



to prevent it from producing its results. So generating regret for our negative actions, or generating a resolve not to repeat such actions again, is very effective in purifying our negative actions.

When we decide to do any spiritual practice then the lam rim teachings thoroughly and clearly explain just how, and what, we should do. The lam rim teaching is where all aspects and benefits of the practice that you wish to do are clearly explained. If you engage in the practice of making offerings this is clearly explained, likewise with making prostrations, and the four remedial forces of purification. The lam rim teaching is very handy: all that we require is there and readily available. In fact, we have already studied the four doors of moral downfall in the past but Geshe-la thought it important to recall what we have studied in the past, so that we can build upon it and thus further develop our understanding.

We find here a different means of bringing peace and satisfaction to our life. Here the peace and satisfaction we seek is a result of calming our mind, and disciplining our actions through the application of mindfulness, and a sense of moral shame and embarrassment.

Normally we believe that the satisfaction and happiness which we seek results from some outer or material conditions. In experiencing that material pleasure our mind and our actions are completely free from restraint. When our mind is scattered and wandering towards the outside, there is also no restriction on our actions and so we indulge ourselves in a variety of things, finding some satisfaction and enjoyment in this process. The question is at what cost do we find that material pleasure? Generally we have to say that there are many conditions which must come together if we are to experience that material satisfaction, conditions such as finance, or good company or a personal friend. It also depends upon our age as well. If we are not young enough, we are limited in what we can enjoy.

There are so many factors which must come together, that sometimes it is not easy to find outward satisfaction. And, not finding satisfaction can be very frustrating, and so your life becomes meaningless because you can see no type of pleasure or goal apart from material ones.

So it is essential for us to find inner peace and satisfaction by finding the meaning of life within ourself. We can only achieve that understanding if we recognise it, and then through that recognition live our lives accordingly. In one sense all we have to do achieve that understanding is to think “What do I want in life?” Of course what we want is to enjoy good health and mental happiness, and some sort of mental satisfaction throughout our lifespan.

Then we have to investigate the true causes which bring about good mental and physical health. As said before, to find happiness in the mind we all have to look beyond the artificial happiness which results from indulging in outer material objects. Then we would find some peace and satisfaction in the mind. With some sense of peace, stability and happiness in our mind then our life becomes meaningful.

With this state of happiness and ease of the mind, then if you have to do some action, whether for your own goal,

or those of others, you will do so very joyfully. Even, if we do not undertake such actions, then we shall find lasting peace and happiness.

## Questions and Answers

What are the two causes of taking refuge? Fear and faith. There are many types of fear, but here we mean fear of falling into a lower rebirth.

Having experienced this fear we look for how we might be freed from this fear, and we see that the three jewels have the capacity to free one from this fear. So, in this way we generate faith.

What are the types of refuge precepts? There are two:<sup>2</sup> 1. Common and 2. Specific

<sup>3</sup>Is the Buddha a sentient being? No.<sup>4</sup>

Are there sentient beings in the pure land of Buddha? Yes.

Do the sentient beings in the pure land have contaminated aggregates? If there are sentient beings who are subject to contaminated aggregates, then how can that land be pure?

There are sentient beings in a pure land but only beings who are there not by force of karma and delusion, but by stainless prayer. Their body cannot be called the truth of suffering.

They have some contamination of their aggregates but not in the sense of contamination by karma and delusion since such aggregates would be truth of suffering. There is no truth of suffering in a pure land. So, these sentient beings have contaminated aggregates, but not in the same sense that ordinary beings have aggregates contaminated by karma and delusion. Most sentient beings in a pure land will attain buddhahood in that one lifetime. However, prior to attaining buddhahood they do have obstructions, either in the form of obstructions to liberation, or obstructions to omniscience which will have to be removed.

Your home work is to learn the seven-fold cause and effect.

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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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<sup>2</sup> For details on these refer to “Liberation in the palm of your hand” pages 424 to 428.

<sup>3</sup> Editor: The following was in question and answer format but this had been a confusing interchange, so to clarify matters only Geshela's questions and the correct answers have been printed.

<sup>4</sup> Editor: This was clarified later by discussion with Samdup and by reference to other sources (“Tibetan - English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology” pages 41 & 441). In this text it states that sentient beings are all beings possessing an ordinary mind, as distinct from Buddha who possesses an enlightened mind. Therefore the Buddha is not a sentient being. Whereas, the term “gang-zag” གང་ཟག་ or in Sanskrit “pugdala” means a person, “I” or living being. Therefore a Buddha is a “gang-zag” but is not a sentient being. Whereas a Hinayana Arhat who has overcome the obstructions to liberation but is yet to overcome the obstructions to omniscience is regarded as a sentient being as well as being a “gang-zag”.