

Our Precious Human Chance: Rock Concert Commentary

PART 1

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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Rinpoche was watching a crowded Bad Company concert on television one morning and gave the following commentary. Several times as he watched he placed his palms together and said prayers and mantras to bless the beings who were being shown on the screen. Later in the day he also referred to it multiple times, again and again shaking his head in compassion and saying how we sentient beings waste our time, either by not having the dharma or by not practicing it, and so “destroy ourselves.”

Look at this, how many thousands or millions of people are all there together! Look at us, such sentient beings!

We do have the precious human body, speech, and mind. Everything! We can connect to the dharma. We are lucky in every way.

...BUT we don't go directly into our liberation. We do have the freedom to liberate ourselves, but we don't grab that and use it. One way we choose it. Then instantly we don't want to. We don't want to be awkward. We only want to be slick and go on our own smooth road, deeper and deeper, more and more slippery.

Having connected to the dharma, you can benefit other sentient beings; you can benefit yourself, too. But we don't want to go straight into that. We twist that, and then at the last minute, when we are dying, then finally we see. Finally we want to go straight. Finally we see what is precious, that what we got was the key to freedom. At that time we would be happy to do it, desperate to, even, but it's too late. Right now we have that key. What do we do? We drop it. We don't want to use our freedom key. We don't want to go to liberation. We want to go deeper and deeper into samsara. That way we will never be liberated.

But that is what we want—to go deeper and deeper into suffering. We think that will be wonderful! We think we will find every happiness there! Look at these people. Why did they all come there, to that place? Was it for something meaningful, some reason? No, nothing. Look at how many people there are! My goodness, so many, like ants, all desperate. For what? Why did they all come? Useless!

These funky old men playing the guitar or whatever, they think they are young and handsome still—sorry, mister! Too late! Actually, more than too late—you look like you never were! Especially that one, embarrassing! All the ladies dancing up there, just about dying to gobble them up—more embarrassing! Everybody is working so hard, trying so hard, doing all these things. For what? Maybe for a little money or fame. A few pennies, maybe. Look what they do for that—so much! Look at how many people, you can't even count them! Like a huge group of animals.

These people, they don't know the dharma, they don't have a connection to it, they don't know what they are doing or what they are losing. They don't have any chance or any knowledge or any key. They are just like children playing, or like animals, without thinking.

But we have no excuse. I don't know what we are doing—practicing the dharma, or connecting to the dharma, or hugging the dharma, or whatever you call it, but it is for liberation. It is for something meaningful. But what do we do? We think our liberation is so meaningful, we turn away from it. We turn our back on it, we turn to the other side, instead. How come you do these things? Because you want a big name? A few pennies? How come we are willing to turn our whole chance at liberation upside-down for just one penny? How sad we are, we sentient beings! We destroy our own chance at liberation.

Look at so many people! Young, old, everybody is there, thousands and thousands. One way they don't have dharma, so they don't know what to do or not. But one way, still they could think a little bit, still they could consider how to be a good person, at least. Still they could check to see what is meaningful and what is a waste of time. What is their dharma? Kissing and hugging. What is their liberation? Maybe having sex, drinking, smoking dope. That is their big liberation. Then they think they really got something. Oh, poor sentient beings—how come they are so upside down? *[Rinpoche placed his hands together and said Vajra Guru mantra for a few minutes.]*

Poor sentient beings! They got it exactly wrong. Their thinking is exactly wrong thinking. They exactly didn't get it! They got it...exactly...NOT!

For us, particularly right now we have freedom. We have connected to the dharma, just this much—maybe one inch. We have connected to the Buddha maybe just like one touch, one instant, and then we jump away or flinch like we were burned. We say mantra, maybe OM MANI PEME HUNG, OM MANI PEME HUNG, maybe one or two, and then we stop suddenly as if we are afraid someone will catch us. Even when we start, right away we stop our dharma and start our samsara again. Like Reagan said, "Here we go again!" That way we exchange our chance to be liberated for the chance to stay in samsara.

When it comes to the dharma, we always have hesitations and doubts, we are shy or unsure. When it comes to samsara, we go straight, directly into the middle, without hesitation, like it is our own place, our own house, our own chair. With the dharma, it looks like we are afraid to touch it, afraid to look at it, afraid to say one word, afraid to listen. We hug and kiss samsara but are afraid to touch one hair of the dharma.

That's not how it's supposed to be. It looks like we don't know how to practice. How do you do it? First we study, then we contemplate, then we meditate on it. That means we go inside it. The dharma becomes our place. Of course it's not push-button! Of course at the beginning the dharma is outside and we don't understand, we have so many questions and so much doubt, it is really uncomfortable! Then slowly slowly as we hear the teachings and read the books, then we start to know it a little bit, like a place we have been before. Then we contemplate and think about it more and more, then we start to get a little more comfortable, like wearing your own

pants or your own shoes. You do know them, you do know they fit you, so you just put them on without any hesitation. Like that. Then you practice and go deeper and deeper and then the dharma is becoming really your own place, like your own home. You know each part, each table, each chair, and really you are the most comfortable there, better than anyplace else. Then when really you meditate and realize, even more than your own place, the dharma is becoming YOU! You recognize your own nature. That way you learn, from outer, to inner, to secret, stage by stage.

Why don't we learn that way? Is it because the dharma doesn't work? Does it have some fault? No, no. It is because of ourselves—we don't go into it deeply, straight. We just give it one touch and then jump away. We face toward our liberation for one second and then we turn around and run the other direction.

There are many so-called lamas and practitioners everywhere who have some little understanding of the dharma or who have done some little bit of practice, but then slowly they change. They turn to face samsara. Instead of looking for the dharma they start looking for a little money, or some ladies, or the ladies looking for some guys—maybe slowly, slowly, just a little bit, one penny, one or two ladies. Slowly they exchange their dharma for samsara again. The money—that becomes more important than the dharma. The ladies or the guys—they become more than our liberation.

We do this! We trade benefitting ourselves for harming ourselves, and engage in that. We think that will be our highest liberation.

Look at these people—millions, almost! Wow! They are human beings. But what are they doing, what is number one for them? All the funky guys hugging the ladies, all the ladies hugging the guys, desperately, nakedly. KON CHOK SUM KHYEN—Three Jewels, you know! Hold us in your compassion, we are such ignorant beings!

Look at the funky one singing! Poor guy! GURU RINPOCHE KHYEN—Guru Rinpoche, you know! May you bless all the beings!

Oh, look at this one—it looks like maybe he has a little money, he is dressed up fancy. Is your money going to liberate you? What do you think—is your money going to take you up, or bring you down? Think carefully! I will tell you: Down, only—because you lose your freedom, lose your chance to practice, lose your liberation. Why? Because you are only looking at your money. That way your money actually steals everything from you.

All of you who are trying to practice, trying to learn the dharma, trying to study, be careful! Maybe you are doing good right now, but we are nothing stable. If you get a penny or two, then it's easy to end up upside-down for many thousands of eons.

[to be continued...]

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