

# ~ *Two Kinds of Suffering* ~

By Mingyur Rinpoche

We have two problems, two sufferings, what we call, “self-created suffering” and “natural suffering.” These two sufferings, the main cause of both these sufferings is concept.

For example, when I was young, I asked a lot of these questions (about the nature of suffering) to my father. My father gave me a good example, which is of a multi-colored rope. The color of this rope looks like a snake, and if you stay someplace, maybe inside a house, and the house does not have bright light and suddenly somebody comes, your friend, and throws out this multi-colored rope, and you say, “Wow! What is that!?” and your friend says, “That is a snake!” You feel like there is a real snake, and you feel like the snake is moving and shaking and using its tongue and getting close to you. You have a big problem, yes? This is an example for a self-created problem.

This is very strong. You have this in your life, maybe, let us say, 90 percent of our problems are self-created problems. There are problems connected with your relationships, job, studies, business, and social life. You create your own concept, your own prison or jail, and you put yourself into your own jail.

How do we liberate that? We recognize that it is just a concept. It is my mind making it. For example, when I was young, I had panic attacks, and most of them I created, I exaggerated, and they became very strong and fearful, not only in my mind, there were feelings and physical sensations, also. If you recognize this is just a concept coming from your mind, then you can go beyond that.

But the second suffering, what we call, “natural suffering,” you cannot liberate, for example, by just recognizing your misperception – the normal misperception, you cannot liberate that. For example, my father told me that this rope – this multi-colored rope – if someone

took the rope and tied it up tightly around your neck, then if you think “Oh, this is not a snake, it is just a rope,” there is no benefit. The tightness here is a problem (Mingyur Rinpoche points to his throat.)

The rope is an example for natural suffering. For that, you need deeper wisdom, higher wisdom. The practice for that is emptiness. If you go beyond all concepts, then you can even go beyond natural suffering, such as getting old, sick, die, and being born again – what we call, “The four rivers of suffering.”

Buddha never died. If you are not going to die, then you cannot be reborn again. Why? Because all of this is an illusion. The four rivers of suffering is an illusion. As long as we have concepts, we have suffering, we have problems. But if you go beyond all concepts there is no suffering. Suffering is just an illusion.