

Advice On Healing from Lama Zopa Rinpoche

You can only receive SARS if you have created the karma, which is created by delusion, which is negative. The karma is basically the result of an unethical life, immorality, harming others, and this also harms you. It is the result of unrighteous actions done with negative thoughts. If you receive SARS, it is the result of past karma ripening; the outer condition is the manifestation of this disease in the world.

According to Tibetan medical texts and also in the teachings, it explains that cancer and other diseases are caused by the individual's negative karma; in addition, it is caused by mamos (evil beings) who want to harm others. The mamos send out poisonous breath that spreads out. Anyone who has the karma then comes in contact with the poisonous breath. This is the condition that causes cancer.

Sentient beings who have created negative karma through jealousy, having broken samayas (vows), living unethically, living life without a good heart and with the thought of the three poisonous minds, having an unrighteous mind, and doing harmful actions and so forth will receive harm from outer beings, those evil-doers (mamos) who harm other living beings. Thus, sentient beings who have created the karma are then infected by their poisonous breath (similar to how airborne viruses and diseases spread). That manifests into sicknesses such as cancer and SARS. It is for these reasons that these various practices and mantras, especially Black Garuda, are helpful.

Ultimately, we need to cease the delusions and negative karma of sentient beings, which are the source of all the sufferings, including rebirth, death, and all the sufferings experienced in between. Ultimately, we need to bring sentient beings to liberation and to everlasting happiness, full enlightenment, by ceasing even the subtle defilements.

In the meantime, Buddha manifested with unbearable compassion that embraces us sentient beings as these various forms such as Black Garuda, who is the enemy of nagas and who eats snakes, etc. Buddha manifested as Black Garuda so that sentient beings could be protected from various diseases, especially those that come from naga harm. Black Garuda protects and heals these sicknesses (which are the conditions) to help sentient beings.

Similarly, Buddha manifests as a rich person to help the poor. Buddha can even manifest as a butcher to subdue evil beings, to transform their consciousnesses by splitting them from the body. Buddhas and bodhisattvas can manifest as armies for similar reasons, to destroy those evil ones who are continuously harming other sentient beings and harming the peace and happiness of the whole world, as well as to stop evil beings from creating so much heavy karma because of their actions. Buddha's actions only come from pure compassion and concern for sentient beings, as they have unsurpassable compassion toward the sufferings of evil beings and all sentient beings.

The clinical way of explaining the sickness (SARS) in the West, even if it is correct, is not a complete explanation. This is because to fully understand the cause of the sickness you have to understand and have full knowledge of the mind. There is so much to learn about even just the conventional nature of the mind. In the sutras there is the explanation of the gross mind and in the tantras the explanation of the subtle mind and its functions. If the education of the mind is limited in its understanding of the causes of sickness, then the explanation of how to cure it will always be incomplete.

Usually in the West they explain about the conditions of the sickness, but they do not mention the causes, which one cannot see with human eyes and or with machines.

From positive thinking and having positive thoughts, the result can only be beneficial, causing happiness to others and, along the way, happiness for

oneself. If our thoughts are very heavy and negative, the effect is harmful to ourselves and also harmful to others.

By knowing what is right and what is wrong in our life, we can similarly create positive actions with discriminating wisdom that knows what is beneficial and what is not. If one does not know and is ignorant, then we will receive the opposite effect. The result will be harmful to our life as well as to others who are numberless.

From ignorance, you cause danger to others. But with wisdom, as well as compassion, patience, and tolerance, you give only peace and happiness to numberless sentient beings as well as to yourself. You also bring peace and happiness to the whole world, to numberless living beings in numberless universes. You are able to do this from life to life, with a continuous positive mind, having patience and compassion. The opposite to that is having an angry, jealous mind, which is harmful to numberless living beings in numberless universes, which is harmful to the world; there is no question that it is harmful to you.

Liberating yourself from the mental sickness of desire is like letting go of the cause of confusion, suffering, and pain. You are freeing yourself from being overwhelmed and overpowered by the external object of desire, and you are giving yourself inner peace because you achieve inner satisfaction.

In the teachings of Buddhism, giving yourself satisfaction and contentment is called renunciation because you are renouncing the cause of suffering: the negative, troubling, emotional mind, which is the source of all our general life problems.

So here, you can see very extensively the negative effects of desire, the cause of suffering. You can also see the positive effects of renunciation – so much peace and happiness, inner strength, freedom wherever you go, whether you are alone or with people. This comes from letting go and freeing yourself from desire.

Then there is the self-cherishing thought that opens the door to all problems in life and harms numberless others from life to life, directly and indirectly, and is also of great harm to yourself. By transforming, by changing the mind into cherishing others, it is like giving happiness to numberless living beings. It is similar to the sun shining in the world and is best way to achieve happiness for yourself, which comes by the way.

Ignorance is also very harmful. For example, in business if you are ignorant and cannot see the present or the future, there is the risk that you may completely lose all your money that you collected for so many years, for your whole life, from kindergarten onward. So you can lose all your money, and the next day you become a beggar. This is due to ignorance. Therefore, it is very important and necessary that you have knowledge, understanding, and foreseeing.

Ignorance is also very harmful in relationships. When you are married or living together, throughout your whole life you fight and quarrel and there is so much suffering, no peace day or night. You have such a sad life, such an angry life. It is as if you are caught in prison; instead of enjoying life, you are caught in prison, and it becomes like hell. Your relationship, your family life, becomes like hell. Then there is also the suffering of separation, especially if you are very attached. The shortcoming is ignorance, not understanding, not having knowledge or the ability to foresee.

Ignorance is also very harmful in medical treatment. You can get the wrong treatment or the treatment takes a long time to work. Then maybe the treatment is right, but another sickness comes by the way, or you experience life obstacles and death. Again, you need knowledge, understanding, and foreseeing to overcome these things.

Ignorance is also harmful in war. You make mistakes because of not knowing where the enemy is or the time that the enemy will attack. Thus, you lose the war and so many people get killed. Again, you need foreseeing, knowledge, and understanding to overcome that.

Ignorance is also harmful with regard to how you bring up your children. If you have no knowledge, understanding, or foreseeing, you will not know what is right for the child and what is wrong, what is to be abandoned. You will not know how to bring up the child according to their different karmic imprints left from the past. Again, because of ignorance you encounter so many hardships, problems, and sufferings. You can't really benefit the child and are not really able to make the child's life meaningful. Even though you have given birth, shelter, food, and common education, but still the child's life is very destructive, not only inside but also outside, in the family and in the world. This is because of the lack of education in the good heart and wisdom.

So due to ignorance not knowing what is real happiness and the real cause of happiness (even ordinary happiness, success) and not knowing what is the cause of suffering (which is negative karma and delusion), due to ignorance not knowing what is the cause of liberation and the path to achieve it and not knowing what is the path to achieve full enlightenment, the child is selfish, having no respect, even toward the parents who have sacrificed so many years of their lives to bring the child up in the way that they think is good.

This is the most harmful ignorance as it means that you can't really help others to achieve happiness; you can't really educate others in what is the real cause of happiness and the real cause of suffering; you can't really liberate them because you don't know the path yourself; and you can't bring them to full enlightenment because you do not know how to do this. All this is due to ignorance.

Ignorance is also harmful to your spiritual practice. Because of not having knowledge, understanding, and foreseeing, you are unable to know what is right or wrong to practice and then you get stuck. Life is very short, and of course, death can happen at any time, so then you lose this great opportunity to liberate yourself from suffering and its causes and to liberate others.

Whatever life you live, whatever you do in your daily life, do everything with the thought of loving kindness, with the thought of compassion, and with the precious thought of benefiting others as well as with wisdom. You need to develop both. Without wisdom you may do silly things that are actually meant to benefit others but are totally silly, empty, and impractical; so you encounter problems. Without wisdom you can use your life and actions in a negative way, and so what could be used to benefit others instead results in harming others. This is because of not having knowledge, so you engage in negative karma or in things that have very small benefit. For example, you may be able to benefit so many hundreds or millions of people or animals, saving their lives and liberating them from creating suffering and causing them to create happiness; but instead, you give your life, you sacrifice your life for one tiny insect; you choose to die, giving your life to one tiny insect, instead of benefiting so many people. That is an example of compassion without wisdom.

Colophon:

This advice was scribed by Ven. Holly Ansett, at Kachoe Dechen Ling, Aptos, California, on April 2–3, 2003. It has been lightly edited and formatted for students of the FPMT by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Services, April 2003.