

## *On Outer, Inner, and Secret Blessings*

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I came here to America for the sake of virtue. I did not have outer, inner, or secret qualities that would make it possible for me to create great virtue and then teach and inspire others to do it as well. What I had was the command of my gurus to come here. Whatever success has come about has been through their blessing and compassion. The lamas' blessings are limitless and their compassion is inconceivable. These blessings come to us on the outer level as the empowerments, transmissions, and instructions they give; on the inner level as the qualities that are developed through study and contemplation; and on the secret level as the qualities that arise through practice as we go deeper and deeper, which is our greatest hope. These outer, inner, and secret qualities develop in dependence on the outer, inner, and secret blessings of the gurus, and they are our outer, inner, and secret hope for progress on the path and ultimate liberation.

Outer blessings are the blessings of empowerment and so forth, which the lamas give because of their great compassion. These are not the blessings of being an American go-go lady, okay? One way, giving such blessings to American go-go ladies and playboys is a waste. But on the other hand, the playboys and -girls are sentient beings wandering in samsara, too, and the outer blessings are given to liberate them from their suffering. The lamas came and explained the qualities of enlightened body, and therefore we built all these supports of enlightened body, speech, and mind--the statues, stupas, and so on, which are also outer blessings. For whom? For the go-gos and the playboys, to benefit them! So you can see that you have certainly received outer blessings on a vast scale.

Inner blessings are the inner qualities that develop as you study and contemplate the dharma. For example, outerly there are the statues showing the qualities of enlightened body, and innerly we have to understand their meaning and join our minds to that. Slowly as you study, your qualities ripen. As your understanding of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities deepens, dharma becomes more and more tasty to you. That means it can benefit you more and more. This blessing comes slowly, just as Tibetan medicine works slowly to benefit the body. Millions of people waste this inner blessing by rejecting it. Then it brings no benefit at all--there is no need to ask whether the benefit is slow or quick--they have thrown away any possibility of it! They think they are not wasting anything important, and of course they are right because they are so smart: The really important things are their five poisons, outerly and innerly, and they are taking full advantage of all that samsara has to offer them, enhancing those qualities of delusion each second. The problem with delusion is that we are never satisfied. If we get one, we need three; if we get three, we need nine. We will never be finished that way. But anyway, that is what keeps us so busy that we don't want to take the tiniest instant to focus on the inner blessing. We are too busy giving ourselves our own samsaric blessing.

The secret blessing is our greatest hope. It is the actual accomplishment, which comes only through sincere practice. The progression of outer, inner, and secret qualities are what will free us from samsara's sufferings, but it is with the secret level of blessing through practice itself that we will really see a result. Of course, the secret qualities only develop on the basis of the outer and inner qualities, which in turn come from study and contemplation. Nobody can jump over those stages! The qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind can be attained, no doubt about it, as long as the practice is done in sequence. This is why you need to study, contemplate and meditate. Yes, I'm talking to you, you Westerners with your red heads and big butts. You don't get some other method than this. You don't need something

more than the Tibetans or Indians had. The process is the same for you. As you connect through the outer, and understand through studying the inner, then you engage more and more deeply with the dharma, which is the only way to reach the secret level of genuine practice.

We are all one family of students, contemplators, and practitioners. We all have the same hope of finally actualizing secret qualities. We all have the opportunity to do so through our lamas' kindness. Which lamas am I talking about? The Dalai Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche, the Karmapa, Penor Rinpoche, Yangthang Rinpoche, and other great masters of our time. They have treated us with such compassion and given us such profound blessings! If we have interest in studying and practicing the dharma, we are opening a tiny window through which to spy on their blessings. We want to let them in, but we have ants that have gone not just into our pants but into our butts and we can't sit still. Those ants of our habits are quite heavy.

It is embarrassing to admit that tiny ants could steal our liberation, but that is what we let them do. How could a tiny ant stop a giant person like you? You let them! You make a big deal of them, even though they are so tiny. "These ants are so heavy, I will get rid of them tomorrow...next week...next lifetime...next eon." Or sometimes, "These ants are so tiny, it's okay if I let them eat my butt." Really? Negativity is negativity. If something is chewing on your butt, then it's chewing! How will you get rid of big negativity if you are unwilling to let go of tiny negativities? "These are MY ants. It's okay if they chew a little bit--sort of uncomfortable, but okay. I'm scared to ask them to leave. They might get upset." Really? What are you going to do when a doggie or a lion comes to chew? Is that still going to be okay, as it chows down on your head? One way, we make such a big deal of our negative habits, they are so precious to us that we don't want to change them. On the other hand, we also pretend we don't see them, or that they aren't serious. If someone were to look at our habits and ask us, "What is that?" we would have to answer: "That is just what is going to cause me to go to the deepest hell for a billion years...but no problem, I will get rid of that later. When I have made all my money." Really? Do you have a guarantee for later? Is it in your schedule?

The lamas' blessings are not on any schedule. They give their blessings inconceivably and continuously in whatever way might benefit us. We need to study and practice so that our minds are open to that blessing on every level, outer, inner, and secret. If we are never willing to give up our negative habits, our minds will not be able to open. Please, everyone, try to appreciate more and more deeply what the lamas have given us. 'Appreciate' doesn't mean saying, "Wow! Now I am really special--see what the lamas gave me? I don't know if they gave anything to anyone else, but I got my own special thing." Don't be that stupid. To 'appreciate' blessings means to internalize them, letting them mingle with your mind. Then your faith will deepen and you will become more humble. Slowly as your negative habits subside, your qualities will blaze forth of their own accord, not because you are boasting or showing them off to everybody. That is how we should show our appreciation for all the lamas' blessings. Everybody, please try sincerely to practice in this way.

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatral*

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