And if you go on doing that—indulging in thoughts of imposing pain and suffering and problems on others, that is the real cause of negative karma. So there can be nothing worse than that. Khenpo Kunpal says that there is nothing more devastating for this life or the next. Because the more negative thoughts you have about others, that much more negativity you create for your self. Your negative thoughts are like a magnet that brings the negative things on you. Wishing harm for others is really breaking the bodhisattva vows. It is considered a root downfall—it is breaking the precept to never give up on sentient beings.

Caught upon the hook, unbearable and sharp,
Cast by the fisherman, my own defilements,
I'll be flung into the cauldrons of the pit,
And surely parboiled by the janitors of hell! (89)

This is a traditional example of the fish caught on a hook and cooked in a frying pan. In this example, your negative thoughts, such as wishing harm on someone, are like the fisherman's hook—it is very sharp. You are like the fish who bites the hook and gets caught on it. Then once you have been caught, where do you go? Into the frying pan, which represents the hell realms.

So if you really develop this kind of personality, this state of mind, then you create the real causes and conditions for being born in the hell realm. So therefore these are the worst kind of thoughts,

because they bring only harm to yourself and others. So if this is the case, then isn't this something that you should give up?

Story about karma

A man is planning a pilgrimage to Lhasa, and before he leaves, he asks a trusted friend to hold some gold-dust that he has saved, saying: "Please keep this gold with you, and if I don't return, then you use it according to my instructions. And if I return, please return it to me." And the friend agrees.

Then the man goes on his pilgrimage, and after one or two years he comes back and he says: "Can I have my gold back?"

Now his friend is not a very nice person, so he says: "All right, wait here. I have kept it exactly as you have given me." So the friend brings the pouch that had contained the gold dust, and he gives it to the man. So he opens this and he finds no gold, but just sand and stones. So he says: "There is no gold, just sand and stones."

And his friend says: "Oh, how terrible! We friends, we are so unfortunate. What kind of bad karma we must have that the gold turns into the dust?" The pilgrim is quiet for a moment, and then he says, "Oh yeah, if that is our karma, that is our karma." And then goes away.

Then one day the man returns and says, "I have prepared some very nice food. Can I take your child away for a picnic?" And the friend says: "Why not?" So he takes his child away. And then in the evening he comes back with a monkey, and he cries: "We two friends, there can be no one more unfortunate than us! My gold turned into sand and now your child has turned into this monkey!"

So his friend says: "No, my child cannot turn into a monkey."

"But if gold can turn into sand, why not?"

And then he says: "No, your gold hasn't turned into sand, it's here."

"In that case, maybe your child is also there, maybe I can do something about it."

And then he takes the gold and he gives the child back.

From Lerab Ling, 02 July 1998, 17.00

II.B.2.2 Patience towards obstacles that prevent pleasant things to happen to ourselves and our friends

The rigmarole of praise and fame
Serves not to increase merit or one's span of life,
Bestowing neither health nor strength
And nothing for the body's ease. (90)

Of all these things that we want that we don't get, our good name and fame are very important. We are so attached to our name and fame, our personal importance. This attachment can be much stronger than our attachment to material things. Sometimes people will spend everything they have in order to prevent their good name from being tarnished. There are lots of people who will even fight a duel and risk being killed in order to keep their name or reputation.

But if you look at it more logically, it is really not that important. No matter how famous we become, after some time we are forgotten. And even if we are not forgotten, what does it matter? What good will this fame do for me after I am dead. So if I die and nobody remembers me, so what?

When we really look at it, things change, and then people change, and then you are remembered for a time, and then forgotten. You might be remembered by a few people, and they die also, then it's forgotten. So why go through so much trouble for sake of praise or fame? If you get it without any

effort, then it is all right. But why go through so much trouble, such as waging a war, or causing so much trouble to others and to yourself, in order to keep a name?

The main thing is here that if you do something, it should be something that is helpful and that really is practically good for yourself and others. So we need to revise this attitude, because sometimes our pride, our circumstantial, our educational achievements create such a strong impact on us that we think that that is the most important thing. Then if somebody says a bad thing against me, I get angry, and can even kill him. I think "He has offended my name, now I must fight a duel with him!"

If I am wise in what is good for me,
I'll ask what benefit these bring.
For if it's entertainment I desire,
I might as well resort to alcohol and cards! (91)

We lose our lives, our wealth we squander,
All for reputation's sake.
What use are words, and whom will they delight
When we are dead and in our graves? (92)

So here we examine this attachment to our good name. If you say that when people say good things about me, at that moment I feel nice, then why not drink some alcohol or play cards as well, because that will make you feel nice for some time.

Because anyway, it will not last long. People will say good things about you now, and after some time people will say bad things about you. Even the most famous people, they go up very quickly and down very quickly. A little scandal or rumor can cause them to lose their reputation. True or not true, it doesn't matter. Therefore, since my good name, or what other people think of me, is something which is very unstable and constantly changing, then it is not worth becoming angry about it, or exerting all this effort. Because it is too fragile. It comes up and goes down so quickly.

I see this very strongly in the government officials, for example. When they are in office, they are very powerful and they are very respected and important. Then the moment they retire, they are nobody. Then they feel so bad. In India in particular, they can take this very hard. Sometimes they don't come out of their rooms at all, and they often die very quickly. This is because the higher the people are, the more attachment and craving they have for their name.

So our need to feel very important is a very difficult problem to overcome. Even this need to be loved, our craving for love from others, is a big problem. It creates lots of agony. Because if we get lots of love that's very good, but we don't always get lots of love. Therefore we should train in such a way that we can give lots of love, but don't need to always look for it.

I think that is the source of many, many problems, many, many sufferings, because especially when we become alone, when we become older, then it is very difficult. I think it is very natural that everybody needs love and wants to be loved. But we will be much happier if we can cultivate the attitude that if somebody loves me, it is very good; but if nobody loves me, that's all right too. You come into this world alone and you leave this world alone.

So if nobody loves you right now, it's all right. If we have lots of love and good company, then we are better off for it. But even if not, so what? Even if there is something happening which we really don't like, or if what we really like is not happening, let us see whether it is really worthwhile becoming angry and becoming really devastated about this or not. And most of the time it is not. So why should we care so much for something is so difficult to gain and so easy to lose?

Children can't help crying when
Their sand castles come crumbling down.
Our minds are so like them
When praise and reputation start to fail. (93)

When somebody says something bad about us, we can get very disturbed and unhappy. It is almost like when a child builds a sand castle and then somebody destroys it; then they feel very bad and begin to cry. But when you understand this, then you can get some kind of stability in the mind, it doesn't matter whatever happens. When we see this more clearly, why we are getting agitated? If somebody doesn't like you, so what? If someone doesn't like you, there are always others who will like you.

Because sometimes we go through so much suffering and pain because somebody doesn't like me. Is it worth suffering so much because somebody doesn't like me? Because my suffering doesn't make this person like me anyway. Even if I cry all day long, those who don't like me don't like me. And maybe they feel happy because I cry. Or maybe they don't feel happy, but my crying doesn't make them like me.

If you understand the futility, the uselessness of getting agitated because somebody doesn't like you, then I think we would have a little different way of reacting: it's all right. Because the best thing for me is that I should feel good, I should feel peaceful. And maybe if I feel good, and I feel peaceful and more positive, maybe more people will like me. Therefore there is not benefit in worrying whether or not some people don't like me, or some people don't like me.

Short-lived sound, devoid of intellect,
Can never in itself intend to praise us.
"But it's the joy that others take in me," you say—
Are these the shoddy causes of your pleasure? (94)

So if you say that it is other's praise, saying good things about you, a good name, which is important for you, then the sounds, something written in the newspaper, or something said on the radio, or something like that, some people saying something, these sounds are short lived—they come and goes, and they are devoid of intellect. The sound itself doesn't even have the thinking that it's good or not, so the sound itself does not even have the intention to praise. So why does the sound make me happy?

Then you might say: "No, it is not the sounds, the praise that the people give, but the fact that people are happy when they praise me. That is why I am happy when people like me." But Shantideva asks, "Is that the real cause of your pleasure?"

What is it to me if others should delight
In someone else, or even in myself? (95)

If you say you are happy because those that praise you are happy, then if it is someone else being praised, you should also be happy. It doesn't matter for what, because I am happy because somebody is happy! If that is the case, then whether they praise me or not, whether they like me or not, if they are happy that should be the cause for me to be happy also.

Their pleasure's theirs, and theirs alone.
What part of it could be for my enjoyment? (95)

Because they have pleasure, that is nothing related to me.

If I am happy at the joy of those who take delight,
Then everyone should be a source of joy to me.
Why, when glory goes elsewhere,
Am I not happy with this cause of happiness? (96)

So if you are happy when others are happy, then you don't need the praise. You are happy that other people are happy; therefore you don't mind that you are not praised, or that people don't like you but people like somebody else. If people like somebody else and not you, you should be happy for that.

The satisfaction that is mine
From thinking "I am being praised,"
Is unacceptable to common sense
And nothing but the silly ways of children. (97)

Praise and compliments disturb me,
Sapping my revulsion with samsara.
I start to covet others' qualities
And thus all excellence degenerates. (98)

When people praise me, not only does this not bring me much benefit, or not benefit at all, but praise and compliments can also be a great distraction. Because the more people say good things about me, the more I can become arrogant and puffed up, and also my renunciation for samsara becomes weaker. I can start to covet good qualities or possessions of others, and become jealous and so on. Therefore, slowly all my good qualities degenerate.

Story of the gyalpo and tsen

For example, there is a story about two different negative spirits. One spirit is the *gyalpo* and one is the *tsen*. One day they were having a discussion. Then the *tsen* said, "I am a very strong spirit. I can do lots of harm very quickly. I can really vanquish things, and cause immediate harm to people." And the *gyalpo* replied, "Maybe you are better, maybe I am better. Let's have a test to see who is the strongest in inflicting harm on others."

So they went and found two lamas doing retreat in a solitary place. Then the *gyalpo* said: "You try first." So the *tsen* lured one of the lamas to the edge of cliff and then pushed the lama over the cliff. So the lama fell down and immediately died. Then the *tsen* said to his friend *gyalpo*, "Look how powerful I am. I have killed this lama." The *gyalpo* replied, "What harm did you do? As soon as that lama died, his consciousness went to the Heaven of Great Bliss. You did not do any harm. You need to take your time with this sort of thing. Watch me. I'll show you how it's really done."

So now the *gyalpo* went to work. The other lama who was still doing retreat was sitting in his room near a small window, and the lama threw some grain out the window. Soon afterwards the lama noticed that these grains were growing very quickly. They were so big and so nice and so many, that after some time he could cut it and make some *tsampa* out of it. And he thought: "Oh, I never knew that you could grow *tsampa* so easily." So he made his kitchen garden a little bigger. And then it grew so well, that it was not only enough for him to eat, but he had some surplus to sell. Then he thought: "I must be something very great." So he bought some fields, and then a little bit more, and it grew so well. Even when everybody else's grain didn't grow, his grew. And now he started becoming richer and he started doing some more business. And then he became more rich and more famous, and then more rich and more famous.

Then he left his retreat and came down to the town. Soon he met a very nice girl and married her. And then soon he started having lots of friends and lots of enemies. And very soon then he started fighting, many court cases, many enemies, many fights, trying to guard his things. And then somehow he got killed. And then he went down to the lower realms, and he was born into the *gyalpo*'s retinue. Then the *gyalpo* said: "This is how it's done. If you really want to harm somebody, this is the way."

Therefore it is not only are praise and compliments not necessarily beneficial, but they can give rise to many other things.

Those who stay close by me, then,
To ruin my good name and cut me down to size
Are surely there protecting me
From falling into ruin in the realms of sorrow. (99)

So if you think that way, then those who are causing problems for you are in a way also protecting you, because they are preventing you from becoming too arrogant. They are showing you your own face, putting you into size, or giving you a chance to practice patience.

For I am one who strives for freedom—
I must not be caught by wealth and honors.
How could I be angry with the ones
Who work to loose me from my fetters? (100)

Especially if you are a dharma practitioner, and especially if you want to get rid of the samsaric state of mind, if you really understand that in the samsaric state of mind there is always the continuous suffering, as long as you are in the samsaric state of mind you are in the continuous suffering, and if you really want to get rid of this, then somebody saying bad things to you is not necessarily a bad thing. Because that reminds you of your own situation, that reminds you of having to work on this, that reminds you that you want to free yourself completely from the samsaric state of mind, not just to gain some honor and importance. If that is the case then you should be grateful to these people who are obstructing you to get your things.

They, like Buddha's very blessing.
Bar my way, determined as I am
To plunge myself headlong in sorrow:
How could I be angry with them? (101)

So those people who create difficulties for me are *like the Buddha's very blessing*. They are in a way preventing me from getting more and more deeply involved in samsara, from becoming completely entrapped in the samsaric state of mind. Therefore, they are a reminder of impermanence, a reminder of the negative emotions that you have to work on, a reminder of the state of samsara that we want to get rid of ourselves and all sentient beings. Therefore we should be grateful to those people who are obstructing us from getting our wishes. And many times these what we wish for or desire is not necessarily the best thing for us.

We should not be angry, saying,
"They are obstacles to virtue."
Is not patience the supreme austerity,
And is this not my chosen discipline? (102)

You might say, "No, I'm not really angry because they are preventing me getting a good reputation and so on. I am upset because, through their actions, this person is obstructing me from entering into retreat and practicing the dharma, and from doing other positive things." Here Shantideva says, even if this is the case, there is still no need to become angry. Because of all the dharma practices, the practice on patience is supreme; it is the strongest practice, the most important practice. [check – meaning of austerity] So if someone causes obstacles to your retreat, they give you the chance to do that practice. It doesn't matter if they don't give you the chance to do the retreat or something else like that.

As we have said again and again, the real dharma practice is to work on your mind. If you are doing something about your mind poisons and your habitual tendencies, then you are practicing the dharma. If you are not doing anything about that, then it is doubtful whether you are practicing dharma.

If I fail to practice patience,
Hindered by my own deficiency,
I am myself the obstacle to gaining
Merit, yet so close at hand. (103)

Therefore when I have these obstacles to getting what I want, and then I don't practice patience at that time, then I can't blame these people for obstructing me from practicing the dharma. I am the one who is not practicing dharma, because I am not practicing patience. So if I really want to practice the dharma and gain a lot of merit, then I should take this great opportunity to practice.

For nothing comes except through other factors,
And comes to be, those factors being present.
If one thing is the cause of something else,
How could it then be said to hinder it? (104)

We must understand that nothing comes out of one factor, or from a single cause. This is a very important Buddhist principle, I think I have emphasized enough on this. But I think this is also very important to work on. When you blame something on yourself, like guilt and things like that, that there is nothing that is caused by one single factor; everything comes out of many causes and conditions. Therefore you can't single out just one factor and say this is the cause of the problem, because there are many other causes too.

And even this, the seed is the cause of the flower or the grain, maybe you can't have the flower without the seed, but even you if you have the seed you may not have the flower. Just the seed is not [enough], you need moisture, you need manure, you need the ground, you need heat, you need everything. And if one of them is not there, it is not there, isn't it? If one factor out of maybe hundreds sometimes is not there, the whole thing is not there. So you can't say this one is the only cause. So it's not just one thing, so therefore you can't really blame on somebody only. And moreover:

The beggars who arrive at proper times
Are not an obstacle to generosity.
We cannot say that those who give the vows
Are causing hindrances to ordination. (105)

This means whenever someone obstructs us from getting what we want, or especially even disturbing our dharma practice, we can't say that we can't practice dharma because of these people, because we can practice dharma more strongly because of these people if we really wanted to, just by being patient. To say that because of these people I cannot practice dharma is the same as saying that there are lots of beggars, so therefore I cannot practice generosity. If there are more beggars, it's more of a chance for you to practice generosity.

Or we cannot say that those who are give me the vows are causing hindrance to ordination. If I want to take ordination, and I have a teacher who is ready to give the ordination, it doesn't make sense to say, "I can't take ordination because of these people." These are the people from who you take ordination.

The beggars in this world are many,
Attackers are comparatively few.
For as I do no harm to others
Those who do me injury are rare. (106)

So like a treasure found at home,
Enriching me without fatigue,
All enemies are helpers in my bodhisattva work
And therefore they should be a joy to me. (107)

These verses may be a little difficult to accept. Shantideva says that if you want to practice generosity, there are enough beggars everywhere. But people who attack you are not as many. Especially if you are a practicing bodhisattva, or a really good person, then it is less likely that people attack you, or the people who attack you are rarer. Especially great bodhisattvas, they say, have great difficulties to find somebody with whom they can practice patience. Because the great

bodhisattvas are always good, and always radiating good, so there are few people who really hate them and do bad things to them.

If you don't harm others, then usually people don't do harm to you. Therefore when someone harms you, it's like finding a treasure in your home *enriching me without fatigue*. Because if you find a treasure in your home, then you become rich without doing any work, you become rich without any trouble. So if you find somebody is harming you, then you can practice patience without any effort. This is the greatest chance to practice dharma; you do not even have to earn your money for doing the retreat. You get to do the retreat for free.

Therefore all enemies are helpers in my bodhisattva work. If I am a bodhisattva and if I am really practicing, then someone who harms me is a helper. If I see like this, then whenever someone obstructs me from getting what I want, it should be a joy, not a cause for anger.

The fruits of patience are for them and me,
For both of us have brought it into being.
And yet to them they must be offered first,
For of my patience they have been the cause. (108)

If I can be patient, then this is a great practice that will generate lots of positive merit for me. Here Shantideva says that I must share all of this merit, the *fruits of patience*, with those who are causing me the problem. Because I could not have practiced patience with this person who caused me harm; therefore, the result of this practice has been brought into being by both of us.

Yet if I say my foe should not be praised
Since he did not intend to stimulate my patience,
Why do I revere the sacred Doctrine,
Cause indeed of my attainment? (109)

You might think, "This person tried to harm me, but I have practiced patience, and therefore I have been very good and gained lots of merit for myself. But this person who caused me trouble did not intend to help me. They intended to harm me, or at best they were only concerned about getting something for themselves. Therefore there is nothing I need to be grateful or happy about."

But Shantideva says, in that case, why do you revere the dharma? Because the dharma does not think that: I am going to help you. When you practice Dharma, it is not as if the Dharma has the intention, "Oh, I must help this person." You praise the dharma because when you practice it, it helps you. Therefore you say the Dharma is great. If that is the case, then your enemy is great, because he or she helps you to practice patience and work on your mind. It does not matter what your enemies intentions are.

This enemy conspired to harm me," I protest,
"And therefore should receive no honors."
But had he worked to help me, like a doctor,
How could I have brought forth patience? (110)

Because of those whose minds are full of anger,
I engender patience in myself.
They are thus the cause for patience,
Fit for veneration, like the Doctrine. (111)

You said that this enemy is bad because he tried to harm you, so therefore it is not good for me. So therefore I have no honor for him, I don't thank him. But you have to think again, because if a person wanted always to help you, then how can you be angry about it? And then how can you be patient about it? You can never practice patience if everybody is completely happy with you. If no one is causing you trouble, then you don't know if you have any patience or not.

Story of the lama who uprooted his anger

There is a story about this. Once a lama spent a long time in solitary retreat practicing patience. When he left his retreat, he went to visit Patrul Rinpoche and said, "Well, I have completely uprooted my anger." It is quite something if you have completely uprooted your anger, so Patrul Rinpoche decided to test him. So Patrul Rinpoche whispered to his attendants and said, "Well, this lama says that he has completely uprooted his anger, but actually his hand is not very clean." Meaning that he steals.

So this rumor spreads; it goes on and on, like the rumors do. And in an instant everybody knows about it, so they are talking to each other. Soon the lama hears about this rumor himself, and he is shocked! Because he has been very good, and he has never stolen anything. So the lama tries to find out the source of this completely baseless rumor, and he soon finds out that it is the Patrul Rinpoche who started the rumor. So he rushes into Patrul Rinpoche's small tent, kind of shoots into this place, and his face is completely blue and red and full of rage, and says: "How dare you say this, that I am a thief!" Then Patrul Rinpoche laughs and said: "I thought that you had completely uprooted your anger."

So when you are in retreat, and you are alone, and all the food and whatever else you need is given in, then there is no need to get angry. What is the use? But this does not mean that you have uprooted your anger.

Every situation has positive and negative

In any situation, even the worst kind of situation, we have always two things: a positive thing and a negative thing, a good thing and a bad thing. I think that even in the most negative thing there is something, at least a chance. So if we can see the good side and the bad side, the positive things and the negative things, and if you can take the opportunity, or the advantage of this positive thing. Then that situation is no longer negative, that situation is already positive.

Therefore there is no need to get angry or agitated. This attitude of seeing every side, trying to have a broad perspective. I think really even for people like us who are not highly advanced, or have no great experience of Dharma practice or meditation or things like that, I think it helps when you say that in every situation you see there is a negative thing, but there is a positive thing too, a chance at least. So if you see this possibility, the chance, then it is up to you whether you want to take advantage of that or not. So if you take advantage of that, then that is no longer negative, isn't it?

Suppose I had no friends. It is not a good thing; everybody wants friends. But should that make me so unhappy that I cannot enjoy anything? I cannot be happy because I have no friend? Or should I be happy, even if I don't have any friends? That is the understanding. What I am saying here is that, it's not that I don't want friends, but even if I have no friends, it's all right. I can be happy without having any friends. I should be able to be happy without any friends. And if I can really do that, then of course I will have lots of friends.

Then if you have this kind of confidence, that I can be happy even without my friends, then my friends are really my friends. My friends are friends because I like them, because I want to help them. It is not that I need them. If you have friends just because you need them, then your friends are just for you to use for yourself. It is not a real friend. Then it's a little bit taking advantage. When you need them it's nice. You need something and then you come and say, "Ah, you are my friend." And then when you don't need them, you don't look at them. Here it's not like that. You are not in need of the friend, but you like them, so therefore they are your friend. Therefore you can be happy with friends or without.

Being unaffected by praise or blame

And also this is saying that even if your name is not good, or people talk bad about you, should that be a real cause for unhappiness or not? Even if people are talking bad about you, it should not make you completely unhappy. Because if you make it like that, then you are always unhappy, because

some people is talking bad about you all the time. You can't cover everyone's mouth with tape. So that is the attitude.

If you can learn to see it this way, then you naturally become more stable, more grounded. You are not always affected by people saying this thing or that thing. You know that people say good things, and people say bad things. So when people say good things, you don't become like floating. You know what you are. When people say bad things also, you don't go under the ground, because you know what you are. So then you become stable.

What you are talking about is that: I should not get agitated too much because people are talking about me. If you do something good, if you are a good person, if you have really done something well, then you are famous. Whether it is written in the Guinness book or not. Whether lots of people remember you or a few people remember you, you are famous. So therefore there is no problem.

Now if you are famous, can you say whether it helps you or not when you die? Then maybe it does not really matter whether you are famous or not. But if you are famous and have done something great, then I think it is good for others, like Gandhi or mother Theresa. All great beings inspire other people to do that way. So it does good for others.

In the case of Gandhi, I don't think you can really say that Gandhi died because he was famous. Gandhi was killed because there were people who were against his non-sectarian feeling. He wanted everyone to be equal. He did not want to be sectarian. And that is always there, it is very difficult to be equal, to be non-sectarian. Those people who are very fundamentalist, very sectarian, don't want that. So it was this force that didn't want him to be there, this anger. So Gandhi died and was killed, but that is not because Gandhi was good, that is because the people around were bad. There are always bad people. So it is not that you are good then you never get anything bad. That is not guaranteed. Sometimes when you do good things, those who don't want good things get annoyed, don't they?

From Lerab Ling, 03 July 1998, 11.00

III. Respecting all sentient beings

In the first section of this chapter we tried to find out how important it is to get rid of anger. In the second section we tried to work on the causes of rising anger. Now this third point, respecting sentient beings, this is more or less from a positive side.

This section has three parts:

- 1) Developing respect for sentient beings by considering them as the field of merit.
- 2) Developing respect for sentient beings by considering that it pleases the buddhas.
- 3) Developing respect for sentient beings by reflecting on the result of doing them harm.

III.A. When thinking of the field of merit

The worlds of beings are a buddhafiield,
Thus the Mighty Lord has taught.
For many who have sought the happiness of others
Have gone beyond, attaining to perfection. (112)

As we have said before, from a Buddhist point of view, if we want to get rid of our sufferings and causes of our sufferings, and get the causes of all our happiness, which is complete enlightenment, then we need to do these two things: accumulate merit and purify our karma. The accumulation and purification is the whole practice.

From a Buddhist point of view, there are what are called two fields for the accumulation of merit. For example, if you want a seed to grow, you must plant it in a field of good dirt. If you want your merit to grow and increase, then you must plant it in a field of merit.

One field of merit is the buddhas, and bodhisattvas and other great beings. We learn the teachings and gain our inspiration from them. Making offerings to the buddhas and bodhisattvas is a way of gaining merit and making a connection with them. In this way, the buddhas, the great beings, are one field for accumulating merit.

Then another field of accumulation of merit is the sentient beings. Without the help of the sentient beings, we would not be able to work on our mind poisons and negative habits, and gain positive qualities. For example, if there were no other beings, then you could not practice generosity. The same is true for developing compassion or patience. All these things you do with the sentient beings.

Therefore we need both fields of merit. One is the field of compassion. One is the field of wisdom. The field of wisdom is the great beings, the enlightened beings. The field of compassion is the sentient beings. From a Buddhist point of view, they are equally important. In order to work on yourself, in order to get the result of getting rid of all your sufferings and getting enlightenment, these two fields are equally important.

Moreover, when we say that we want to get this enlightenment, we want to get rid of the problems, because I do not want these problems and sufferings, and then likewise all the sentient beings don't want them, so I would like to work for that. So the reason why you want to work on that is also the sentient beings. So therefore from that point of view there is no difference between the buddhas and the sentient beings as the field of accumulating merit.

Because when you first generate the bodhicitta, you have these two aspects: the compassion and the wisdom. When you first generate bodhicitta you say, "I do not want the sufferings and the problems. Not only for myself but for all the sentient beings. Therefore I would like to get rid of them, and I would like to put them and put myself in a state completely free from this." So this is inspired by the compassion. And then wanting something completely liberated, that is wisdom.

So there is always this compassion and wisdom together. If one of them is not there, then the bodhicitta, the bodhisattva's aspiration is not there. Therefore both are there in the beginning.

And when you actually practice bodhicitta, then in the beginning. when you aspire, you need both. Then in the middle, when you practice the dharma you need both. For taking refuge and understanding dharma and so on, you need the Buddha and the enlightened beings as the field of your practice. But then, in order to develop generosity, discipline, patience, discipline and so on, you need to focus on the other beings around you. Therefore without the other beings, there is no practice. And then at the end also: the result is becoming enlightened for myself and for all the sentient beings.

So therefore the sentient beings are a very great part of our practice. And so therefore if I need to work on something, I am doing it for the sentient beings. It is almost like "for the sentient beings, by the sentient beings, of the sentient beings."

Originally, I want to do it for all the sentient beings. But without the sentient beings I can not do it, so I will do it with the sentient beings. Therefore the sentient beings are as important as anybody else.

So therefore it is said in another text that: When you see somebody, then you look at them with so much gratitude, thinking something like. "These are the people for whom I am working! These are the people for whom I am doing all these things. And because of these people I am going to be liberated!"

That is what we should try to feel like. Because they are like my friends. If because of somebody I am going to become rich or I am going to become wealthy or healthy, then you would regard that person as your very good friend. But here, because of this person I am going to become completely enlightened. So then they are even more of a friend. Also when you have this kind of attitude, then you do not have any hatred. There is no space for hatred. So therefore this is a genuine concern, a genuine liking for the sentient beings.

It is not to say that you feel that everybody is like Buddha. Sometimes people have this misunderstanding. Everybody has buddha-nature, so they are all buddha. So they must be all very good. You can not have that. You are not buddhas. Maybe you have the potential of becoming a buddha. You have buddha-nature all right. But we are not buddhas.

Therefore we understand that every being has their own mind poisons and lots of negative habitual tendencies and other problems. So everybody will get angry, everybody will become nasty sometimes, and everybody will do things which are not so good. But that is understandable. It is like that, *therefore* I would like to help them. I wish them good. If they were not like that, then there would be no need for me to help them or do anything for them. There would be no problem.

Because nobody wants to have problems. Nobody wants to be tortured by their mind poisons and negative emotions. Nobody wants to be suffering from any of these problems. But they don't know how to get rid of them. I am like that myself, so all others are also. Therefore we are all the same. We are all in one boat. And if I am a little bit wiser, and if I can take this understanding and react accordingly, without malice, without hatred, without keeping the anger, but with compassion, with understanding, then, who will be benefited? I will gain the most benefit. So if I am benefited, then I must be happy. Then I cannot say, "Oh, these beings! I want them out of my place!" If I am receiving something good from them, then I need to respect them. I need to be grateful to them. I need to be happy about them. That is the understanding.

Thus the state of buddhahood depends
On beings and the buddhas equally.
By what tradition is it then
That buddhas, but not beings, are revered? (113)

Therefore we should revere or respect the sentient beings as much as the buddhas. We respect the buddhas because from them we receive such great benefits from them. The buddhas have great qualities, and we respect them for that, as well. But not just for that. If buddhas have lots of qualities, so what? What does it benefit me? If it does not benefit me, let him have good qualities and sit up there. It is not concerned with me. The main reason why we revere the buddhas and enlightened beings and great beings is because that inspires *us* and that changes *us*, and from that we learn and therefore we improve. And the more benefits we get, the more we are grateful.

This is the same even with our friends. When people help you and benefit you, then you are grateful and respectful towards them. If somebody has lots of things, we can't be grateful to them. But when we receive help, then we become grateful.

Therefore the reason why we are grateful to the buddhas and bodhisattvas and great beings is mainly because of the help that we get from them. If we receive the inspiration, the teachings, the guidance, the path, and then if that helps us, then we are grateful. And the more that helps us, the more grateful we become.

Atisha Dipankara had many teachers, and he used to show his respect for them whenever their names were mentioned by folding his hands and bowing down. But then when the name of his main teacher, who was called Serlingpa, was mentioned, he used to put his hands on top of his head and then really shed tears. Then people asked, "Why are you doing this? What is so special about this person?" Atisha replied, "Well, there is nothing really special. All my teachers are very great beings, equally realized. But this teacher is the one through whom I really got the understanding of the bodhicitta. And if there is any little compassion, little bodhicitta I have in my being, that is because of him. So therefore I am more grateful to him. That gratefulness is arising naturally."

So that is how. So when you are grateful to the buddhas, you revere buddhas because that is benefiting you and benefiting others. So in that case we should be grateful to the sentient beings as well.

Their aims are not, of course, the same,
But it is by their fruits that we should know them.
And so we see the excellence of beings—
Beings and the buddhas are indeed the same! (114)

If you just look from the quality side then it is not the same of course. The buddhas have the great qualities and all these things. But that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about the result. By showing respect and making offerings to the buddhas and by showing respect to the sentient beings it would be the same.

Offerings made to one who loves
Reveals the eminence of living beings.
Merit that accrues from faith in Buddha
Reveals in turn the Buddha's eminence. (115)

Since they are both the means of winning buddhahood,
We say that beings are the same as buddhas,
Even though they are not equal
In the boundless ocean of a Buddha's merits. (116)

Yet if a tiny part of that great merit
Were found to be contained in certain beings' hearts,
The three worlds made in offering to them
Would be a slight, a very little thing. (117)

A share in bringing forth the supreme state of buddhahood
Is thus possessed by everyone.

This demonstrates the reason why
They are the proper object of my reverence. (118)

That is why to have respect for the sentient beings is important. Even if I am working only for my own sake, I should respect the sentient beings because through them I will [gain positive qualities]. But generally we have said from the beginning that we want not good things for myself only. I want it for other beings too. So when that is there, then I am doing this not only for them, but also I am having the results because of them. So therefore the sentient beings become my main focus.

I think it is a great exercise actually, sometimes. Usually we are always thinking about ourselves. "I am the center of the world." I always think about myself. "How do I feel now? What will happen to me tomorrow? What will happen to me the day after tomorrow? If it rains then I will feel very unhappy. If the sun shines I will get burned." So sometimes we think about ourselves too much. Most people have these fears and insecurity and all these kind of things because they think too much about themselves. And especially those who are alone, and then just living on their own and a little bit introverted.

So therefore, I think many people have found trying to think about others to be very helpful. To just not think about oneself, but think about others. And trying to do something for others. Think about doing something good for others. They have found that the best way of fighting with depression, is to do something for others. Becoming busy: "What can I do good for others?" Then you can't be depressed. It is impossible to get depressed if you are always thinking about doing something good for somebody. So therefore, although we are trying to do something good to others, which is a good thing, but in the long run I am the greatest beneficiary because I have no mental problem, I feel good.

So therefore the real thing is that, to be able to feel near and to be able to feel equal and same to all the sentient beings. For example, "They are all like me. So therefore they are all like my relatives. They are all like my best friends." This understanding. Of course we have different meditations to support this kind of thing, like loving kindness and compassion.

First think about one person who is really your best friend, somebody to whom you have lots of gratitude and lots of love. And then you feel how you feel about that person. You just feel how much you want this person to have good things. How much you want this person to have no problems, no sufferings. And then you think "Towards this person I feel like that. And now why not feel the same to more people? Because they also are in all different ways like this person too."

Then you try to expand this gradually to all the beings. So then you generate this warm and kind and peaceful feeling to all the sentient beings. So that you like people. Then you like people. You do not need to be afraid of anybody, you just like everybody. And you wish them good. It does not mean that everybody is acting good all the time. To expect everybody to be very kind and very nice, that is naive, it is not possible. But that does not matter.

The buddhas and bodhisattvas have no need to work on themselves. They have already done it. So no need to do anything for themselves. Their only purpose is to help other beings. So they go everywhere, they do everything, whatever is possible, to help other beings. Therefore if we can be of little benefit, that attitude, then you are more likely to become like them. If you admire a great being, if you admire a buddha, enlightened being, a bodhisattva, if you want to become like that, if you are inspired by them, then one should do like them, one should try to become like them. And that means trying to help other beings.

Even though the beings may sometimes harm you, that is no reason to stop loving them. That is no reason why you should completely hate them. Because they do that out of ignorance, because they are overcome by negative things. You want to help them because they are like that. If they were not like that, then there would be no need to help them. Then there was no need to be compassionate. So therefore if you understand that, then it is all right. Of course, people will still do negative deeds. Then if you can forgive, then there is no problem. Then you get peace of your mind. And once you have the peace of mind, and the compassion, then you are a bodhisattva, no problem.

III.B When thinking of how that rejoices the buddhas

[no comments; verses 119-127, tentative]

III.C When thinking of the benefit and harm of the fruits

[no comments; verses 128-134, tentative]

Questions

The more I work with compassion, the more irritated I get

Student: When we receive teachings and instructions on compassion and patience, sometimes what happens is the opposite. It's the anger the irritation; is this a cause of abandoning the Dharma? Because for a few days I'm so irritated. I don't know why, but ...because it always happens when a teaching happens. When there is a teaching on compassion and if there is a teaching on patience irritation comes up and the more I work with things like compassion and patience the more this irritation and these things come up.

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche: I don't know why it happens like that. Usually it should happen the opposite. Maybe you are trying too hard. Maybe you are trying too hard to be compassionate. And sometimes trying too hard, it is not necessary to try too hard. If you say that I shouldn't be... I should be too much compassionate, it's not that. I should be too much patient, not that. You just let yourself be, naturally. And then we are impatient, anyway. Whether we are receiving teachings or not. We are generally a kind of not completely compassionate all the time, whether we are receiving teachings or not. But it is all right. I mean, it's not all right means that what can we do? That's the way it is.

So therefore you take it, it's all right, it's nothing wrong, nothing worse. Maybe it's also possible that you become more aware of this. It's possible that when you receive a teaching on compassion and then you say that I should be very compassionate and then you see that you are not that compassionate. And when you receive a teaching on being patient and then you become more aware of importance of patience and then maybe you see that you are not that patient. That's possible.

When we talk about these things, again this is very important, you know, I need to be patient, I need to be compassionate, then you become too much in that...I need to be patient, I need to be compassionate, and if I'm not a little bit compassionate then I feel very bad about it. That is not necessary, that is not good. That is not...because then you feel ...then it becomes not a training but a kind of imposition, that lots of people feel, you know.

Lots of people come to me and have a very strong kind of resistance against compassion. Many people have resistance. They were told to be compassionate. In their upbringing they said, you must be compassionate, you should not think about yourself, you should always think about others and, you know, somehow this kind of...I don't know where this is going on and then they have resistance against. They feel heavy when you talk about compassion. They feel that they have to be...they have to be completely...they have to be like a doormat, they say. That's the expression I got from them. You have to feel like a doormat, that everybody walks on it and that, you know, and cleans their shoe on. That's not necessary.

Being compassionate means meaning well. Wanting to do something that's good for yourself and good for others. You are never, you don't need to completely reject yourself. Doing something good for yourself and good for others, wishing well. Being compassionate is wanting good things, but not wanting bad things to others in your mind. Of course you cannot make it happen all the time. Nobody can help everybody, that's all right. It's impossible. Nobody ever can completely help everybody to have all what they want. That's not possible.

So therefore if you don't have hatred but have good will with everybody that's compassion, that's enough. You don't want to be a kind of a doormat, you don't want to be this towel where you wash all the ...not necessary. Is it clear? I mean ...so therefore you are not patient completely, hundred percent. That's all right. As I said earlier, as long as we are in this samsaric state of mind we are like that. We are not completely compassionate. We can't be. We have problems. It's all right. Learn to be happy within that.

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