
Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”
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ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅངས།

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Make sure that your motivation for listening to these teachings is to achieve the full state of enlightenment for the sake of all living beings.

Motivation Itself As A Dharma Practice

Before engaging in any practice make sure that right from the beginning the motivation with which the practice is commenced is pure dharma. In this way we are always reminded to adopt a right frame of mind or motivation.

This implies that right from the beginning we need to transform our state of mind, which means to transform our motivation. If it is to gain fame and reputation then this is a wrong motivation. If it is to compete with another or through jealousy, that too is a very wrong frame of mind. If we hold such negative states of mind in us, then no matter what practice we do, or for how long, it will not calm the mind. Since it does not diminish negativities it is not a mahayana practice nor is it even dharma practice.

Whenever we engage in dharma practice we have to always make sure that it is countering our own negative states of mind. The motivation that we say at the beginning is a practice of dharma. What negative state of mind does it counter? The bodhicitta mind helps us to be rid of the self-cherishing mind. If we always place the focus of our practice on our own mind, developing its positive qualities and decreasing the negative ones then we gain real benefit from the practice that we do.

Dharma As Transformation Of The Mind

The practice of dharma is actually no other than changing our own mind from negative to positive states. We have to realise a lot of our difficulties are the result of our own thought processes, or way of thinking. If we change our way of thinking, the difficulty or problem is automatically solved.

The question as to whether dharma is beneficial or not, is answered by knowing how a state of mind can be replaced by different ways of thinking. It is a lot easier to solve emotional problems than those related to our physical body. Recovering from a physical disease may be very expensive. This is not the case when the problem is associated with our ways of thinking.

422.122.23: The Causes Of The Eight Ripened Qualities (Cont)

དེའི་རྒྱ་བསྐྱབ་པ།

So far we have seen that by practising the ten virtuous actions and discarding the ten non-virtuous actions we can obtain higher rebirth. To take full advantage of this rebirth, we need to obtain a higher rebirth endowed with eight ripened qualities. From this point we went on to recognise the eight ripened qualities and the benefits of each of these eight qualities. Knowing that those eight are obtainable then we need to know the causes of those eight qualities. This is the current subject.

The Causes Of Long Life (And Freedom From Disease)

We have finished the first ripened quality which is enjoying long life. The main causes are preventing harmful actions to other beings; refraining from killing other beings and saving or releasing any being from death; being very generous to other beings; helping any prisoners to be released from prison. These are some of the main causes to achieve long life.

As part of showing the causes of long life the text also shows the causes for freedom from any diseases in the future. It is said that the best cause to be free from disease in the future is to help others suffering from disease. This help may be in the form of providing food, medicine or just company. Practising helpful actions to anyone (and especially to one's friends and those close to us) particularly when they face such diseases, is very much in accord with the practice of dharma. The practice of dharma is to benefit others. To benefit others at a most needed time is even more beneficial. Imagine being hospitalised and helped by a friend. You would never forget the kindness of that friend.

For everyone of us the time will come when we shall be sick and end up in hospital. If at such a time friends are very helpful, we shall be very grateful to them. Similarly when friends are in difficulty we shall show concern and affection for them. As a direct result, even in this immediate life, we shall have friends to help us when we are in need. In addition we have also created causes to always have help from others, and to be free from problems such as diseases in future lives.

The Benefits Of Serving Others

In this Lam Rim teaching, we find advice not only for future lives but for everything in this life as well. The teaching shows the benefit of serving others, including friends and especially one's parents. Because of the amount of love parents give to us, it is very important for us to repay that love and kindness by serving them. In Tibet, when children grow up, they regard it as a great opportunity to find a moment to serve their parents. If they miss that opportunity they experience regret for their whole life. If we cannot serve all other beings at least we must serve those who are closest to us. Why do we call someone a friend? When do we regard ourselves as their friend? "Friend" means to be helping the other person to eliminate problems and to create the causes of happiness. If we do this then we are a real friend. If we cause harm to them, they will regard us as an enemy or a bad friend. Try to realise that the whole point to being friends in this life is to help each other to be rid of suffering and to create happiness in this life. A future life friend is one who helps us find a better life and conditions in the future.

The Causes Of A Good Physical Appearance

The causes of a good physical appearance in the future include being patient; minimising anger; offering butter lamps or light to any holy objects; actually making or restoring holy objects; painting gold or silver on holy objects; offering clothes or ornaments to holy objects. It is also said that giving any new clothing to another being as a gift is a cause for beauty.

The Causes Of Being Born In A High Caste

The causes of being born in a high caste include not having pride or being proud of any qualities which one might have, e.g., being born in a high caste, one's practice of morality, one's knowledge, social position, status, wealth or power, etc. To not feel pride in any of this is a cause to be reborn in high caste in the future.

Social Stability Through Mutual Respect

The other cause to be reborn in a high caste in the future is to show respect to one's teachers, parents and to all those who are older and more senior to oneself. This also indicates that if you are part of the sangha community, you need to respect your own vows or moral code but also respect the vows of other friends.

Just as we learnt earlier of the benefit of serving those patients who suffer from disease, now we learn to respect elders. This practice is a very important cause for more peace, harmony and happiness in the whole nation. One major factor influencing the cause of happiness and suffering in a nation as a whole is the relationship between older and younger generations or between parent and child. If this relationship is good, there is mutual benefit. If the older generation enjoys good relationships with their children or young ones, then no matter how long they live they find enjoyment, and no

moments of loneliness. There is so much unhappiness when they do not enjoy a good relationship with their children. In the same way some of the younger generation experience great suffering because of the lack of support and guidance from the older generation. It is very important that those who are older, or who have more knowledge and experience, not take pride in this or look down on others. Rather the older generation should be very kind and helpful to others. Younger people must see that their elders have helped them because it is their duty or responsibility. Just as it is a parental responsibility to support children, so it is children's responsibility to support parents in old age when they need company. Nothing should jeopardise the relationship between parents and their children because both benefit from it.

It is very sensible to say that younger ones should respect and obey their elders, and the elders should show kindness, love and support to younger ones. There is a mutual benefit in this and a great contribution to general peace and harmony in the country as well.

End of discourse.

Next Tuesday is discussion night. Geshe-la advises us to make discussion very relaxing, comfortable and free for everyone. Since we are going very slowly with these teachings you do not need to feel that in discussion time you must use only these Lam Rim topics. You can use any topic not necessarily directly related, but which is very beneficial to discuss.

The compulsory question:

"How does one's meditation help one's mind?"

You must expand this question by first showing what meditation means, then how to meditate, and the purpose of meditation. If the purpose is to counteract something, you must then identify positively what is to be counteracted and the remedy to be applied. What helps to improve or develop one's concentration in meditation is another aspect. These questions are not included in the main question, but they are the things you need to consider in your answer.

Often people ask Geshe-la what sort of meditation he does and how he does it. When we answer this compulsory question, we should do so as if we were replying to someone asking us this question. So you need to reply in such a way as to answer the question so it is as clear as possible to others.

Geshe-la says to try your best to write your answers in the exam.

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

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