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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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འཇིགས་རྒྱུ་ལྷན་སྐྱོད་ལྷན་གྲོགས་ལག་བཅུངས།



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The first and most important thing is to ensure that before undertaking any action the motivation (or preceding thought) is correct, because with the right motivation we can focus on the result which we expect from our actions. Also giving time to set the right motivation helps to make the actions more enjoyable and positive.

Therefore we must be sure to establish the right motivation for attending the teachings.

Generating the Bodhichitta Motivation

For starting spiritual practice there are many levels of motivation.

But to engage in study and practice of the Lam Rim one is instructed to generate the highest level of motivation. This means freeing the motivating Mind from the influence of any thoughts such as attachment, anger or jealousy about the pleasures of this life.

It is incorrect, for example, to have the motivation for listening to Lam Rim teachings in order to obtain material goods, or to increase one's good name and reputation. It is also inappropriate to seek the pleasures of future lives.

In this highest motivation there should not be any attachment to this life's pleasures, nor to the pleasures of future lives, nor is it appropriate to aim for the state of liberation for one's own sake, since this shows a self-centred motivation.

The highest motivation, the best motivation, for listening to Lam Rim and then putting it into practice, is to wish to achieve the perfect state of enlightenment - free of all faults and possessing all good qualities - for the sake of all beings.

Going Beyond the Happiness of Desire

With regard to setting up the right motivation we said that it is inappropriate to have the motivation of obtaining pleasure, or any gain within this life when we engage in spiritual practice. In order to fully understand this point we need to examine it thoroughly, because for the ordinary person's mind the pleasure which we seek is something which arises from desire or attachment.

If we examine the kind of happiness which we seek in

this life and engage in lengthy discussion with others, we realise that the happiness we seek is the happiness of desire or pleasure. Yet no matter what we achieve or do in life we are never fully content or satisfied. If we then analyse or investigate the cause of this unending dissatisfaction in our mind, we will find that it is because our mind is influenced by attachment or desire. It is also said that achieving any desire or goal for this life is all due to attachment or desire, or the wish to achieve the goal of "desire happiness". And no matter how much we pursue this attachment/ desire happiness it will never fully satisfy us. At a deep level it is this desire happiness which is the cause of our unending unhappiness.

It is not like when we talk about the outcome of hatred. It is not difficult to know the result of that, since it is very destructive and harmful to both our own life and that of others. Whereas when talking **about the** consequences of desire we need to investigate more thoroughly and deeply. Without that, as mentioned before, there is no difference between what we seek and desire, and the desired outcome of that desire. If we engage in meditation, whereby we fix our mind singlepointedly on a virtuous object without any influence of desire or hatred, then our experience of peace and happiness is deeper and lasting, and brings no unease into our mind.

Beside these points, the reason why we must utilise our spiritual practice to overcome desire and hatred is because that is the whole purpose of spiritual training. So we must ask "In what way can spiritual training benefit others and as well as me?" Benefiting others refers not only to material benefits, but also to spiritual ones where we can prevent harm to others as well as ourselves. Then we can prevent harm not only to our mind, but also to our own body and speech.

We must seek the happiness beyond the happiness of desire, not only in this life but also in future lives. In the future if we seek happiness associated with desirous thought, then there will be no end to our suffering, since this desirous thought is like a chain binding us to cyclic existence.

Attaining a Balanced Stability in the Mind

We should examine the benefits to our life of the spiritual teachings within the context of our own experience and

actions. In the spiritual teachings there is an emphasis on overcoming desire and hatred, and the very biased attitude which is fond of some but shows dislike and distance to others. We should think that we have performed all our actions up to now with this attitude of desire and hatred. We should ask 9n what way has this attitude impacted upon all the actions which 1 have performed? Is this attitude good for maintaining my relationships?" For instance is it good for our mind to be influenced by these two attitudes depending on how things appear to our mind? It is always natural that your boyfriend or girlfriend appears as very attractive, and that you feel strong desire for that person. But as soon as they appear unattractive, or unpleasant to your mind then immediately you will feel hatred out of this unattractiveness. Then due to the force of this hatred, outwardly you will show hatred in your facial expression or speech.

Therefore desire and hatred is the main cause of instability in our life. Life becomes like a scale which always moves upwards and downwards. With this biased attitude our mind is very keen to become attracted or unattracted very quickly, this can be a further cause of losing our relationships and trust.

On the other hand if we try to familiarise our mind with thinking in a stable way (not becoming angry very quickly or becoming very attracted and excited about things very easily) then whether things are going well or not in a relationship; having wealth or not; having enough food or not; the mind retains a balanced stability. On the basis of this balanced stability of mind, if you then go to help others and support them then your happiness can be lasting. Then whether our lifespan is short or long, we have found some meaning, and lasting satisfaction for its duration.

We shall stop here tonight, and next week we shall continue the teaching from where we finished last year. We are up to the six types of root or primary delusions. Of these six primary delusions the first five are called "non-view delusions" whereas the 6th is called the "view delusion" and it has five types, which are called the five "view delusions".

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

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