



SOGYAL RINPOCHE: TIBETAN BOOK OF LIVING AND DYING-LOVE

Sogyal Rinpoche is a devout Buddhist who is responsible for bringing Buddhism spiritual teachings to America. Rinpoche was instrumental in ensuring that these teachings were presented from an Eastern and Western understanding perspective. This provision provided new students with encouragement to learn Buddhism literature along with assimilating teachings in a practical manner.

In Buddhism, deep and meaningful wisdom-knowledge encompasses a broad understanding of conscious spirituality through the crossing of cultural religious and philosophical barriers allowing for applying simple practices. Buddhism significantly contributes to a deeper more meaningful understanding of universal truths, human compassion, love spirituality and in practice contributes to making this planet a better world. In “The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying” Sogyal Rinpoche expresses how in our daily lives we can each awaken our innate spiritual compassion enabling us to connect more deeply with family, friends, and community. An extract from the book titled ‘How To Awaken Love and Compassion’ expresses deeper levels of interconnectedness.
—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020

SOGYAL RINPOCHE

[PP: 195-197] HOW TO AWAKEN LOVE AND COMPASSION

Before you can truly practice Tonglen¹, you have to be able to evoke compassion in yourself. That is harder than we often imagine, because the source of our love and compassion are sometimes hidden from us, and we may have no ready access to them. Fortunately there are several special techniques that the Buddhist “training of the mind” in compassion has developed to help us evoke our own hidden love. Out of the enormous range of methods available, I have selected the following ones, and have ordered them in a particular way so as to be of the greatest possible use to people in the modern world.

1. Loving Kindness: Unsealing the Spring.

When we believe that we don’t have enough love in us, there is a method for discovering and invoking it. Go back in your mind and recreate, almost visualize, a love that someone gave you that really moved you, perhaps in your childhood. Traditionally you are taught to think of your mother and her lifelong devotion to you, but if you find that problematic, you could think of your grandmother or grandfather, or anyone who had been deeply kind to you in your life. Remember a particular instance when they really showed you love, and you felt their love vividly.



Now let that feeling arise again in your heart, and infuse you with gratitude. As you do so, your love will go out naturally to that person who evoked it. You will remember then that even though you may not always feel that you have been loved enough, you were loved genuinely once. Knowing that now will make you feel again that you are, as that person made you feel then, worthy of love and really lovable.

Let your heart open now, and let the love flow from it; then extend this love to all being. Begin with those who are closest to you, then extend your love to friends and to acquaintances, then to neighbours, to strangers, then even to those whom you don't like or have difficulties with, even those whom you might consider your "enemies," and finally to the whole universe. Let this love become more and more boundless. Equanimity is one of the four essential facets, with loving kindness, compassion, and joy, of what the teachings say form the entire aspiration of compassion. The all inclusive, unbiased view of equanimity is really the starting point and the basis of the path of compassion.

You will find that this practice unseals a spring of love, and by that unsealing in you of you own loving kindness, you will find that it will inspire the birth of compassion. For as Maitreya said in one of the teachings he gave Asanga: "The water of compassion courses through the canal of loving kindness."

2. Compassion: Considering Yourself the Same as Others

One powerful way to evoke compassion, as I have described in previous chapters, is to think of others as exactly the same as you."After all," the Dalai Lama explains, "all human beings are the same —made of human flesh, bones, and blood. We all want happiness and want to avoid suffering. Further, we have an equal right to be happy. In other words, it is important to realize our sameness as human beings."

Say, for example you are having difficulties with a loved one, such as your mother or father, husband or wife, lover or friend. How helpful and revealing it can be to consider the other person not in his or her "role" of mother or father or husband, but simply as another "you," another human being, with the same feelings as you, the same desire for happiness, the same fear of suffering. Thinking of the person as a real person, exactly the same as you, will open your heart to him or her and give you more insight into how to help.

If you consider others just the same as yourself, it will help you to open up your relationship and give them a new and richer meaning. Imagine societies and nations began to view each other in the same way; at last we would have the beginnings of a solid basis for peace on earth and the happy coexistence of all peoples.

¹ "Buddhist term for Giving and Receiving"



3. Compassion: Exchanging Yourself for Others

When someone is suffering and you find yourself at a loss to know how to help, put yourself unflinchingly in his or her place. Imagine as vividly as possible what you would be going through if you were suffering the same pain. Ask yourself: “How would I feel? How would I want my friends to treat me? What would I want from them?”

When you exchange yourself for others in this way, you are directly transferring your cherishing from its usual object, yourself, to other beings. So exchanging yourself for others is a very powerful way of loosening the hold on you of the self cherishing and the self-grasping ego, and so of releasing the heart of your compassion.



Suggested resources:

The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, Sogyal Rinpoche, San Francisco, America: 1992, Harper Collins Publisher, ISBN: 0 7126 5437.

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Tibetan-Book-Living-Dying-Sogyal-Rinpoche/9780062508348?ref=grid-view&qid=1574200466215&sr=1-2>

Uplift Connect -

Sogyal Rinpoche, Seven Teachings from The Tibetan Book of The Dead,

<https://upliftconnect.com/tibetan-book-of-living-and-dying/>

