

Segyu Rinpoche

Week 4, Awakening the Mind: A Journey for Contemporary Life

Developing Insight

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Segyu Rinpoche: Hello. I hope you all have enjoyed your meditation—not only the concentration meditation, but also the analytical meditation, and balancing the emotions as well cultivating compassion. Let me say one thing that is very interesting about this path. This path is a path of flying, flying free. That's what the great thought of Buddha was about. Change the quality of your experience. Experience this world, in the magnificent way of it. It's really to be radiant, loving, kind, and free. But the question remains: what does that freedom mean?

That's where we're getting stuck. We're looking for a spiritual path. What is the spiritual path about? If you ask seven billion people in the world, each one will have a different definition for spirituality—about themselves, about their perspective for the way they want to live life, about the way they understand that at whatever level. That's why this last block is very exciting. If we want to fly, we have to have a vehicle to fly with. And that vehicle itself has three major components. One is the body, the body to make us fly. That body is built by the meditation and the balancing of the emotions. And then that body needs two wings to fly. One is the compassion, and the other is the wisdom, the insight. Those are the two wings. And you have that engine of modulation, that joy of what life is about. And that's how we'll be able to fly. That's one of the reasons why the fourth block is extremely important. That's the wisdom teachings; the insight, the wealth of insight.

First of all, what is the fundamental idea of freedom, and why are we getting stuck? We're getting stuck because we are locked up in concepts. The only way for us to be free is when we are free from concept. When we are free from conception, we'll be able to fly. That developed wisdom is to protect our mind from the downfall into darkness. This is why it is very important for us to understand that wisdom, those wisdom teachings. We, as humans, really live upon whatever beliefs people are telling us about. Then we believe in so many other aspects of those beliefs. Therefore, we get imprisoned in that ocean of conceptions.

So, we're getting locked up in those concepts. That's one of the reasons I said before. We cannot fly. We are not free because whatever concept comes about, with that concept brings an emotion. The emotions are afflictive. We will suffer from them. But they're just a concept. And we don't know how to get rid of it. So, we must understand wisdom. There are two aspects that are important to understanding wisdom. One is the three moments. What are those three moments about? They are about how we are dealing with the dogma, dismantling the dogma, starting to question the dogma. Not making judgment, but critically analyzing all those concepts. So, when you have that, and when you start to apply that critical analysis of the dogma, sometimes we feel,

“oops.” We feel unsettled, it’s creating uncertainty within us. So, therefore, those three moments are 1) to question the dogma and acknowledge the dogma—to see what the dogma is, 2) apply critical thinking to that dogma, and 3) allow new insight, new wisdom to come out of that.

Let’s see what the dogma is about and how that dogma is so...why we are so imprisoned in that ocean, in the woes of concept. Because the dogma, pretty much, is our inner pattern and inner stories, the stories we believe in. We really focus upon that. We sometimes cannot live without that. Just to change one habit, sometimes, is almost impossible. To change one conviction for something even better; we can see how better it could be, but we can’t because we are so attached to that inner pattern, to that inner behavior, we are so ingrained with that. And we cannot do it.

So, pay attention to how much we say, “we should be that way, we should do things that way, this should be that way.” We have this unbelievable list of the things we should do or how things should be. And you don’t know how to get out of that. I have to do this. I have to do that.” Yes. Some things we need to do because the livelihood of our life depends on it, but we do not need the crazy conviction that this list is fundamentally real. We lose the understanding that we need to do these things because they are part of functionality, not because they are part of the ultimate truth. And that’s where you get locked up into those concepts, into the dogma. Pay attention folks. It’s a little difficult to explain that very quickly.

So, the wisdom side, the wisdom teachings, is something we need to build slowly, patiently, by continuing your analytical mediation, by balancing your emotions, and by cultivating compassion. And you’ll be able to bring more clarity of insight. And then you’ll be able to understand the fundamental structure of your beliefs, your inner story from the point of view of the dogma itself. When we’re talking about spirituality, I asked before, what is spirituality about? For us at Juniper, we understand that it is a path in which we cultivate deep levels of consciousness to understand the nature of the phenomena—the way the phenomena actually are, beyond the conception you make for that object, that story, that aspect of it. So, when you engage in the path in which you have different levels of consciousness, different levels of understanding, that gives room for an unbelievable possibility, an unbelievable clarity to understand the way things are, but not from the point of view that things are according to my concept or the characteristic I put into that object by my beliefs, by my dogmas, by my inner story and so forth and so on.

So that’s why the three moments are fundamentally important. From the point of view of the dogma, we need to see what that dogma means. We start to inquire into the nature of that belief or habit: what is the story you have about something? We place questions and say, “hmm.” This is just a concept. Not accepting it the way it is or negating it—saying, “I don’t like it,” and negating it. No. Okay. Let’s see. And then you start to apply reasoning, apply a line of critical

thinking. And with more logic, more intuitive examination of that phenomenon, rather than making a judgment upon that phenomenon or that aspect, you know it is another concept.

So, trying to analyze one concept by using another concept will not work out. That will create trouble. That will keep us locked up in inner conflict. That's why we will suffer. There is one phrase in the practices...in Sanskrit it is *OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM*. It's very important to understand that wisdom. What that means is this. Pure by nature, the nature of phenomenon is pure. "Pure by nature" means that a phenomenon is just a phenomenon. Phenomena are not good, not bad. It is the way it is. But we don't acknowledge that. When we see something, immediately I like or dislike it. And we really put all of our concepts into that. So, the correct wisdom is to acknowledge that the phenomenon is just the way it is.

And then, how do I use that phenomenon in action to be able to produce positive results in what I'm doing? Not because there is any truth in it and belief in it. So, this phrase, *OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM*, the complete translation of that phrase is "pure by nature, the nature of phenomenon is pure. All conception is dissolved. In one instance, I am unbound by conception." This is very difficult in the meditation for us to get to that state of mind. Some people think when concepts dissolve it means nothing exists. No, it's not that. What it is trying to do is dismantle this exaggeration that we put into those appearances. We put truth into those appearances but deny their meaning; we going into this stream of nothing exists. Or we'll go to another thing: that everything is eternal and real. No.

That's where into this reality is the investigation of the core of Buddhism, the middle way. The middle way is understanding that things don't exist autonomously. Things don't exist because of their own creative power. Things exist by the collection of interdependent events, or dependent arising. That's why things exist, because of dependent arising. That's one of the fundamental expositions of Buddhism: that mystery of the production, that things don't exist because of a causal power that makes things to happen. Instead, things happen because of interdependence, what arises for that event, for that phenomenon to take place.

So, when we mentally understand this—things don't exist autonomously, they do not have self-inherent existence, they instead arise because of many factors coming together—when we put our mind to that understanding, in our meditation with the compassion, it gives rise to that unbelievable capacity we have to produce a mind of joy and clarity. That's the way we fly free. And that's why the insight chapter is a fundamental building block.

When we put these four blocks together—meditation (concentration and analytical), balancing the emotions, cultivating compassion, and developing insight—then you are this being who is flourishing, who is emanating clarity, emanating love and kindness, sharing that love and

kindness with others. You have the skillful means to free others from suffering. Skillful means that this world could be better, could be not partitioned and divided into concept, divided into ideas, totally dogmatic, totally ideological. Ideology serves no means whatsoever except to feed even more into those patterns, those inner stories that automatically hurt us as individually and as a society.

So, the fundamental thoughts of Buddhism, for awakening the mind is to build those four blocks to indeed understand that wisdom. Buddhist training is to free us from those extreme emotions, free us from afflictive emotions and free us from dogma, and then to let us unleash that mind's potential for our benefit and for the benefit of others. That is what the Buddha has brought us, this great idea, this great insight, which has developed into the *bodhisattva* ideal. By cultivating the awakening of our mind by the means of these four blocks, we will soar into the sky of life, enjoying life with great clarity and with great energy for our benefit and for the benefit of all sentient beings.

I hope we all get benefit from this retreat. It is a very simple model. I hope you sincerely engage in this spiritual path by means of those four blocks so that you can soar into your life with joy, happiness, and good health, for your benefit and for the benefit of all. Thank you very much.