

# Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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ཨོ ལྷོ་སྤྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།

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## Mixing Dharma Practice With Daily Life Brings Benefits

While formally engaging in meditation it is important to develop an altruistic mind and cultivate love and compassion towards other beings. It is also important to do the same thing in daily life. In daily life things, which are learnt from dharma study, must not be forgotten. We should do our best to find time to meditate while every now and then, reminding ourselves of the dharma teachings and integrate them into daily life. If this is done then dharma will result in benefits, not only future lives but also this current life. The dharma benefits assist in developing a more peaceful and gentle mind, compared to those who do not practise dharma. If life and dharma study are seen as separate things, then dharma would have no ability to bring happiness and peace into daily life.

Therefore, the benefits of dharma and of giving up the self-centred mind must truly be recognised. Even if the self-centred mind is not given up completely, at least thinking, "Just as I do not want that to happen to me, in the same way others do not wish for that," will lead to respect for other beings.

## The Foundations Of The Various Practices Of Lam Rim, Sitting Meditation And Dharma Practice

The practice of Lam Rim begins with contemplation on leisure and endowments.

The practice of sitting meditation begins with establishing proper motivation.

The practice of dharma begins with faith in the law of cause and effect.

Lam Rim practice is begun by contemplating the leisure and endowments of this human life. This contemplation serves as the foundation of the practice. If it is done well, it enables to make good progress.

In sitting meditation good progress is only possible if the frame of mind is adjusted into a proper motivation. For the practice of dharma, faith in the law of cause and effect is like "laying the foundation". Without laying that foundation, i.e., by not having faith in the law of cause and effect, no matter how much is learnt about dharma or by becoming a great scholar, dharma is not being

practised, and so many negative actions will be continuously be created.

## 422.122.112: Karma Increases<sup>1</sup>

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When a karma or action is created, a karmic imprint is imprinted on one's consciousness or mindstream. It is like taking a photo. The image cannot be seen until it is fully processed, but then every detail can be seen. Therefore, until the conditions are met, this karmic imprint in one's mind stays intact. When for example a mental craving for something arises, and the conditions are met, this karmic imprint will ripen its result.

## Purpose Of Meditation On Increase Of Karma: To Be Cautious Of Even Small Actions

"Karma increases", means that the potential of Karma can produce either enormous or a great many results, irrespective of the size of the karma. To illustrate this consider an outer seed, i.e., a grain seed. Just one seed can produce an enormous result or harvest, which can feed many people. However, in terms of producing a number of results, the potential of karma is far greater than any external cause. Because of the certainty aspect of karma, one should affirm to oneself that:

"I shall now only create positive karma, since I wish for happiness and I shall abandon negative actions, since I do not want suffering."

Therefore this aspect of the certainty of karma, clearly shows that:

- if happiness is wanted, its causes (positive actions) must be created.
- if avoiding suffering is wanted, its causes (negative actions) must be abandoned.

Contemplating the certainty of karma leads one to do the right actions.

However, there is a likelihood of becoming very careless about minor actions, by thinking that minor positive

<sup>1</sup>Liberation.. p434 The title used in the text is "Karma shows great increase."

actions are trivial, so they are not worth creating, or creating some tiny negative action by thinking that it is minor and harmless. In fact this should not be done. By realising the karmic aspect of increase, even if one thinks it is only a very minor negative or positive action, one should realise that it has the potential to produce an enormous result.

Therefore, by understanding the increase of karma one is encouraged to create positive actions, even if they are small or trivial, and to abandon any negative actions, even if they are very minor. In this way it is important to know how to relate each aspect of Karma into practice and to make an effort to practise it.

Pabongka Rinpoche said:

"As far as learning Dharma goes, if you read my teachings they are very clear and simple because of the way they are written."

As far as the style of writing goes, Pabongka Rinpoche's Lam Rim is one of the easiest to read, mainly because Pabongka Rinpoche saw the weakness of beings in these degenerate times and that such a text was necessary for these beings.

### **Benefits Of Practising Even Small Virtues Consistently**

From this teaching on the increase of karma arises the inspiration to do regular practice, even if it is very small in terms of time.

One sutra:

"Never underestimate the benefits of a small virtue and of not practising it, because a dripping of water can fill a large container. And never become absent-minded about committing even a small negative action because it is very small. Even a small spark of fire can burn down a mountain of forests."

In this way by regular, consistent practice, even if it is just twenty five prostrations or one mala of recitation, by just continuing to do it then as the year goes by one shall accumulate a great number of prostrations and mantra recitations.

No matter how small is one's practice, if it is kept consistent, it is worthwhile. For example, reading a Lam Rim text is not like reading other texts, which are just to occupy the mind. Rather, Lam Rim has the potential to calm the mind and develop its qualities.

Even if there is not dramatic progress in this life, one's practice implants some seed in the mind so that there is the potential to make quick progress in the future.

### **422.122.113: Not Meeting With Karma Which Is Not Created<sup>2</sup>**

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This implies that everything follows from its own cause. Without creating the cause, there is no point in hoping for a result. If the wish is to be born as a human in the next life, then the cause for that must have been created. If the wish is to achieve the state of Buddhahood, then the cause, which is the accumulation of merit, must be created. Without the cause there is no result whatsoever.

In the Lam Rim text there are some illustrations:

Some people engage in war and conflict, but only some of them die, while others survive despite being struck by weapons. Similarly in a plane or bus disaster, many die but a few survive. Why do they survive? Because they have not created the causes. Therefore, they do not meet the cause of dying in those situations. All the things that do occur in a life are all due to oneself having created causes in the past. All those things which are wished for but never happen are because of not creating the causes for it in the past. This shows the inevitable link between cause and effect.

### **Recitation Of Heart Sutra: Benefits**

The benefits of the recitation of the Heart Sutra are:

- to have no obstacles to one's practice
- to have peace in the world
- the cessation of disease
- to flourish goodness in the world.

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**Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.**

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*The original typescript is prepared from Alan Molloy's original transcript, which has been checked against Damien Busby's notes. Adair Bunnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.*

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<sup>2</sup>Liberation.. p437 The title used in the text is "One does not meet with something if one has not created the cause for it to happen."