

**Live Teaching by Khen Rinpoche Kalsang Nyima**  
**'The importance and ways of taming our mind (8)'**  
**7:30 p.m., 27 October 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 (8)' at the Facebook page of 'Wake Up with Dharma' at 7.30 p.m. on 27 October 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.

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**'The importance and ways of taming our mind (8)'**

Please think that: To help living beings who are as numerous and vast as the space in attaining the liberating, supreme and perfect Buddhahood, I shall listen to the teachings in accordance with the Dharma. We need to generate this pure motivation [first].

What will tonight's Dharma teaching be about? It is about 'Utterly taming one's own mind'. This is the Dharma taught by our genuine teacher, Lord Buddha. Tonight, Khen Rinpoche will teach the ways of taming our mind that Lord Buddha taught.

In the Buddhist teachings that work on the state of our mind, there are so called 84,000 means. If Lord Buddha's teachings are summarized, then they are all about the skillful means of taming our own mind.

In the world, there are two kinds of people – those who believe in religions and those who do not believe in any religions at all. Among those who follow religions, there are two more sub-groups who recognize a creator god and those who do not recognize a creator god. The followers who accept the latter think that all the suffering, happiness, good and bad events are created and controlled by their gods. So, these followers can only pray [to their gods] all the time and everywhere. There are no other means than this.

But our greatly compassionate Lord Buddha did not accept any creator gods. If a creator god is not accepted, then we may want to ask how and where the external world and inner sentient beings come from.

Lord Buddha, our teacher, said that many causes and conditions give rise to both the external world and sentient beings. As such, everything originates from causes. If we wish to eliminate the karmic result, then we need to remove the causes of the result.

That is why when Lord Buddha turned the Wheel of Dharma of the Four Noble Truths, he taught that 'we need to know suffering.' That means we need to understand the result of suffering and how painful, troublesome, and difficult the situation is that we are in now and that there is no happiness at all. After knowing the result of suffering, it is not helpful and beneficial to merely say 'I find it very disturbing' 'I have great difficulties' 'I feel very sad'. If we want to eliminate the result of suffering, then we need to observe the causes that give rise to the result of that suffering.

How does the result of suffering arise?

Lord Buddha said that suffering comes about due to karma and afflictions. If we can eliminate karma and afflictions, then we can eliminate the causes of suffering. Hence, Lord Buddha gave a teaching on the truth of the origin of the suffering afterwards. This teaching is about ending the formation of suffering.

Furthermore, each of us hopes to have a quiet, perfect, and wonderful result. This result is Buddhahood - liberation and omniscient wisdom that can fully pacify all suffering and is vast and perfect. We hope to be able to get this unchanging peace and happiness forever. We also need to be free from suffering forever. Are there any ways to be able to achieve these? What are the ways of achieving them?

We do have ways by means of which we can attain Buddhahood and eliminate suffering.

How can we attain Buddhahood? We need to gain the wisdom of understanding the truth of all phenomena and develop great compassion, which is the skillful means. We follow the path of the union of wisdom and skillful means and can thus attain Buddhahood that I just talked about.

How can we generate this kind of wisdom and skillful means? How can we uproot all the afflictions in our mind?

The nature of mind of all living beings is stainless and primordially pure. All living beings have this innate nature of their mind. But we have not been able to recognize this stainless, pure nature. We fail to recognize and abide in it. We follow external phenomena due to tiny illusional thoughts that appear in our mind. This is the root of all

the illusions, delusions and suffering. This arising of tiny illusional thoughts and their movement prevents us from being able to recognize the truth and law that we need to understand. It is a misunderstanding that we cling to.

How do these tiny illusional thoughts arise?

When the power and colors of our mind appear or are in motion, we do not understand that that is the mind's power and colors. We think that 'the other' is not 'me'. We cling to our stainless, pure nature as 'me'. The movements of these tiny illusional thoughts give rise to the discursive thoughts of 'me' and 'the other'. These discursive thoughts have caused us to become attached to 'me' and angry at 'the other'. We therefore have discursive thoughts of attachment and anger. From the desire and love to 'self', we generate a serious desire and love and cling 'ourselves' and 'self' to as 'me'. Then we take things outside of ourselves as 'others' and become jealous of 'others'. Similarly, we generate pride when we think that our capabilities, qualities, reputation and wealth are better than other peoples'.

The actual situation is that the nature of our mind is emptiness. This emptiness is not nihilism or nothingness. It is a clarity that can understand situations clearly. On this basis, everything is just the mind's power or play which results in different unceasing appearances. The power and appearances are neither independent nor different - they are in union of clarity and emptiness.

Our restless consciousness does not know the reality of the nature of our mind. We cling to the reality and the nature of the mind as two separate entities, i.e. 'self' and 'others,' which in turn forms discursive thoughts of desire, attachment, jealousy and pride. These feelings are not the truth but are mistaken.

What I have just talked about is an illusion. But we think that the concepts of 'self' and 'others' as well as the attachment and anger that goes along with these discursive thoughts are real. We do not know that we are deluded. This situation is like placing a big piece of crystal [on the ground] while a tiger walks past. He sees its own reflection on the surface of the crystal yet does not know that the projection shows himself. He even thinks that another tiger has come and so he jumps towards the reflection on the crystal to fight against him.

There is a story like this. Once upon a time, there was a remote, poor village, in which a father and his son lived together. The son looked very much like his father. But the village did not have any mirrors, crystal or glass objects to mirror any objects. As such, nobody could see their own faces.

When this son grew up, he married a wife. As he got older, his father passed away due to his old age. Therefore, he had only seen his father's face. But he had never seen his own face. One day, he found some crystals on a mountain and so he picked up those crystals. The crystals reflected his face naturally. Because he looked like his father, he thought his father was in the stone. He did not know that image was himself. Since he had not seen his father for many years, he felt very pleased and started to talk to the crystal. He took the crystal with him wherever he went. When he missed and thought about his father, he would then take the crystal out.

His wife always saw her husband holding something without having any idea. She started to feel suspicious and very curious about that. She asked her husband to have a look at the crystal. But her husband declined that. That had caused his wife to suspect even more, and she tried to seize the crystal stone. After some time, she finally got the crystal in her hands. When she held the crystal which was like a piece of glass, her image was naturally reflected by it. She was not aware that the reflection in the crystal was her own. She thought that it was another lady and so she scolded her husband if he had been seeing another lady when holding the crystal. She asked her husband if he liked that lady. The couple fought together eventually.

Similarly, we are not aware of all appearances, i.e. all phenomena, in our mind. That is all phenomena in samsara are the projections of our mind. We cling to the dualistic difference of 'self' and 'others' and thus we have been cycling in samsara all the time. If we have the instructions and can reflect about the appearances of our own mind carefully, we will understand that these appearances are all illusions. We also need to know that these illusions can be eliminated and uprooted in different ways.

Since we do not understand reality, we are ignorant and stupid about the truth, we become attached to 'self' and angry at 'others'. This deluded mind has caused us to accumulate a lot of bad karma. If we can eliminate and purify ignorance and illusions, then the truth of our mind - the ground - will appear. At that time, we will be called Buddhas.

Our motivation and thinking process determine if things performed by our body and speech are virtuous or non-virtuous.

For example, a person has built a monastery that can house more than 10,000 monks and has built another 100 stupas around the monastery. He offers the meals to the sangha and has spent a lot of money. But this action cannot be said to be virtuous if his motivation is impure.

For example, someone does not stay in a monastery and is not in retreat. But if he has pure motivation to work and benefit other people, such as nurses in the hospitals with a genuine motivation to benefit patients, then they can still accumulate a vast amount of good karma from the work they perform even though they are not staying in a monastery or are in retreat.

If someone has left the family and moved into a retreat center and continues to follow discursive thoughts of attachment and anger without turning his mind to virtues, then his mind is still full of afflictions. Even though his body remains in a retreat center, he is still the same as someone not practicing the Dharma the way it should be practiced. Even though he appears to be practicing externally, he is still creating downfalls, i.e., the causes to be reborn in the hell realms, the realms of hungry ghosts or animals.

There are also people who stay in crowded cities with their family members. Although they appear to be performing mundane work, their minds are in accordance with the key practice points of Buddhadharmā and they tame their mind with fortitude, which enables them to attain siddhis, even as lay practitioners. There are many such examples from the past.

If we can turn our mind to virtue, then our body, speech and mind can accumulate vast amounts of good karma. If our mind is strongly influenced by attachment, anger and afflictions, all our actions that appear to be Dharma activities, such as listening to the Dharma, building monasteries and doing retreats, can never turn into good karma. On the contrary, we will accumulate a lot of bad karma. If we wish to have good results, then we need to work hard in becoming a kinder person. If our mind is imbued by kindness, then all the practices we do will become pure. The moments that we develop kindness will become meaningful and beneficial.

There are many ways of changing our own mind according to different situations.

Some people can change their minds by seeing their gurus and listening to the teachings. Some people can change their minds due to serious sickness or great difficulty. There are many different situations. In short, those who can bring about the greatest change in our minds in our lives are our kindest gurus.

In Chinese Buddhism, the master who bestows the refuge vow initially is being regarded as the most important person, and here are very important reasons behind this. It may be because we did not know about the Three Jewels and causes and effects at first and were truly ignorant. The masters who guided us to take refuge are often the people who

introduced the qualities and merits of the Three Jewels to us and explained details of the law of causes and effects first. Therefore, they become our most important person (master).

In the past, Lord Atisha, the founder of the Kadampa lineage, considered his most important gurus as those who helped him in giving rise to the precious bodhichitta in his mindstream. Lord Atisha had an amazing number of gurus. Whenever someone mentioned the names of his masters, he would fold his palms in front of his heart. But when people talked about one of his gurus, i.e. Dharmakirti or Serlingpa from Suvarnadvipa, he would become very moved, put his two hands on top of his head and broke into tears. Atisha's disciples asked why Atisha would only fold his palms in front of his heart when hearing names of other gurus but place his two hands onto the top of his head and break into tears when mentioning Serlingpa. Atisha replied that the merits and qualities of all his gurus were the same. However, it was due to the kindness of Serlingpa that he was able to give rise to a bit of bodhichitta in his mindstream at that time. Therefore, Serlingpa's kindness towards him was amazingly huge.

In the tradition of the Kagyu lineage, it is said that those who can directly point out the nature of our mind, help us recognize and remain in the nature of the mind are our most important gurus. In short, we need to change this untamed mind. It is not easy to correct our untamed mind. No matter what the hierarchy and reputation of our gurus are, the ones who give us teachings and can change our life are our kindest gurus. Some gurus are highly realized and very powerful. Even when they move their arms and legs, they can change our mind. There is such a possibility.

We understand best when and how our mind changes. Even when we are circumambulating stupas and temples, the actual purpose is to tame and correct our mind. Doing prostrations, making offerings, and engaging in Dharma practice are for taming our mind as well. Meeting different masters and learning various teachings is for the purpose of taming our mind. It is very important to understand this key point. Otherwise, it can be very dangerous.

Some people circumambulate stupas and temples without thinking of taming their own mind. They just care about taking photos to post them on the Internet and showing off in front of others. Others, when meeting teachers, are only concerned about whether the master is famous and has a good reputation. When they meet the masters, they only focus on taking photos to let them circulate among their friends or to post the photos on the Internet to show off.

As such, they spend a couple of months in holy places, meeting these masters. But their minds never change. When being asked as to how their minds have changed after doing so many things, they say they have never thought of that [changing their minds]. It is because they have never planned to tame their own mind from the start.

People just focus on boasting about Bodhgaya where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, Varanasi where Lord Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma and Kushinagar where Lord Buddha reached nirvana. In short, they are busy showing off. They also like to share the photos they took with those venerable rinpoches with their friends. After showing off, they think they are honorable and prestigious. Dharma friends who are new to Buddhism admire these people for being able to go to the holy land of India and seeing some great masters and virtuous friends. When being praised in that manner, they think of themselves as superb. But they still have not understood the true meaning of Dharma and are unable to change their minds, which is required in the practice of Buddhadharma.

Therefore, some people enjoy talking nicely to other Dharma friends. But when they find things unpleasant or unsatisfactory, they lose their temper with their Dharma friends, get angry at them and get into arguments. That is because they generally do not change their mind in their daily life and have not practiced patience. So, when something happens, the afflictions appear strongly in their minds.

Since beginningless samsara, the three-poisons or five-poisons, i.e. the afflictions, have been causing us so many difficulties and pain. But all living beings' minds are endowed with Buddha nature. We do not know the reality [of our mind]. But we inherently do have the wisdom that enables us to understand the reality. Our mind is endowed with compassion to rescue our parents, relatives and friends and even living beings who face all kinds of difficulties and suffering. Although we sometimes face difficulties and suffering, our mind has the innate patience that can take this suffering less seriously.

The nature of mind has the innate qualities including loving kindness, compassion, patience, openness, etc. from the very beginning. However, the power of our five-poisons, the afflictions, is so strong that sometimes they conceal the power of wisdom and compassion etc. as if the latter is relatively weak. In this way, we feel pain.

If we can cultivate such virtues as the innate wisdom and compassion that our mind is endowed with and are able to reduce or eventually eliminate the afflictions of desire, attachment, anger, ignorance, jealousy and pride, then this is called the practice of taming our mind or correcting our mind.

We find it unpleasant, and the mind is disturbed when afflictions appear in our mindstream. This causes suffering in us and others because of which we create negative karma that in turn will lead to short-term and long-term difficulties and suffering. So, we need to know the faults of having afflictions. This is very important.

We can remain at peace, be happy and see the mind's reality when good qualities arise in our mindstream. We will then not be so ignorant about the practice of giving and taking, will be able to benefit other living beings greatly, and achieve happiness and peace in the short- and long-term. Hence, if we can understand the benefits of knowing the excellent virtues and qualities [in our mind], we will be able to practice giving and taking wisely and very easily.

When taming our mind, we do not just listen to our guru. We also need to practice it diligently every day. We can use many different means.

For example, when Jetsun Milarepa was practicing in a cave, he did not have any food such as tsampa. He ate plants in the mountain to support his life. Once he got knocked off by stones and fell onto the ground as his toenails became very long when he was on his way to collect these plants. This has caused him to break all the food containers.

If we have just a container for holding clean drinking water, we would cry right on the spot after breaking it carelessly. It is because without the container, we will not be able to hold the water. We will become crazy without knowing what to do if we have just one phone and have broken it.

Jetsun Milaprea then said the containers were unbroken one or two minutes ago. But they broke after one or two minutes. The time of having the containers broken was very short. But the incident has become a very excellent teacher of impermanence. The incident was very useful for him.

It is very difficult for us to have some feelings towards impermanence, such as the fact that we will die. We never think that we will die but that we can still enjoy what we have for a long time. But the breaking of the clay container warned him about impermanence. The clay container reminded Milarepa that his body would die anytime as the broken clay container. The clay container became a teacher reminding Milarepa about impermanence and that he needed to practice immediately because he could die anytime.

For example, when we go to work in a company, some people are friends the day before and might become enemies the day after when a situation has changed. If this happens



and we can transform it as a teacher of impermanence, then the incident has tremendous benefits of changing our mind. If we are working fine in the company one day and lose the job the following day and take this matter as a teacher reminding us about impermanence, it will have huge benefits to our mind training. It could be the case that we talk happily and casually with our family members before but argue and fight with them afterwards. When we meet with such a situation and can still see it as a warning of impermanence and apply it in our practice, this approach can benefit us. When our health is fine the one day before and then we have stomachache the following day, we can use this situation as our practice. Every day we meet different situations externally and have different feelings. If we know how to make good use of these opportunities, we can change them into skillful means or friends of mind training.

If we do not know how to use these situations to change our mind, all the situations we face can become means for us to give rise to pride and afflictions. Some people are not able to change their minds even after practicing for several years. Some people keep on thinking how different they have become and generate pride after completing a three-year retreat. This is in fact non-dharmic. If we do not tame our mind, we have not yet understood the meaning of the Dharma even though we said we have met some masters and received teachings of certain practices. They have just become the causes of enhancing our pride.

Therefore, just as Lord Gampopa has taught, if we do not practice Dharma properly, then Buddhadharma can become the cause of our downfall to the three lower realms. All our short- and long-term difficulties as well as pain come from our disturbed mind and the five poisons, i.e., the afflictions. Therefore, we should dedicate ourselves to reducing and uprooting these afflictions. This is very important.

If we can generate uncontrived compassion and bodhicitta that can remove suffering and give happiness to living beings about all living beings, we can attain the seed of the three-kaya Buddhahood. The most important of all is that we need to nurture the seed of our innate compassion and let it continue to grow. There is nothing more important than this.

The benefits and shortcomings that I just talked about are all about whether we can tame and correct our mind or not.

Therefore, we should not follow those famous masters like others other people may do or follow them to take photos and eventually upload them onto the Internet merely to show off everywhere.

The most important thing is to tame our own mind. We know very well if our mind has been tamed and what it is thinking about. Hence, we should not lie to ourselves but should focus on taming our own mind. This is the lifeline of practicing and learning Buddhadharma.

That is all for tonight's teaching.

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