

## *On the Passing of Longtime Student Latif Harris*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

October 15th, 2017

We just heard that our Latif passed away. Everybody pray, okay? He was particularly our person, our guy. At least we can pray for him—he connected to our centers, he enjoyed them. Why did he come? For what? Was it for money? No. For power? No. Nothing like that. Just for the buddhadharma.

Now his life is finished, but he is not the only one who is going to die. Everybody is gonna die. Old, young, high, low, rich, poor, smart, dumb—every man and woman, pretty or ugly or handsome or just goddamned, everybody is going to die. Therefore, we need to practice. We need to learn. Why do we need to learn? This is obvious! Why do we need to practice? This is obvious! It is obvious because it is not only our Latif who will die. Same, same, same, everybody.

Therefore, everybody needs to practice, same, same, same. How we are gonna die, we don't know. When we die, where we are going to go, we don't know. But if we think everything is going to be no problem, then hahaha.

Do you think you aren't going to die? No. You are. Even the Dalai Lama is going to die. Do you think that you don't need to practice? No. You do. Everybody is practicing! Even the Dalai Lama. He practices continuously. He has his own power, he is a buddha, he won't have any problem when he dies. But he still practices! Other high beings, real lamas, they won't have any problems, either. But the rest of us, we will, dying like cows or pigs or chickens.

And when we die, where are we going to go? The six realms of samsara. Then do we think everything is going to be okay? No, no. There will be so many complicated things. Who made them that way? We did. We lied. We lied to others, and we lied to ourselves. We cheated ourselves. We killed our motherly sentient beings. But we still point the finger at others! Whose finger is pointing? Our finger. It is actually pointing at ourselves, but we don't think so. Therefore, we are blindly guilty. Stupidly, actively guilty. Shameless, shameless, shameless, we are.

Pray. Practice. At least be honest with yourself. Respect yourself. How are you going to be honest with yourself? How do you respect yourself? Watch yourself! Watch your actions of body, speech, and mind. We don't see ourselves. We just destroy ourselves. That's really interesting. Children, men, women, even animals, everyone does. Animals, they don't know; but we human beings, we know. A little bit. But please, don't destroy yourself. Don't destroy your life and your next life. Ohoho! How come we screw up ourselves? It is childish to screw yourself up. We are not children! It is obvious that we screw ourselves up and how we screw ourselves up, if we open our eyes. Hey! Do you hear? Open your eyes!

Please don't continue on with your eyes shut. Please don't just keep destroying yourself. We need to wake up, everybody!

This dharma, Buddhism, all these teachings, what are they for? They are to benefit sentient beings. The Buddha who taught the dharma, why did he teach it? To benefit beings! To protect them from suffering! But how do we protect ourselves? A wonderful way: by destroying ourselves. Is that fair to ourselves? Is that smart? I don't think so! I think we are the dumbest!

But wake up! Everybody try. Don't be like me—I am here, day and night, and they are feeding me everything as if I were a zombie, my giant mouth open, eating and drinking everything, but still I am not satisfied. Still I want more, looking for more. Don't do what I do.

Everybody practice. That doesn't mean it has to be something complicated! You can just say the refuge verse very simply, NAMO BUDDHAYA, NAMO DHARMAYA, NAMO SANGHAYA. Why? Well, who is going to help us? Out of everything, the dharma is going to help. Therefore, just check. Just try, slowly.

We don't need to smilingly gobble up the bomb. We smile, happy, and then we gobble up the bomb that destroys us, the poison or whatever. Or we stab ourselves with the knife or point the gun at our own head or our own heart. We destroy ourselves. No, please don't do that. Therefore, everybody wake up. Try not to do that too much. Okay?

Therefore, we need to practice. We need to pray. We can pray for our guy, our friend, Latif, and we can pray for ourselves, too, and all sentient beings. Everybody needs that. That way try, okay? Now is our time. Now is our chance. Now is our eye-opening time, now is our waking-up time, now is our praying, practicing, learning time, this time the real way. No more pretending or wishy-washy, okay?

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatral*