

## **Never Ending Lamp of Liberation**

### **Review of May 27, 2025 Teachings**

Rinpoche informed us that we will be talking about what happens after death, and a little about the bardo.

#### **Why Study Lam Rim**

He said, we are studying the Lam Rim which is something we study for knowledge. Lam Rim is material for meditation.

The purpose of meditation is to transform our heart and reduce our attachment to materialistic things.

He said in the practice, some practices aren't easy to comprehend. It's not just about studying. We want to have big changes in our heart, therefore we sometimes have to think about things that are unpleasant.

#### **Death and the Uncertainty of the Time of Death.**

Rinpoche quoted a Sutra: "Everything in this world is impermanent. Like a cloud in the fall sky that appears but then moments later is gone."

Everything is constantly changing.

Our lives are like watching a TV show or a play like Romeo and Juliette where people keep dying here and there.

He told the story of a meditator that wasn't that serious about meditation. He thought that if he knew when he was going to die he could do something like perfect himself before he died. So he asked a spirit friend to let him know when his death was coming. The spirit told him of different people here and there that died. Then one day he told him that he was going to die tomorrow. He was shocked and said you should have told me earlier. The spirit said, I tried to tell you by telling of other people dying.

This is why we need to purify our bad karma now before it's the time for death.

The Sutra of Tree says: Even though we have food enough for 100 years, at the time of death we may have an empty stomach. Means we can't take the food with us.

Even if we have a lot of clothes to last us 100 years, when we die, we die without clothes.

He talked about material things that we may be attached to. We can put our name on it but we can't take it with us. After we die, the things that we cherish will end up thrown away or end up in a garage sale.

He said, in some traditions family members will burn or cut people out of photos once a person dies, or they throw pictures of the person away.

The things that we are attached to means nothing to them.

#### **What Can Help at the Time of Death?**

At the time of death, our friends, family, wealth or a doctor can't help us.

Even knowing a great Lama can't save us at the time of death. They can say prayers or give a blessing pill, but when we die, nothing can help us that much.

We need virtue to be in a better place.

Our virtue can help us. The Lama can pray to increase our virtue but the prayers are more from our power.

5th Dalai Lama said in his Lam Rim: Nobody knows when they are going to die. After seeing this we still do no practice which means we are blind.

If we don't do any preparation for our death, we are like the animals on the National Geographic channel that graze grass while the animal next to them gets eaten by a predator, and they just keep eating. If we don't do any preparation for our death, we are acting like those animals.

### **How Can We Prepare for Our Death?**

Rinpoche said for death preparation people try to leave a will and downsize. This is not actual preparation for death. We are just doing the job for the people left behind. It is preparation for this world, not preparation for next life.

Preparation for death is purifying negativities like our hatred and guilt. We must prepare for the mental state we want to have at the time of death.

In our daily life meditation we should try to give our mind more virtuous and less non-virtuous thoughts.

### **Actual Dying Process**

Rinpoche quoted a Prayer:

"When your body gives up, we should wish to not have delusions of non virtue in our head". Not just at the time of death but to be used in every situation in our lives.

We shouldn't think about our stuff and who will get it. This is a delusion. It's the type of mind that we shouldn't let take over.

We are wishing to remember what our Guru taught. Not to be attached to this life, and how to be happy in any situation.

We will leave our friends and accumulated wealth behind. Even though there will be sadness for us leaving our body, we should feel happy and proud to look forward to our next life.

When we die, it's not like how people die on tv, like turning a switch.

There is a death process. At that time we want to have a virtuous mind.

If negative thoughts cross our minds we must purify those thoughts with a calm mental state.

Rinpoche said that we sometimes cry over not having material things. We cry because we can't control our negative emotions.

We should be able to maintain a calm mind with awareness.

He talked about how young people say to older people, you are sooo old.

The elderly person replies by saying, you should be lucky enough to live this much life.

We don't have to feel bad when we look at an older face. Our looks will always change.

## **What's Going to Happen After Death?**

Tsongkhapa says in Foundation of Perfections:

Our karma will take us exactly where we need to go based on the karma we created.

*"I must remember that death is quick to strike, for spirit quivers in flesh like a bubble in water, and after death ones good and evil deeds trail after one like the shadow trails the body"*

Death isn't a game. We don't get to choose where to go. We will go where we are supposed to go. The karma will decide. If we have good karma and bad karma, which karma will hatch?

### **In Vasubandhu's teaching in Treasury of Abhidharma:**

1) The one that will likely hatch first is the one that is the heaviest or most serious.

Rinpoche admits that karma is really, really tricky.

Some people have strong karma to have continuously 3 human lives even though they do bad things, which is why we see the reincarnation of really bad people. They will eventually pay their bad karma.

2) The karma that ripens is the one we are the most familiar with. If we are used to practicing virtue our whole life, that will be the karma closest to us and the one that will ripen.

In our daily life it's important to do prayers. Most prayers are all about virtue.

Being kind will benefit while we are alive and at the time of death. Kind people don't hold a grudge. If you don't hold a grudge you are free from debt. Holding a grudge is like having a thorn bush next to our heart. Makes us not happy at all.

If we go with high level practices we can transform our subtle mind with different forms of meditation.

### **Description of the Bardo**

The process from this life to the next could be very short or long.

Pabongkha said in Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand: There is a monk in his room (monks have rooms not homes) resting peacefully in his bed and next morning wakes up in a place that is on fire.

In that short moment we can reach a bad place after death.

Bardo: The life between this life and next life.

It's not like our human life where we are born and grow up.

Bardo can be really short if you are going to the wrong place, like hell.

If we are in the bardo just hanging around, that's actually a good sign of not going to a lower realm.

There's no map after death. When we die, good karma is activated and we go to our next life.

We must wait to be born. That's our bardo. We have to find a place that matches our karma.

Sometimes we find a mother but can't be born because she isn't married?

**Bar** means Between

**Do** means Wandering

Wandering Between

Buddha says in order to have a baby, there needs to be a bardo nearby. Otherwise you can't have a baby.

After someone dies and is looking for their next life, they are in between. That's the bardo.

### **What does bardo look like?**

In the bardo we look like what we will look like in our next life, not what we look like in our previous life.

If your past life was an animal, and your next life is a human being, you will look like a human being in the bardo.

Because the karma that brings up our bardo and our next life is the same karma.

If bardo looks like our past life, it's not the bardo, it could be a spirit.

Who will see the bardo? Bardo can see another bardo. Some meditators can see bardo with special attainments. The bardo can remember its' previous life, and can travel place to place very quickly. Bardo beings can get someplace as quickly as a phone call can reach the other side of the world.

Bardo beings have all of the senses. Like smell, sight and hearing.

One bardo can last no more than 7 days, and then they die and take another body for 7 days and this can last 7 times for 49 days.

If the first bardo isn't successful you get 6 more times to take rebirth.

Karma is depending on the real life. Nothing happens because of karma on its own. Our karma can't make people do things.

Even though it's karma we can shift our karma here and there.

If you have the karma to die but do well, you can change that karma to live.

Karma isn't like a thunder bolt on our head. We see lightening and can move out of the way.

We can play with karma but don't know how long we would last if we extend our lives.

In the bardo we can have a virtuous mind to shift our karma to have an even better rebirth.

A bardo being can walk through walls but once in the womb, they are stuck there.

Most important part is what to do when we die.

We should have a calm mind. We should not have negative emotions running around.

In our daily life we should try to be more emotionally stable.

If we get angry, it shouldn't last for long.

**Q:** In the spirit world there is no practice. How do we get out of there? Is exhausting our karma the only way?

**A:** Rinpoche said when he talks about the spirit world, he means hungry ghosts.

How can you get out of there? I think they die. One can kill another one and then they die.

He told a story about a hunter that shoots his gun into a cave and later learned that he killed a spirit because of the explosion.

We can have the good karma to be born a human being, but still have lower realm karma.

Some people are born a human being, but live like being born in a hell realm.

Some people are very fortunate. They have food, and friends and wealth, but never enjoy or appreciate those things. They experience unhappiness from these things.

That means your karma is stained. We have good karma to be a human being but we are always destroying these good things. We are consuming wrong karma in this right place.

**Q:** How do we know when we are ready to help? Sometimes we are too flawed to help properly.

**A:** We should help other people when we feel patience and when we feel we can take hardship. If we feel like we can't take on things, then we are not ready. Mainly check our patience and your strength. That also includes skill.

**Q:** If we aren't sure where we stand with karma, what is the best purification practices to use.

**A:** 4 powers, Vajrasattva practice, White Tara. If he had to choose, he'd pick the 4 powers.

**Q:** When a firefighter goes into a fire, is that an example of a Bodhisattva going into a lower realm? Is it an actual hell realm or a state of mind hell realm?

**A:** The example is the fire fighter here.

There are 2 types of Bodhisattvas. Upper level like Arya level. They don't go to lower realms because they don't have the karma to go to lower realms.

The lower level ones can go to lower realms but won't go to hell realms because hell is considered no opportunity to practice at all.

Although they can go to the animal realm and benefit a little bit. Like in the Jataka Tales.

When we talk about Buddha, he was in the hell realm and left when he developed compassion for a suffering friend. He left because of the strength of his compassion.

**Q:** How can we know if the path is correct and how do we know if there's rebirth?

**A:** When people put money in the stock market, there's no obvious proof you are going to make money. It can collapse anytime. Yet we put money there because we see earlier that something could happen. And we are hoping that way.

Similarly many people remember their previous lives. That is one proof that there's a future life.

We acknowledge that there is future a life because there is a past life.

Another thing (he said) is, if we wait too long looking for obvious proof, it might be too late.

He told the story of a life long hunter that was not religious. At the time of his death he saw animals coming for him. This is an example of him seeing his future life.

Some people while dying feel very cold even if it's hot weather. It's a sign of where they are going.

If there was obvious proof, we wouldn't have to convince people to do the practice.

We would do it without any help.

How can we develop the conviction required to pursue this path?

He said it's pretty simple logic. Good things bring good things. Bad things bring bad things.

If we provide good things for others, it's a good thing. If we provide suffering for others it's a bad thing.

If we provide happiness for others, the result it will be happiness we find for ourselves later.

If we provide suffering for others, we will find suffering for ourselves later.

If we don't trust in this, go punch a friend in the face. They may have a bruise but we will suffer with lots of paperwork.

Rinpoche's logic is in this life we practice Dharma, we meditate, we try to be a good person, we develop our mind training practice.

If there is a next life, good. If there isn't a next life, still good. There's nothing to lose.

Use this life to be less attached to things. Having attachment to things doesn't make things better. We plant flowers with such attachment When other flowers do well on their own.

Desirous attachment is giving us trouble in our lives all the time.

Attachment means there is no wisdom. Wisdom is important to have.