

MILAREPA -Tibetan Yogi

Good morning and welcome. We especially welcome all the families and children on the broadcast. Our story this morning is about Milarepa, the beloved saint, great yogi and poet of Tibetan Buddhism. Here is a picture. ***(Show picture.)*** Today you're going to hear a story about how Milarepa endured painful and physical hardships to balance his karma. You will see in this story how Milarepa accepted his karma as opportunity to become closer to God and make amends for wrong choices.

Let's listen to our story now.

Milarepa's Tests

When Milarepa was a youth, he committed acts that were not Christ-like out of revenge against his very unkind relatives because they had treated him and his mother badly and took away his inheritance. As he got older he felt great remorse for what he had done. "Revenge is not good," he thought. So, Milarepa went in search of a guru who could teach him the Dharma, the teachings that lead to enlightenment through the way of the Buddha and the Christ.

In Wheat Valley, Milarepa met the worthiest of men, Marpa the Translator. "Lama, I desire you teach me the Dharma." But before Marpa accepted him as a disciple, he knew that Milarepa would first have to atone for his previous unacceptable deeds through much hardship so he could learn lessons on how to be more forgiving and Christ-like.

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Marpa said to Milarepa, “If I impart to thee the Truth, it will entirely depend upon thine own perseverance and energy whether thou attainest liberation in one lifetime or not.”¹

Marpa wanted to build a house on some open land in the village. “Milarepa, build me a round house on the eastern crest of this mountain.”

So, Milarepa began building by carrying the stones and earth on his back to the place where Marpa had indicated. He worked long and hard. When the structure was half finished, Marpa returned and said, “I had not fully considered the matter. Tear down this house and take the stones back to their places and all the earth back to the holes where you had dug it.” *(Show picture.)*

Milarepa did as he was told. After he had completed this task, he went back to Marpa and said, “I have followed all your commands, now please teach me the Dharma.”

Marpa replied, “It is not quite time yet. I would like you to build a house in the shape of a half circle on the peak to the south. Once you have finished building it, I will teach you the Dharma.” Milarepa again went out and started collecting stones and earth and began building the walls of this second house.

When Milarepa was almost finished with the work, Marpa appeared and instructed, “The other day, I did not give you good directions. Tear down this house and take the earth and stones back to their places. Build me a sturdy, triangular-shaped building on the peak

¹ W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibet’s Great Yogi Milarepa: A Biography from the Tibetan*, p. 91.

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in the western direction. If you finish this house, I will teach you the Dharma, and not only that, I will celebrate it with a great feast.”

So, Milarepa began building the third house. After a few days had passed, Marpa returned and said, “Who gave you the instructions to build here?”

Milarepa replied, “Lama, you were the one who told me to build this house.” What do you think Marpa said to Milarepa? (***Allow children to answer.***)

Marpa said, “I do not remember giving you such orders. Now in the future you shouldn't be doing work that you weren't told to do. Tear down this house and take the earth and stones back to their places.”

Overwhelmed by grief and still thirsting for enlightenment, he carried back the stones and earth back to their places.

Then Marpa gave Milarepa his final instruction. “I want you to construct a square, white house with a superstructure. It will be nine stories high with a pinnacle forming the tenth story. You will build it on the northern crest of the mountain. This house is for my son and will never be torn down. When you have finished, I will give you the secret teaching. Then you may retire to meditate.”

Because of his previous experiences, Milarepa requested Dagmema, Marpa's wife to be witness to all these promises. Marpa agreed.

It was at this point that Dagmema instructed Milarepa to show Marpa his bruised hands and legs and the terrible wounds on his back and shoulders from carrying the heavy stones and earth.

Marpa replied perhaps differently than we might expect. He said to Milarepa, "If thou art really in search of the Truth, do not boast so about thy services, but continue waiting patiently and working steadily till thy building task is entirely finished."

Milarepa continued with his work and started the construction of the fourth house stone by stone, never complaining about his master or his demands. He finally completed it up to the ninth story. All that was missing was the pinnacle.

One day Milarepa noticed that Marpa was giving teachings to many of his students. Each of them had brought wonderful offerings or gifts to their teacher. Milarepa decided to join them. But Marpa looked at him and said, "What is your offering?"

Milarepa replied, "I've been building this house and that's my offering."

"Marpa admonished him, "You're building this house but it's not finished. You must offer a finished house." And he chased Milarepa away.

Milarepa went back to work. Now, at one point in the construction, two of Marpa's other students had placed a rock in one corner of the house's foundation. So, when Marpa came to see the house, he said to Milarepa, "You must remove that stone because it is not fitting for you to be served by my disciples who are practicing at advanced stages. Do not demolish everything, but take away the stone and put it where it was."

Of course, it was impossible to remove a foundation stone without destroying the entire house, so once again Milarepa's work was for nothing. Marpa made him rebuild the entire house exactly as it had

been including the stone. Yet, after Milarepa finally completed the house, Marpa still did not give him the Dharma.

Through many more years and initiations, Milarepa finally balanced enough karma that Marpa could give him the Dharma. Milarepa went on to become a great yogi and teacher himself. Why it's even said of him that when he meditated, he was in such attunement with God, his own Mighty I AM Presence that he could levitate. Every once in a while in the harvest fields of Tibet, people would see what looked like a huge bird flying through the air. And someone would say, "That is not a bird. That's that yogi, Milarepa."

CONCLUSION:

We can see that Milarepa's perseverance and desire to balance his karma without complaining about his teacher or circumstance enabled him to reach enlightenment and his ascension. As he was building and rebuilding the houses on the outer, he was rebuilding his inner spiritual life as well.

One of the main lessons we can learn from this beautiful story is that when we desire something with all of our hearts and make the fervent call with all the love of our hearts for it to manifest according to God's will, God cannot deny answering our call. God always answers our calls but it may not be in the way that we are expecting just as what occurred in Milarepa's life. However, Milarepa never gave up pursuing his desire for the Dharma. In the end, God granted it.

Thank you for sharing in our story. Have a wonderful day.

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