

淨空法師：什麼是智慧？（中英文）

Venerable Master Chin Kung: What is wisdom?

這位同修問：「請問智慧是什麼，它從何處來，又到何處去？」

答：這個問題很有趣。智慧是什麼？簡單地，就事相上，簡單的跟你說，智慧就是明瞭。迴向偈說：「願得智慧真明了」，你對於一切現象，你都能夠通達明瞭，這叫智慧。智慧大的人，不但能知道現前，還能知道過去，還能知道未來；所以說，十方三世一切理、事、性、相、因、果，無所不知，無所不能，這是智慧。智慧沒有來處，智慧也沒有去處，智慧是我們自性裡面本來具足的，佛家叫「般若智慧」，這個東西不是學來的。

我們有沒有智慧？有，跟佛一樣圓滿、一樣究竟，但是我們的智慧被東西障礙住了。智慧好比太陽，我們現在是什麼情形呢？有一層烏雲把太陽遮住了。太陽在，不是不在，被烏雲障礙住了，陽光透不出來，所以我們的智慧就沒有了。佛教我們修學，修什麼？就是把這個障礙去掉，你自性智慧就又透出來了。什麼障礙是什麼呢？佛跟我們講，是煩惱啊。「見思煩惱」這是第一大類，「塵沙煩惱」是第二大類，「無明煩惱」是第三大類，你有這三大類的煩惱，把你的心性遮蓋了。所以，你自性裡面有究竟圓滿的智慧，不能現前；你自性裡面本來具足萬德萬能，你也不能現前；你自性裡面具足圓滿的福報，一絲毫欠缺都沒有，現在也不能現前。

那麼煩惱從哪裡來的？跟你說，你自己造的。煩惱不是原來有的，是你自己一念不覺造出來的。自己造，那你自己還要受。佛雖然大慈大悲，沒有辦法把你的障礙除掉。為什麼？障礙是你自己變現的，不是別人給你的。別人給你，別人就有辦法代你去掉；它不是別人給你的，是你自己從迷幻當中生的，你必須從迷幻當中一下覺悟過來。就像你在作夢一樣，你自己在做惡夢，別人沒有辦法救你。那個夢是你自己做的，不是別人變現給你做的。一定要等你自己清醒過來，那你就得救。你要不醒過來，那就沒法子了。

我們今天就在作夢，永嘉大師《證道歌》講得好，「夢裡明明有六趣」，我們在搞六道輪迴是在做大夢；「覺後空空無大千」，什麼時候真正覺悟了，不但六道沒有了，十法界也沒有了。六道沒有了，十法界沒有了，跟諸位說，一真法界也沒有了。為什麼？一真法界是從十法界對立，相對建立的，是相對的，是方便說的，這一邊沒有了，那一邊也沒有了，那才真的是覺後空空無大千。你要認為「哎呀，六道沒有了，十法界沒有了，還有一真法界」，你完了，你還是迷，你還是執著。你妄想、分別、執著還沒有斷。為什麼？你執著一真法界。一真法界能不能見到？絕對見不到。所以眾生的大毛病是處處著相，佛雖然說得那麼清楚明白，「離一切相，即一切法」，他就是不肯離。

佛說法善巧方便，你要懂得佛說法的意思。眾生執著有，佛就講空，希望你把執著有打掉。可是眾生很麻煩，“哦，佛只說空”，好，有破了，他又執著空，這麻煩大了。他是教你離去掉執著，不是教你換對象啊。眾生學佛往往都是換對象。世法不執著了，而執著佛法。世法不分別了，而分別佛法。所以，永遠沒有辦法脫離無明，永遠沒有辦法丟掉妄想、分別、執著，這是眾生最困難的地方。

不但智慧沒有來去，《中觀論》講：「不生不滅、不來不去、不一不異」，你不能說是一個，也不能說是二個，為什麼？你起心動念，你就有分別執著。佛實實在在教給我們，對虛空法界一切現象，常常保持著不起心、不動念，不分別、不執著，那就對了，完全正確了。起用的時候，別人向你請教的時候，你講得頭頭是道；不起作用的時候，一念不生。六祖在《六祖壇經》裡面講得好：「本來無一物，何處惹塵埃。」「本來無一物」是自性清淨心全體顯露，那就是如來果地上講的寂滅忍、清淨寂滅。

《楞嚴經》講得好，清淨寂滅不妨礙森羅萬象的發揮，。那就是外面一切現象的動態。大的，星系的運行，。小的，像地球上春夏秋冬的變化，剎那在變化，都不妨礙。清淨寂滅是體，不妨礙萬象發揮，。這就是《華嚴經》上講的理事無礙、事事無礙。重點是講什麼？「無礙」啊，。什麼時候無礙？清淨寂滅現前才無礙。你的心不清淨，心不寂滅，那就有妨礙，理事有礙，事事有礙。起心動念一動就有妨礙，什麼妨礙？迷了，。你自性裡面的智慧、德能、相好統統不能現前，妨礙了。

由此可知，真正用功的人用什麼？一切境界裡頭，學不起心，不動念，不分別，不執著。這個話我也講得很多。這叫真用功。這叫「從根本修」。心愈清淨，看你清淨的程度，你的智慧、德能、相好，你能夠透出多少。你一份清淨，得一分利益。這三樣透出一分。兩分利益，那你就透出兩分。

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Q: This fellow practitioner asks, 'May I ask what wisdom is? Where does it come from and where does it go?'

A: This question is very interesting. What is wisdom? To put it simply, from the perspective of the condition (or state) of a thing, wisdom is clear understanding. A line in (one of the verses of) dedication of merit goes, 'Wish to gain wisdom of true understanding.' If you can have a thorough understanding of all phenomena, it is wisdom. Those with great wisdom know not only the present, but also the past and the future. That's why, they know the nature 性, the manifestation 相, the principle 理, the instance 事, the cause 因 and the effect 果 of everything in the ten directions (of the universe) in the past, the present and the future. They are also capable of doing anything. This is wisdom. Wisdom does not come from anywhere. Neither does it go anywhere. Wisdom is what we originally have in our original nature. In Buddhism it is called 'prajna wisdom'. It cannot be attained by learning.

Do we have wisdom? Yes, we do. (Our wisdom) is as perfect and thorough as that of Buddhas. But our wisdom has been obstructed. Wisdom is like the sun. What situation are we in now? A dark cloud has covered up the sun. The sun is still there, but it is blocked by the cloud and the sunlight cannot seep through. So, our wisdom disappears. The Buddha taught us to practise. To practise what? To practise how to get rid of hindrances. (Then,) our original wisdom will seep through again. What are the hindrances? The hindrances are afflictions. The first type of afflictions is those caused by attachment to incorrect views and thoughts 見思煩惱. The second type is caused by differentiation 塵沙煩惱. The third type is caused by not awakening to the truth of the universe 無明煩惱. We have these three types of afflictions and they have covered our original nature. So, the ultimate and perfect wisdom in our original nature cannot emerge; the innate countless abilities in our original nature cannot emerge; the innate perfect good fortune in our original nature cannot emerge.

Where do afflictions come from? Tell you what, they are the result of our own doing.

Originally, there were no afflictions. They were created by a single unawakening thought of ours. They are generated by ourselves, so we have to experience them. Although Buddhas are compassionate and unconditionally love us, they cannot remove this hindrance for us. Why? Because the hindrance is generated by ourselves, but not given by anyone else. If they were given by anyone else, then there would be a way of removing them by someone

else. But it is not given to us by someone else, but is generated from our own delusions. We must suddenly awaken from delusions. It is like dreaming when we are asleep. When we are having a nightmare, no one else can save us from it. (Because) the nightmare is generated by ourselves, but not by other people. It has to be when we come back to consciousness, then we are saved from the nightmare. If we do not wake up, no one else can do anything (to save us from having the nightmare).

We are in fact dreaming today. The Venerable Master Yongjia well put it in his 'Ode to Attaining Enlightenment'. (One line goes,) 'There are clearly six realms in the dream.' (It means that) the state of us creating the six realm is dreaming. (The following line goes,) 'Nothing is there when one is awake.' When we are truly awakened (to the truth of the universe), not only the six realms disappear, but the ten dharma realms also disappear. The six realms disappear. The ten dharma realms disappear. Tell you what, the one reality dharma realm also disappears. Why? Because the one reality dharma realm is established in association with the ten dharma realms. They relate to one another. (The Buddha used these terms and concepts) for the convenience of our understanding. When one of them disappears, the others also disappear. That is truly 'nothing is there when one is awake'. If you think, 'Well, the six realms disappear and the ten dharma realms disappear. But there is still the one reality dharma realm.' (If you think like this,) you are incorrigible. You are still deluded. You are still attached to things. Your thoughts, differentiation and attachment are still not removed. Why? Because you are attached to the one reality dharma realm. Can you see the one reality dharma realm? Definitely not. So, the big shortcoming of all beings is being (mentally) attached to things all the time. The Buddha clearly taught us that 'Be in contact with everything in the world without being (mentally) attached to them', but all beings are still not willing to let go.

The Buddha taught in a way that is for the convenience of our understanding. We need to understand he meant. All beings are mentally attached to 'there are things', the Buddha therefore taught us that 'there is nothing' in the hope that we can get rid of the attachment. But all beings are not easy to guide. They would say, 'Aha, the Buddha only taught that there is nothing.' Well, they have got rid of 'there are things', but then they become attached to 'there is nothing'. This is a big trouble. The Buddha meant to teach us how to get rid of attachment but not replacing the subject to which we are attached. (But) we often replace the subject. We are no longer attached to early things, but then become attached to the Buddha's teachings. We no longer differentiate things in the earthly world but then differentiate the Buddha's teachings. Therefore, we can never escape from 'unawakening (to the truth of the universe)', and can never get rid of thinking, differentiating and being (mentally) attached to things. This is the most difficult aspect for all beings.

Wisdom comes from nowhere and goes to nowhere. Not just that. In 'On a Balanced Perception of the Universe', (Nāgārjuna) states that '(Wisdom) can be neither generated nor exterminated. It comes from nowhere and goes to nowhere. It is neither one thing nor two things.' We cannot say that (wisdom) is one thing or two things. Why? Because as soon as we start to think, we start to differentiate and be (mentally) attached to things. In fact, the Buddha taught us that when being in contact with all phenomena in the universe, we should always maintain a state of mind that neither think, differentiate nor be attached to things. That is right, completely correct. When (wisdom is) in action, (e.g.) when someone ask you

for guidance, you can clearly and eloquently answer them. When (wisdom is) not in action, no single thought is generated. 'The Platform Sutra of the Six Patriarch' (records) a verse (by the Venerable Master Huineng), a line of which goes, 'There is originally no single thing. Where to provoke the dust that is found nowhere.' 'There is originally no single thing' is the complete revelation of (a being's) pure original nature. That is the state of a pure and tranquil mind without generating a single thought when one has attained the Buddhahood.

It is well stated in 'The Śūraṅgama Sutra' that the purity and tranquillity (of our minds) do not hinder the manifestations of all things (in the universe). The manifestations are the dynamic states of all phenomena outside. The big phenomena are things such as the movements of galaxies. The small ones are things such as the changes of the four seasons on the Earth. They are all changing. (The purity and tranquillity of our minds) do not hinder all of these manifestations. The purity and tranquillity (of our minds) are the origin (of all things), and they do not hinder the manifestation of all things. This is what is stated in 'The Avataṃsaka Sutra' that 'there is no hindrance to the interactions between the principles and instances of all things' and 'there is no hindrance to the interactions amongst the instances of all things'. What is the emphasis (of the two lines)? 'No hindrance'. When is it when there is no hindrance? It is when the purity and tranquillity of our minds emerge. When our minds are not pure and not tranquil, there bound to be hindrances. And there bound to be hindrances to the interactions between the principles and instances of all things and amongst the instances of all things. As soon as a thought is generated, there is a hindrance. Why? Because we are deluded. (Consequently,) the (innate) wisdom, capabilities and good appearance in our original nature cannot be manifested because of the hindrances.

To conclude, what does a true practitioner practise? They learn to let go of thoughts, mental differentiation and mental attachment to things under all circumstances. I often talk about this. Practising this is truly working hard. This is called 'to practise from the fundamental'. The purer our minds are, depending on the level of purity, the more wisdom, capabilities and good appearance (embedded) within us will be manifested. 10 percent of purity brings us 10 percent benefit, and 10 percent of the three things emerges. 20 percent of purity enables the emergence of 20 percent (of our wisdom, capabilities and good appearance).

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