

The Eight Verses for Training the Mind

Origin: The root text was composed by Kadampa Geshe Langri Tangpa (Tibet, 1054–1123).

Podcast Episode #2: Verse 1

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Voice-over: M. Wendelboe

Synopsis: *Lakha Lama is sharing the deeper meaning and understanding of the first verse, which is about seeing all beings as precious and holding them dear.*

TRANSCRIPT

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The two things we are gathered here [for], one thing is, [that it is] kind of more good being together, and have the good food, coffee and tea, and the wine, and beer, and all this entertainment level, according [to] western tradition—but, [another thing is] deeply what we need is kind of more mental calmness.

So, for to develop mental calmness one has to recognize, realize what are the mental disturbing thoughts. Then one shall not try to escape from that. So, escaping meditation is very much into the Theravada meditation. Mahayana meditation is facing. So, there are two type of practicing and use in the meditation. So, we used to think of, “*I don’t want, I don’t want,*” that is kind of more escaping. So, instead of thinking, “*I don’t want,*” just say, “*okay, do I need to follow that or not?*” Then one can go more deeper into, for example, like fear worry and speculation, and all those things. So, this way you *SEE* some clearness of [the] first step: “*Okay, I don’t need to follow immediately, I wait and see.*”

And fear for the death—just wait until you... until the end of life, okay... And sometimes I got people [talking to me] about the fear for the death. And whatever I say, still—yes, fear for the death is so strongly following. Then lastly, I have no more to say! I will join the hands [and say], “*please don’t die before death comes!*” When the death comes, then there is no fear for the death. So, that is the reality.

About the Eight Verse[s], of course there are many [who] have been following the Dalai Lama and also following the different Buddhist centers [where] they got a lot of information. Just by the words I can go [through] eight verse[s] in just half an hour—that is easy. Looking more deep[ly], there, it should give some kind of more clearness. As long as we don’t reach to get some clearness, because then we just say, “*okay it is the Eight Verse[s] for Mind Training*” so, finish—no more next day.



Training the mind is in our society, in our life, we always train the mind. Training the mind in connection with selfish ego, in connection with non-selfish ego—there are two fields. Training the mind in connection with the dharma is very much based on non-selfish ego. Then, education, and learning, and practicing, all this is very much selfish ego in one lifetime's success or [in becoming] rich. We say "me/my," still we don't have the clearness of "me." "My," we say "my"—more belong to "me," and "I own," all this that you own—"my"—[is] only [in] this life time. Then, by that [comes] fear for loosing, fear for not [being] able to control, fear for not [being] able to own a relation and whatever.

So, that means very clear[ly] "me/my" is inviting some other heavy destructive mental factors as fear, and worry, speculation. And fear also—different type[s] of fear, then what to do? "Me," I say "me," okay!? I am thankful I am still alive. Then, whatever surrounding relation I am thankful I am still with [these relationships]. So, in the partner relation, society say, "oh 'my wife,' 'my husband'," the wife and the husband is addition identity. Behind the identity there are two humans sharing good or bad [*laughing*]. Then comes bad irritation, then heavy dialog. I wouldn't say arguing—heavy dialog. So, all this heavy dialog [be]comes very much connected to the "me/my," "me/my way," "my way of thinking," "my way of doing," "why don't you do it my way?". I have my way and other person also has their way. They say "my way." I can say "[the] other's way," but [the] other one says "my way," so both are "my way."

So, I will do my best within my capacity, or within my way of seeing more deep. I want to share that. I do not teach you. I don't teach you! I want to *show* you! So, if you are able to SEE then its good, if you are unable to see then it's okay. So, now we continue with first verse.

(Rinpoche recites Verse 1 in Tibetan)

With a determination to achieve the highest aim
For the benefit of all sentient beings
Which surpasses even the wish-fulfilling gem,
May I hold them dear at all times.

So, sometimes I need to follow these Tibetan words because they are translated direct from the Sanskrit—very very clean, profound. So, "bdag ni ... sems can" (*Tib.*) ... "sems" means "mind or consciousness," "can" means "form, which is contained with consciousness." So, like other things (e.g.) trees—we don't say they are living being, but living being can live in the tree. So, that kind of debate is very much ... basically there are four different Buddhist philosophers. They have a debate and some they say, yes—trees are living, flowers are living because when the sun rise, then they open, and when sun set, they go down, and this kind of more ... different some plants if you touch, they will just escape and go kind of ... So, then Madhyamika philosophy, Nagarjuna's philosophy says no, trees are "living" but not "being." So, this way "living being" means the form, which contains consciousness. That type of form is—so many different types of form, not only the human form, not only the animal form, there are so many. So, what I can see, when I watch the nature television things in the oceans, how many forms. So, comparatively to that we—human form—is so rich, valuable and contains with a lot of basic abilities. As we have the basic



abilities then we can add more learning, and education, and practicing, and we can add on top of that.

So, that is why we talk about having the human form. Human life is very precious life and we have the basic quality, abilities. Then addition is selfish addition or non-selfish addition—there are two. Non-selfish developing is developing care and one can also say compassion and more valuing other sentient beings. So then, “*sems can thams cad*” (*Tib.*) that means all sentient beings—why? For to develop love and compassion—care... If you don't see the suffering then where to develop the compassion and love? So, therefore [it is] very important to value [that] every sentient being is helping me to develop. So, if I say, “*yes, I see the worm,*” then I say, “*okay if I am like worm, then I have no possibility to develop.*” This worm is a living being, yes—living being. Humans are also living beings. The difference is [that] the human has so much ability and so much capacity but the worm does not have that. Okay, when you see the snail do you feel appreciation that you are a being, a human being? That kind of valuing! As we are human being we should value. So, then valuing this snail or worm or whatever for to develop, they are kind of looking as a—yes, field of for to develop love and compassion. All other beings, like fish or whatever, and they all have the suffering.

So, this way we value. “*mchog tu 'dzin pa*” (*Tib.*) means for to develop love and compassion, you see the suffering world and want to benefit, to guide the other suffering living being for to develop. Then, for to develop (directly develop for to develop) is more in the human field. Then, for the animals, insects, all these connection with wishful thoughts. That is why we have [the Four Immeasurables recitation](#).

So, that [*the Four Immeasurables*] is not only for the human beings. Then, within the human being of course we say we suffer, we have the problems and bla, bla, bla... So, we give the identity “*problem*” and identities are very much dominating. Due to the identity dominating, that is hurting the psyche. So, without giving the identity, what is the fact? I have sickness—I *have!* Then, I want to use that sickness for to purify my negative karmic pattern. So, this way I can transform my heaviest sickness, give the new identity, benefiting for to purify my negative karmic pattern. So, then use that sickness in the best way. So, maybe [you can be] happy to have the sickness. Then also, there are many ways, if you lose everything, so, one can also mentally transform into, “*oh yes, it shows impermanent.*” The reality, as a human we are born with nothing. When we die, we leave everything, material thing or relation, but the thoughts, holding on—attachment, we hold on what we don't have. When we didn't have anything, we don't hold on anything. Do you see that truth? So, in the Christianity they also talk a little similar about “*childish*” or child mind, or something.

So, that is what I am talking about... On the side for to develop the love and compassion field is every sentient being, one should be very thankful for [*them*] helping *me* to develop. Then, as I develop my love and compassion, I will care [for] all other sentient beings [to be] guided toward—there are two levels: Free from the samsara; that by developing my love and compassion, I can guide them to [be] free from samsara. And it's not connecting to the, “*oh then I will be great, I am so lucky and all this*”—*it's not!* I am thankful for this. So, that's the humbleness, not the pride.

Then, the other level just in this life, in society, no matter, east or west or south, no matter—anyhow, human beings need each other. Human beings need each other, [not] only humans, we



also need the nature [i.e. humans need both each other and nature]—nature beings and natural resources. So, there is a lot to thank. Without natural resources we can't eat the stone and iron and computer—iPad [*laughter*]. For the natural resources, they are similar to human body resources. Human body resources, not only human body, all living being body resources is very much in need of five elementary circulation. So, nature also need these five elementary resources [*ed. earth, water, fire, air and space*]. So, in this way, some will look at our body as earth. So therefore, even one does not connect to develop love and compassion, but just being on this earth, having the surrounding human beings and other living beings and nature. Therefore, we have the reason to be appreciative and thankful. I don't want to give the identity of "mother earth" bla, bla, bla—no! Do you buy the vegetables? You buy potatoes? – Yes! Is it produced by machines? Earth! Earth contains the five elementary functions. So, some things you can work [with] and put in the seeds, some things you don't have to put in any seeds, it produces [by itself]. So, I think nature people in Africa and some other areas they go to the forest, and they get the things. And, especially in Denmark in the autumn, you can go and pick up the mushrooms. Who planted the mushrooms, all the trees, forest trees, who planted [them]? So, [it's] the nature elementary energy in the earth that helps to grow.

However, there is a lot of things to be thankful [for]—not only human being. "Mchog tu 'dzin pa gang." Then, "rtag tu gces par 'dzin par shog"—so, "yid bzhin nor bu las lhag pa'i" (*Tib.*). If you have a very precious stone, like a diamond, can you develop love and compassion by having the one kilo diamond help me to develop my love and compassion, or develop my love for the money?

P:¹ *It depends on how you look at it. You might say that you have something special that no one else has—but if you say that you hold something beautiful in your hand and you share that beauty with the world, and that you can become curious about more things, then it could bring some kind of love and respect towards the diamond as well as worldly power and money. It doesn't have to connect to selfishness.*

R:² Yes, I understand it's individual. Can you really follow that? When we have a one kilo diamond you can give [it to] someone. So, [at] that time you have to [have a] very strong feeling of giving. That will help develop your care and whatever, your bodhicitta practice. But [the] receiver might develop a lot of worries and a lot of speculation and calculation. Human life is a hundred thousand [times more] valuable than material like a one kilo diamond; comparatively.

So, when we talk about diamond then use the intellect into the dharma field. Then, that is the best use. Intellect: surface looking and judging that is one type of intellect. Intellect: use the intellect to look more deeper, SEE and RECOGNIZE, that also the intellect is helping [with]. So, this way the intellect is not only kind of [on a] relative level, the intellect can be used at a very deeper level. So, Buddha has developed, by using the intellectual way to analyze. So whatever teachings, they are not just teachings. It's very much deeply making research by the clear intellect. So therefore, Buddha says, "*you must examine what I say as you examine the gold, and don't just follow because I say it.*" So, [that] gives the place to us

¹ P = Participant

² R = Rinpoche (Lakha Lama)



to, to make research and analyze. Then, what we see is much more benefiting. So, I do not just read and just say, "ohh yes, yes, yes," no I don't! I think, "okay, my way—what I can SEE." That helps me a lot. Anyhow, that is what I can share, what I see according to this first verse. So, these two days I am not going to use the express train.

Discussion

- R: When you look more carefully, first at oneself, and if I follow my emotions, destructive factors; do I feel comfortable? Do others feel comfortable with me? What will you answer?
- P: *That is obvious—you know that from experience. If it is uncomfortable for me, you also know it is uncomfortable for others.*
- R: Yes, instead of thinking of the compassion be aware of, "I know how I feel. I know how others can feel with my emotional reactions." Do I keep calmness? Yes, I keep the calmness, not the compassion. I don't disturb myself and I don't disturb others—so, I keep calm. So, there are two ways. You can be kind of more tough with your ego. Selfish ego—that is one thing. You can be tough guided by your dignity. That dignity connects to the compassion feeling, not towards the anger.
- P: *The story goes that in one of The Buddha's former lives he offered himself as food to a hungry tiger mother to prevent her from eating her cub. That story makes me think, "My goodness, that was nice of him."
But it also makes me think behind the story, and that he (at that time) must have obtained a greater understanding that made this kind of action meaningful. There must have been more to it than just being a nice and kind fellow. There must have been some higher meaning to it...?*
- R: We talk about life, okay—life as the physical life. Consciousness continues. So, when you are more dignified and firm, this physical life is used for to benefit the hungry tiger mother. So, that means motivation or intention is very very clean. So, that motivation and action is—we call it good karmic pattern for to obtain the enlightenment. You know Buddha doesn't have the body. Buddha is kind of more wisdom—it's not the body. So, these are all former lifetimes, practicing patience, generosity, ethics, and moral, and determination, all these kind of more connect to those practices.
- P: *You mentioned yesterday that Buddha didn't point the finger but he showed instead, and just a practical advice; for instance, when I was in the hospital there was a lady and for some reason the doctors didn't help her. She was screaming from pain, but she didn't get any help. And in those circumstances, I felt a lack of compassion from them. I could not understand how they could not help her. So, I wasn't quiet, I told them, I asked them, "why don't you show her compassion, she is in pain, you are..." and so forth. My question is hence, do you think I should just have been quiet and not say anything, when you see that there is a huge lack of compassion? Am I then pointing the finger, should I just be quiet, or should I say something?*



R: Then, there's also a way to express [oneself]. One can express with kind of a more requesting way, and one can express with a complaining way. You can say to the doctor, "yes, I really wish you could do something for her." When we say something in connection with the irritation, then your language is irritated language.

So, another thing is ... I wish all sentient beings will be free from the suffering. I have that wish. Do I reach all sentient beings? No, I am just packed [stuck] in Denmark. Even all the Danish I can't reach, and now I reached some people here. Then, I don't know how deep I reach or how surface I am reaching. Reaching has two sides—so then, find the middle way; one can share. Then, who can digest, who can't digest, that is very much to do with how you are used to follow the mental factors. Even the food—before you digest, you chew in it. Isn't that right?

P: Yes.

R: Then dharma! Better chew first...

P: *I have a question to verse one. What is "the highest aim"?*

R: For oneself—hmm... CALMNESS. And when you value other sentient beings, you do not really follow the emotionally thoughts. So, whatever you see, good or bad, whatever you see you just SEE it—you do not judge. So, one way is very wise and another way is best stupidity.

P: *But isn't it also the heart that overflows—you have so much love within you that you need to give it to somebody. Isn't that also a high aim?*

R: Give and receiver is different. If [you] don't receive, [you] don't receive.

P: *Of course, no—people can refrain from receiving, but you can feel the need to give... And someone then might receive...*

R: Okay, you might also need chili—can you receive chili?

P: *What you say is interesting... If you feel this need to give and to pour out one's love or whatever, then there is some kind of addiction to that, because you have this need and that there will be someone who wants to receive it. I say this in relation to myself because I can recognize this need.*

R: "Love" in Danish is combined in two words: "care" and "equality." Equality is very very—is the important one. Care is more easy... Equality is not that easy.

P: *It makes me think that there must be some limits to it in a way, since there is so much suffering in the world, which can be frustrating to me—especially to my ego. How far can I reach with my compassion? One thing is within a smaller group of people, but there is so much suffering that there has to be an accept of some limitations.*

R: You understand there is accepting [and] not accepting, you understand [that]. There are a lot of suffering. You understand you cannot reach all of them. Then, what you can do [is] just have the good wishes [that] they will be free from the suffering. That you can remind [yourself of] every day. So, it's not something like everything you can practically reach and



have to do—then, you will be exhausted or you give up. I am following this more deeper level. It's not something like you have to force yourself—*no not at all!* You find your own way, how you can take steps and what you can develop, using your own analytic [mind], hmm...

R: So, I got a lot of teachings, Dalai Lama, this master, that master, studying in the monastery, philosophy, all these, but I examine by myself what I can connect to. Ability, what I can use. I heard hundred times of "love and compassion" *hallelujah!* So, I don't use the word "love." I use the "care." Care for oneself and care for other.

[Be] aware of the language. Sometimes [I] happen to say something not very pleasant. Then I feel sorry. Yeah, then it reminds [me to be] aware [the] next time, [to] be aware of [the] language. But then, sometimes what I see [is that] everybody wants the truth. Then, can they take the truth? So, truth—relative truth and deeper truth—there are two, and all these dharma teachings that is mostly connected to the deeper truth, not the relative truth alone. Relative truth is comparative. Relative truth, one can like and one doesn't like, there are two different. So, then who doesn't like will complain or kind of say something against [it]. So, [at] that time, if I am able to respect [that] she doesn't like to hear that, then I am calm.

Okay...

Appendix Discussion

The discussion continues based on the [Seven-Limb Prayer](#) that was part of the recitations during Lakha Lama's teachings of the Eight Verses for Mind Training.

P: *In the Seven-Limb Prayer, verse six, we are requesting the enlightened ones not to pass into nirvana and beyond suffering until the cyclic wheel of life has been emptied. That sounds to me a bit dualistic as if you disappear once you obtain enlightenment. How is that to be understood—this request to remain...?*

R: Yes, 'the cyclic wheel of life', where is the wheel—outside or inside? When this wheel (*pointing to his brain*) stops turning, then more connection with heart—hmm... So, that's individual, not every living being.

P: *In regard to the Seven-Limb Prayer and that verse, as I read it, we request Chenrezig not to pass into nirvana. I don't really know what that implies, but as to my understanding we pray that we will still be able to connect to this aspect, and that this will support us and help us to progress on our path. Is that totally misguided...?*

R: What is Chenrezig?

P: *Well, it has something to do with the capacity of practicing compassion in regard to all living beings—a very deep compassion.*

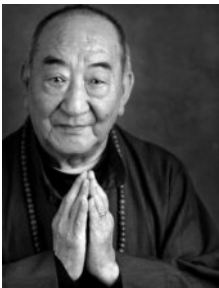
R: Hmm, so that means the compassionate... I don't know, we have to use some language. I can't find the language—this compassionate quality can develop [in] every human being.



Lakha Lama

Yes, instead of [saying] compassionate, [we can say] developing [a] much more broad mind. We are sugar-coating compassion, very small mind, narrow mind. The compassion—the language says compassion—but philosophically what it expresses is “*nying je*.” “Nying” means “heart,” “je” means “care”—hmm...

As for us, Chenrezig as a kind of more symbolic compassion, highly developed or very stable, unshakable compassion. So, my wish [is], “*I can develop my compassion [to be] very strong and very stable as Chenrezig.*” So then, the prayer in the language says, “I become Chenrezig.” It is not I become another Chenrezig; I become my compassionate Chenrezig. So, bodhicitta practice is not one week, one month till you become something “*bodhicitta hallelujah*,” no it’s not there! First, you copy, imitate. So, what you can imitate—be humble, and we have difficulties in ... many people, they find it difficult to be humble, and maybe difficult to understand what is humbleness. So, my way of humbleness—I make it very simple: *We have the differences. So, I respect the differences.*



Lakha Lama, born Thupten Dorjee in Tibet in 1942, was appointed as a spiritual leader for around 100,000 inhabitants in eastern Tibet at the age of five. In 1959 he fled to India as a refugee and then came to Denmark in 1976, where he settled and started a family.

Based on basic human needs, Lakha Lama shares the Dharma and its message in a unique and simple way that makes the philosophy and methods accessible to all.

Lakha Lama's many humanistic and cross-cultural activities have attracted thousands of followers within Scandinavia and throughout the world. One Swedish follower commented: “*Lakha Lama is to Scandinavia and many Tibetans what the H. H. Dalai Lama is to the world.*”

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