

# **INEXHAUSTIBLE MIRACLES**

*The Ten Perfections on the  
Path of Compassionate Beings*

**Tempa Dukte Lama**

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cause conflict. Giving at the wrong time or place means that the other is not really suited to our act of generosity. They may be so conditioned that giving is useless. They may not be ready to process our gift. This is like pouring water into a container that is upside down.

The fourth aspect of generosity concerns our capacity and skills in giving with respect to the three times of past, present, and future. Sometimes giving causes fear or distress in us rather than generating a state of joy. This is why we have to make a clear decision before we give. Do we really want to give? We need to ask ourselves this question so that we can be completely open and become one with the act of giving.

In our lives we may experience difficulties and pain because of our confusion and inability to make clear decisions. Being able to clear our mind opens the door to liberation. If we want to give, we must clear our heart and mind so that we do not have doubts, expectations, or a lack of faith in the positive effect of our giving. When we have cleared our mind to give, this enables us to drop the act of giving and the object we have given from our mind. Making a clear decision to give also provides determination and patience so that we are able to accept any hardships we may encounter while giving.

With respect to the present moment, skillful giving is our capacity to spontaneously manifest our heart and mind of generosity. When our generosity manifests spontaneously, it has become effortless; the manifestation of the clarity of our mind. Having a clear mind means that we know the four aspects of giving: our intention, the object we are giving, the one who is receiving, and our skills involved in giving. We do not insist on giving, or force the other to accept, when he or she is not ready or does not want our gift. When our mind is not clear, giving becomes a struggle or burden. Sometimes we want to give and we do give, but the

lack of skill in our giving destroys its essence. For instance, we may give with anger. When we give with anger, we may throw the object that we are giving, making our act of giving impure.

With respect to the future, skillful giving means that we let go of what we have given. We abide in joy by reflecting on our generous act. If we do not let go, the resulting regret can generate unhappiness in us. This may in turn lead to anger and from there into depression. We become frightened or judgmental: “I should not have given it, now I do not have it!” Be happy with what you have given. Feel joy about what you have been able to do for another. Contemplate on your generous actions so that your generous heart and mind can expand and become boundless.

### *The Threefold Expression of Generosity*

As compassionate beings we express generosity in three ways to support the body, feelings, and mind of others: giving material gifts, giving the truth, and giving non-fear. While practicing generosity, we always stay in touch with the four aspects of giving that we talked about earlier.

When we give material gifts, we can practice small acts of giving such as giving a spoonful of food or a drop of water. We can give in medium ways by giving larger material objects. Finally, great acts of generosity involve giving one’s own limbs and organs to others without attachment. This is the true Perfection of Generosity. However, any generous act that is free from attachment and given with wholesome intention is a true gift of a generous heart and mind.

Giving the truth can be teaching the truth, giving initiation for practices, and teaching the doctrine of the path of awakening. It also means showing others the way, giving advice, and encouraging and empower-

ing others to be healthy and happy. We can give ourselves and others this gift of empowerment. Through our self-care and gentle self-acceptance we empower ourselves to listen to our inner voice and our feelings instead of ignoring our happiness and our suffering. Empowering others means that we show the way to those who are lost in the cloud of delusion and conditioning. We become a model for others to reflect on their own true nature. We do this by being honest, compassionate, loving, and self-caring.

We may feel that in order to give the truth we need to have a lot of knowledge and wisdom. Yet, if we really have compassion and the deep intention to help others, there is no need to feel that we do not have the necessary wisdom or knowledge. Having the intention to help others is wisdom. Through this wisdom we will have the strength and clarity to show others the way or to help them find it. Our compassion and compassionate listening for someone can be a powerful skillful means to help this person find their way.

To give non-fear, we provide a refuge for others and protection to those who are in danger. We may protect our planet. We may protect animals that are at risk when crossing the road or animals that are being hunted. We can protect others from becoming the victims of their afflictive conditioning. When we become a refuge for others in this way, we give non-fear. To practice giving non-fear we resolve that we will not engage in any action of body, speech, or mind that could harm others or ourselves or cause others to feel afraid. This means that we renounce all actions that arise from afflictive emotions. For example, acting out of anger, lying, or gossiping can cause others to experience fear.

If we do not act out of afflictive emotions, we give non-fear. We give non-fear when we have the heart and mind to accept others the way they



are instead of getting angry with them. If we lack this acceptance, we give fear because we make it more difficult for others to accept themselves. By becoming angry with our friend we scare each other. That is giving fear. Like the sun, the light that dispels the darkness, and like a refuge that protects us from cold, compassionate beings observe their actions and refrain from doing anything that will frighten or cause harm to others.

How many of us give fear to others or to ourselves? We give fear to ourselves by putting pressure on ourselves and constantly thinking that we have to be better. We give fear to ourselves by worrying about what may or may not happen. Our attachment to a particular outcome can give us fear. If we are afraid, this will feed and increase our insecurity. If we are frightened by our own conditioning, the gift we can give to ourselves is to be stable and not afraid. We can initiate this by asking what we can do to be at peace. We can ask ourselves how we can manifest so that our presence can empower ourselves and others to be happy.

Sometimes in our lives we become the victim of misfortune and have to face great external and inner difficulties. We may be so affected by our situation that we are no longer able to recognize or trust in our natural potential of healing and our strength to take care of ourselves. We begin to feel that the answer has to come from outside ourselves. Doing our best to help others who are in this kind of difficulty is a genuine act of compassionate giving. This act provides a space for those who are in a vulnerable state and who need a safe place of refuge. When we give non-fear, we are there for the other in such a way that she or he can take refuge in our presence. When we give non-fear, we are role models for others and we give them the strength to recognize who they are and move forward.

Most of us have conditioning that limits our capacity to give non-fear from a clear, unafraid, and unaffected mind. But we can do our best. We need to make a strong wish to help others in this way, and then do our best without judging ourselves and without having too many expectations.



THE PERFECTION OF  
*Discriminating Awareness*

The essence of discriminating awareness is to know the nature of reality. It is the ability to see all phenomena clearly. In particular, discriminating awareness has to see its own true nature clearly. In order to know, we have to investigate. The quality of mind that follows the object of its investigation fully and thoroughly is discriminating awareness.

When we follow an object with the quality of discriminating awareness, we understand that neither we as the perceiver, nor the object we perceive, nor the act of perceiving have inherent existence. Discriminating awareness is the wisdom that is free from any concept of these three agents having an inherent identity of their own. When we perceive with discriminating awareness, we know that the object of our mind does not have inherent existence, neither does our perception of the object, nor our mind that knows the object.

In Tibetan, discriminating awareness is *Sherab*. *She* means knowing or cognition. *Rab* means to perfect to the end. We all have the potential

of knowing and recognizing the nature of reality. This is our innate wisdom, or *Yeshe*, which we are born with. *Ye* means primordial or “from the beginning” and *She* means knowing. *Yeshe* is our innate potential of knowing. This wisdom is inherent within us. The knowledge we gain when we manifest this potential of wisdom is *Sherab* or discriminating awareness, the perfect knowledge of all phenomena that we cultivate through our path of practice. Having perfected discriminating awareness means that we understand the state of ourselves and others. We also understand the impermanent and interdependent nature of both the self and others. Recognizing the nature of self and others enables us to work toward transformation as true compassionate beings.

As compassionate beings, all our actions, including the practice of the preceding nine Perfections, have to be guided by discriminating awareness. At the same time, we develop and perfect discriminating awareness through the practice of the other nine Perfections. For instance, when we practice generosity, we develop discriminating awareness as our ability to distinguish between pure and impure intention, pure and impure giving, and objects of giving. Discriminating awareness enables us to extend our generosity to all beings without distinction because we recognize that we are not separate from all other beings. In our practice of morality, we develop discriminating awareness as our capacity to discern whether an action is wholesome or unwholesome. Through discriminating awareness we are able to understand the consequences of our actions for ourselves and others. Then we know what we need to cultivate and what we need to abandon.

The remaining Perfections are guided by discriminating awareness in a similar way. Without being guided and supported by discriminating awareness, we cannot manifest the essence of the other Perfections. We

may begin to practice them, but we will not be able to perfect them; without discriminating awareness, our practice retains a stain of conceptuality. Consequently, our practice may not become the causal seed for us to become compassionate beings. Discriminating awareness has the power to wash away all stains of misconception. We need this quality of discriminating awareness in order to perfect the other nine Perfections.

### *The Benefits of Discriminating Awareness*

Discriminating awareness is the wisdom that cuts through misconceptions. It empowers us to clear delusion in its two forms, the delusion of afflictions and the delusion of intellect. Delusion means that we perceive phenomena differently than they actually are. We misjudge appearances. Delusion separates the true nature of our mind from the object of our mind. It obscures our inherent wisdom through not knowing and wrong knowing. Not knowing is our ignorance due to our preoccupation with afflictive emotions and with views that we hold on to. Wrong knowing is our holding on to a view that is not in accord with reality. The latter is the delusion of intellect.

By not being able to understand the truth of interdependence, we invite the obscurations of affliction and intellect into our life. When our emotions are controlled by ignorance, they become the main condition for creating the cyclic continuum of suffering. In the presence of ignorance, our inherent wisdom of awakening falls under its shadow. We begin to hold on to our feeling of self-identity and disconnect from the innate wisdom that recognizes selflessness. As a consequence, we experience mental distraction and the suffering of insecurity that is caused by the delusive perception of fear.

Knowing, on the other hand, is our direct experience that is free from the obscurations of intellect and afflicted emotions. This means that we know the selflessness of ourselves and of phenomena. This knowledge is the true manifested form of wisdom. We manifest this knowledge when we are free from the two delusions. Then we become Buddha.

To be able to use discriminating awareness to clear the two delusions, we need to understand how the two delusions affect us. When we are influenced by the five poisons of ignorance, desire-attachment, anger, envy, and pride, and the five wrong views, we cannot perceive the nature of reality as it is. This is the delusion of afflictions.

There are five main wrong views or misconceptions. The first is the belief in the permanence of transitory phenomena. The second is the belief in the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism. Nihilism is the belief that nothing exists. Eternalism is the belief in permanence. We may believe that our self is permanent and exists by itself; we fail to see that we depend on others. When we abide by either of these two extremes, we develop ignorance of attachment to our view.

The third wrong view is to see oneself as superior. When we see ourselves as superior, the pride of ego is born. Pride makes us feel that we know everything. This closes the door to learning. When we think that our view is superior to that of others, our mind is divided. Based on this view, distorted perception arises. For example, we may feel that our religious tradition is superior. If we hold on to this view, this will cause us to dislike or judge those following other traditions. This will divide the world and consequently we will experience suffering.

The fourth wrong view is to believe that unwholesome actions are wholesome. We may believe that gossiping, lying, or even killing others is fine. This can cause us to engage in these actions. The fifth wrong