

Venerable Robina Courtin  
*How We Purify Karma (unedited)*  
Osel Shen Phen Ling  
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### ***Introduction and Motivation***

Okay; so let's carry on from these verses...Let's think again, remind ourselves of our motivation. We're going to listen to these ideas of the Buddha, as tools to bring into our life, to develop our qualities and to help others. Thinking like this; that's why we're here; thinking this way.

So, again, just to give some context here for this series of Eight Verses; these cute little verses, seemingly. They're actually from the Bodhisattva path; and they're in fact from a very particularly kind of outrageous approach to cultivating these marvelous levels of love and compassion where we're really trying to literally exchange ourselves for others; not just sort of use continually the reference point of 'I', then 'I' stretch out to reach out to love others and have compassion for others; but not just that; but to actually completely go beyond the 'I' to exchange self for others, to put others first.

They say one of the criteria of having accomplished bodhicitta, for example, which this is the basis of, is that there's no longer the thought of 'I'. I mean, this sounds insane to us, you know? Way beyond what we think would be possible.

So, these verses here, seemingly simple are about this radical approach of ripping out the self-cherishing, ripping out the sense of self that goes first, and actually putting others first. This training in this way is, you know -- the application of these ways, these techniques is to help us accomplish that.

So, the last time we talked, Thursday -- wasn't it? Yeah, Thursday. We talked about karma; and I think I wanted to continue talking about karma and how we purify it, although it mightn't relate exactly to the verses here. So, I'm going to ignore the verses for the moment -- I kept thinking there was a way I could link them, but there just isn't, so I'm going to keep talking about karma, okay?

### ***The Basis of the Buddha's Teachings***

As we've been talking, you know....the basis of the Buddha's teachings, the kind of fundamentals, really; I like to call them like the 'pillars', the basis of the Buddha's fundamental view of the universe is the idea of the mind, consciousness; not physical, doesn't come from a creator, doesn't come from parents, and it's beginningless -- you know, it's a bunch of things to have to take on board; each point fundamentally different from how we think now. We either think a creator made us or mummy and daddy made us, our mind is our brain, you know; and in either case, that god made you or mummy and daddy made you; in both cases you think you *began* back then -- before that moment there was no such thing as you.

The Buddha's view is completely different; completely different. So utterly different that to really take on board Buddha's tools in your daily life, you know; at least you can take this as your hypothesis. I'm not going to ask you to believe it; you don't swallow it whole -- that's not the point. You're taking it as a possibility, you know, that your consciousness is *yours*. All the Buddha's teachings are based upon this assumption that you come into this life fully programmed with your own tendencies; with your conditions called *your life*, you know.

### *Two Main Ways That Karma Ripens*

3:38

There's two main ways that karma ripens in our own life -- well, three; but two main things. One is you get born with your own tendencies and they don't come from your parents. This is the biggest shock to us. You certainly can't blame god for a creator, not in Buddha's view, but -- you know, your tendencies are *yours*; and this is the basis of all Buddhist practice, actually: that your mind has the potential to change and what's in your mind is yours -- all the good stuff and all the bad stuff. It's *yours*. Why is it there? Because you put it there. When? Before. How come you're good at piano now? Because you put it there. When? The day before the day before the day before, you know? You practiced. You have a tendency in there and you practiced it.

So, we come born with a bunch of tendencies. We can see ourselves, our mothers didn't teach us lots of the things we know -- we call them 'instinct'. Well, the Buddha just calls that 'karmic imprints', that's all -- karmic imprint, you know -- whether it's a tendency to kill, or lie or steal or be loving or be a maniac; doesn't matter what it is. The tendencies are there and they're *yours*. This is the simplest way to think of it: *they're mine*. The tendency of ego is to always blame someone else, to think that it's not my fault, to think 'I didn't ask to get born', to think it's because of what my mother did when I was seven or what my father did or what the teacher said or what happened here or my genes or my DNA or my chemicals. We'll find every reason in our mind to kind of think 'well, it's not my fault'. That's why we say, 'Oh, but...' 'But when I was seven this happened...' but what we're really saying is, 'But you know, Robina, it's not my fault.'

Ego wants desperately to do this; it's the nature of ego to put responsibility *away* from myself. It's very painful for us, for some fascinating reason, to be accountable for what's inside us. Everything in our being wants to put the blame on somebody else -- my DNA, my genes, my mother, my father, the teacher -- what *they* did to me. It's very deep in us, it's very instinctive; it's very natural. That's the view of ego. As Lama Yeshe calls it, that's the view -- he calls it the 'self-pity me'; and if we analyze carefully -- and this is why we have to be very clinical and analytical of what goes on in our mind. This is what being a Buddhist *is*: being your own therapist -- observing very clearly your own mind, giving labels to what happens in your own mind; not labels to what your mummy and daddy did to you -- we love to remember that -- but naming what is going on in your *mind*. It's a really precise job to do, and it just takes time for us to go inside there and look at it.

But we don't even know what that means. As Lama Zopa says, we don't even realize that our mind plays a role –

'Why are you angry, Robina?'

'Well, Dinae said this to me and Dinae said that and Dinae did this and Dinae did that.'

'Tell me about your anger, Robina.'

'Well, Dinae said this and Dinae said that...'

'No, no; you're talking about Dinae. *What about Robina's anger?*'

And I'll repeat again what Dinae did because as far as my anger's concerned, she is the thing I'm describing.

This is very interesting, this point; it's utterly fascinating. We so objectify everything, you know. "Why are you happy, Robina?"

'Oh, well, Bob gave me this and Bob gave me that...'

You know, even in love –

'Oh, I'm in love with Bob...'

'Tell me about your attachment to Bob.'

'Oh, Bob's so divine; he's this and that and...'

'No, tell me about your attachment, Robina; that's about Bob and his nose and his eyes. That's Bob. Tell me about your attachment.'

'Huh?'

We don't even understand what it means, because attachment only thinks of the object. Anger only thinks of the object. Self-pity only thinks of the object. We can't even see that there's a thing called a 'state of mind' describing an object.

That's really the first step into really being your own therapist: when you've actually got the ability to acknowledge states of mind, and you think: 'that's *my* state of mind, that's *mine*'. And every state of mind is a viewpoint. This is what's totally interesting. It's a viewpoint; it's an opinion.

So our heads at the moment are full of opinions. Everything is an opinion – this is quite fascinating, actually. I'll say there's a cup on my table – that's an opinion, actually. But it happens to be an opinion we all agree upon; so then we call it a 'fact'; but it began being an opinion. You think about it: we made up what 'one' means, didn't we? We made up what 'cup' means. We made up what 'table' means. We made those things up and we agree upon them. So, we're all so used to believing in 'one cup on my table' that we don't think of it as a viewpoint or an opinion anymore. This is a really incredible point, this, but in fact it is an opinion. It happens to be an opinion everybody is in agreement with, so there's no argument.

'That's an ugly cup on my table' – that's also an opinion; and we will have arguments. We won't think that as an objective truth; but if there's a bunch of us here who hate pink people – we're all pink people racists, let's say – see, we won't think it's an opinion. When it's very strong in your mind, you don't think it's an opinion. A person who's a racist and doesn't like pink people won't say, 'Whenever I see pink people, they look very ugly to me, but I do realize it's just my own projection.' No way – we will say, 'Pink people *are* that!' And this is the point, the specific point that Buddha's making: right now with our very strong instinctive viewpoints, we don't think they're a viewpoint; we think they're

*objective fact*. We don't think they're viewpoints, we think they're objective fact; and we don't even think our mind plays a role. We know we're angry, but we don't think it is doing anything; we just think it's the result of what Dinae did to me. I'm an innocent victim of an unfair action and I'm now angry.

So we're not thinking we're projecting onto Dinae; we're not thinking that what we thought she did was really an *opinion* of what she did. We're thinking what she did is a *fact*; because our unhappy mind is so grasping. And this is the nature of all the negative states of mind, all the negative opinions: they're the voices of ego and they are very deeply ingrained, very instinctive – to the point that we don't even *think* they're a viewpoint. We don't *think* they're an opinion. We *think* that whatever we're seeing is *true*. When we can really begin to see this distinction, we are becoming a Buddhist. We are on track; we are expressing the intention of Buddha --bserving that whatever appears to us -- ugly Dinae, beautiful Bob, ugly cup – is a projection of something that is in my mind. That's the part that is so fascinating. This is what takes time to see. So whether it's called 'depression', whether it's called 'anger', whether it's called 'jealousy', whether it's called 'fear', they're all *merely opinions* that arise in the mind, that are there very strongly – so strongly that we think they're just instinctive; so strongly and instinctive that we don't think they're an opinion – that then *cause* things and events and people to appear a certain way to me. *We don't think our mind is doing it*. We just think it is *like that*: 'the world is a depressing place'; 'the world is a fearful place'; 'Bob is a divine person'; 'Dinae is an ugly person'. We don't think our mind is thinking it; we think it's *true*. This is the part that's outrageous. This is what Buddha's saying; and that *everything* in the mind is like that. *Everything in the mind is an opinion* – everything that arises in my mind colors and determines the way things appear to me.

This is why Buddha says how our minds make things up; and he's not being just 'cosmic'. It's *literally* true: depression literally is a series of stories in the mind – an elaborate conceptual story that causes people and things to *appear* a certain way. Anger is a series of elaborate stories in the mind that causes people and events and things to appear in a certain way. Love is a series of stories in the mind that cause people to appear in a certain way. The difference between anger and love would be that anger is a lying story and love – relatively – is a valid story. They're both stories, they're both opinions; but one of them is in sync with reality and one is not. That's the part we have to understand; this is the way Buddha talks.

This is like saying 'there's one cup on my table', and 'there's two cups on my table'. They're both just thoughts; *they're merely thoughts*. But because we have eyes and we look over here at my table, we can see that the thought 'there are two cups on my table' is not true. It's a thought; but it's got no objective basis. 'One cup on my table' is a thought, but it has an objective basis. Depression is a thought, but it has *no* objective basis. Love is a thought, but it has to some extent an objective basis. This is how Buddha's psychology talks. This is what we have to discover. If we say we're Buddhists, we have to learn to understand what this means.

This is what Buddha's psychology is talking about; this is how Buddha talks and by understanding this approach, this is the way to enlightenment. This is the key to understanding how we change our mind.

So, it's a tough job; it's utterly against the instinctive job which is to put everything 'out there' and to believe in what I'm seeing and then to blame other people for it. 'It's not my fault' – this is the view of ego; this is the instinctive view of ego: to see everything as a projection, but to *not know* it's a projection; to think it's real, to believe in it. Bad enough, as Lama Zopa says, bad enough that our mind does what it's doing; bad enough that we have depression, anger, low self-esteem, rage, jealousy, anger, arrogance and all the rest in the mind; bad enough we have these. Bad enough that they cause us to see things as the way they appear to us; but the worst part is we believe it's true.

That's quite tricky – and this is the way of factoring karma into it: we come into this life totally programmed – to the point of complete instinct – with all these voices. We don't learn them fresh from our new parents; we come *fully programmed* with these instincts; so we just keep increasing them, buying into them, believing them. This is what Buddha means by 'being in samsara', quote unquote. Samsara's not 'out there'; samsara's 'in here', you know? So, it just takes time to see this; to see how our mind is lying to us every second.

So karma, just to even understand Buddhism to some extent – not to 'believe' in it, but just to try to comprehend what he's talking about – you've got to factor in this idea that you come fully programmed into this life with your tendencies. They're all fully grown already, and then you just keep repeating them.

So, the fisherman comes into this life – like I said on Thursday – with a view: as soon as he sees fishing, it looks good to him. The other little boy, who had – you know, the one I mentioned who was three years old and crying because his mother was taking the lice out of his head, and he's full of compassion for the lice... 'Mommy, mommy, don't hurt them, it's their home...' He came programmed with compassion; he's never killed a living thing. He's, like, thirty-five and he's never killed a living being because he came programmed with the practice of compassion in the past life that had empathy even with the lice in his own head. The other little boy came programmed with the tendency to kill, so he sees fish and doesn't want to save them or like them, but he wants to kill them, and of course, you think it's good.

Whatever your habit is, it's familiar to you so you see it again and it triggers a good feeling. That's why people like to torture – because of habit; it appears good to them. So whatever your habit is, you know, you follow it. If you've got a habit of being lazy – you know, you love being lazy – it's hard to go against that. You have the habit to eat, you have a habit to kill, if you have a habit to lie, if you have a habit to get depressed, if you have a habit to blame, if you have a habit to get angry... they're all habits. You come programmed with habits. That's what 'personality' means: there's a bunch of habits in there. Luckily, we have some habits to be kind, loving, intelligent and all the rest. They're the things that save us. They're the ones we're trying to grow, the habits we're trying to grow. If we

didn't have those, we wouldn't be in this room. We wouldn't bother thinking about the meaning of life, you know?

So, in relation to the two main causes of suffering, as far as the Buddha's concerned, the delusions in the mind, which are the negative tendencies, these neuroses, these voices of ego, these deeply instinctive viewpoints that feel utterly real; as truths. The most immediate level of practice is to at least consider that they're there even though we can't really see them, we're so buying into them; at least protect ourselves from following them more and more every day and therefore avoid responding in a negative way to the situations of our daily life. This is the most immediate level of practice, as Lama Zopa says – watch your body and speech and mind like a hawk. Protect yourself from creating more negative seeds.

The other level of practice – more long-term – is, you know – given that we've come fully programmed with a whole pile of junk from countless lives that are sitting there as tendencies in the mind; as latencies that haven't yet ripened as suffering which we can't see the evidence of *at all* – we need to allay, to delay the growing of these as quickly as possible; and that's called 'purification' of negative karma. So let's talk about that one. That's what I was getting to on Thursday.

### ***Purification***

**19:09**

So, purification' sounds like religious, doesn't it? 'Purify', you know, but it's the most simple of concepts, actually. If you had a tendency to do something like, you know, if you've got a tendency to not know about mathematics, the most obvious antidote is to know mathematics! So every time you learn mathematics, you weaken the tendency of not knowing mathematics, don't you? Sort of obvious; if you have a tendency to say, 'oh, I can't be bothered', then obviously the simplest, most obvious antidote is to *be* bothered – to force yourself to go against that and do something. If you're playing the piano and your finger goes on the wrong note, obviously the antidote is to go onto the right note. So, this is the most basic level of purification. You change the habit. You have a tendency to be angry, then obviously the antidote is to have a tendency to stop being angry; be patient. If you have a tendency to see the world in a depressed way, you go to the opposite. So the most obvious purification of any old habit is to do the opposite. It's a simple psychological thing – which implies you've got to see the habit in the first place.

There's another more potent way, you know, of purifying; and this, again too, is based upon the view of karma that we come fully programmed with these tendencies into our lives; and so we have to acknowledge these tendencies and then the very first step is – and this is in relation to the *actions* of our body and speech, which are those things that impact upon others – the very first step is to acknowledge that you're doing those and so – given that you have a tendency to be impatient then the obvious antidote is to *be* patient. If you have a tendency to kill, the obvious antidote is to refrain from killing – that's the most basic. But here, there's this other approach, too; like at a more profound level, if you like.

The first step has to be – the first logical step, before you even apply any antidote has to be that you acknowledge that it is something that you want to regret having done.

So this is the view of karma in Buddhism. Buddha said that everything we think and do and say – and there's *only* stuff that we think and do and say; there's nothing else. There's what we think, and on the basis of what we think, we do and say things. That's it. No other bits and pieces of us, are there? There's body, speech and mind – that's it. It starts with the thoughts.

So, the very first level at which we're trying to control ourselves is the level of body and speech, which is the stuff that impacts upon others. So, you know, the first step has to be then – we have to acknowledge certain actions that we've done with our body and speech that harm others. And the thing we have to do with those is acknowledge we've done them and then we have to *regret* having done them. The first step in this process of purification – there's four steps – is called 'regret'.

### ***'Guilt' is not 'Regret'***

**22:27**

Now, we know another state of mind really well that feels like regret and we even think it is; and it's called 'guilt'. Guilt is a disastrous state of mind. Guilt is a voice of ego. Guilt is just self-pity. Guilt is no accountability. Guilt is just rubbing your own nose in your misery and making it worse. Guilt is blame; except you're the object instead of another. Guilt says, 'I did that and I did this and I did that and I'm a *bad* person.' That's how guilt talks; and we love to think that. It's the instinct of ego to think that – self-pity, remember? It's exactly the same as anger: *you* did this and *you* did that and *you* did this and *you're* a bad person – it's exactly the same state of mind. The difference is, is *you* are the object. It's the identical state of mind – guilt and anger. The same state of mind, different object; and they're both *useless*, utterly useless. They're the voices of ego and we run to these instinctively.

So what we have to do is change that voice from guilt to regret. The first part of it is the same: you do acknowledge, 'I did do this and I did do that.' 'I did steal the money.' 'I did kick the dog.' 'I did kill my grandma,' whatever you might have done. You've got to acknowledge you did it. But instead of saying, 'I'm a bad person,' you say, 'What can I do about it?'

Now, why would you say that about this? Why would you want to do something about it? So, the assumption here is that we have to acknowledge that it's called a 'negative action' – so what's a negative action? Like we talked on Thursday, Buddha's view of a negative action is very simple. It's got nothing to do with his saying it's negative – which is the usual view; that's how we have faith in god. A negative action by definition is one that god says *is* negative; one that god says you shouldn't do. That's what defines a sin in the theistic religions. *Nothing* to do with it in Buddhism; and this is what defines bad actions in our world: the judges say it, the police say it, mummy and daddy say it. That's why we say it's bad; because mummy and daddy said not to do it. There's nothing like that in Buddhism.

### *What Defines Actions as 'Negative'*

24:58

The reason Buddha points out 'don't kill' is from his own observation. He has seen that killing is a negative action. And why is it negative? He says it's very simple: other people don't like getting killed; just do your market research. It's very simple. It's almost so simple it's embarrassing. It's a convention; it's something we all agree upon. In this room, we have an agreement we won't kill each other. Because why? Because we all know being killed isn't cool! You check the behavior of a dog if you try to kill it; it won't be happy. You check the behavior of an ant; it won't be happy. You check humans; they won't be happy. So, based upon that response we can deduce -- therefore, Buddha says that killing is called a negative action. A negative action, for Buddha, is defined as an action that harms another. It's so simple, it's a joke. It's so simple; and all Buddha's doing is pointing it out to us. He's not revealing it from heaven or anywhere. He's pointing out a conventional fact. So, that's what he means by 'negative action'.

### *The Importance of Motivation in the Creation of Positive or Negative Karma*

25:40

Now, we can see the world does these things; but there's a very interesting point here. We discussed this on Thursday but I want to say it again here and be very clear. One: a negative action is one that harms another; but, two: what is it -- and this is a crucial point -- what is it, when you do it, that causes you to create negative karma? What does that mean? What does it mean, 'create negative karma'? We can agree that killing is bad; we can all agree on that, but and this is the point -- it doesn't follow that when you do it... another way to put this... it doesn't follow that when you do it you create negative karma; and this is the Mahayana interpretation, like I said on Thursday. And the key to understanding this is the motivation for doing it. It's exactly the same as a good action -- Buddha would deduce that a virtuous action, a good action is one that benefits another -- again, do your market research. Easy to prove that people like being generous to, people like being kind to. People like being loved and supported and given things and looked after. This is very obvious; that's a virtuous action because it's made other people happy -- not because god said or Buddha said.

Again, though, it doesn't follow that when you do a virtuous action that you create good karma. Let's say that I think that Jenna's rich and I'm being all creepy-crawly nice to her because I want her money. Do you understand -- because I'm attached to getting her dollars? Well, it looks like I'm being very kind to Jenna, doesn't it? No; the motivation stinks. So therefore I'm not creating virtuous karma when I give her five dollars -- because I'm just hoping she'll give me five hundred back, you know? So motivation is the key. My *hand* is giving her five dollars. She gets her five bucks; she's happy. My *mind* is manipulating; my mind is wicked, my mind is cheating. We understand this so totally. That state of mind -- of hoping she'll give me more, therefore pretending to be kind -- that state of mind is what causes me not just to not create good karma; but I'm creating negative karma.

Just the same, Jenna can have that mouse in her kitchen; she sees the mouse's suffering; her heart breaks for it, she can't believe the suffering of the mouse and she thinks killing it will help it. She only wants to help the mouse so she kills the mouse. Now, we go and check Buddha's little checklist of Ten Don'ts and one of the first ones is 'don't kill'. Oopsy-daisy; well, that's a negative action. But Jenna – she had compassion in her heart therefore she created good karma. *Her motivation is the main factor* that determines whether what you do brings a negative or a positive result to you. This is a crucial point to understand. This is the Mahayana interpretation.

That's why the Tibetans say, 'You don't know who anybody is, so don't judge.' Back off, you know; mind your own business. Of course, it is more complex than this because there's more factors involved; but this is the crucial thing to understand. In Buddhist view, morality – by definition – is doing actions – first level is refraining from doing actions that harm others. That's the definition of a negative action. But, the point is -- right at the beginning – why you regret having done a negative action isn't because it's harmed another; first step is because it's going to harm you.

### ***Why Regret? Recognizing That Negative Actions Cause My Own Suffering*** **29:37**

So, why I regret killing – and this is the point. Let's say I've got a mouse in my kitchen, let's say; my intention, which is equal to karma – intention; my intentional decision – 'I will kill the mouse.' The mouse is there; I kill it, it dies. That's a complete action of killing; but look at my motive. Under the heading of intention there's various sub-headings; the key one is 'reason for killing it': 'Because I don't like a mouse.' You know; mice in my kitchen -- I have aversion and anger toward mice. So, that anger in my mind; therefore, wanting to harm the mouse is what informs it as a negative action for me. Hers was good. Even though the poor mouse went to the lower realms – she probably put the mouse from the frying pan into the fire; that's another discussion – but from her point of view, what was in her mind was the wish to help the mouse. What was in *my* mind was the wish to harm it; so therefore what I'm regretting is the action of killing and the anger that motivated it because – why am I regretting it? Because Buddha says, everything we do and say and think *necessarily brings consequences to our self*.

So this first step of regret has got *nothing* to do with compassion yet – *nothing*. That comes second. This is our self. So, I regret having killed out of anger because that has just polluted my mind and it will ripen as lower realm rebirth, my habit to keep killing and my getting killed. They're three of the consequences of any action: the fully ripened result, the tendency and the experience similar to the cause.

So, because *I* don't want those consequences – just like if I've eaten too much food and I don't want the consequences of getting overweight – you don't have to get all noble about going on a diet – 'Oh, I want to be beneficial to others; I must get thin!' Rubbish! You want to get thin because you want to feel healthy and you want to be nice looking yourself. That's for your own sake; nothing

wrong with that; then eventually compassion for others will grow; but the first step in negative karma, the first step in regretting what you've done – nothing to do with guilt – is this recognition, this *marvelous* recognition which we mostly don't have that there are consequences to *me* of everything I think and do and say. When we can get this, we really become a mature, grown-up person. We're like children right now who want to get away with what we do because we think it's other people's fault; it's not *my* fault. 'Oh, it's not my fault because they did that to me when I was seven;' like as if it's a valid reason. It's not a valid reason; it's ego's reason, because we're a baby and we don't want to be accountable.

So, really, it's grown-up to be accountable, to own my tendency; it's there because I had it before and I follow it because I followed it before; and I have to have this mature, grown-up attitude which we fight and kick and scream to get that whatever I think and do and say brings consequences to me. This is so tasty, I tell you. It's so incredible. It's so mature. It's so calming for the mind. That's accountability; and Buddha's view of karma is the *ultimate* n accountability: you create yourself. You practiced whatever tendencies you've got in your mind in the past; that's why you have them. Your mother didn't do it, your father didn't do it, it's not random, it's not your mother's fault, it's not your father's fault, it's not the Catholic nuns' fault, it's not god's fault, it's not gene's fault, it's not the DNA's fault. It's not anybody's fault. It's just there because you did it before. So, own it. Own it. Own it.

The regret will come naturally: I am *sick* of this suffering, I regret from the depths of my heart the killing, lying, bad-mouthing; they're the things that harm others. And then of course I can afford to regret the anger, the depression, the hopelessness, the self-pity, the low self-esteem, the jealousy, the pain, the hurt, the fears which are *breaking my heart*. They are *my* tendencies; no one put them there; they're mine. Own them; and when you own them, you feel courage and you can change them.

Fear is the result of not owning them. Fear is the child's response. I mean, join the club; we're all children – it's okay. So, owning them, and then realizing they're going to bring consequences to me; 'You know what, I am sick of suffering. I'm fed up with suffering, thank you very much, so I regret from the depths of my heart the actions I have done to harm others.'

So, on this little 'Buddha's checklist of Ten Don'ts', there's hardly many things...you think about it, there's not that many things you can do with your body and speech to harm others. You can be quite creative; you can be a torturer and come up with all sorts of methods; but mostly we're kind of pretty boring. We lie, we bad-mouth people behind their back – one of our worst crimes – we say harsh words, we just rabbit on about nothing; that's speech -- four things. There can be variations there, but that's pretty much four things. And there's maybe three things we do with our body: we kill, or we harm – physically harm other people with our body. We steal things that don't belong, and we misuse our body, you know, to fulfill our own sexual attachment. That's it; there's hardly many things you do with your body and speech to harm others. There's not that many; you shouldn't get overwhelmed by it. It's not complicated; you

can go through this checklist quite quickly, and you regret each one. Because why? Well, you don't want these things to happen to you. You don't want the tendencies, that's for sure; so, 'I regret having lied, killed, stole, this, that, blah. That's it; it doesn't take too long. Because I don't want the future suffering. I don't want this to come to me.

And this is Buddha's fundamental principle, his observation. He didn't create this concept, he didn't make it up. He's not speculating; it's his own direct observation of how the world is – that whatever anyone does, says, and thinks leaves an imprint in the mind that will ripen in the future in that mind, in that life as those experiences; those tendencies and those experiences. This is Buddha's observation.

So clearly, because I don't want further suffering – I'm sick of it – I *do* regret having done this and this and this because I don't want the future result; I'm sick of suffering. That's regret; it's a very wholesome, self-respectful, grown-up attitude – nothing to do with guilt. So we have to change it, because guilt is our natural response. We have to change the script, change the words. Don't just go by the feelings -- that's silly. Change the words.

So then obviously you think, 'Well, I regret it; what am I going to do now? What can I do about it? How can I change? What can I do about it? What can I do about it?' Guilt just stamps up and down like a baby, moaning and complaining and feeling sorry for itself same as anger; it's not much help at all. It's just like the lamas always use the example of having eaten poison. When it comes to things like food and behavior, we know very well there are consequences to me of what I do; we know very well that if you eat something called 'poison', it'll bring suffering to *you*. Like I said before, you don't have to be all noble about it – 'Oh, I regret eating poison because I can't be of benefit to others.' Don't be ridiculous; you regret eating poison because you don't want to get sick! The first step is *you*. Come on... So imagine how silly you'd be if you go, 'Oh, I ate poison and I'm such a bad person...' You'd have guilt every day about eating poison; what good is that? It's bizarre, isn't it? Every day you're getting sicker and sicker and you just go, 'Oh, I'm a bad person. Oh, I ate poison. I'm a bad person.' That's what we do with guilt – we just rot in this nonsense in our own mind. Well, the other response we have which is blame: 'Who put poison in my lunch?!' That's absurd; you're getting sicker and sicker but all you care is who put it there. You're not happy that Marlboro made the cigarettes, but you've got to regret smoking and give them up, please, before you try to blame Marlboro and sue them; meanwhile you're getting cancer! And the other ridiculous response we have when someone says you've done something bad – 'I did not!' We live in denial; can you imagine if someone points out that you've eaten poison in your lunch – 'I did not!' So we blame, we have guilt or live in denial; they're our three responses now, like babies, you know? *Anything* but own it. The sensible response is, 'Oh my god -- what an idiot! I ate poison! Quick, what can I do about it?' because you don't want the suffering; that's the attitude of regret, the first step.

As Lama Zopa says, this practice of purification, these four steps we're going through; we're insane not to do it every day – completely insane. Given that every microsecond of every thought, action, and word is a karma; you're sowing seeds throughout the day in your mind; and given that you're in samsara pretty knee-deep, most of those seeds will be motivated by attachment, aversion or ignorance; which means they're called 'negative' – which means they will ripen in the future as your suffering. So, if you don't start doing a bit of weeding every night, you know – pull out a few weeds before you go to sleep – what an idiot!

### *Reliance*

**39:54**

So, the next step, you know, the second of these 'Four Rs'—the first one is 'regret' -- the second one is 'reliance'; and that's got two parts. If you're regretting taking poison – whom can I turn to? – obviously you need a doctor. You rely upon a doctor. So, there are really two main reasons for relying upon a doctor. The first thing is you've got to not want the suffering. That's the thing that motivates you to find the doctor; because you can't bear the thought of the future suffering from the poison. And the second thing is you have to have some confidence that the doctor's valid; and that's up to you. So our doctor here we're talking about is the Buddha. We're relying upon the Buddha and his medicine.

So this is again the difference between being a Christian or a Muslim and being a Buddhist; the crucial difference. If I'm a Christian, and indeed as I was -- a Catholic – because god said 'don't do this' and I go and do it then my regretting having done it demands that then god forgive me, because he's the creator. That's reasonable.

But the Buddha is not the creator -- for the Buddhists – therefore he didn't create the laws of morality; therefore it's not a question of him forgiving you. He's a nice guy; he probably will forgive you. But that's not the issue. That's not the point; forgiveness is not the issue; and this is a very interesting point in our world as well. We mightn't be Christians or Muslims or have a concept of a creator; but we've all got this view in our world – we do something wrong and we're desperate to get the other person to forgive us. But that's mostly just ego; because we're so craving other people's approval; that's our biggest attachment of all – craving of other people's approval – that we will do *anything* to get them to say, 'I still love you, Robina; it's okay' So, what looks like virtue – my apology to you and begging you to forgive me – is really me covering my own ego much of the time. I'm not saying there's not genuine compassion there for the other person, but it's mainly covering myself. That's why you keep doing it again: because you haven't made deep enough commitment to change.

So, forgiveness is fine, but it's not what purifies you, Buddha says. So, relying on the Buddha is not requesting him to forgive you. That's not the issue. The reason you rely upon a doctor – you don't need a doctor to forgive you for smoking cigarettes. That does not change you, I promise you. You need the doctor because you've checked up that he's a valid doctor and that he's got medicines that work. You take his medicine and apply it; so *you* have to do the work, not the Buddha. You *rely* upon the Buddha as a decent doctor; it's a crucial difference. Of course,

if you have the view of a creator, that's your business. We're not discussing that here.

So, 'reliance' we call refuge. We *rely* upon – we take refuge in the Buddha on the basis of his being a good doctor and you've checked up on that. You just don't *believe* he's a good doctor, you've checked up on that. You've checked on his methods and you have confidence in them; and the reason you turn to the doctor is because you don't want the future results, the suffering; so you use his medicines. That's the proof of refuge: reliance.

### *Compassion for Others*

43:17

But there's a second part to this second heading, 'reliance'; this is where you have now compassion for others. I mentioned this last week, this kind of approach; we discussed it in the second verse of this text. This approach of – the *first* verse – the Tibetans talk about how we *rely* on suffering sentient beings; meaning in order for me to cultivate compassion – which is the second part of the practice here now; the first part is compassion for yourself; regret – now we've got to cultivate compassion for others, for those we have harmed. So in order – they call it 'reliance' because in order for you to have compassion, you've got to know about suffering sentient beings, so you need them; and if you're really brave you need sentient beings who are your enemies, who have harmed you; because they're the basis of real compassion – and we'll discuss this in a minute. As Geshe Sopa said, 'Bodhisattvas *need* their enemies.'

So what does this mean? Well, first of all, we're trying to cultivate compassion for those we have harmed. So, for the first one, we regret all the killing, the lying, -- the objects are the sentient beings, the sentient beings we have harmed, lied to, stolen from, killed; and we regret *for our own sake* in the first step. Now we're regretting for their sake; so we think of those sentient beings. So you can take one of more in this life; maybe the one you aborted, maybe the fish you killed, maybe the deer; maybe, you know – who knows – maybe you killed your husband, your mother; I wouldn't know – lied to people, stole from them; all these things. You think of the sentient beings you've harmed; and you think of them, and you think for their sake, 'I'm now regretting. I must purify myself for *their* sake,' and you try to have empathy for their pain.

And then second -- if you can -- be brave enough to have compassion for those who have harmed you. Now, this won't come naturally until you've got refuge down – karma. All of this is based on karma – Buddha's fundamental view that every being brings their own mind with them; their own tendencies from their own past actions *and* the experiences they have are also the result of their own past actions – all of the good ones, of course, as well as the suffering ones. This is the fundamental assertion of the Buddha's. This one, one has to take on board if one wants to. This is the basis here.

So when you've got compassion for yourself, meaning 'I'm sick of this suffering, I'm sick of this misery. So what am I going to do about it? I'm going to regret my neuroses and my misery and my negative and my killing and my lying because I

don't want the future results.' It's like having compassion for yourself. When you understand that for yourself, it is easy to understand, to have compassion for those who have harmed you; because it's the same basis. One, for yourself – this is renunciation – one, I am sick of suffering; but, two, why? You know, why? Why am I suffering? Because of my own past karma and my own neuroses – my own delusions. So then you look at others and you go, 'Look at that suffering.' Either the suffering of the victim, and you go, 'Look at that suffering,' and then why are they suffering? Because of their own past karma; or you look at the harmer and you go, 'Look at the suffering he's causing himself in the future'; and *that's* the basis of compassion for those who harm.

Once you've got it for yourself, it is *easy* to have it for others. Once you've got this renunciation, it is easy to have compassion. As His Holiness says, you cannot have compassion until you've got this first one. It's not valid; because this compassion that we have now is the compassion for the 'victim', compassion for 'innocent victims'—animals and children. We love to have compassion for animals and children because we think they're innocent. Well, Buddha says they've all had countless lives – you know, Hitler was a baby once, little old Adolf, isn't he cute? Excuse me – we love to see innocent babies. It suits us for some reason to think babies are innocent. I'm not trying to be mean here; it sounds shocking to our ears. Of course that's based upon the assumption that mummy and daddy made Hitler and mummy and daddy made this cute little baby and then somehow it turned into some evil monster – maybe some Jews harmed Hitler as a little boy and it made him want to go and kill six million of them; who knows? All very feasible, isn't it? Anyway, where was I? Raving on... Any questions so far? Questions so far?

### ***Hitler's Human Birth***

**48:00**

Q: On the question of Hitler... the fact that he had a human rebirth means that you must have created some positive karma...

Ven.: of course you did; there's four tracks of karma, aren't there? One is the fully ripened result...there's billions of karmic seeds in the mind all in different stages of development and growth and nourishment. And so there's four tracks – four separate tracks. One is the karma that ripens at the time of your past death. For Hitler and for you, we can deduce it was a morality karma. That became the throwing karma – a very specific one that programmed your mind – yours and Hitler's -- and caused it to go to a human mummy's womb. This is one.

But then, at the same time for Hitler – and the complication of all – no one's judging it all or making it happen; it just happens – the second way for karma – at the same time for Hitler – all those tendencies of his ripened in that particular package. The third is, all the 'experiences similar to the cause' – all the power he had and the fame and hate – all loving him then turning against him – all that ripened as well. All that ripened even before he died in the past life! There's several tracks of karma.

Mother Teresa got a human birth. At the same time, all the particular tendencies that she eventually expressed ripened at the same time to be *her* particular personality, as opposed to having Hitler's personality. And the third one is the karma she had to be seen this way and seen this way. And then the fourth one, of course, is what they call 'environmental karma'. There's four tracks of karma; distinct tracks that have no direct relationship with each other. Can you see what I'm saying?

So you can be born a person with a bunch of good tendencies and a really lousy way you're treated. Do you understand what I'm saying? You could be a person who lives in this world; you could have really bad tendencies – you could be a psycho, a murderer, a thief -- but you never go to prison. You're treated beautifully by people. So, there's two tracks of karma there: one is called 'experiences similar to the cause' which is how people see you; and that could be really good. You're loved, you can live in rich houses, people think you're great; but you're a psycho inside. You can be in prison, which is a lousy experience – everyone hates you and thinks you're the scum of the earth, but you've got really good tendencies: you were blamed for something you didn't do; you're a loving, kind, patient person. So, you've got one track of karma called 'experiences similar to the cause'. You have another track of karma which is your own tendencies – your 'actions similar to the cause' and these don't have a direct relationship at all. Can you see what I'm saying?

There's a poodle, for example. Someone has the karma to be born as a dog, with a mind as thick as a post; a stupid little animal, you know? But it's given best calf's liver and insurance policies and it's like, you know, Helmsley's dog – a little Maltese somebody-or-other that was given all that money, you know; left a hundred million dollars in the will, you know, to a little dog. So then, really good experiences similar to the cause, but a mind of a dog and the body of a dog; so what use is that? You understand. Wrong combination. You understand what I mean? Any other questions? Yeah, go, Bob.

### ***Animal Rebirth***

#### ***51:19***

Q: I'm thinking about – because I'm getting into discussions with my son a lot – about animal rebirth. So, I'm thinking about, like, a baby wildebeest is born and immediately jumps up and knows right where to nurse...is that 'result similar to the cause'?

Ven.: That's tendencies. That's tendencies; 'actions similar to the cause' – completely, totally, instinctively knowing exactly what to do. That's exactly what we call instinct, isn't it? It's because of tendencies to do those things from the familiarity of being a little animal, you know? Actions similar to the cause. Whatever the tendency is, in your mind you hop up and do it, hop up and think it. Look at my three-year-old little boy with lice in his head crying with compassion. His mummy didn't teach him. The little boy that likes fishing, the little wildebeest that pops up – same thing: action similar to the cause. Doesn't that make sense? The experiences are what happen so you.

### *The Karma That Animals Create*

52:24

Q: So, animals are constantly creating the karma to be reborn as animals?

Ven.: Hell-beings, mostly; or spirits and everything. Negative lives, suffering lives; not possible to create virtue...

### *When do These Karmas Ripen?*

52:45

Q: But the karma that ripens that the baby wildebeest knows immediately what to do – when does that ripen? Does that ripen...

Ven.: I would think of it this way: in the past – there's Bob, alright? Whether it's a wildebeest or Bob, okay? In this case, we'll call it Bob...so, a few weeks before your consciousness bopped into Bob's mummy's womb – what's Bob's mummy's name?

Q: Gladys.

Ven.: Gladys – I love it; Gladys. That's a very Australian name, actually. There's Gladys, probably in bed with your father, presumably. What's his name?

Q: His name is Russell.

Ven.: Russell and Gladys were doing their thing; you weren't conceived in a Petri dish, right? Okay... so there's Russell and Gladys doing their trip, okay? Well, right then, we can track back the very subtle consciousness that ran into their womb; track that back a couple of weeks – it could be up to seven weeks – that mind, which we now call 'Bob', was in another body. And let's deduce it was in a human body, and it was the time of the death of that human. So, at the time of the death of that human, we can deduce – from the fact that that mind went to Gladys' womb as opposed to Gladys and Russell's dog's womb in the back yard; you with me? – we can deduce that the death was a fairly peaceful death. And that meant – because the mind was peaceful – it also then ripened -- it enabled to ripen -- a very strong habitual seed of morality or non-harming. As Lama Zopa points out, like I said before, 'probably practiced in the context of a spiritual path', was a very strong tendency, probably even practiced as a *vow* to not harm; that habit ripened at the time of your death which became the *throwing* karma, the main seed which would then put your consciousness on autopilot and cause it to find its way to Gladys' Fallopian tube.

Do you understand? But at the same time -- at the same time -- all the tendencies that would become Bob's personality, well, these bunch of little seeds – there's trillions of seeds on this mind, but the ripening of that particular Bob indicated also the ripening of a certain type of personality – all those seeds of your personality ripened; then even the conditions that would become your new family – being born, American, Russell, Gladys, their relationship, blah; all the drama 'out there', the conditions – they all ripened. All this little package ripened right then, before you stopped dying; now, the wildebeest, the same. There's the wildebeest; it could have been Fred. But Fred spent his life not necessarily being

Hitler but being a regular old ordinary person – killing the fish and killing the deer and killing the ants and sleeping with his next door neighbor and bad-mouthing his sister and never looking at his mind; just acting out his own rubbish, acting out his own nonsense but particularly killing -- we'd suggest – without ever a second thought and, let's face it, most humans kill *something*; even most religions say it's cool to kill. Do you understand?

So that – let's say Fred was doing that; Fred was your brother. Let's just say. You're Joe and there's Fred. But you're a little practitioner of virtue; and Fred was a nice guy, you loved Fred but he practiced killing and he wasn't a Hitler, he was a regular ordinary person but followed his instincts; followed his old habits. Well, at the time of *his* death, because he never thought about impermanence, he completely is in a panic status. Negative karma ripened – of course his killing karma was the main one. That triggered his mind – all the other tendencies, his personality and his conditions that then caused *his* mind to be on autopilot and – boom! – he leaves that body and he rushes straight to the wildebeest mummy in Africa; but you go to Gladys' womb in – so all of this whole personality and the experiences and everything else all come as this little package; and that's just a few of the trillions of karmic seeds in your mind and it's just a few of the trillions of karmic seeds in the wildebeest mind.

Now, *you've* also got karma to be a wildebeest; but in your case human stuff ripened -- your wildebeest karmic imprints are way down. But you can see some humans like, you know, torturers – that's animal karma, very strong; animal karma. Not trying to be rude about animals, but animals torture each other unbearably because their ego-grasping is so primordial; and their habit is to harm each other brutally. Well then, those karmas are inside you too, but they're not ripening as Bob. But for some humans, who manifest in this life with a tendency to torture from the time they can remember; their animal karma came along in their human life. Maybe Bob has a very strong tendency to sexually abuse people -- that's an animal karma. Most of the negative things we do – I'm not trying to be horrible – because Buddha's psychology refers to *all* living beings and there's a whole spectrum of possibility of types of beings with types of physicality: animal, human, spirit, god – they're just different psychological states with different types of tendencies, you know? And we can see, lots of humans are animal-like. Lots of animals are very sweet and patient and, you know – you understand?

So these are the tendencies in our mind and, depending on the karma that ripens, we've all got these tendencies very deep. Whichever life you get, you run into those habits, you know. Does that make sense?

Q: Yes. Yes it does. Oh, yeah, yeah, absolutely... I'm just processing... I was thinking about when you said the trillions of things that ripen at that birth; they ripen...

Ven.: Before you die!

Q: Before you die...

Ven.: Oh, god, yes; it has to be! Listen, listen, listen; if the throwing karma to become 'Bob' ripens before you die, well, 'Bob' isn't an isolated body; Bob's got a personality! Bob belongs to Gladys and Russell! So, obviously, *all* the experiences similar to the cause, all the personality and the shape called 'Bob' have to all ripen simultaneously. Do you see my point? It has to; you can't separate this human body from Bob's personality. Your human life's got to be at the same time, you know, ripening. Does that make sense?

So, you've got karma to be a wildebeest, but it's just not ripening in Bob's life; not in this particular life, you know? Do you understand what I'm saying? But all those other sets of karma are there, waiting for the conditions to manifest as a wildebeest, as a bird, as a giraffe – who knows what, you know? They're just states of mind, along with some physicality – that's all they are, for the Buddha.

### *The Importance of Cultivating Virtue*

59:27

Q: So, it's vitally important to end this human life with practice...

Ven.: Cultivate the seeds – and that's where – it's like, Buddha's view of our karma is like learning how to grow a garden. He says we can all grow a good garden and a good garden would consist of, you know, patience and love and kindness and compassion and what are the cause of these? We've got to learn what seeds grow that, darling; it's very simple thing; he says it's a natural law; one can take it on board. We can learn what seeds to not grow, and which ones to grow – just like you would if you wanted to learn to be a gardener.

And then you know very well – if you know the law of botany – if you know the law of botany, no one, you know – let's say I've never heard of botany. Let's say I've never heard of botany; and we know it's a natural law but I've never heard of it. And then, you've got this acre of ground out there that looks barren to me, but you know you've sowed all these seeds. And you can proceed to give me a vision of what it'll look like in fifty years, right? And you know you can do that because we all know the laws of botany; they're predictable – given the laws, all the other laws work as well. And I'll go, 'Wow, you're clairvoyant, Bob!' And you'll say, 'No, Robina; I just know the laws of botany.'

Well, Buddha talked about karma in the same way. It's not some 'cross your fingers and hope for the best; no one knows' and that's how we think about these things; Buddha says it's as predictable as botany, you know? That's how he talks.

So, it's up to us to know – if we're taking Buddhism on board in our life and that's our choice – to take on board his rules, his laws and take them as our hypothesis, and then know the fundamentals. Do I want happiness? Well, happiness, Buddha says, comes from actions that are done that don't harm others and by doing things to benefit others; and suffering comes from actions that are motivated by neuroses and delusions and 'I-based' and fear that cause suffering. It's a simple, practical law; it's not punishment, it's not reward; no one's doing it to me, no one's pulling the strings, no one's calling it that. Buddha says it's a

natural law. Lama Yeshe says, 'Karma takes care;' like botany takes care. Put your seeds in; you pick your nose in peace and wait for the garden to come, isn't it? Put a bit of water in now and again and you're done. Karma is the same, Buddha says; which is a very interesting view, because we don't think of religion this way; we think God runs the show – and that's fine; I'm not complaining about God. It's just not Buddha's view, that's all; or, no one runs the show; that's why we're all living in a state of panic. 'Oh, no one knows... one never knows... you never know... I'm so bad...' All I'm doing is telling what Buddha says; you don't have to believe a word of it... You're the boss, not Buddha; I'm telling you what he says, that's all. Anyone else? Yes?

### *We're All Junkies; It's Just a Question of Degree*

**1:01:56**

Q: What type of karma is it when people harm themselves, like, a junkie hurts themselves, but, their motivation is obviously they think they're going to get benefit from it...

Ven.: That's called 'attachment', sweetheart; and Buddha says we are all harming ourselves and we're all junkies; it's just a question of degree. I'm not kidding, now. Attachment is – okay; it's most interesting. The Buddha's psychology says that the – we've got these positive states of mind and negative states of mind and neutral states of mind in his little model of the mind. Forget the 'neutral'. The positive ones in general we know the words – love, kindness, blah, blah blah; we know these things. The negative; the ones that really run the show day-to-day quite subtle deep-down is this thing that he calls 'attachment'; but its deeper, more energetic level is actually this deep, primordial sense of dissatisfaction way deep down; and some of us have it really grossly; we just feel nothing's ever right no matter what I've got, no matter what I do; always finding fault, always feeling 'nothing is enough'. And this can be quite serious, and I think if you think of being a junkie or an alcoholic or a person who gets up to six hundred pounds in weight – the craving for food – it's quite a serious mental illness of dissatisfaction – do you understand what I'm saying? – because no matter what you do, you're never full, you never get enough. That's the serious suffering of attachment. Some of us don't have it so seriously but the Buddha would say if we look into our mind, that's what motivates all of us to some degree. That's all.

So that's what harms us, because attachment is this belief – there's all these different functions of attachment. The deepest level is this dissatisfaction which then causes us to crave after something. 'I believe that'll do it for me – the food'll do it for me and doing this'll do it for me and I'll get this and I'll do that...' whatever the habit is; depending what the habit is that you do; whatever it is that you've got karma to do or think – behavior, you know? 'If I do that then I'll get happy.' And that's why – where's that bloke? He's not coming today – what's his name? The one who says he goes... Bill – who doesn't like to kill, but he goes fishing and does flies – fleas – flies?

Students: 'Catch and release.'

Ven.: 'Catch and release.' That one. So, whatever – he's got this tendency, you know, in his mind – he doesn't want to kill on the one side but he's got this tendency; that's what makes him happy. He does it almost every day. Some of us like to eat food and some of us like to have sex and some of us like to torture. Some of us like to help each other – I mean, aren't we fortunate? You know what I'm saying; so it's good that we've got some virtuous tendencies.

So the attachment, the neediness, the craving, is the one that's the source of pain; and then when it doesn't get what it wants, that's anger or depression or guilt – depends on the kind of person; it goes in or it goes out. And if it goes out – you know, the only reason people harm others is because you're not getting what you want and it becomes either massive rage or deep depression or you kill yourself or you kill someone else.

So this attachment or aversion are the two we go between a thousand times a day, Buddha says. And if our minds are reasonably stable, we see them at a subtler level; they're not maybe very gross. Some people are more content than others, you know? You can see that these are the fundamental – these are the criteria -- these are what Buddha says is what 'samsara' means; being caught up in this. So, when we've rid the mind of ego, the result, he says, is blissful contentment, blissful joy, blissful love and happiness and love and compassion and wisdom and all the rest, you know. So we – the point the Buddha's saying, in the first stages of practice when we begin to look into our own minds and see attachment and anger and the rest, *they* are what break our own hearts and so it's in this sense that compassion is for yourself first. We harm ourselves, Buddha says, as a result of these delusions; and that's how we then harm others. And renunciation is the recognition of this – to whatever degree we each have it. Do you understand?

Someone else? Anything else before we go to the next two hours? Yes?

### *How The Wildebeest Gets a Human Rebirth*

**1:05:48**

Q: Can you sort of quickly tell the story of how the wildebeest takes a human rebirth?

Ven.: Well, it would be quite difficult. Okay; the wildebeest or the ant or the human; we've all got trillions of karmic imprints and they're all in our minds and they're beginningless, Buddha says. Okay; so there's Fred doing what he did, being Fred and the killing karma which is his main tendency -- you know, nourished by his other negative actions; not being Hitler or anything; I'm not trying to say that – they ripen; and that's the wildebeest karma ripening. Okay. So once you're down it's quite hard to get up, because when you're in the wildebeest mode, your ego-grasping – which we've all got – is ten trillion times more intense. Your ignorance is ten trillion times more intense. You've got all these virtuous imprints in your mind but you can't access them; and your view

of the universe is the view of the wildebeest, which is to kill or be killed and -- what do they do? Are they killers?

Q: Grazers...

Ven.: But they probably kill if they're threatened? Whatever wildebeests do; who knows what his tendencies are, you know, whatever their tendencies are... But basically, the main energy of being an animal, the Buddha would say, is primordial ignorance. Now, we've all got this ignorance; we've all got these tendencies but in an animal they're more extreme. There's less opportunity for an animal to access wisdom or kindness or compassion or forgiveness, which we can sort of see, without trying to be rude or hieratical, you know? That's just an animal's mind; it's just primordially caught up in who it thinks it is; enormous attachment, enormous aggression, enormous fears and all the rest. So all they can do every split-second is create negative karma. It doesn't have a choice.

So, the only opportunity for it -- for one of its virtuous karmic seeds to ripen is to meet a certain condition that might encourage it. So, the wildebeests -- are they pets? Do you meet them in zoos? You meet one in a zoo, don't you? Well, maybe this wildebeest met Lama Zopa in a zoo -- I remember, for example -- Lama Zopa's really very funny like this. The Buddha's view about karma is *any* sentient being; whatever it sees or hears or experiences leaves an imprint in its mind, okay? So the Buddha's view would be of course to try to get animals to get imprints of something virtuous, because that would help encourage its own virtuous karma, you know?

So, Lama Zopa, I remember, visited the zoo in Singapore. He's having his picture taken with this big ape; and all he was doing was shouting mantras into the ape's ear, you know, talking to the ape; saying prayers in its ear; in Rinpoche's mind -- being a Buddhist -- leaving an imprint of the Buddha and the imprint of mantras in the ape's mind so that maybe could help encourage some virtuous karma it had from fifty-seven lives ago or something; who knows?

So certainly for your own animals, the Buddhist view how to treat your own animals would be to, while you go to work, you put CDs of the Dalai Lama's teachings on repeat all day so it hears the karmic imprints of the virtuous stuff. It can't understand it; but it leaves an imprint of something virtuous, you know, of something holy.

So maybe the porcupine -- I remember the porcupine at the Singapore zoo -- it was mesmerized, like this, you know, by Lama Zopa shouting prayers in its ear. Or while we were in New Zealand, Rinpoche got us to gather all the goats in the field and locked them in, and he put loudspeakers up and then he taught -- he shouted the sutras to them for the next hour or two, you know? So that might encourage a virtuous imprint in the mind. Including your old senile old grandma, have her a CD on all day as well and help her virtuous karma ripen at the time of her death.

So, the karmic imprint's got to ripen; to have an opportunity to have a condition to allow it to ripen. That's why there's more opportunity for a domestic cat or dog to get a better rebirth if you take the opportunity to put some decent things into its mind, you know; and prevent it from killing.

Q: ...and it pays to have a sort of peaceful death?

Ven.: And to have a peaceful death -- very important. Yes; that's why it's so important, if you do have an animal, try not to put it down, you know? That's what the Buddhist view would say. Try and let it die peacefully. You keep it in a quiet situation, have lots of prayers and mantras is the Buddhist view. So that itself will calm the animal down so that it can die at its own pace and that can help maybe activate a virtuous karma sort of floating there waiting to ripen. That's what the Buddhists would say.

### *Applying the Antidote*

#### **1:10:13**

So the next step -- we do 'regret' -- for your own sake -- because you realize the things you do that harm others harm *you* and you don't want the seeds of suffering; you're sick of suffering so you regret -- 'whom can I turn to?' -- you rely upon the Buddha, the doctor, his medicine. And then you have compassion for those you've harmed. Then the third step would be you do some practice, you know; the antidote. They also call this step the 'antidote'. Well, the most obvious antidote is to do the opposite. Well, the Buddha's view -- for example, one of the most helpful things to do -- let's say you want to purify killing -- you would try and save the lives of beings.

Actually, this reminds me -- it's rather funny -- our friends in Boston, at the center there, they -- on a certain day in the year, a certain holy day -- they go down to Maine -- up to Maine and they buy a bunch of lobsters. So this one year they saved, they bought four hundred and fifty lobsters, or something, and they threw them back in the ocean. Well, the lobster fishermen got so offended and sort of took it personally; and I suppose if you were a fisherman, you would -- really offended and they called the CBS news or whatever and I remember some news show showing 'those bloody Buddhists, those idiot Buddhists, hah, we're going to show them' so they purposely went out and caught another four hundred and fifty-seven lobsters just to prove to those idiot Buddhists how they're gonna dare insult our -- they took it personally, you know? Fair enough. So that was kind of interesting...

And I remember one time, I remember one time I was in Florida, and I went to the supermarket to buy something and I saw in the fish department all these lobsters. So, I went up and I sort of poked my nose into the lobster pond -- what do you call it, the pool, the water -- and I said a few mantras; and then as I was walking out, I thought, 'How can I leave these lobsters? I've just met them, I have a karmic connection with these lobsters; they're *my* lobsters, you know; I can't just *walk away*...' So I had to go back in and go buy buckets and put water in them and deal with the lobsters; the guy in the fish department, he was quite moved by this; he gave us a cheap price for all the lobsters; but he said, 'This old bloke, he'll be dead soon, you don't worry about him. He'll be dead before they

cook him.' So we left that one lobster. And we got all the other lobsters – I forget how many it was; it cost a fortune. Then I went down to the water – we didn't know whether they were pure water or salty water -- they probably would have been a bit unhappy but better than being boiled alive, we figured. So we did prayers and circumambulated them around the stupa and then we chucked them back in the ocean, you know?

But then, of course, I couldn't go back to the supermarket again because I would meet more lobsters and I didn't have enough money, so all I could do was just say a prayer for them, you know; what could I do? Anyway – there you go.

So then – okay; so then the first step would be to do purification. Okay – in this tradition all the lamas in the Tibetan tradition praise really powerfully one particular type of meditation visualizing the Buddha, reciting a certain mantra as a very potent kind of antidote to negative karma; that's all – and it's this recitation of this prayer – blah, blah, blah. That's all; that's the third step. But then, you could do anything. You could do any kind of antidote, you know? In your daily life you would need to do this; and if you regret lying, you try to tell the truth. If you regret stealing you try to give. If you regret killing, you try to save lives. Sort of the opposite, you know; very reasonable.

But on top of that, this particular practice is said to be very powerful; the third step, you do that visualization and everything.

### *Resolve – The Determination to Change*

**1:13:27**

And the fourth step is – as one lama says – the most important. They call this 'The Four Rs' – resolve – the determination to change. So obviously if you're regretting a certain action, based upon the fact that you don't want that suffering to come to you as a result of it – which is sort of like self-respect for yourself -- no one's forcing you to do it, it's up to you to do those things – then the fourth step comes easy. You obviously – if it's an old habit – you want to try and change that habit. So then you vow not to do it again. Or – you don't lie to yourself, as Lama Zopa says. Say you've got an old habit to, you know, steal, let's say. You're not ready to say, 'I'll never steal again,' so you say, 'Okay, for twenty-four hours I won't steal.' So, you're thinking about the idea of not killing. No one's going to force you; it's up to you; you're the boss. You might decide, 'Well, I'll give it a go for twenty-four hours. I'll try not to kill an ant, or a fish – or whatever.' It's up to you.

But if you are – let's say, you become a Buddhist – you know, you become a Buddhist, you vow not to kill, lie, steal; there's a certain set of vows you take – and they're life-long vows – so when you do this practice every day, you would re-iterate those commitments every time; and the point about this is because the Buddha says every thought you have, every action you do sows a seed in your mind; don't just think of it as your mind thinking 'Oh, I must never do it again'; you're actually making a firm commitment 'I will never kill again'. If you say that every day, guess what? It's like doing push-ups; it keeps getting stronger in

your mind. And guess what? You won't do it again, you know, because you're the boss. So the fourth step's quite important.

So this is how you change. This is what's called 'purification'. All right? That's it. What else? Any questions about all that? Yes?

### *Prayers to Help Others*

**1:15:05**

Q: Is there a prayer or a mantra for intercession for someone else?

Ven.: Absolutely. A big part of Buddhist practice is this, definitely. There's many, many practices and prayers that one could do, you know. It depends, I mean -- there's one if people are sick there's a common -- there's many aspects of the Buddha -- of, kind of, enlightened energy and one of those is called the 'Medicine Buddha' -- there he is, this blue one. He looks like regular Buddha but he's got a blue body. And there's his little bowl that's got medicine plants, you know? And so there's a particular mantra or prayers to the Medicine Buddha, which would be very good for people who are sick; things like this. There's lots of these types of practices, yeah.

So, did you want to learn one or did you just want to know that they exist?

Q: I wish to learn one.

Ven.: Okay. So, is it for a person who's sick, or you're worried about?

Q: Not at this moment...

Ven.: Okay...

Q: But there are so many out there that I could just focus in on...

Ven.: Absolutely; no, absolutely. So this is -- what we're doing here is -- this practice we're discussing today is -- there's this nice analogy in Buddhism that 'the bird needs two wings: wisdom and compassion'. So, all this first part's about putting yourself together. Then, what this qualifies you to do then is then be able to do the compassion wing, which is how you help others. So, that's very much a part of all the practice, all the prayers we do, to benefit others ourselves -- you understand -- that's a massive part of the practice.

Q: In other words, strengthen yourself before...

Ven.: Precisely, precisely; that's exactly the point, that's the whole point -- which makes sense, doesn't it?

Q: I can't make a long run like that without eating first...

Ven.: Training -- precisely -- that's exactly right. Spot on. So, a lot of these are practices you do here; you do practices like this, don't you? So, you want to look

at their program; they come along and they have practices here; they do prayers and things like this for other people as well. And ones you can take away – little mantras and things that are easy to do, easy to learn. Someone else? Yes?

### *The Antidote for Discontent*

1:16:58

Q: What's the antidote for the attachment; for not being content?

Ven.: It's a very profound one; it's the deepest one of all of us; I mean, we don't even notice it half the time because in our lives we get what we want very easily; we can fill up the spaces, can't we?

So, it sounds so simple, but it stops you in your tracks: it's to learn to be content. Which means obviously, if you've had one piece of cake, and you *know* your stomach's had enough actually, but your little mind's desperate; you just tell it to shut up and you keep your hand in your lap. There's no shortcut, you know? It's obvious: the most basic way to change a habit is to go to the opposite; and it's just so simple it's almost embarrassing – but it's the hardest one to do, because *everything* in us wants to have that second piece and it's something so simple. And the trouble is with it, because these delusions – the Buddha said because these instincts are so deep -- we come born with them – that when the craving is there very strong, it's like everything in your being wants it and it's almost as if you have a panic attack if you didn't follow it. So, it is *so profound* actually. It seems so simple, but really so difficult not to follow the habits. Like, you know, depression or anger or whatever they are; but it's the best way to know your own mind. You can't escape it; you've got to be your own therapist. You've got to look deep inside and then do all – the most basic opposite one – and in the Buddhist view all these other practices are to support it – doing this type of practice every day supports these things. It's like doing pushups to make you stronger so you can run further. Well, doing these practices are like the inner pushups to help you *do* the job of working on your mind daily, you know.

Q: So, like, mindfulness of what's going on...

Ven.: Absolutely. Oh my god, this is fundamental. This is the point. Without this, what happens is, we become a junkie – 'oh, I'm a junkie. I didn't realize...' All those years your mind's doing its thing but you're not following it. You wake up in bed deeply depressed and now you're on pills because you haven't looked at your mind. You wake up killing people – 'Oh, what happened? I got angry.' It's because we don't know what's going on inside. This is the fundamental job we have to do: learning some concentration, learning some meditation, learning to be our own therapist; noticing what's happening while it's cooking way deep down before it gets full blown out, you know? That's the key to success long term; there's no question about it. That's the particular skill of being a Buddhist, absolutely.

So, we're in for the long haul, you know; don't have any, you know, fantasy expectations about overnight. The Dalai Lama says – Dalai Lama says, 'Bodhisattvas think in terms of eons.' So, way to go, baby.

So, I don't know; isn't that enough? It's four-thirty. Maybe that's enough, isn't it? Is it? Go, darling – hang on a second – go, darling. Yes?

Q: Ah, excuse me; I'm having a geriatric moment. I forgot...

Ven.: Oh, darling! Never mind the geriatric moment... I know all about them. I know about them more and more; I can't believe it! Go on...

### *How Do Our Prayers Benefit Others?*

**1:20:29**

Q: Is there any interjection once you get to that point?

Ven.: Say it again...

Q: The interjection, once you get to that point where you're able to...how does it affect the path of the person that you're interjecting for? It should be good, but is it – I mean, does it change their path?

Ven.: You know, it depends on many factors. In the Buddhist view, in general, you've got to do the work yourself. But it's like we can get support, can't we? In the relative level, you've got to take the medicine, but you need a good doctor. So you can – you know, intervening on other people's behalf by saying prayers; by supporting them... if they're ripe and ready to be helped it can have a big effect on them. Do you understand? Can't it? But if there's something about them that's a very old habit, nothing will change. You can do your part, but they've got to be ripe and ready to be helped. That's the point, you know. Do you understand my point? Even on an ordinary level, you might want to help people who are fighting with each other. So you intervene, but they'll go, 'Mind your own business,' and carry on fighting. They don't want to be helped, you know? So, it depends on the people – do you understand? There's no harm in trying... Yes?

Q: His Holiness said that, with Medicine Buddha practice, that you were doing it primarily for your own mind, but if you have a strong karmic connection with them...

Ven.: You can help them. Precisely; that's the point. That's exactly right; precisely. That's the point; they've got to be ripe and ready to be helped. Exactly; that's right. Yes?

### *Creating Only Positive Karma*

**1:21:58**

Q: I know this is way down the road, but say a person's managed to uproot all the negative seeds... so, what I'm thinking... are they... what's their intention? Are they still creating karma?

Ven.: Okay. When you're really – okay –if you're really advanced on this path – let's say you've cut the root of all the delusions, all the neuroses and you've gone beyond ego, which Buddha says you can, and you've got this really profound

compassion; compassion would be the default mode – your wish to help others. You'd be still creating virtue – virtuous karma. You'd be finished creating negative karma. So you'd be keeping putting virtuous 'gas in the tank', if you like. Yes, only that then. So it keeps propelling you forward to help others. Yeah. Enough? Yes, Bob, go.

### *Learning Some Mantras*

**1:22:43**

Director: Before we leave, could you teach everyone, say, something like 'Om Mani Padme Hum' so we have...

Ven.: If you want, I could say a few mantras and you could repeat after me if you want; you can get the oral transmission of it, so then Bob can have them written down or tell people where they're written so they can take them away. So I'll give you different mantras. One is the Compassion mantra, okay; and if you'd like to say it after me, you're very welcome. All these mantras are Sanskrit; the Tibetans didn't translate them; they left them in the Sanskrit although their pronunciation's kind of weird...but never mind. So this is the Compassion mantra, if you'd like to say it: 'OM'

Students Together: 'OM'

Ven.: 'MANI'

S T: 'MANI'

Ven.: 'PADME'

S T: 'PADME'

Ven.: 'HUM'

S T: 'HUM'

Ven.: 'OM MANI PADME HUM, OMMANI PADME HUM'

S T: 'OM MANI PADME HUM, OM MANIPADME HUM'

Ven.: I'll just sing it a couple times; it's got a sweet tune, a different tune: (sings) 'Om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum'. And you can sing it like that if you want. And there's another one; this is wisdom. This is for wisdom of speech; so that your speech can only be useful to others, instead of just rabbiting on about nothing and confusing everybody; actually help people with your speech – wisdom of speech. Also wisdom of mind, as well – obviously has to come from the mind, you know? So this is the Wisdom mantra: 'OM'

S T: 'OM'

Ven.: 'AH'

S T: 'AH'

Ven.: 'RA'

S T: 'RA'

Ven.: 'PA'

S T: 'PA'

Ven.: 'SA'

S T: 'SA'

Ven.: 'NA'

S T: 'NA'

Ven.: 'DI'

S T: 'DI'

Ven.: 'OM AH RA PA SA NA DI'

S T: 'OM AH RA PA SA NA DI'

Ven.: So, they say this very fast – in the monastery, you hear all the little monks and nuns going to their classes in the morning; they say it like this: 'OMAHRAPASANADIOMAHRAHPASANADIOMARAPASANADI...' And then they go, 'OMAHRAPASANADIDIDIDIDIDIDI', as long as you can, 'DIDIDIDIDIDIDI...' so then you swallow it, and you imagine the last syllable, the essence of it all, this 'DI', you swallow it and imagine it smashing your ignorance. It's very nice. So for wisdom of speech, so you can be useful to others; and wisdom of the mind, this is a very nice one.

Now you've got the Medicine Buddha, which is helpful for people not just for healing, but for all kinds of things: 'TAYATA'

S T: 'TAYATA'

Ven.: 'OM'

S T: 'OM'

Ven.: 'BEKANDZE'

S T: 'BEKANDZE'

Ven.: 'BEKANDZE'

S T: 'BEKANDZE'

Ven.: 'MAHA'

S T: 'MAHA'

Ven.: 'BEKANDZE'

S T: 'BEKANDZE'

Ven.: 'RANDZA'

S T: 'RANDZA'

Ven.: 'SAMUNGATE'

S T: 'SAMUNGATE'

Ven.: 'SOHA'

S T: 'SOHA'

Ven.: 'TAYATA OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZA  
SAMUNGATE SOHA'

S T: 'TAYATA OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZA  
SAMUNGATE SOHA'

Ven.: 'TAYATA OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZA  
SAMUNGATE SOHA'

S T: 'TAYATA OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE MAHA BEKANDZE RANDZA  
SAMUNGATE SOHA'

Ven.: Okay; then you've got Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra; Mr. Buddha himself.  
Where is he? There he is. 'TAYATA'

S T: 'TAYATA'

Ven.: 'OM'

S T: 'OM'

Ven.: 'MUNI MUNI'

S T: 'MUNI MUNI'

Ven.: 'MAHA'

S T: 'MAHA'

Ven.: 'MUNIYE'

S T: 'MUNIYE'

Ven.: 'SOHA'

S T: 'SOHA'

Ven.: 'TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA'

S T: 'TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA'

Ven.: 'TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA'

S T: 'TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA'

Ven.: And then we've got power -- the three essential qualities of enlightened mind, they say -- one is compassion -- 'OM MANI PADME HUM'; one is wisdom -- 'OM AH RA PA SA NA DI'; and the third one is -- you've got to have the compassion which is the wish to benefit others, you need the wisdom to know how; but the crucial third quality is the ability to do so -- or what they call this 'power'; and this is often depicted by this female Buddha called 'Tara'. Like she's 'action energy': power, action, courage, cutting through the obstacles; successful, making things happen -- we all need that. We'll do hers three times. 'OM'

S T: 'OM'

Ven.: 'TARE'

S T: 'TARE'

Ven.: 'TUTTARE'

S T: 'TUTTARE'

Ven.: 'TURE'

S T: 'TURE'

Ven.: 'SOHA'

S T: 'SOHA'

Ven.: 'OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SHOHA'

S T: 'OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA'

Ven.: 'OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA'

S T: 'OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA'

Ven.: Okay? Okay.

S T: Thank you!

Ven.: Thank you everybody! Cheers! May you live a long and happy life; I know we haven't finished yet; I'll be seeing you a few more days, aren't I?

Q: You're not rid of us yet.

Ven.: No, I'm not rid of you yet – you're not rid of *me* yet. Okay, so we delight, in this hour and a half – yeah, an hour and a half – as many seeds, as many thoughts as each of us has had, in Buddha's view, is a seed we've planted in the mind. So, we've just done an hour and a half of gardening. Be so delighted. And we think, 'Okay. All these things; may we think about them; nourish these seeds we've planted so that we can develop our marvelous potential in the direction we want to take it in, so we can be of benefit to others – thinking like this. Thank you, everybody.

Transcribed by Fran McDermott