

Live Teaching by Khen Rinpoche Kalsang Nyima
'The importance of taming our mind for real happiness'
7:30 p.m., 25 August 2020
English transcript

Dear Dharma brothers and sisters,

Our Venerable Khen Rinpoche Kalsang Nyima gave a live teaching on 'The importance of taming our mind for real happiness' at 'Wake Up with Dharma', a Facebook page, at 7.30 p.m. on 25 August 2020. The Tibetan teaching was translated into Cantonese by Professor Lozang Hau. The English translation of the Chinese transcript of this online teaching is now available for your reading and sharing. Thank you.

The Importance of taming our mind for real happiness

First of all, Khen Rinpoche would like to greet all male and female Dharma friends who are listening to this live teaching through the network with 'Trashi Deleg!'

Today's teaching is about the need of correcting and taming our mind for our real happiness. Khen Rinpoche is going to explain why there is a need for us to do so.

All the body activities, speeches, and thoughts in the minds of all living beings are for gaining happiness and dispelling suffering.

We cried or called from the arms of our parents since we were small for happiness. Then when we grew up, we attended primary schools to universities for acquiring different knowledge. In fact, we did all this for the sake of gaining happiness. Upon completion of our learning, we go to work every day. Some people would get married. Some work hard to earn more. In short, all these actions are for gaining happiness and eliminating suffering.

Furthermore, we sing and dance, do exercise days and nights, or spend the efforts to groom ourselves for seeking happiness and freeing from suffering. Our only hope of all our activities from walking, living, sitting, and resting to even sleeping at nights and all our inhales and exhales is for having happiness and freeing from suffering.

When we were still a young child who just learnt how to walk with our parents, our mind was very pure, vast, peaceful, and happy. At that time, we were happier and in greater peace unlike others.

However, when we got older, we studied, worked, and made greater effort at work, our worries, difficulties, and suffering gradually increased. Compared with the time when we were small, the pain and suffering we had when we got older have grown by hundred or thousand folds.

Many people asked, 'Why we were so happy and could get along well with our family members even though we had no money and were poor when we were small? Our mind was so broad and peace. Why we are so unhappy now?' Many people asked this question.

The reason for this is that we have the wrong ways of thinking and working. The harder we work, the more difficulties we have. The more we learn, the more worries arise. These are all due to our wrong ways of learning and working.

So, what goes wrong? We think that all our own happiness has to do with external objects and come from external objects in forms and materials that have appearances, and every form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. We think that the more we can get these, the happier we will become. We hope to get more of such objects, thinking our suffering would be lessened. As such, all our hopes and thinking are working in this direction.

As we all have a body, we do need food, clothes, a place to stay, and money to pay for transportation and living expenses. We all have these needs. But what is more important is: we need to nurture and grow the virtuous qualities of our mind. They include open-mindedness, contentment, patience, compassion, and wisdom. Yet we do not know how to do that. On the other hand, we do not know that we need to cut and abandon the five-klesha afflictions, including attachments, anger and hatred, stupidity, jealousy, and pride that are defects of our mind. They give us suffering. As a result, we experience more pain and difficulties.

Because we do not know how to nurture the qualities of our mind and do not work hard in cutting through its defects, our mind is simply like a stupid, crazy person. Whatever thoughts the mind has and whatever desire it has, we will just follow them and become driven by them. As such, our afflictions and defects grow. No matter how wealthy we have become in terms of external materials, we can never feel satisfied.

Consider an example of a hungry bagger. At first, he only needs food. After having food, he needs money. As for his need of money, he may need \$100 at the beginning. After having \$100, he may hope for \$1,000 and then \$10,000, \$100,000, and \$10,000,000 so forth. Therefore, no matter how much he has, he would still hope for more. So, when our situation is like his, we suffer more. That is why we said our mind can like a crazy person.

These days, there are rich and famous people in the world who may fight with their family members. They may quarrel with others for a small amount of money and may even put the case to the court due to such reason. In the end, no matter how wealthy these persons are, their desire can never be satisfied creating more worries. They may become ill with cancer, or harm their own family members.

If we do not take good care of our mind but let it become like a stupid, crazy person, we will want whatever we do not have and will never become satisfied with what we have.

For example, a poor person who has a cheap mobile phone at first wishes for an Apple iPhone. When he gets an iPhone 2 one day, he may think his phone is not good enough as compared with an Apple iPhone 5, 6 etc. As he thinks his phone is not good enough compared with mobile phones of other advanced models, he, therefore, hopes for a mobile phone of a more advanced model or a more recent model of an Apple iPhone.

Another example is that someone with a boyfriend or girlfriend. They may find another person attractive at the beginning hoping to be able to be with that person together. But after being together for a few weeks or months, they may find another person not that special. At last, they go for another lover. It is because our mind never feels satisfied. Why our mind does not feel satisfied? Because we have not mastered our own mind letting it become like a crazy person.

For example, many Asians look forward to the US and Europe thinking these places are like pure land. They try many ways and make a lot of efforts to go to the US and Europe. But Europeans and Americans think Asia is good and hope to be able in Asia. Actually, people try to get what they do not have. For the things that they have, they think there is nothing special and they are bad. Failing to recognize this point, our mind has become so lost.

The U.S. has many whites with fair skin. In order to make the skin looks tanner, they would always tan their skins. The skin color of Asians looks yellowish. In order to make their skin looks whiter, they would apply many things to their faces.

Why is it so? It is because our mind never feels good and enough with the things that we possess. We never feel satisfied with the comfort and autonomy that we have. We take a lesser and disregard attitude towards what we have. We place our hope on other objects thinking they are more wonderful. We, therefore, do not feel happy but only experience suffering.

We, therefore, will feel the pain again and again continuously like water flow. Because our desire can never be satisfied and we have too much desire, we have a lot of hope. But after we get the things that we want, we become worried about losing them and having them become damaged. We would have fear. Our mind never feels relaxed, comfortable, peaceful, and happy with these hope and fear. They are like surface waves in the ocean crashing continuously.

We all hope to become better and have more. But if others were better off than us, and had more knowledge, wisdom, and power in a higher position, we would feel unhappy, become envious, and say bad words about another. As such, our mind can never feel relaxed and comfortable. It will become painful.

At the same time, when we see something that is unappealing or unpleasant, we would generate anger and hatred and may have aversion towards another. At that time, our mind suffers like being burnt in a fire.

If we have education, reputation, and position, we think ourselves of being terrific, superior, and indifferent to others, and feel proud of ourselves. But if others have good qualities, we would become jealous of them and would never respect them. We disrespect them. At last, our mind is as painful as being like in boiling water.

Why is it like this? It is because all our worldly knowledge or subjects are related to external objects that have appearances, i.e. external forms, sound, smell, taste, and touch. They all talk about how to have more of such external objects. But the importance of mind, how to correct our own mind, how to cut through defects of the mind, and how to unveil the quality and virtues of our mind were never taught. Since we never pay attention to these learnings, we, therefore, do not know how to practice them.

It is much easier for us to understand objects with appearances because we can truly see and touch them. But the mind is very subtle. We do not value the mind because we cannot see, hear, or touch it. We, therefore, create the pain that was just mentioned.

Some materialists do not accept mind. They merely think the so-called mind is actually a function of our brain. But in fact, all the pain, happiness, good, and bad that we talk about are controlled and created by our mind. All suffering and happiness are controlled and created by our mind regardless of the matter and situation.

Whether we will meet a good or bad person is also determined and shaped by our mind. So, our mind determines how good or bad our learning is.

The reason for this is that all good and bad actions can only be taken after they are initiated by our mind. First of all, our mind will need to generate a motivation and then a plan. After making many plans in our mind, we will then take the actions and make the speeches. Therefore, everything starts from the mind. If the mind has not taken any step, nothing can happen.

Our mind determines whether our activities are beneficial to other living beings as well. If our mind has virtuous thoughts of benefiting others, then our activities can benefit both others and us naturally. If our mind is full of negative thoughts with despise, hatred, and anger, what we do will bring suffering and damages to others.

When we take the action, if we were able to focus on the task, the work can be done very nicely. However, if our mind was distracted and went onto something else, then we absolutely cannot get the work done properly. So our mind also determines the success of our work.

Our mind is key and is the most powerful. No matter what wholesome and unwholesome matters we do, they are all controlled by our mind. If we manage and correct our mind, the rest will come together naturally in the same direction. Our mind is like a king. If the king is good, his retinue and people of the country will be happy and in peace. If the king is bad, his retinue and people will suffer.

For example, three people are taking the same food at the same price during lunch. But they feel different pain and happiness due to different thoughts in their mind.

One of the persons thinks he has had a bad day especially after being criticized by others and failed to accomplish anything. He cannot find the food tasty and so he can only feel pain without any happiness.

Another person thinks the food is not so tasty. But he still takes the food in order to satisfy his hunger. After finishing his meal, he feels his suffering has lessened.

Then the third person feels he is very lucky since he is still alive. He realizes many people in this world are suffering from hunger. So he feels he has a lot of merits since he can still enjoy his food. He thinks people like farmers, people who raise the livestock, businessmen who sell the food, and cooks who prepare the food, have great kindness to him. Since his mind is happy when he eats, he is eating happily.

The price of the food they take is the same. They eat at the same time. The taste of the food is the same. But one of three persons feels incredibly painful. Another person feels less suffering than the first person after lunch. The third person is eating happily. The results are due to different ways of thinking of these three persons.

So, we take a look at the situation that we just talk about, is it more important to be the master of our mind and think positively than the food itself if we wish to attain happiness?

Another example is one day your friend is risen to a unique position, and becomes very successful or outstanding with his business, or very famous. If he has three friends with different thoughts, three situations can arise.

This man who becomes so fortunate suddenly has been getting along well with three of his friends (four persons in total). One of his friends wonders why this friend can rise to become so famous and rich when he has the same education level and knowledge as him. He cannot accept this fact. He then becomes angry and very jealous of his friend. When jealousy arises in his mind, he feels very unhappy. So, he tells others that his friend is just an ordinary person far from outstanding, and is not well educated. The success of his friend merely comes from cheating others.

Due to jealousy, he cannot see the merits and qualities of his fortunate friend. He does not respect him and despises him. He hurts his friend by making many bad remarks. When two friends discuss about something bad on this fortunate friend and the talk is overheard and becomes known to this fortunate friend, this fortunate friend turns angry. So, two persons who use to get along well have become enemies. When this friend read the news of his fortunate friend in the newspapers, his mind is like being cut by knives, and is very upset.

The second person realizes he can never attain what his fortunate friend has accomplished. He feels not pleased after seeing how very successful and well off his fortunate friend has become although he has yet felt jealous about it. The situation of this second friend is more neutral.

As for the third friend, he feels positive about his fortunate friend. He always prays for all living beings wishing them especially his friend to be freed from suffering and to attain happiness. Now his friend can achieve peace and happiness through his own efforts without his help, he rejoices in his friend. He feels very happy and praises his fortunate friend. Although his fortunate friend gains the position and reputation, this third friend still feels very happy in his mind.

This third friend feels very joyful and amazing with the success of his fortunate friend. He even tells others that, 'My friend [the fortunate one] is really nice and outstanding. He studied a lot and is well educated.' When others relay this talk to his fortunate friend, his fortunate friend praises this third friend in front of others. So, these two friends become closer as best friends.

So, we take a look at what was just described. Some people do not know how to think properly. They cannot master their mind and so are overpowered by their anger and hatred. He feels painful although something nice happened with his friend. On the other hand, people would be very happy with the success of his friend if he knows how to have a proper way of thinking. Although it is his friend who gains all the reputation and position, he is far happier than his friend. It is due to different ways of thinking by each individual.

Then three persons are working together in the same company. One day their supervisor scolds them harshly.

One of the persons thinks this supervisor is terrible, dirty, and despicable. His supervisor often treats him badly and looks down on him. He finds his supervisor very disgusting. Since he keeps on thinking this way, he cannot hold his fierce anger and so, he feels like being in a fire pit. As he feels so angry that he can no longer control himself, he rushes into the room of his supervisor and says, 'What did you just say? That is not my mistake. You made the faults!' At last, he quarrels with his supervisor. The supervisor terminates him. After he is being fired, he can no longer find a similar job. It has become very difficult for him to get a new job.

The second person is not very angry though he feels a bit unhappy. So, he does not go to fight with the supervisor.

The third person has been practicing patience. He gets a bit upset at first after being scolded by his supervisor. But as he usually practices patience, he thinks, maybe it is the ripening result of his karma that he created in the past, i.e. having talked badly to others. He recognizes his own problems in addition to those of the supervisor. As all

phenomena arise from many causes and conditions, the supervisor can only get angry due to his own presence. The supervisor would not have got angry if he was not there. The scolding of his supervisor arises due to his presence. If he does not exist, the supervisor has no way of scolding him. His supervisor can only scold him due to many conditions, not just the personal issue of his supervisor.

Particularly, someone who does not know Dharma and how to practice forbearance, he can be overpowered by his anger once it is arisen and can act like a mad person. Since this supervisor may be controlled by his own personal anger, this third person thinks he should practice compassion towards his supervisor.

He thinks that his supervisor is very kind to him as he gives him a good opportunity to practice forbearance by scolding him with bad words.

He practices tong len (giving and taking) by visualizing many people in this world who are being scolded by their supervisors suffer harder than him. So taking the opportunity of this scolding, he hopes that all the pain of scolding can be ripened at him and he would take others' pain and suffering.

He thinks being able to have opportunities to practice forbearance and tong len in this life are very important, thinking how kind his supervisor was to him. Since he thinks like this, he feels very happy.

Since he practices patience and tong len this way, he purifies a lot of bad karma and obscurations while accumulates a vast amount of merits.

Therefore, he does not get angry. On the contrary, he apologizes to this supervisor acknowledging his mistakes and saying he will improve in the future. The anger and hatred of his supervisor have reduced. His relationship with this staff turns excellent afterward.

When the anger of this supervisor is pacified, the staff goes to explain the details of the incident helping the supervisor to recognize his misunderstanding. After realizing this, the supervisor apologizes to this staff.

So when we look at the situation that was described, a person loses his job after quarreling with his supervisor in his rage without practicing forbearance. Another person manages to keep his job and improves his relationship with his supervisor and everything becomes successful.

We just cited a few small examples. You need to apply these examples to different situations.

Different people would react differently when each of them has a different reputation or benefits. What we wear, eat, live and travel, and our food and wealth, etc. are very important. But the most important of all is to learn about our mind and focus on the means that improve our mind and reduce the mind's defects. If we wish to attain happiness and free from suffering, nothing is more important than this.

If we wish to have genuine happiness, we need to tame our mind. If we wish to free ourselves from suffering, we also need to make an effort to tame our mind.

If we wish to abide in peace, calmness, and happiness, we also need to make an effort to tame our mind.

If we wish to attain great benefits for ourselves and others, then we have to make an effort to tame our mind.

If we wish to reduce the pain, difficulties and troubles in our life, then please make an effort to tame our mind.

If we wish to benefit ourselves and others through money, education, reputation and position, please work hard in taming our mind.

If we wish to reduce the suffering from others' criticism, bad comments or despise, and even turn these pain into peace and happiness, please focus on taming our mind.

If we wish to be healthy with energy and have a long life, please focus on taming our mind too.

Why? The reason for this is that our wholesome, unwholesome, good, or bad actions are entirely powered by our mind. There is a strong connection between our mind and the winds in our body. The wind in our body can become peaceful when our mind is peaceful and happy. That will, in turn, make the blood, power, and energy in our body in harmony too.

If the mind is agitated, the winds will become agitated, and then the blood and all the strengths and so forth. This will lead to many sickness and suffering in our body. We will get ill even if we do not wish to.

Our teacher, the unexcelled perfectly enlightened Lord Buddha gave 84,000 teachings.
Yet all these 84,000 teachings are actually about methods of taming our mind.

This is the end of Khen Rinpoche's teaching for tonight. Trashi Deleg!

- End -