

On Excuses

Part I

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Many people call me up and ask for prayers for someone who is sick, or dying, or dead. I have no qualities, but I am happy to pray, to try, whatever I can do. But really, more than waiting until you are dying and then asking somebody else to pray for you, you need to pray for yourself. When do you need to pray—do you need to wait until you are dying? No—that is too late to start. You have missed your time. But everyone still calls and asks the lamas for prayers at the time of death. Nobody asks if they need to pray, too; nobody asks if they need to pray, now, while they're alive and healthy—if they need to pray for themselves.

Do we need to pray? Do we need to practice? Do we need to learn?

Ask yourself that!

It looks like we don't want to pray; we don't want to practice; and we don't want to learn.

We don't want to think about the fact that we are going to die. If someone asked us if we were going to die someday, we would have to say, "Yes." If they asked, "Do you have the power and freedom to liberate yourself at that moment?" we would have to say, "No." "Who's going to help you?" "I don't know; I don't have someone to help." "Why don't you pray?" "I don't want to." "Why?" "I'm not interested," or "I am lazy," or "I am busy."

Just a whole bunch of shit excuses! Excuses, excuses, excuses. A rich man has rich excuses, a poor man has poor excuses. A young lady has young lady excuses—she is too busy buzzing around, painting her face, and selling her butt. A young man has young man excuses—he is too busy chasing the ladies and trying to cheat his brothers and sisters, even his dharma brothers and sisters.

When you make excuses, you are cheating yourself and lying to yourself.

Actually, mostly everybody is trying to cheat each other—young or old, rich or poor, man or woman. Everybody thinks that is how they will be successful. "What, I can get ten dollars? Wow! Sure, I'm happy to cheat my sister, or my daddy, or my old grandma who is blind." The bottom line is, if you cheat someone for ten dollars, you've lost something worth more than a hundred million dollars. Especially if you cheat your brother or mother or best friend or something—it's shocking, people are shameless! Anyway, you might ask, "What is this precious thing you lose when you cheat someone?" You destroy your positive motivation, and that way you destroy yourself—that is the worst form of cheating yourself. You might be cheating them out of ten dollars, but you are cheating yourself out of something priceless.

So when you try to cheat others, you are really cheating yourself. When you make excuses, again you are only cheating yourself. You should take yourself to court and sue yourself, you are cheating yourself that much! What would Judge Judy have to say? Which one of you would win? I think either way, already you have lost.

When we hear that someone is dying or someone is dead, we immediately think, "Let's have a lama say prayers for them!" That is good, of course. But why don't we wake up and see that someone is dying or someone is dead because everyone is going to end up dead, including ourselves? When we hear that someone is dying, we should think, "That is me, too. I am dying, too. I need to take my chance, now while I have freedom." That is what we should think. That is our opportunity to open our blind eyes! When your eyes are open, then you can stand up. Then you can do something. Opening your eyes is the opposite of making excuses. When you make excuses, you make yourself more blind. We are blind enough already, aren't we? When we hear somebody is dying, that is our chance to recognize our own situation and do something positive, something meaningful. Do you think it is positive and meaningful to make excuses? Come on! Enough's enough! Wake up!

[to be continued...]