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rampant and you become completely controlled by attachment and anger once again. If that occurs, then that is a clear sign that it has not had much of an effect in your life.

When we embark on training our mind with meditation, it is really important to understand what we are attempting to achieve. With the aim to overcome the afflictions within one's mind, initially it is very important that we contemplate the faults of the afflictions, such as anger and attachment. The more we think about the ill-effects or disadvantages of anger, the more likely we are to take the initiative to practise what opposes anger, such as love. The more we meditate on love as an antidote to overcome anger, the more our mind becomes familiar with love, and when we come out of the meditation, it is more likely that our mind has a positive effect of love, on the basis of having seen the disadvantages or ill-effects of anger previously. Initially while we engage in this training, when we come out of the meditation session, there may still be occasions where we get upset or angry due to the immediate circumstances; nevertheless, due to the familiarity of meditating on love the difference would be that the intensity of the anger is not as great and one will not act upon that anger as readily as we had previously. In this way, the intensity of the anger is gradually reduced, which is the positive effect we experience.

It is significant to remember the advice in the third verse of the famous work called *The Eight Verses of Mind Training* by one of the great Kadampa masters Langri Tangpa.

*In all actions, may I examine my mind,  
And as soon as delusions arise  
Endangering myself and others,  
May I firmly face and avert them.*

As Langri Tangpa very effectively explains, in all our actions we need to maintain constant vigilance over our own state of mind. As soon as we notice that an affliction is starting to develop within us, we immediately need to try to apply the antidote to overcome that affliction, in order to prevent harm to oneself and others.

By contemplating this advice and putting it into practice, we are reducing our familiarity with the afflictions. As a result, we will not be swayed by the afflictions and we will not become completely dominated by anger and attachment. Therefore, we will slowly become more able to withhold and not act upon our afflictions. Otherwise, if we fail to notice whenever the afflictions arise, and act accordingly, that is how our familiarity with the afflictions increases and therefore we react more spontaneously.

If one can begin to acknowledge and understand that the inner turmoils and disturbance that one feels within oneself are not entirely dependent on external conditions, but the real cause lies within oneself, then that is already a very good start to working on one's mind.

In summary, as a means to overcome the afflictions which are the cause for our inner turmoil, meditation is really a most effective method.

It is significant to understand how our minds are affected and how the afflictions arise within ourselves. In simple terms, it is due to the connection that we make between our minds and the object that causes particular afflictions to arise in our mind. The connection serves as a condition for the afflictions to become manifest. With regard to attachment, there is an object of attachment (an object that we are attached to) when our mind focuses or makes a connection with the object. Then, due to that connection to the object of attachment, we experience attachment in our mind. The same occurs with anger. When we feel angry, it is in relation to an object, therefore it is due to a connection with the object of anger that the anger arises. In the same way, jealousy is due to the object of jealousy that we start feeling jealous in our mind – it is basically the connection we make with the object.

If it is due to the mind having a connection with the object of an affliction that the affliction arises, then we need to find a method to sever that connection. Therefore, if our mind does not make a connection with that particular object, then that particular affliction will not arise in our mind.

If we were to think about this process, it is not that difficult to sever our connection with the object. Normally we don't even think about it – we allow our mind to focus and make the connection with the object and just carry on with whatever follows, but if we were to actually think about it, it can be quite simple.

I give this illustration to you as friends with whom I can share openly. When you have a particular friend or companion whom you start feeling anger towards, then for as long as that person is in mind, you will experience anger. A simple way to overcome that is if you can just change the object of your focus to a friend whom you feel very affectionate towards. The moment you focus on the second person, when you bring them to mind, you have temporarily forgotten the other person you felt anger towards because you are not focusing on them. Then the anger subsides and you don't feel anger anymore. This doesn't mean that you completely sever your relationship with the friend you are feeling angry towards or seek a separation from them, but temporarily not focusing on them will help to settle the mind of anger. This is just one example.

During a meditation session, when we choose an appropriate object to focus on, by the virtue of focusing single-pointedly on this chosen meditation object, it naturally severs all our connections with other objects which cause the afflictions the arise, such as attachment, anger and jealousy. Therefore, by focusing on this appropriate meditational object, one's mind naturally becomes more settled, calm and free from the turmoils of the afflictions.

This is an introduction to how the meditation practice works. We can leave the specific instructions of how to engage in meditation, such as the sitting postures, for another session – we don't have time to go through that this evening.

The main point this evening is how focusing on adopting a genuine attitude of loving kindness towards others is really the key to one's own happiness. Therefore, if one

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contemplates on the positive effects of loving kindness, one would naturally be inclined to put in every effort to developing a positive attitude of loving kindness. As one develops a genuine sense of loving kindness towards others, it provides a peaceful feeling within oneself. As mentioned earlier, the immediate beneficiary is oneself, as it brings about a genuine sense of well-being and peacefulness within oneself.

Therefore, the way to extend that loving kindness attitude towards others is by contemplating specifically on two aspects in relation to others. By focusing on others, when one sees others experiencing different kinds of suffering or what we call miseries or disadvantages, one develops the feeling of how unfortunate they are to be experiencing such miseries, and how wonderful it would be if they were free from such miseries and suffering. When one extends that attitude, then that is the aspect of what we call 'compassion'. Whereas, when one sees others being deprived of happiness and one feels how unfortunate it is that they are deprived of happiness and how wonderful it would be if they were to be endowed with happiness, then extending a strong feeling of wishing others to be endowed with happiness is the attitude of 'love' towards others. Love and compassion are extended in this way by contemplating others and wishing everyone to have well-being.

As I have mentioned previously, on a personal level I have my daily practice of generating the attitude that I will do everything possible to make others happy and not intentionally cause any suffering for others and may I be able to help others to gain happiness and be free of miseries. When I adopt that attitude and really focus and meditate on it, it is a reasonable and simple attitude to develop, yet it has a very positive effect on my own mind. This is very significant.

If one contemplates and meditates on this attitude of loving kindness - extending well-being to others and specifically focusing on the others, when one sees others distraught and suffering, one develops a genuine wish for them to be free from these sufferings. Also, when one sees others deprived of happiness and well-being, one genuinely cultivates the attitude and wish for them to be happy and endowed with well-being. As one familiarises with this state of mind, it definitely brings about a transformation within oneself. There are times when one can be moved to tears on contemplating loving kindness towards others. As a consequence of the familiarity with this practice, one can reach a point where whoever one encounters, they all appear as close relatives or very close friends, and one is seeing others in a very positive light. When this starts to occur, the most positive transformation is occurring within oneself.

As it is explained in the teachings, love is really one of the most effective antidotes to overcome anger. When the truth of that starts to become apparent, one will begin to see that as one cultivates genuine love towards others, the mind of anger naturally starts to subside and the intensity of anger within oneself is definitely reduced, resulting in one's own mind becoming much more peaceful.

Now we can spend a few minutes in meditation. For those who are familiar, the object of our meditation in the short session here is our own breath.

Although focusing on the breath is a simple technique, it is said to be very effective, especially for a beginner - not that I'm implying that you are all beginners. The main thing is that it is said to be very effective in overcoming an overly active or inactive mind. For anyone who is affected by an overly agitated mind containing a lot of disturbing conceptions, then making a genuine attempt to focus on one's breath and allow a few minutes to settle down one's mind, will definitely help to reduce this overly active and agitated state of mind.

A hyperactive state of mind follows every disturbing concept, so to apply this meditation technique effectively, one needs to make a commitment that 'for the next few minutes, I will not allow my mind to follow all the normal whimsical thoughts, but instead I will bring my focus within and place my full attention on my breath. Based on the natural rhythm of the breath, I will follow every in-breath and out-breath and keep a 100 per cent focus only on the breath itself'.

In this way for the next few minutes, we will make a genuine attempt to adopt this meditation technique.

*[Pause for single-pointed meditation]*

While maintaining our focused mind, we can now change the object of our focus to the sound of the mantra to be recited, which is the name of Buddha Shakyamuni. As we hear the sound of the mantra, we keep our focus on that, and when the recitation subsides, maintain the awareness of our inner focus just for a few moments.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA.

That is the session for this evening, and we will continue gradually in our next sessions. I would like to thank you all for paying such great attention.

I have shared a few words which might have been beneficial for you. If that is the case, then that will be my small gift for you, after returning from my overseas trip to India.

It is a gift which, if you were to consider and pay attention to the words, you might be able to get more and more benefit - which is unlike a gift that is gone soon after one receives it!

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