Study Group - "Liberation *in the* Palm *of* Your Hand" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering





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Reason For Studying Specific Aspects Of Karma:

Having finished the general discussion of karma, one might realise the depth and profoundness of this subject. The next thought is "How shall I put it into practise?" Therefore, the text now explains the ten non-virtues to be abandoned and the ten virtues to be adopted.

The Four Non-Virtues Of Speech

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Of the ten non-virtuous actions:

Three are of body:

- 1. Killing
- 2. Stealing
- 3. Sexual misconduct

Four are of speech:

- 1. Lying
- 2. Divisive speech
- 3. Harsh speech
- 4. Idle gossip

Three are of mind:

- 1. Malice
- 2. Covetousness
- 3. Wrong view

As Atisha said:

When with others always observe one's speech,

When by oneself observe one's thoughts.

While with other beings, if one is not mindful, it is so easy to cause unnecessary conflicts and arguments. Whereas if by oneself and not mindful of one's own thoughts, then the mind will be filled with various types of thoughts which cause difficulties. Therefore, when discussing the ten nonvirtues, we proceed according to Atisha, which means to check that one's speech is not one of the four non-virtues of speech.

Benefits Of Refraining From Killing, Stealing And Sexual Misconduct:

It is very important to establish in one's own mind that there really is a true benefit from adopting the ten virtues and abandoning the ten non-virtuous actions. Dharma is a means to transform the three doors of action - body, speech and mind - into something positive. So dharma is something which transforms the practitioner into a good human. Dharma helps a human being to become a better person. This is because of the practice of the ten virtuous actions.

The direct benefits of the practices are:

Practising Non Harmfulness:

We should all practise abandoning harmful thought and harmful action to other beings. If one is regarded as being committed to not harming other beings, then attitudes of trust, admiration and friendliness arise from others.

Practising Refraining From Stealing:

This means that any other being can place full trust in oneself, even if they entrust ten thousand dollars. They could not do this if they had any doubt as to whether you would steal it.

Practising Refraining From Sexual Misconduct:

In someone who fully practises abandoning sexual misconduct other people can see some admirable qualities. This can be seen in one's own daily life. When people do not practise these virtues there are unending problems in relationships. This is mainly due either directly or indirectly to the concerns about the other indulging in sexual misconduct. The reason why people do not trust in their friendship is because of the lack of virtuous actions.

It is so obvious that the main cause for bringing peace to the mind of other beings is the practice of non-harmfulness.

422.122.121.14: Lying

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Similar to the three non-virtues of body, there are four aspects for the non-virtue of lying to be complete.

1. Base:

There are mainly four:

Lying about something which:

- i. has been seen by one's eyes but claiming to have not seen
- ii. heard by one's ears but claiming to have not heard
- iii. mentally know but claiming to not know

iv. something physically experienced but claiming to have not experienced

Although in order to lie it is not always necessary to actually say the words, rather it is said that the object to whom one lies must be a human or person, who can hear and is capable of understanding the communication.

2. Thought:

Recognition: If one wants to lie to someone and to say that one has seen that object but in fact one has not seen that object then this is recognition. One should be very clear about what one is lying. Intentionally it must be very clear in one's mind just what one is going to lie about to that another person.

Motivation (Intention): This is simply the wish to lie.

Delusion: This can be any of the three poisonous minds.

3. Deed:

The actual deed can be either verbal or non verbal. The deed is the actual action which communicates about what one is intending to lie, to another person. The deed can be actually lying by speech with false words or in response to someone who asks' "Have you seen some other being?", one can respond by saying, "I have seen that person", or by nodding the head, when in fact one has not seen that person. In this way the other person gets a false message.

4. Finalisation:

Is when another person fully hears or receives one's lie. That is, the conclusion of lying is when the other person fully receives the false message. Generally speaking, lying entails carrying or containing some meaning of the subject which is not true.

It is like the difference between the two divisions of truth conventional and ultimate truth. Conventional or relative truth is the false truth. It is false because there is a difference between the way that truth appears to one's mind and how it is in reality. Similarly when lying, the words one's says to others are false, because what the words say and what really exists are different.

Exceptions To Lying:

Should we always be honest in our speech? This may depend upon the circumstances. In some circumstances it may be necessary to not restrict our actions to the ten virtuous actions. It may be wiser to break the rule of not lying, if one sees more purpose and benefit in so doing. The example given in the text is that one has witnessed someone running away to save their life. Afterwards on meeting the pursuer, it is not wise to immediately tell all to that pursuer. Rather it is best to distract them by bringing up some other subject, restricting talk to that other subject or by some other method.

422.122.121.15: Divisive Speech

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1. Base:

Can be either other beings who enjoy good relationships or alternatively beings who do not enjoy such good and harmonious relationships.

2. Thought:

Recognition: This should be unmistaken.

Motivation (Intention): In the case of those enjoying a good relationship it is the wish to divide those people or to cause

conflict. In those without such a good relationship it is to cause further division.

Delusion: Any of the three poisonous minds.

3. Deed:

Is the actual speech or action which causes deterioration in the relationship between good friends or makes other relationships worse.

To commit the non virtue of divisive speech there must be some intention to cause disharmony in the relationship between others. This relationship can be either healthy or non healthy. The usual deed that causes disharmony is talking. Since the intention must be to cause disharmony in that relationship it does not matter whether whatever is said is true or false, rather it depends upon the consequence causing conflict. For example, there are two people. The faulty action of the first person is witnessed. The observer goes to the second person and, out of an intention to divide them, states that the first person was seen to do such and such a wrong thing. That is divisive speech. Two people may have a bad relationship. If one goes and says something, which for certain reasons encourages one person to not have a relationship with the other person, then, whether the reasons are true or false, one's words are a cause to create further division between people. This is divisive speech.

4. Finalisation:

When the people concerned fully understand one's advice or speech.

End of discourse

Geshe-la has a few thank-you's to say. Geshela is very pleased that while he was away in New Zealand for one week, the program in the Centre had gone very smoothly as usual. He would like to thank us all for keeping the program going, and to thank anyone who puts effort into the Monday night meditations which are so successful. He admires those who give time to that. Also while he was away we sat the examination. This is also a very good way to develop your knowledge. Last Wednesday night, as he had wished, that was also fulfilled by meditation, discussion and teaching on the program. On Sunday was the seminar, which we all enjoyed. When he arrived back, everyone seemed happy from the look on their faces, and even those on the road looked at us, questioning why we were having so much fun. This is due to being open, kind and sharing with each other. He thanks us for making that effort. Such efforts indicate the development and growth of the Centre. He wants to see this always.

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

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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