

On Death and Honesty

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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Who dies?

Everybody.

But nobody thinks they are going to die.

They say *I know I am going to die*, but they don't trust that it is true.

What will you do when you die?

We say, *I don't want to think about that*.

Nobody wants to think about that! Even though it is the very thing that, were we to think about it, would lead us to freedom and bring us success.

What do we do? We say, *I don't want to think about it*.

Instead, we are happy to think about that which will grant us no freedom, which brings no meaningful result, which harms our dharma practice and screws us up. We will diligently contemplate these things again and again and again. This is the number one obstacle you make for yourself. Do you want to do what makes you suffer?

We say, *No, I don't like to suffer. I don't want to do that*.

Then why do you still do it?

We say, *Don't talk to me. It's not your business! I don't like what you're saying. I like to do things my way. I am smart*.

What is the very thing that will harm you, damage you, and screw you up? MY WAY.

How come you want to do that all the time?

I like it! And don't tell me what to do!

That's just like someone saying, "I am the king of Tibet!" even though they are the king of nothing and only making a fool of themselves.

I am the king of myself!

Actually, you are just the king of the five poisons. Is five subjects not enough? Do you want to be the king of millions, will that make you exalted? Okay, you are right: you are already the king of millions...of poisons. Amazing, we aren't ashamed or worried about that at all.

We say, *I am so smart!*

Are we smart? No. We think we are smart but we are dumb-dumb, like a rock. When we suffer, we are like paper burning. The paper has no freedom or power to choose not to burn. The cause that makes our paper burn, again and again, is our faults, the five poisons. We don't even want to look at our faults. We don't even want to check to see if they are there.

We say, *I am checking! I am looking!*

But actually you don't care what you find. Sure, you are checking...with your eyes closed. If you find something nasty, the very thing you need to get rid of, instead you cover it up and keep it quite safe. That is our kind of checking. And everybody complains that they don't make any progress in their practice! I agree with them--you are right! But if you try to tell them the reason why, then everybody gets quite uptight and nobody wants to hear it. Okay, you are right, you have wonderful freedom: the freedom not to listen to anybody. The freedom to keep doing things your own way, and the freedom to keep complaining about the results.

Well, I have freedom, too--hahaha! I have the freedom of my rough mouth to say these things even if you don't like them. Do I say them because I don't like you? No. I don't enjoy saying them and you don't enjoy hearing them. But if I don't, who will? I say them because I hope it benefits a little. If we can practice more honestly, that will really benefit us. That is my hope for everybody. That is the reason for my mouth.

What will make your practice pure? You must start by being honest with yourself about the inevitability of your death.

Everybody, please think a little. Please try.

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatrul