

Pointing the Finger

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We have to eat. We need to eat, but we don't need to use too much chili. We need to drink something, but we don't need to drink too much beer or whiskey or saké. We don't need to be too greedy and go too far. Men don't need to chase the women too much; women don't need to chase the men too much. But usually we go too far. Then afterwards, we point our finger. We start by pointing our finger out, at somebody else, but the bottom line is that really, in the end, we are pointing at ourselves.

Of course people are going to talk about things you have done. Whatever you have done, people have the freedom to talk about it! People might say, "Oh, this is because you are a Westerner!" or "Easterner!" and point the finger that way; but that doesn't work. Bad behavior and negativity doesn't come particularly from the west or the east, from the south or the north. It isn't just from one direction. What is the real direction? It comes from you, whoever you are, the one who did it.

If you are a teacher, still if you did negative things, you did them. It doesn't matter if you are a man or woman, either. If you are a teacher and you pretend that makes you something high, then you pollute yourself. Do you think that you can do anything you want because you are a teacher? No, no. That is like being drunk. You pollute yourself that way.

People say, "Oh, he did this," "He did that." Yes, for a long time! Everybody does negative things, almost! Not just any one lama or group of students. People say, "Why did they do that?" They wonder how someone could call themselves a Buddhist and then do negative things. Negativity is just ordinary. Then to cover it up with the name of Buddhism or of secret mantra is shocking. Shocking, using those names. Does that activity or conduct actually relate to that name? No. The name is like gold.

I don't know who does or doesn't have particular faults, this person or that person, this lama or that lama. But everybody has faults. I don't think anyone is totally clean, except maybe the Dalai Lama. Not just one or two people do negative things. Everybody does. Therefore, who do you need to watch? You need to watch yourself.

Everybody is so busy! You can easily 'busy' yourself right into hell, following your negativity.

If you can see others' faults, then turn that same mirror around to look at yourself. You don't need to say that somebody else has a problem: "It's his problem!" "It's her problem!" If you do see this problem or that problem, then look at yourself. Turn that mirror around. You will see for yourself if you are ugly or handsome or pretty. Maybe you look around and see how this lady, and that guy, and all those other people have a problem. Then it looks like everybody has a problem, doesn't it? And how about you? You, the one with the finger? You are the one talking! The pointing finger is yours! You are pointing at yourself in the mirror! Check carefully!

If someone is like your brother or your sister, you can tell them if you see that they really have a problem. If they are really like your brother or your sister, then there is no reason not to tell them. You have no control over whether they listen or not, but at least you did warn them, even if they don't accept what you say. And if someone tells you that you really have a problem, in the same way you should not be upset or yell at them, but be polite and think about that. Like that, slowly, slowly.

If you tell someone about their problem and they don't listen, in one way that person is like a representative of Buddha Shakyamuni or your lama, whoever has taught you what you know. So you don't need to be upset if they don't listen. If it doesn't work, then just leave it alone! You don't need to then take on airs of a scholar or practitioner and give them advice. You can think, "Oh, she doesn't have the merit to listen to me." Or, "Oh, I don't have the merit to have her listen to me." But don't get upset and yap at the person. In the future, maybe you can talk about it again.

But don't gossip about them! Don't then go and talk about their faults or problems. And if you are talking about dharma or helping someone understand something, you don't need to use that as your opportunity to gossip. That's not what it is for. You can explain what the books say, what your teachers have said, and what you yourself know—that makes three different ways you can explain something. That's enough! You don't need to drag someone else's business or problems into your explanation in front of everybody. Better to watch yourself, and see if you also have that problem or not. Be careful that way. You don't need to gossip and slander.

If you don't see your own faults, it's very difficult to share the dharma with others. If you see them, then you are supposed to throw them away. I don't think anyone has done that completely, except maybe the Dalai Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, the Karmapa—some lamas like these.

One who is without faults is a buddha. To have faults means you are not yet enlightened. Buddha is "*sangye*" in Tibetan. The first syllable, *sang*, means pure. How is the Buddha pure? He has no faults. Because he has no faults, he has no suffering. We can suffer in so many ways—we catch colds, we get headaches, we can get all kinds of illnesses—because we still have faults. Don't we? Those faults are what we need to eliminate, slowly, slowly. But it is difficult to cleanse away all faults. Some people don't even clean their butts properly! Some don't even have toilet paper!

Anyway, try. When you are sharing the dharma with others, don't be hypocritical. Think about what you do. Are you telling others not to do something that you do? Maybe you tell others not to do something but you still do it yourself. Then they continue doing it, too. If you see them doing it, ask yourself if they are following your example. Maybe they learned their bad habits from you! Check carefully! Ask yourself, "I said they shouldn't do this, but they are doing it. Maybe that is what they really learned from me?" We are really interesting.

All the time, watch your own faults. All the time, see your own problems and shortcomings. It is only by seeing them that you will slowly, slowly be able to change or get rid of them. Seeing somebody else's faults, don't laugh at them. They are not a laughing matter.

Some so-called yogis, they make lots of jokes about being drunk, or this or that lady they slept with, shamelessly telling you everything they did. Do you think that is a joke, to ignore their secret mantra vows that way? No. That is really heavy. Even more heavy than a monk or nun losing their vows, to break samaya is the worst. One who is a real mantra practitioner will understand that and never ignore their vows. Therefore, you need to know what those vows are, how to keep your samaya, and how heavy they are. Check those things carefully, and then watch your own actions carefully. Know which are the things to eliminate and which are the things to adopt.

If you see others' faults, it is easy to point your finger at them, but don't. Point in at yourself a little bit more. Stay humble. Look at your own face, your own mind. You will be able to see if you have a lying face or a cheating face or a truthful face. Slowly, slowly, try like that in the future. You can work to eliminate your faults, you can lessen them, but you have to turn around and work inside, not pointing outwardly. That is why Buddhists are called *nangpa* in Tibetan, which means "insiders" — they look inside at their own faults.

And as for qualities, whatever qualities you have, don't turn them upside down.

I'm not a scholar. I'm not a practitioner. I'm not rich. I'm not a high person. Just a dumb-dumb. Poor guy. That kind of guy. But I have never wanted to cheat anybody, man or woman, rich or poor. I have tried to benefit everybody, a little bit. I have tried to benefit the dharma, a little bit. My motivation has slightly been that. Mostly just dumb, though.

Try to have a little altruism. If there is no altruism whatsoever, then that is not Buddhism. If a little altruism does come into your mind, should you turn around and let it come out your butt? No.

Know what faults are and what qualities are. The more you see your faults, the more you should understand they are the very things you need to eliminate. That understanding is how you will be able to get rid of them. If you recognize your butt is all dirty with shit, then you understand instantly that is what you need to clean up. Like that, with anything that you need to clean up or get rid of, first you must really recognize it as such. The key is knowing that you need to get rid of it. Likewise with excellent things that you should cultivate or embrace — first you have to clearly understand that they are good qualities.

At some centers, everyone is kind of berserk, sleeping with each other and so on. No, that is not the way — that becomes dirtier and dirtier, polluting other people. You don't need to do that. That is a fault.

Also, don't become a great lump of pride or arrogance or jealousy, either. Then your qualities become nothing. Real qualities will never arise in the presence of pride, jealousy, anger, or any

of the afflictions. So go slowly and watch yourself carefully. Where there is desire, there is pride; where there is jealousy, there is pride; where there is anger, there is pride; where there is confusion, there is pride. Pride comes with the afflictions and karma. We think we are special and wonderful. We think we are the best and can do anything. We all have that kind of pride, except for masters like His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Karmapa. They don't have any of that garbage.

The Sixteenth Karmapa, he's dead. Penor Rinpoche, and the Dalai Lama's tutors, they are dead, too. Do you think you aren't going to die? Do you think that you are going to keep living longer so that you can lie and cheat and be naughty longer? Think about it!

Just watch yourself, your own problems. When you recognize your problems, then you are okay because you can get rid of them. But first you need to know what they are. You need to know how to recognize them, and then you need to know how to get rid of them. You have to know that faults are faults—that they are negative, the things we have to get rid of. If you know that, and then you know how to get rid of them, then you will. If you don't know what faults are, or you don't recognize them in yourself, or you don't know how to get rid of them, then you can't free yourself from them. If you don't see the faults in yourself, you think there is nothing you need to get rid of. So look, slowly, slowly.

It looks like you can't trust anybody in this world. You can only trust the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, it looks like. I don't know, myself, and I am not a scholar. I am not a practitioner, either, and so I have no outer, inner, or secret qualities. But I think in general you can trust the Buddha, in general you can trust the Dharma, and in general you can trust the Sangha.

Someone might be wonderful in some ways—a man might be so handsome or a woman so beautiful. But if they have faults, there is nothing really handsome or beautiful there. Nothing wonderful. A lama with faults is like something upside-down. Faults are still faults. A lama's family members and so forth, their faults make them upside-down, too. A student with faults is also upside-down. Nobody is beyond having faults and being ruined by them. It doesn't matter if those faults are secret or obvious. Everybody has them.

When we point our finger, we think that we are pointing at someone else's faults. We think that we don't have any faults ourselves. That is why we point the finger. Actually, the pointing finger is itself a fault—the fault of failing to recognize our own faults. And the longer we talk, as our faults show themselves, our finger turns more and more back toward our own face. It doesn't have any choice!

What is our business? Our own faults. They are what we need to look at, they are what we need to recognize, they are what we need to get rid of, slowly, slowly. We don't need to advertise or shout from the rooftops, "I'm seeing my faults!" What, are we boasting about how big they are? If we are boasting about our faults, then we should eat them! Like eating our shit.

We think that is disgusting, that there is nothing worse than the idea of eating our shit. But our shit won't take us to the hot hells or the cold hells or keep us trapped in the six realms of samsara. Our five poisons, our faults, they will. So actually they are worse.

Anyway, everybody try, everybody be honest, everybody look at yourself. Okay?

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral