

HABITS: OUR BEST FRIENDS OR BIGGEST ENEMIES

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You think you are free? Everybody thinks, “I am a person with freedom!” Are you sure? You are under the thumb of your habit. Your habit makes all your obstacles. Your habit makes the handcuffs to keep you in samsara. Who's gonna call that free?

We follow our habits blindly, more than we follow a king or a president or whatever. Nobody's forcing us, either! It looks like we are happy to, saying, “Yes, sir! Oh, yes, yes! I will do it! All the negative things, oh yes, Mr. Habit or Mrs. Habit!”

That Mr. or Mrs. Bad Habit, is that your friend? No. It will destroy you. Is it your enemy? Yes! It can be your biggest enemy.

Even if you kill a person, you haven't killed the real enemy. You killed the wrong one! If you want to kill the right one, kill your bad habit! If you feel you need to punch something, punch your negativity! Your own habit is your biggest enemy.

Or if it is positive, your habit is your number one supporter. Then we say, “Yes, that one is your friend, absolutely!” Like your best friend, except more than that. What really helps you? Positive habit. Not your boyfriend or girlfriend! Positive habit, even a tiny one, like a baby sprout, that will really support you. Not only in this life but in the next life, still it will support you. Good luck finding a boyfriend or girlfriend who can do that!

How can you get any kind of success, in this life or the next life? With habits. Positive habits.

Habits can be like stone, it looks like. Like rocky mountains, it looks like nothing could change them. Actually, out of everything, what is the one thing we can change? Our habit. Our own mind. Our habit is, in one way, the most solid; but one way, it's the most flexible. Therefore, dharma! Why did the teachers teach so many years? We have the habit of stupidity, and they have compassion for that! They see our suffering habit and want to teach us how to change that. Why do the students learn, trying so hard? Same reason: we need to change our bad habit. Our habit is samsara. Samsara means self-cherishing, and therefore the three poisons arise, and therefore suffering. Absolutely we need to change something in our situation! What do we need to change? All the billions of phenomena? No. Change your habit. All the buddhas' teachings are for that!

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First you have to know your habit—which one is good, which one is bad. The Buddha explained that, piece by piece. When you recognize a habit is bad, then you want to change it. Again, dharma teaches you how to do that. The Buddha didn't just give an order like an army leader: “Change!” “Liberate!” No. His kindness was limitless. He does know us! He taught so many paths, so many different methods for different beings. Like different foods—milk for babies, cookies for the children; some people like noodle soup or some people like dumplings; some people like chili sauce and some people don't. Everyone has what is suitable for them. Dharma teaches the whole thing, bottom to top, suitable to suitable.

If our habits were not changeable, we couldn't become enlightened. We would just be stuck.

Actually nothing is stuck! Habit itself is stuck—habit stuck to habit! But we ourselves are not stuck. Except we make ourselves stuck to the habit! Then we really think something has got us. We say, “Dammit! Now I'm stuck!” Actually nothing is stuck! Show me—where is your 'stuck'? Brain is stuck with itself, that's it! Like being constipated. What is the problem? Nobody is attacking you, shooting you with guns or cutting you with swords. You are just stuck to your own problem.

When we say someone is 'liberated,' what is really liberated is their habits. That person or being is fine! Themselves, they are already buddhanature. Habits screwed up everything. The number one bad habit? Self-grasping. Liberate that, then the whole of samsara doesn't bother you. Because you don't bother yourself!

Tashi Delek!

- Gyatrul

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