



MINDROLLING INTERNATIONAL

JETSÜN KHANDRO RINPOCHE

Transcripts & Documents

LOVE

LOVE

Her Eminence Jetsün Khandro Rinpoche offered this reading and commentary at the invitation of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC as part of the Call To Compassion prayer vigil on the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

The Reading: The Parable of the Saw

The Blessed One said: “Though robbers or highwaymen might carve you limb from limb with a double-handed saw, yet even then whoever gives way to hatred is not a follower of my teaching. You should train yourselves like this: “Our minds will not become



deranged, we will not utter evil speech, we will remain with a friendly heart devoid of hatred; and, beginning with these people, we will develop the thought of loving kindness.

—Majjhima Nikaya, I. 129, Pali Canon

The Reflection

Devastation and tragedy, unimaginable suffering, death, grief and sorrow, acts of war, terror, profound and inexplicable loss. This day that shattered so very many lives and changed the course of history is difficult to forget.

How is it possible to even consider doing what this parable asks of us, and why would we want to?

The friendly heart devoid of hatred described by the Blessed One, the Buddha, is actually the natural state and resting point for people. The circumstances of people’s lives often obscure these innate qualities of kindness and wisdom. However, amidst all the horror of September 11th, 2001, acts of love and kindness abounded. Total strangers helped and comforted one another, first-rescue teams snapped into action without hesitation. Many victims used their last breath to phone loved ones and express their affection and gratitude one last time before dying.

However impossible the task set out in this parable may seem, meeting difficult situations with loving kindness is not only possible, it offers more potential to survive intense suffering with our sanity in tact. It also helps

people find common ground and possible solutions to seemingly intractable conflicts.

On the other hand, aggression hardens hearts and minds and generally solidifies and entrenches animosity and opposing ideas, thus widening the chasm between people who do not agree with or understand each other.

Please take a moment to consider things you have seen and experienced in your own life that might support this notion.

If someone yells, and we choose to yell back, an argument usually ensues and escalates. It is like throwing gasoline on a fire, whereas choosing not to respond in kind often defuses the tension. The effect is similar to sponging cool water onto the hot forehead of someone with a fever, rather than scolding him or her for being ill and demanding immediate recovery. The person who began with yelling is usually shocked into silence by the fact that no one is yelling back or vehemently disagreeing.

In the context of the *Parable of the Saw*, loving kindness is the sincere wish for all beings to experience true happiness, no matter who they are, or what they have done, or how much one disagrees with them. It is part of a traditional Buddhist meditation called the Four Immeasurables that makes the wish for all beings to enjoy true happiness, freedom from suffering, compassion, and the ability to abide in equanimity that is free from bias, passion and aggression.

It may seem impossible to love someone in this way and make the sincere wish for them to receive these four immeasurables when they have caused such serious harm to our loved ones and to ourselves. But where is the harm in experimenting with doing things differently and seeing what happens when one makes new choices?

The irony of such choices rests in the fact that they bring benefit to us as much as, or possibly more than they benefit the recipients of our good wishes.

To see if this might be true, please examine your own life again. Have you experienced the exhaustion of sustaining your end of a fruitless argument and the relief of letting it go? Have you noticed how it feels to wish someone ill versus how it feels to sincerely wish them well?

These small examples from our own life experience are minimal compared to the challenge of maintaining a friendly heart and developing unbiased and unconditional loving kindness towards the murderous thieves described in the parable or the people who took so much from us that fateful day ten years

ago. But these examples provide clues which suggest the point being made in the Parable of the Saw might be true — that love or loving kindness really can offer more workable options than hatred ever has.

The tragedy of September 11th, 2001, changed everything. In addition to the unbearable loss and destruction, all Americans suddenly felt the presence of distant people wishing to cause them immense harm. Feelings of safety and security disappeared in an instant.

These stones symbolize the devastation and loss of that horrible day ten years ago. But in these stones — emerging from these stones — are the jewels of our capacity for unbiased love, understanding, and healing.

When tragedies happen, even enormous tragedies like September 11th, we can choose to harden our hearts to cope with the pain of our loss. We can become like these stones, or we can use loving kindness to unearth the jewels locked within.

Let the love you shared prevail. Do not let the anger you feel towards the perpetrators of such a terrible crime overshadow or diminish that love. Love heals and keeps one connected to the things that matter most while anger and hatred fester and isolate. Anger causes a wound to remain fresh and putrefy and sullies those we love and hold dear by its toxicity. Whereas love allows our wounds to breath and heal, and honors the memory of all those we lost by having us remember them with that corner within our heart that represents the best within us. Love not just opens our eyes to what is good in others but also brings out that which is the very best within each and every one of us.

So, from the rubble of this tragedy, let us honor the loved ones we lost and heal our hearts. With love, anything is possible.

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