

Live Teaching by Venerable Khen Rinpoche Kalsang Nyima

'The importance and ways of taming our mind (2)'

7:30 p.m., 15 September 2020

English transcript

Dear Dharma brothers and sisters,

Our Venerable Khen Rinpoche Kalsang Nyima gave a live teaching on 'The importance and ways of taming our mind (2)' at the Facebook page of 'Wake Up with Dharma' at 7.30 p.m. on 15 September 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 reading, learning, and sharing. Thank you.

The importance and ways of taming our mind (2)

Two weeks ago, Khen Rinpoche gave some talks on how to tame our minds.

He discussed this theme because of many requests he got from his Dharma friends who told him that they hoped to receive some online teachings about this topic.

As the root of our happiness and suffering depends on whether our mind is quiet or not, Khen Rinpoche gave a simple introduction on the topic of taming our mind based on the main reason that we all wish to be happy and do not wish to suffer.

In general, we human beings cannot live without any money. If we do not have any money, then our bodies cannot thrive. Therefore, money is important. But compared with external money, our mind's qualities such as wisdom, compassion, contentment, and patience are even more important.

But we can see money or other objects with our eyes, hear them with our ears, touch them with our hands, and taste them with our tongues. In short, because we can truly feel these external, coarse objects through our five sensory organs – we take them as very important.

However, the qualities of our minds do not belong to any of these coarse objects and therefore, cannot be seen from our eyes. They can only be understood through careful contemplation or learning. Therefore, many people do not know about the situation of our minds.

Many people think that if they got a lot of material things such as money, wealth, and assets externally, their life would be happy and at peace. But if these material things are not many, vast, and cannot be increased continuously, then they would think that lives are not happy and at peace.

However, as the wealth of some developed countries is rising, the suffering of their citizens is increasing as well. We cannot find a country that does not have any suffering at all while its wealth is increasing.

Khen Rinpoche cited a small example to illustrate this point.

He was born in a place with poor economic conditions. There were no cars and even no bicycles in the village where he grew up. The place did not have any electricity supply. People could only use firewood to light a fire without any gas supply. At that time, people wore very ordinary clothes many times. They would only get new clothes when the existing ones turned very old. Perhaps, they got new clothes once a year. At that time, people needed to go to very remote mountains to pick up firewood for cooking because the firewood nearby (their village) was already gone after having been picked up by other people. So, they had to walk a long way to find the firewood. There was no water supply there too. People needed to go for a long way to carry water on their backs back home. At that time, tsampa [roasted, ground barley flour] was the main food, which one needed to grind by hand without the help of any machinery. The place was of a very low standard and very poor from a wealth perspective. But people's minds were far happier than now.

Why? It is because people would go to the mani stone piles at 3 or 4 p.m. every day. They would circumambulate the mani stone piles and sing and dance together at 6 or 7 p.m. On the special days of each month such as the 15th or new moon day, everyone shared tsampa or their own food and chanted and made the tsog offering happily. They strongly believed that doing these activities would bring them a lot of blessings.

When some villagers were newly married, people in the entire village helped the new couple build a small new house in about 10 days. Then, the new couple would give out food to villagers who helped build the house. Everyone helped with a pure mind. They all ate together without calculating money and wages.

During the new year, villagers took turns to treat each family. For example, all the villagers went to dine in a family one day. They would then go to another family to dine the following day. As such, villagers took turns to dine and drink in each family in the entire village like big parties. It took at least 20 days to finish dining in each of the families in the village. At that time, all the villagers got along very well with each other like a family. Often, there were singing, and activities organized in groups like

the boys' group and girls' group. So, people had a very harmonious relationship and helped each other. They always sang and danced together. Their minds were very happy. If we see that from our perspective now, the situation at that time was like in a pure land. Pure land means the extent of peace and happiness in our mind.

But now materials are sufficient, a family can own two, three, or four cars easily. Their food, clothes and conditions have improved so much that have stunned people. While the wealth of everyone is increasing, competition and jealousy among each other is rising as well. People living in the same area are no longer as friendly and peaceful as before and members of the same family are no longer as harmonious as before as well. It is very difficult for a couple to live and run the living together for a long time. Very often, many couples get divorced.

Our mind thinks how peace and happiness would become more complete when we have more wealth and materials. This is our hope, and we work toward this direction. As our material possessions and wealth increase, the qualities of our mind do not improve at all at the same time. It is because we have not paid attention to the qualities of our mind and so problems arise as a result.

Therefore, we need to pay attention to how to enhance the qualities of our mind. This is a very important point. We need to try our best to reduce our mistakes, i.e., the five poisons (or afflictions). Even though the afflictions would [still] appear, we will need to make them last shorter. If we do not work in this way, it can become very dangerous.

The growth in our wealth helps our activities and facilitates our living. While our work enjoys greater convenience with more wealth, if we can strengthen the quality of our inner mind such as wisdom, compassion, contentment, and patience, we can avoid the disadvantages brought by the external materials. We can still maintain the peace and happiness in our mind too. We can take care of both the external world and our inner mind. This is the most ideal approach.

Today Khen Rinpoche would mainly like to discuss the mistakes of ego-clinging and the benefits of giving rise to compassion towards others.

Today's worldly education often starts with thinking about how to make ourselves to be the best, the most important, and to be different from others. We, therefore, would think, 'If we do not plan for ourselves and make plans for others, help others and benefit others instead, other people would take advantage of us. We would have nothing left for ourselves. We, ourselves, are more important than being compassionate towards others.'

But as we wish so much that we can be in a good position, we need to be even more compassionate towards others. It is because when we are compassionate towards others, others would also be kind to us in the same way.

If we do not think about others and just focus on ourselves, then this narrow mind would make us look down on others and act badly towards them. Other people would then ignore us and treat us badly. Then we would find ourselves in bad circumstances. We need to understand this logic, which is very important.

On the other hand, we need to observe and analyze the actual situation with reflection of our own experience in life to prove the validity of this logic. This is very important.

There are many influential people such as officials, doctors, leaders, and prominent figures in this world who deserve our respect or rejoice. Some of these famous, good people among them who are respected by over thousands and millions of people in this world. People may feel happy only by hearing their names. Why does the world have these people?

That is not due to certain power specially given by some gods. These great and very kind people are, in fact, different from ordinary people. They truly benefit others. They would like to benefit others, have a pure mind, and take care of and love others. They do not only have care, love, and kindness in their minds. They take actions to truly help others, reconcile with others, and undertake many activities to benefit them. Therefore, they have respect, rejoice, and praise from others.

Let us use a small example to illustrate this point. For example, a mother immensely loves and cares for all her children in a family while the father does not love and care for his own children at all. It is very natural for all the children to like and respect their mother in return.

If we wish others to respect and admire us, then we need to be kind and compassionate towards them. If we wish to have many kind and good friends, then we need to be more compassionate towards others. If we wish to gain a great reputation in this world, then we need to be compassionate towards others, too.

Being compassionate towards others looks as if we pay and give something to others. But in fact, all the effects will come back to us eventually.

On the other hand, there are many bad people such as thieves, robbers, and cheaters in this world. We dislike these bad people just by hearing their names. They would eventually be sent to jail after doing many illegal things. They bring huge damages to others and different places. Why did these people become like this? Why

have they become so terrible? It is not because of some ghosts and demons assisting them to create these disorders.

In fact, they only think of their own benefit and happiness without caring about the life and death of others. They are not compassionate and do not care about others at all. Their ego-clinging is very strong. They kill, steal, and cheat by all means and do every bad thing naturally.

For example, if a father does not care about his family members at all and just thinks about himself, all the family members would leave him because he brings suffering to them. Everyone would feel unhappy when seeing him as if seeing a ghost. This is due to his caring for himself alone without taking other people's situations into consideration at all.

However, we do have the opportunity to make this life meaningful and attain great achievements that are more beneficial. When can this be possible? When we can generate compassion towards others, think about the benefits to the community, give rise to a kind motivation, and know how to benefit others, then we have the opportunity to do all sorts of good and kind actions. When we can do these good conducts, others would feel amazed, and we feel pleased with ourselves.

When we give rise to compassion towards others, our family members will become very happy as well and we can help each other. By generating compassion towards others, we will have more friends who will trust us and be kind to us. By being compassionate towards others, they will respect, rejoice in, and admire us.

When we generate compassion towards others and have pure joy, we can experience amazing happiness. We will naturally have a warm and friendly facial expression and make others feel pleased with our appearances. Our words will naturally be respectful towards others and can convey something that can help or please others.

Similarly, when we think about ourselves too much and as too important, then we may cheat, lie, look down on, or criticize others resulting in mistakes. When we just think about ourselves without caring about others and taking others' situations and thoughts into consideration, our relatives, friends and loved ones would leave us disappointedly. There are many such situations in this world.

If we continue to make mistakes, people who used to trust us will no longer believe in us and those who used to like us will no longer be fond of us. The people whom we love will become our enemies. In this way, we will harm others and ourselves. The reasons why we make so many mistakes in our life are due to ego-clinging. That is why ego-clinging is very dangerous for us and others.

When our ego-clinging in our mind is heavy, we cannot feel peace and happiness in our mind. In those situations, the activities done by us physically always harm others or make others unhappy. This will eventually make us feel uncomfortable and others will treat us like demons. No matter how lovely we try to speak, others will not find those words pleasant even after listening. They would still find them unpleasant.

At the moment, clinging to our own ego seems to benefit us. But in fact, many mistakes in our life came from ego-clinging. Ego-clinging makes our relatives leave us. Ego-clinging turns us into bad and terrible people who become notorious to everyone in this world.

We need to ask ourselves and think about the things that we have done in this life and then we will understand this point. All the peace, happiness, harmony, and good things in this world come from being able to generate compassion towards others.

All the struggles, hatred, troubles, and unhappiness in this world come from being concerned about us without caring about others. It has given rise to conflicts between countries, regions, families, and within a couple.

In brief, we do not need a lot of explanations to understand how auspicious and important Lord Buddha is and how perfect and ultimate his qualities are. All of these came from letting go of himself and being compassionate towards others. Living beings have been suffering in samsara due to ego-clinging. They only take care of themselves without considering others and so they only continue to suffer.

In Tibet, there was a siddha called Drukpa Kunley. He went to pay homage to the Jowo Shakyamuni statue in the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. When he prostrated, he said, 'Lord Buddha was the same as us. We all suffered in samsara. But now, Buddha, you have become a buddha because you only think about benefiting others, familiarizing yourself with compassion, and undertaking activities that benefit others. That is why you became a Buddha at last. But I am still cycling in samsara because I only think about 'me', 'me', me'. I only care about my own happiness and act in this manner. So, I still cycle in samsara. Therefore, we two are very different – one has become a buddha and one continues to cycle in samsara. For this reason, I now prostrate to you, Lord Buddha.'

We all would like to have many friends. If we hope to have more friends, then we need to be compassionate towards others. We also hope others respect and admire us. As such, we will need to respect, praise, be kind, and be compassionate towards others in the first place. In this way, people will respect us in return.

We hope to be able to work on something great or nice. Then we will need to be able to give rise to compassion for others, help them, and be able to work with them in a friendly manner. Each of us does not wish to have suffering, troubles, and difficulties. Thus, we will need to work hard to reduce our ego-clinging and think less about 'me', 'me' and 'me'.

We do not hope others look down, criticize, or hurt us. We, therefore, will need to reduce our ego-clinging.

If we do not wish to make mistakes, harm others, and hurt the community, then we need to strive to reduce our ego-clinging.

In short, we need to realize that being able to give rise to compassion towards others can benefit ourselves and others. We need to strive to cultivate a mind that aims at benefiting others based on the understanding that being able to benefit ourselves has tremendous benefits when it comes between benefiting ourselves and others.

Moreover, we do not wish to be taken as a bad, terrible person by others. We do not hope to tarnish our reputation. Then we will need to cut the causes that lead to the above situation, i.e., ego-clinging.

We need to observe, analyze, think, and validate whether the situations that Khen Rinpoche just discussed are true or not. This is very important.

That is the end of Khen Rinpoche's teaching for today.

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