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# Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



## ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།

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Establish the bodhicitta motivation.

### The Six Types Of Suffering Or Faults Of Cyclic Existence (Cont.)

As long as we are bound to this form of life which constitutes the contaminated aggregates, then it is inevitable that we shall experience the various forms of suffering. As discussed last week (being born as a human being because of being bound to contaminated aggregates,) there are six types of suffering experienced in this human life. Of these six types of faults of cyclic existence, the first is the fault of uncertainty, which we have finished. Due to the fault of uncertainty we constantly experience change in our relationships with others (friend, enemy or stranger), our social status, and our wealth. There is no certainty in cyclic existence.

As discussed last time if you refer to the text *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* there are examples in form of stories which you should read.

One contemplates the faults of cyclic existence to generate a sense of renunciation towards that existence. Therefore we should not only theoretically study the faults of cyclic existence, we must actually contemplate to see the fault of uncertainty and the other faults.

#### 422.211.2: The Fault Of Lack Of Satisfaction<sup>1</sup>

### ངོ་མས་པ་མེད་པའི་ཉེས་པ།

The same applies to this second fault - the fault of the lack of satisfaction. Lack of satisfaction means that no matter how much, or for how long, we enjoy pleasure in cyclic existence, our desire will never be fulfilled. This realm is called desire realm or desire existence, since beings in this realm are very fond of desire objects which are mainly the five sense objects - form, sound, smell, taste, touch . When it says there is no satisfaction, it means that these sense objects are not going to fully satisfy or content our mind. In the text it says beings in the desire realm are like the deer who is attached to pleasant sound, and bees attracted to honey<sup>2</sup>. Although

beings in the desire realm are attracted to such sensual objects, these sense objects are like salty water. No matter how much you drink, it does not quench your thirst, rather it makes you want to drink more.

If we contemplate this, we see there is no object in this existence which is a source of satisfaction. So we see this is as a fault of cyclic existence and through seeing this fault we generate renunciation of cyclic existence. It is best to generate this renunciation in this lifetime. If it is not generated in this lifetime, at least it may implant a seed in our mind and thus be a cause to achieve renunciation in a future life.

Thus any practice or meditation we do in this life has an effect. It makes a difference to our spiritual practice, if not in this life then maybe in future lives, because there is not just one cycle of life but there are countless cycles. Therefore what we do now is very important. Even though we may not gain true realisation now despite all our efforts, in future with little or even no effort a very spiritual quality, such as realisation of emptiness, or the generation of bodhicitta will blossom like a flower.

### Contentment As A Cause Of Happiness And Renunciation

The implication of this is to be contented with what we have. The reason why the mind always remains unsatisfied is because of lack of contentment. If we acquire one hundred dollars we want one thousand dollars and having obtained that thousand dollars we want even more. Although wealth increases there is no increase in satisfaction or contentment in the mind. Therefore even though wealth increases we still remain poor in our minds and this can be the cause of great suffering and misery in one's life. There are some people who have to suffer loneliness throughout their lifetime. But if we examine their life they might have met many friends in past, and even married several times, but they have no one to completely trust. So they suffer. If we examine who is to blame, it is not others who have they have met and then left in the past. Rather the blame lies with the desire of that lonely person. Obviously because of desire he or she is not satisfied with one friend. So the relationship does not last long, and they then seek

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<sup>1</sup> *Liberation..* p479 The title used in the text is "The bane of being unsatisfied."

<sup>2</sup> *Liberation..* p479 "Butterflies are fatally attracted to visual form, deer

to sound, bees to smell, and elephants to physical sensations."

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another one.

At one level the fault of lack of satisfaction as a fault of cyclic existence is an important subject to contemplate in order to generate renunciation, which is the driving force to lead us to the spiritual path. But at another level such contemplation shows us how to bring more satisfaction into our daily life, because we learn that satisfaction must come from our own mind, and that it is not necessarily from external objects. Without contenting our mind we will never find satisfaction because external pleasures are like salty water. The more we utilise them, the more desire grows in our mind for these objects. There are some who are extremely rich financially. They have house after house filled with valuable items, but mentally they still lack satisfaction with their wealth. On top of this they have trouble finding one single person who they can fully trust, and to whom they can show their feelings. Therefore in spite of their wealth they live their life alone, without any meaning or satisfaction. Whereas there are others without a great deal of wealth, but who have a few friends with whom they are content. So they enjoy meaningful relationships with them. They may not have a great deal of wealth, but mentally they are very satisfied and very happy.

As mentioned before we can contemplate this subject, and develop more understanding of exactly what satisfaction means, because it is a very important cause for happiness in daily life. Such contemplation can help in daily life. As we see the fault of desiring sense objects, then we can cultivate renunciation towards these objects.

### **Wealth is Contentment, Not External Possessions**

In one sutra it is said:<sup>3</sup>

Even if one possess all wealth in godly or human realms, with lack of contentment your mind will still not be satisfied.

Therefore contentment or satisfaction does not depend so much on possessions, goods or external objects. It comes from one's own mind.

The real meaning of contentment is having less desire. Having less desire does not necessarily mean that you must dispossess yourself of all your wealth or that you must possess little wealth. This is not necessarily the meaning of contentment. Nor does having contentment necessarily mean that if someone possesses enormous wealth that they are by definition greedy or discontented. Nor does it mean that someone without wealth will necessarily be content. Rather contentment means being satisfied with whatever you possess in friends and wealth. When you are mentally satisfied with whatever you possess, that is fulfilling the purpose of being rich. A rich person is one who is mentally content, even if they

do not possess enormous material wealth.

### **Inner Wealth As A State Of Contentment**

If we continuously increase our desire it is very difficult to calm our mind and find rest. Conversely if our mind is contented then there is nothing which can bother it. Therefore there is within a true peace and tranquillity. As mentioned before contentment is not dependent upon external possessions or objects. We can be content with our own spiritual knowledge, our practice of moral ethics, our practice of meditation or of wisdom knowledge.

In reality the measure of whether one is truly rich or not, is whether one is mentally contented with their life. In the story from ancient India, a beggar found a priceless jewel. As he looked around to offer this jewel, he ended up offering it to the king who was in fact the richest person in the country. After accepting this offering the king was amazed and asked 'Why do you offer this to me?'. The beggar replied 'Because you are the poorest. You are never contented or satisfied'. Even though he had wealth he was still discontented.

We can develop contentment about our external possessions regardless of their quality or quantity. Our mind says, 'This is fine, it will do', and so we feel content. But if our mind is not satisfied, that object is not enough, so we shall want something more, and it must be better than before. By having this unfulfilled desire we become restless and it bothers us immensely. Therefore we can talk of contentment in terms of external objects.

If we do not possess any external objects worthy of satisfaction then we can turn inwards and find we have the inner wealth of our practice of morality, concentration and wisdom. In particular the sangha must value that inner wealth more than external wealth. Right from the beginning, sangha took celibate vow to follow the footsteps of Lord Buddha, which is to lead a spiritual life. Following the example of Lord Buddha, from that day onwards you took sangha robes which is an external example of following Lord Buddha's example. Therefore if strong desire for external wealth develops along with engagement in tasks to achieve that external wealth, then even to the eyes of an outsider such tasks do not suit you. Whereas pursuing inner wealth is a task that suits oneself and in particular suits the sangha. Therefore it is an essential practice, especially for sangha, to realise that by taking the celibate's vow you have assumed a different form of life from that you lived formerly. It is important to encourage oneself by thinking from the bottom of one's heart that 'I should turn myself completely from desire'. Instead of pursuing desire objects you pursue inner wealth and see its true value. Then just as rich lay people utilise their time to gather outer wealth, you utilise your time to gather inner wealth.

We should also examine ourselves so we make more spiritual progress now than before we committed ourselves to spiritual path. In what way should we

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<sup>3</sup> Liberation.. p479 The great play sutra:

O king, if a man were to receive all celestial pleasures, all human pleasures, it would not be enough: he would seek even more.

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develop ourselves on the spiritual path? It is by bringing more positive qualities in our conduct of body, speech and mind. That is our practice.

end of discourse

Geshe-la says that Caroline English died last Saturday. We shall do some Chenrezig mantras after reciting the Heart Sutra.

A close friend requested a puja to be done here. Geshe-la thought that Friday night would be suitable but her friend cannot come. They are however organising a puja outside. Anyone who wants can go to that second puja. Geshela cannot go. Tog Me and Anila Kaye can go if they are free. On behalf of Tara Institute send a letter to her parents in England and tell them that we have dedicated prayers to her, and let them know that she used to practise Tara a lot, so there is no need to worry too much about her. Those who are doing the Nyung Nä will not be able to go.

Geshe-la again thanks you for doing the written test. He is pleased with your answers.

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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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