

Voice of Clear Light

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'Coming Back to the Heart'

An Edited Excerpt from Oral Teachings Given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the Six Lamps, Summer 2012



The idea of a lamp is that it illuminates the darkness; it makes the darkness disappear. A lamp can illuminate what you want to see, what you can't see. There are many functions of a lamp, but the most important quality is that a lamp illuminates itself internally. So here, the meaning of the lamp is to look at oneself and thereby cut the source of delusion. When we are taking inner refuge, we are not looking out at anything. We are trying to look at our inner self, our inner buddha, our inner Samantabhadra. In this way it is called the self-clearing lamp. That is the meaning of the lamp.

These teachings are the lamp that shows the hidden wisdom. Hidden wisdom is hidden not because somebody has hidden it from us, but because it just sometimes remains hidden for us. It's not hidden because it is too difficult but, rather, because it is too easy. It's not hidden because it is so far away but, rather, because it is so close. It's not hidden because of being rarely within us; rather, it's hidden because it is always within us. So sometimes the reason why things are hidden is the opposite of what is usually meant by hidden. They can elude us by being so simple, so close, so accessible and all the time with us that we just cannot get it.

It seems like it is human nature to become more interested in something if it appears difficult to us. And our level of interest can vary even over the course of just one day! With regard to relationships, often when one person gets a little closer, then the other person creates a little more distance. It seems we are interested in what is difficult, interested in hardship and interested in what is not there.

A friend of mine is always having difficulty finding a relationship. I recently told him, I can see what your problem is: If somebody begins to love you, then you begin to not love that person. And likewise, if somebody begins losing interest in you, then you begin to go crazy for that person. That is the pattern that I've been seeing in him over the past 10 years! [laughter] I asked him, "Why do you do that?" Some things you have to learn; you develop a love with somebody and you learn some things by going deeply into them. You don't always remain conditioned by the frenzied mind, because that mind is always interested in the difficult thing. If you live your life with the support of that mind, you'll drive yourself crazy, along with all the people around you. [laughter] But in one sense that is human nature; our mind is like that.

So the Six Lamps text refers to the lamp of the heart, which is the lamp that brings out the hidden wisdom. When we go to the inner refuge, the heart place is what we're referring to. So each time we do the practice, we recite this inner refuge prayer, and we just go to the heart place, the knowing of that. I believe that the single goal for spiritual development in life would be to get closer to that knowing. That's it.

If you look at it from the view of complexity versus simplicity, complexity will be all one's conflicts and issues and obstacles and emotions and thoughts. Simplicity is the abiding. And the relationship between the complexity and the simplicity is incredible. You accomplish the simple one to overcome the complex one. If it were the other way around, then we would really be in trouble! Luckily, it's not that way. But we don't trust enough—that is the real issue: We don't trust enough. We prefer the more complex means for overcoming the complex things; that's what we trust in, and that's truly what we believe in. One way to look at it, then, is that life's single purpose, its single focus, is to get closer, to get familiar, and eventually to live all the time with that single essence, that knowledge of the source within.

I've shared many times an experience I had while I was traveling in Tibet. I gave a very concise teaching to a small group of older monks. Afterward, one monk came out of our meeting and held my hand, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Now I know what to do for the rest of my life!" After just one hour of interaction, he felt fully confident that he now knew what to do for the rest of his life. It is amazing that you can come to know in an hour what to do for the rest of your life, even though it has eluded you throughout the course of your whole life so far! For me as a teacher, that was a very important moment. It comes down to a very simple understanding, but it's one that requires so much trust, so much in the way of one's valuing it.

One very important characteristic in the teachings of dzogchen is that the conceptual mind is not encouraged. The point is not to stop thinking but, rather, not to take one's thinking as the way of liberation. You see, within every conversation and conflict there is rational thinking, and there is thinking that includes a strong sense of ego. In that restricted space, resolution is difficult. But the moment thinking becomes less and ego becomes less and the warmth of the heart takes more of a place in the interaction, there is more space opening up between the people and a resolution begins to arise. Everything resolves; issues are not issues anymore. They dissolve into that space; they dissolve into that base of all. Of course, it's easy to say and hard to do. But at least we know not to encourage conceptual mind.

With regard to psychological analysis, some say they really need it sometimes. My advice is to go for it, but go for it for as short a time as possible. The reason you may want to engage in analysis is because at that very moment you feel weak and really feel the need for it. But behind that urge, you have a wisdom that sees that this is not the sole way to do it, and that wisdom helps you to bring it to a close when you can. But if you don't have that second wisdom, you can be stuck there forever. Someone told me recently that a woman had been analyzing one of her dreams for 15 years and that she was very proud of that. Well, if it takes 15 years to analyze one dream, and we supposedly have 84,000 thoughts every day, then if you were to dedicate 15 years to analyzing each thought, then that would be the end of things, a guarantee for your not ever getting out of samsara!

In therapy, one might trace a particular problem back to childhood. It may almost appear as if samsara started when you were 13 years old, when your father was very mean to you, or something like that—a sort of chronological delusion. But the truth is that your samsara began well before that. It had already started a long, long time ago, so long ago that it is said that there is no beginning of your samsara. So if you think about a chronological source of your delusion, or the historical sources of your delusion, and then with each event we encounter we make a big deal of it as we often do, it would be impossible to ever become liberated.

Looking at your problems, you may say, “I have a tendency to be fearful in my life.” Okay, that’s one thing—you see that you are fearful. That’s a single source, and it’s within you. But from another perspective one could say, “I have a fear of this person I work with; I have a fear of flying; I have a fear in this situation and a fear in that situation.” If you approach the problem from a complex view, with a focus on each individual person and situation that seems to evoke that fearfulness, then it’s very hard, because you might have countless things that provoke your fear. So, sometimes we have a tendency to look at our problems in a very specific, historic, individual way, emphasizing certain situations. We try to concretize the problem and make it really solid: This is my problem; this is the person of my problem; this is the time of my problem and this is the story of my problem—this is it! That is not really the case, yet we make it like that. And with all of the focus on the complexity, it is not possible to resolve, because that is not the source of the problem.

If you work directly with the core source of your fear, the source within you, then the problem becomes only one thing and not many. From that unique perspective you see that the source of your fear has nothing to do with anybody else; it has to do only with yourself. Usually, though, we are more interested in dealing with the complexity, the many people evoking our problem, rather than simply dealing with the one person who is the source—you, right? So when we say, go to the source of the delusion, it has nothing to do with the chronological aspects and the varieties of manifestations of it.

Look at the effect that a simple change of mood has on one’s view, such as when somebody is in a good mood, for whatever reason. On that day that person’s point of view is quite different from their normal view. It doesn’t matter where they look. It may be the bad breakfast: “Oh, that’s okay, I wasn’t that hungry.” Or it may be the bad traffic: “Oh, that’s okay, it’s quite interesting traffic today.” No matter what they look at, there’s always something to learn about it, or something interesting about it, something beneficial about it. But on a bad day, even good things no longer look interesting! So it is not about where you are looking and the stories around the details, it is about the one who is looking at them. And the *who* that is looking is not many, it’s one. But the *where* toward which one looks is many. So, if you want to do a lot of work to resolve one core problem, then go for the *where*!
! If you want to simplify, though, then look at the *who*, which is you.

That is the method here. The source of our delusion is simple: From a lack of awareness of our

base, delusion simply arises. The inner refuge prayer refers to the source of all positive qualities without exception, which is that space. So the joy of the new car? You can get that in that space. The joy of the new relationship? You can get that in that space. The joy of the new home? You can get that in that space. What kind of joy do you want? The joy of chocolate? You can get that in that space. All of the experiences that you are seeking in your life are a quality of mind that you can get in that space—it is the source of all the positive qualities. And when you don't recognize it, then that is also the source of delusion.

The teachings of the Six Lamps are the heart advice which finger-pointedly shows us the truth. They are the heart advice giving us the most important password we could have, the password to the truth. And this password has three digits—unbounded space, infinite awareness and genuine warmth. That is the password to the truth.

(Editors' Note: Please tune in to the live webcast on March 23 to learn more about Rinpoche's teachings on "The Inner Refuge." It's Ligmincha's first [free all-day webcast](#) with Rinpoche, and includes practice sessions and simultaneous translations, too. You can find out more in the article below.)

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