

On Karma, Consequences, and Our Constant Killing

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How many beings are we killing? How many mice has Odzer the cat killed? How many bugs are we killing when we use our machines? When we drive? When we walk, even? So many bugs! So many beings! We burn, smash, cut, kill them all different kinds of ways.

Remember them when you practice. When you say Vajrasattva and so forth, pray for them. Don't just ignore them!

For example, at Tashi Choling we have done so much construction. We said we were building a temple, and statues and stupas. How many bugs did we kill, moving the earth, pounding, cutting the trees and grass? When we built the Vajrasattva statue, we killed tons of bugs. When we built Tashi Choling, we killed tons, millions. Whatever we build, we kill billions of bugs.

Right now, you have the freedom and chance to confess. You can dedicate your practice to those beings. That way you can make your negativity a little less, make it a little more safe for yourself. Animals like Odzer the cat, they don't know how to do confession or practice or pray for other beings. We say Odzer has killed so many mice, lizards, bugs, and so on, but actually that's nothing compared to the killing we do continuously, in everything we do. How much have we played on our motorcycles, cars, and trucks, driving everywhere? How much do children play in so many ways, killing bugs all the time? We are killing things continuously, but still we ignore them. Maybe we are pretending that we don't know it, or we pretend we are some great hero to be doing the things we do. Either way, that is dumb-dumb.

If someone were to look at us to see if we were suitable objects of compassion, they would start crying day and night.

Everyone thinks they are some kind of hero, somebody important, some big deal. They think "I am a scholar!" or "I am smart!"

Yeah, sure you're a scholar. Sure you're a hero. But then you have to say that the real heroes are Odzer the cat, or a dog, or a horse. Those animals, they kill so many sentient beings, too. The same as us. So they must be big heroes, too.

We know a little bit more than animals. We know that we are going to have to pay for all the suffering we cause, in hot hell and cold hell and through every kind of torture. We can read these things in the books, in teachings on ngondro or confession, for example.

We are so dumb! We think we are smart, but we are so dumb! We are not smart. We are the dumbest of the dumb, dumb above all others, the stupidest of the stupid. We are screwing up ourselves.

Therefore, everybody try. Try to wake up.

You think you are pretty or handsome, rich or smart? Maybe you are okay in those ways. But it doesn't work, though! Being smart and pretty doesn't liberate you. Nor does being handsome or powerful. Those things take you to hell. Being a hero or anything, same thing. Check yourself. What is the result of these things, of being pretty or a hero or any big deal? What do the teachings say? What does *Words of My Perfect Teacher* say? What does the *Way of the Bodhisattva* say? Everybody knows these things, I think!

Therefore, it's time to wake up. Don't ignore these things, thinking they are just some Buddhist trip. Don't think these things only apply to Buddhists. They are things, teachings, from the Buddha, that's true. But they are true for everybody. What we didn't know, those things the Buddha taught. What we need to know, those things the Buddha taught. Check for yourself. What is there? Did the Buddha say that? He didn't lie. These aren't just his own ideas. Therefore, we need to wake up to them, slowly, slowly.

Do we think the Buddha was joking? Do we laugh when we hear the teachings on karma, thinking they are not serious? That's not smart. Just stupid. We love to do stupid things. Building up your ego, your desire, your jealousy, every kind of negativity—do we think that's smart? That's stupid. That is the way we destroy ourselves. We don't need an American nuclear bomb—we make our own destruction. We don't have compassion for others; but also we don't even have compassion for ourselves—and at least we should have that.

Therefore, we need to think about these things and try, in a humble and honest way. Slowly you will see, "Oh, this is negative, that is negative." Then it will be clear what to do. Don't just keep doing those things like people who are addicted to drinking or smoking. Whatever you see that is negative, drop it. Practice more. You can do Vajrasattva, Chenrezig, or whatever. Whatever you are practicing, learn how to practice it right.

The lamas who wrote these texts, such as the *Way of the Bodhisattva*, they were emanations of buddhas such as Chenrezig and Manjushri. They don't lie. They have no reason to lie! They teach out of honesty and compassion. They have wisdom, and they are trying to benefit us and all others. Therefore, read what they have to say, listen to what they have to say, think about that. Don't just sleep under your ego, ignorance, and desire.

Everybody try to be honest with yourself, be truthful and have compassion for yourself. If you can't with others, that's okay—at least towards yourself, though! At least be honest. At least be truthful with yourself and love yourself. The reason? Check out the consequences. You know already.

Lots of ladies chase guys: "Oh, he likes me! I'm so proud he likes me!" Or guys chasing the ladies: "Oh, she likes me! I'm so delighted!" Or someone has lots of money, so again they are so happy that they almost pee their pants. Yes, money is good. All these things are good. If you like somebody or they like you, that's fine. But how do we like? How do we not like? Check everything that way. Don't deceive yourself. Don't lie to yourself. Don't cheat yourself. That's what we need to do. We cheat ourselves all the time. If the whole world were your enemy

trying to destroy you, still it couldn't cheat you the way that you cheat yourself. We cheat ourselves and destroy ourselves.

You say, "Not me! I didn't do that! I don't cheat myself! I don't lie to myself! I am good! I am okay!"

Think about that carefully.

We do these kinds of nasty things to ourselves. So try not to.

Look around. If you need to change your position, then try to change it. We don't have such bad fortune, we aren't left in the dark. We have teachings on all these things, everything is explained. Look at the teachings on ngondro, on the bodhisattva trainings, and on so many other categories of dharma. We have everything. So try, please!

We think we need to be rich? Yes, yes. We need to be rich in many different ways: rich in religion, rich in Buddhism, rich in dharma. What are the consequences of being that kind of rich? Check. What is the result of being rich in non-virtue and misdeeds? Check. What is the result of being rich in merit? Check how each benefits you or harms you. You don't need to be smart. Be honest. We will not be here so long—maybe fifty years? Maybe fifteen or twenty years? But even in that short time we can destroy ourselves so much. We have no time to relax or hang out.

You might think, "I am not Buddhist, therefore the teachings on karma don't apply to me! I'm okay!" No, no. It doesn't matter if you are Buddhist or not.

Everybody, if you have the freedom to watch yourself, do that. If you have freedom to take care of yourself, do that. If you can take care of others, that's wonderful, but if you don't have that opportunity, at least try to take care of yourself. Maybe we have some opportunity, because how many lamas have come and given so many teachings, blah blah blah? Therefore, don't waste them!

Practice and learn, honestly. To study the dharma, that creates inconceivable merit. To explain the dharma to others, that creates inconceivable merit. You don't need to be paid or to get a big name. Your merit just goes in your bank, in your pocket, better than pocket money.

Hey, you are stealing my spear! You call it a toothpick but I say it is my spear, my weapon. That's mine—my spear! Not yours! Actually, your real spear is your wisdom. Your real spear is your honesty. Your real spear is your faith. Trust the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha—focus in just that one direction, and that is a spear so sharp that it can cut through not only five poisons but five million negativities. Therefore, try.

All these thangkas and pictures, what are they for? Are they for sale? No. Are they just to show off? No. They are to help you remember your refuge object. Then you don't forget to pray, you don't forget to go for refuge. We shouldn't forget that. Why? Each of us is going to die, one by

one. You all think I'm going to go first because I am an old man. Could be. Sure, why not? But really, who knows? Therefore, it's foolish to wait, trusting that you have time to wait because you are young. That means nothing! Everybody needs to practice. That is not a joke. If you love something or somebody, the best thing you can do for them is let them learn and let them practice—let them or help them, don't make obstacles for them, support them. We all need practice. We all need faith. Even if you don't know how to practice, at least have faith and trust in the refuge objects. Try that way.

Don't follow this stupid goddamn old man on his path to hell!

What? Why are you looking at me like that? You are really funny!

Good night! Don't sleep naughty! Sleep good and peacefully!

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral