

THE LIFE OF MILAREPA Part 30 – Hatred

There was a certain monastery at which all of the monks hated Milarepa. They thought that he was teaching a false Dharma that was different from what Buddha taught, and so was harming and misleading people, taking them away from true Dharma. They hated him because they felt jealous of all the attention, admiration and offerings that he received from his many followers.

One day Milarepa told his students he was going to visit that monastery. His students pleaded with him not to go, because they were worried that the monks would treat him disrespectfully. But Milarepa had no fear and was determined to go. He went to the monastery, and walked straight to the entryway of the temple's big hall where all the monks were sitting.



When they saw Milarepa standing there, they shouted at him in anger and rushed toward him to chase him away.

They were disgusted by his appearance – they thought he looked wild and undisciplined, with his long hair and wearing just one cloth. They were angry that he had walked right up to their temple without being invited and just looked at them without saying anything.

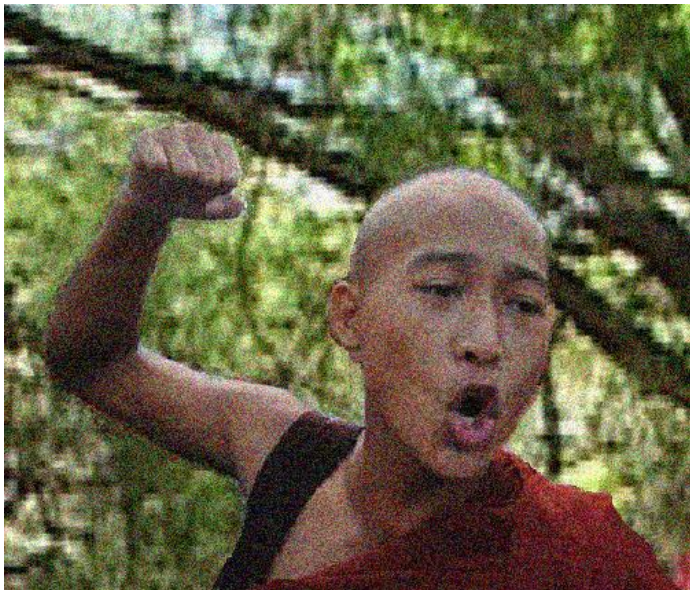
When they ran up to him, Milarepa just stood there, amused. One of them punched him. Then another punched him. Soon several of them were

beating him. Then some of the monks grabbed him and pulled him into the temple. They tied him to a pillar, a thick wooden pole. But when they walked outside the temple, they saw Milarepa standing outside! The monks became enraged – how dare he try to play tricks on them, showing off his magic tricks!

So, they started punching him again.

But suddenly he disappeared and then reappeared inside the temple. They were even more enraged, thinking he was showing off. They started beating him again and again. But he remained

silent and didn't move a muscle. They punched him as hard as they could. Still, he didn't flinch.



Then they tried to push him outside. But they couldn't move him at all! He seemed so heavy. They called more monks to help them try to push him outside. They pushed with all their might, but they couldn't move him an inch. He seemed to be as heavy as a huge rock.



They got some ropes and tied them to his body. Some of the monks pulled the ropes to drag him out of the temple. And other monks pushed him while the others pulled the ropes.

But they couldn't move him. He just sat there like a boulder. They tried pulling and pushing again and again in different ways to move him. Nothing would move him. Soon they all became exhausted, and still he hadn't budged.

Amazed by this, one of the monks said, "When we pull you inside, you end up outside. When we try to take you outside, you stay inside. How is this possible that we can't take you out?"

Another monk said to him, "Okay, we admit that we have attacked someone who is a true siddha-yogi – a yogi with special powers. Now, please leave."

Milarepa replied, "I am not a siddha. You do not know who is a siddha and what siddhas do. Give up your mistaken views of others and stop thinking so highly of yourselves. Having such wrong views is worse than the ten non-virtues – killing, stealing, lying, cruelty and so forth. To think highly of yourself is self-clinging – ego - and therefore causes rebirth in samsara, more lives of suffering."

A monk said in response, "You are most certainly a siddha, a person with special powers. Please tell us, why have you come and said these things to us?"

Milarepa sang a song in reply:

"Like a crystal ball . . . nothing can hide me . . .
I can't be caught or sent away.
This way I moved, like a shooting star,
Was to change your mind that has no faith [that I am enlightened].
So, Milarepa has performed these miraculous powers.
Now I shall not do any more,
For I'm sure your wrong thinking has ended."

When Milarepa sang this, one of the monks said, “How marvelous! Why won’t you perform any more of these miracles?”

Milarepa answered, “There are only three situations in which miracles should be performed. To change the mind of those who have no faith [who don’t believe I am enlightened], To make people’s experiences better, And to point out the results [of spiritual practice], These are the times to perform miracles. At other times one should not do them, it’s taught. This is what the lord guru said.”

So, Milarepa explained why he shows his supernatural powers: to help people see that he really is enlightened, and to show that miracles can happen as a result of spiritual practice.

A monk said, “To be so knowledgeable about these things, you must have studied very well.”

Milarepa replied, “I did study, but I don’t think much of it. Though I did some study, I forgot it all, but that’s just fine.” He added, “Through meditating on the instructions of the whispered lineage of gurus, it’s okay to forget about formal Dharma speech. It’s also good to forget the Dharma that makes you full of pride or arrogance. When you realize that everything you see can teach you, it’s okay to forget about the textbooks. It’s also good to forget about Dharma that’s heavy to carry [too much information that just burdens the mind].”

One of the monks responded, “Before a person becomes enlightened, he still has doubts and flaws; [he is not totally pure], so it’s *not* okay to forget about the Dharma that one has learned.”

Milarepa sang a song in which he explained the difference between the confusion and ignorance that ordinary people have, and the way an enlightened person experiences the world. He also explained that the intellectual formal Dharma doesn’t help very much to get rid of the negative emotions.

And, he warned all the great teachers to watch out that they don’t develop arrogance and pride from knowing so much.

After hearing his song, all of the monks were very sorry about the way they had acted toward Milarepa, and began to believe that he really was enlightened. Their arrogant attitude disappeared, and their minds became more peaceful and pure.

One of the monks, named Likor Charuwa, started to develop real wisdom. He decided to stay with Milarepa all the time to serve as his assistant. Milarepa gave him empowerments and instructions on how to meditate, and then he began to have excellent meditation experiences.



But he still thought Milarepa looked and acted strange. Milarepa was so different from a monk, who is clean-shaven, wears neat robes, and obeys many rules of discipline. One day, he thought, “Jetsun Milarepa has such compassion and power. If he were able to act a bit and dress more like normal people, he would be able to attract many well-educated scholars to join as his students. Then by his wealth and fame, he would be able to benefit many beings by sharing the Buddha’s teachings.”

He went to Milarepa and spoke those thoughts.

Milarepa replied, “I have no need to do anything other than what my guru commanded. Those who have a worldly way of thinking can do what

they want.” He sang a song with these words:

Since I’ve realized that what others say is just like echoes – useless sounds,
I don’t let it stop my way of life as a yogi. . . .
The scholars and good people who come from every direction,
I don’t try to flatter or try to please them. . . .
In the natural state of my mind,
I realize attachment and anger are the cause of suffering.
I’ve cut all the attachments and tormented states of mind. . . . “

Likor Charuwa responded, “Of course, for someone like you, Jetsun Milarepa, this is fine, but I was talking about how to help the teachings of your Kagyu lineage and the beings who are just learning.”

Milarepa replied, “Just as I kept my vow – my promise to practice - I do so now, and I will continue to do so in the future. It is certain that I bring great benefit to both the teachings and the beings.”

“What vow did you take?” asked the monk.

“My vow was like this, and those of you who follow after me should do the same,” he said, and then he sang,

“Until I get the supreme taste of the genuine Dharma,
I won’t let my mind be distracted by other things.
Until I master the path of practicing Dharma,
I will not give up my way of life as a yogi.

Following after Naropa's instruction,
I'll always uphold the Kagyu teachings.
Having Bodhicitta from the beginning,
I won't practice the Dharma only for myself.
Marpa's teachings I will spread throughout all of Tibet.
Whatever it is that pleases the guru, from now on I will strive to do."

Through the compassion of Milarepa, Likor Charuwa's understanding changed, and he made a strong vow, that "Just as the Jetsun Milarepa vowed, I too will practice." Then he went and meditated alone in the mountains, and he became one of the close spiritual sons of Milarepa who were meditator-monks.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were the monks jealous of Milarepa? (he got so much attention and offerings from his many followers)
2. What did the monks think was the reason Milarepa was showing his powers? (they thought he was showing off magic tricks)
3. In which situations did Milarepa say it is okay to show miracles to others? (to help people see that he really is enlightened, and to show that miracles can happen as a result of spiritual practice)
4. Why do you think Milarepa went to the monastery, knowing the monks hated him? (he wanted to teach them and help them overcome their ignorance, jealousy and hatred)
5. Did Milarepa hate the monks who hated him? (no)
6. In what way did Likor Charuwa want Milarepa to change? (he wanted Milarepa to act and dress more like ordinary people)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – Hatred:

"Aggression and malevolence agitate your mind." p. 287.

"If you have malicious intentions, you'll exhaust your merit." p. 589.

"If you do not have ill will toward others, your own merit will flourish." p. 644.

"Enemies that are fleeting just like a flower, to risk your life fighting them is extremely foolish."
p. 39.

“Toward all sentient beings without realization, continuous compassion and love are important.” p. 555.

“These days, people have not accumulated merit, and so they cannot see many inner qualities of people. Instead all they see are the tiny outer faults.” p. 198.

“At the risk of your life, you should practice patience.” p. 650.

- Milarepa

The monks hated Milarepa because they thought he was doing something harmful – teaching a wrong kind of Dharma – and because they were jealous of all the attention that people gave him, which they thought he didn’t deserve.

Those are some typical reasons we might hate a person: when he does something harmful and he gets a lot of attention that he doesn’t deserve.

What are some other reasons we might feel hatred toward someone?

If they bully, insult, humiliate or hurt others. If they are hostile, aggressive, destructive, greedy, racist or rude. If they try to ruin things that are important to others. If they abuse, manipulate, cheat, disrespect or exploit others. If they belong to a group that shows these behaviors.



What is hatred? How does it feel? What happens while you are feeling hatred? Whenever we think of them, we have negative feelings. We think over and over about how awful they are, their bad qualities. We see them as a terrible person. We can’t stand to be around them. We feel agitated, stressed or maybe aggressive when are around them or even when we think of them. We may want to say or do something in revenge or to “punish” them. We have ill will toward them, wishing that they suffer. We talk about how bad they are and have nothing nice to say about them.

It’s natural to feel hatred. It’s a way to protect ourselves and loved ones from harm; when we hate someone, we stay away from them and avoid getting harmed.

When someone is cruel, unfair or harmful and we react by speaking or looking at them with anger or hatred, what does it communicate to them? That we don’t accept their behavior. Sometimes we need to react to stop their misbehavior, to protect and ourselves and others.

But if we hang onto our feelings of hatred afterward, we are making ourselves miserable with ongoing agitation, negative thoughts and feelings.

We would feel much better - we would feel relieved - if we let go of them.

How do we let go of our feelings of hatred or ill will?

Understand where your feeling of hatred comes from.

Do you think it might come from your fear of what the person might do in the future?

Think about it: suppose you knew that the person would never be able to harm anyone again, would you still hate him? You wouldn't be concerned about what he might do next, so you probably wouldn't be thinking of him much anymore, and your hatred would disappear.

Hanging onto hatred means you are worried about what harm the person might do next.

But your hatred won't change that.

You cannot get rid of his bad behavior by hating him.

Remember that our ill will - our negative thoughts - don't hurt him, but hurt us instead.

He might actually enjoy your reactions, your angry face and negative attention toward him.

But you are suffering the stress and distraction of your own anger and hatred.

Remember that it isn't our job to punish someone; their own karma will punish them automatically, sooner or later. If we wish that they suffer, or if we try to punish them, we are only making negative karma for ourselves.

Think about what, exactly, you are hating. Do you really hate the whole person?

Do you hate the person's whole body? Arms and legs? Or just his face? Or just his mind?

Do you hate his whole mind? You don't know everything about his mind.

You only hate the part of his mind that causes his harmful behavior - the harmful thoughts.

We should hate the behavior, but not the person.

How can we do this?

Ask yourself, where do his harmful thoughts and behaviors come from?

They come from the same place that our own bad thoughts and behaviors come from:

Our pain and ignorance. Our suffering, and not knowing how to stop our suffering.

A person is unkind because he is hurting inside, and doesn't know how to stop the pain.

Have you ever heard the expression, "hurt people hurt people"?

He may have been abused, neglected or bullied by someone - maybe even a family member, that made bad thoughts and behaviors arise in him. We don't know what he has been through.

No one taught him to be kind and compassionate. He can't feel the joy of being a truly loving person. So, when we think of this, we can try to have compassion for him.

If we can develop compassion for someone who we hate, that is truly great because we are helping ourselves to get rid of our own ignorance!

How do you think Milarepa felt toward the monks who attacked him?

Instead of hating them, he knew they didn't understand him, so he had compassion for them.

Remember that every being, no matter how bad their behavior, has the Buddha Nature. The problem is that their Buddha Nature is hidden behind their ignorance and confusions, like the sun is hidden behind thick clouds. One day, in some future life, they will be free of their ignorance and have the perfect qualities of a buddha.

We also let go of our hatred and ill will by doing virtuous actions like meditating and chanting prayers, and dedicating them for the happiness of all sentient beings. In prayers we wish that all beings - even those who are harmful - be happy by being full of love, and be free from suffering by becoming enlightened. Then they wouldn't be harmful anymore! When we do these prayers, we are having loving, compassionate thoughts, and then what happens to any hatred we might have had? It disappears! We can't have compassionate thoughts at the same time as hateful thoughts.

What if a friend attacks with words or actions someone you dislike, and your friend is not just trying to protect others? You might be tempted to join in, like the monks who ganged up on Milarepa like a mob, attacking him. It's easy to get caught up in it. But you should be careful to think for yourself and remember the lessons we just discussed. What can you do? You can stay silent, leave, try to discourage your friend, or try to distract him or her by talking about something else.

ACTIVITY – Make a Hatred Monster:

Make a monster like those from previous chapters, only make this one with a face showing hatred. The monster reminds us to be aware of our own inner “monster” of hatred.

