



Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche Teachings

Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche on acts of violence

In the last few weeks many very sad acts of violence occurred all over the world. My students and friends have asked me for some advice on how to deal with them. I understand that these questions stem from deep worry and concern. Therefore I would like to briefly impart some thoughts on the subject.

These days certain organizations, groups of people and individuals on all sides utilize emotions to divide people. They accentuate the difference between 'me and my culture' versus another culture; or between 'me and my religion' versus another religion etc. They insinuate fixed dividing lines and conjure scenarios where only one side can win and the other must lose without any possibility of coexistence. They need to win and subject their enemies to suffering, no matter what the cost might be. We all must be very careful not to be subject to such a belief.

So what can we do not to be swayed by these emotions, which call for revenge and defeat of the other? If we give in to the rhetoric and believe in these scenarios of doom, we comply with the wishes of the perpetrators. Therefore the first step is not to get swept away by feelings of helplessness, fear and disorientation. Instead we should strengthen our inner peace and calm, which is more suitable and balanced to make decisions and to form valid opinions. If we decide and act out of fear, we do exactly what these fear mongers want us to do. We become their puppets. What we should be most afraid of is to become the victim of fear and to act without compassion and love towards others. Then we are in danger of losing our humanity. This is of crucial importance regarding any area of our life – be it culture, religion, being part of a society etc. We need to step back and take a good look at the situation, taking into account all sides, whilst remaining patient and trying to have compassion for all involved. The aim should be to investigate what could actually bring about a long-lasting solution without panic clouding our common sense. I believe this to be very important.

Of course everything should be done to ensure public safety, but this needs to be done with societal peace in mind and the wish to find long-lasting ways of coexisting. There the leadership of wise politicians and people of quality is crucial. But if we react violently and full of hate to these brutal acts, we are no different than the attackers. We need to make

a difference, however. We cannot give in to hatred and fear mongering, through which we would actually fulfill the wishes of the ones committing and inciting these heinous crimes. They wish to bring about unrest, tears in the social fabric and in the worst case war. Then we can forget about safety for any of us, no matter what side we are on. We all know what a war entails. Whatever a society and culture has worked for and erected over decades or centuries like factories, houses, schools, temples etc. can be erased within days. Families are torn apart and lives are destroyed. This is incredible suffering. Actually we do understand the causes and conditions which lead to these developments. All of us have witnessed wars unfolding after social unrest on TV and in the news.

Two factors are crucial in this quest. First of all the reaction of politicians to these violent incidents. Many of them use these tragedies to further their own agenda. They dish out blame to their opponents, hoping to heighten their profiles to voters and to get better election results in future. Sometimes it seems to me that they forget about bringing about peaceful solutions. Their tactics might even involve aggressive and disparaging rhetoric towards certain groups in society. This is dangerous. Politicians therefore carry great responsibility. If they win elections by inciting violence and deepening resentment between people, their wins will not be based on their good statesmanship, but on their use of despicable tactics, which might potentially hurt society. This also means a lot of responsibility for the voters – we should vote for politicians that sincerely promote peace.

The second factor is the media. There have always been horrible occurrences everywhere in the world, but never before were they broadcasted so widely through so many different channels. Years ago, we were simply not aware of many conflicts, acts of aggression etc. That we are now bombarded with negative news, pictures of carnage etc. is overwhelming to many of us and lead to a feeling of vulnerability. It makes us turn against each other, believing another group is a threat. Distrust and doubt spread easily in such an environment. We all need to be very cautious of this. We need to counter balance these negative news stories with reporting on initiatives to promote understanding, harmony etc. Many lectures have been given on these subjects, many people engage themselves in promoting these values and a lot of research has been done. All this should get a fair share of representation in the media. Not just for the sake of an equilibrium, but also to preserve the mental health of the consumers. My feeling is that this negative news is so overwhelming that it seriously harms us.

We should prevent furthering aggression and violence at all costs by remaining calm, patient, compassionate and truly seeking a peaceful solution for everyone. Only then we can maintain safety, de-escalate conflicts and refrain from harm. My sincere request to everyone is to practice this in the days and weeks to come.

Advice given by Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche in Kathmandu, Nepal, 23. July 2016

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