
The Condensed Lam Rim

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As usual, it would be good to spend some time in meditation. It is important to sit in a relaxed but attentive and upright posture. Sitting in an upright position seems to prevent drowsiness and sleep arising in one's mind during meditation.

It is advised to perceive the object that one is focusing on as luminous, stable and heavy. Perceiving the object that one is focusing on in meditation as luminous prevents the mind from sinking into dullness. Perceiving the object in a stable, firm or heavy aspect helps the mind not to wander into excitement. If one is focusing on an external object there should be a moderate distance, not too far and not too close as well. A good distance to visualise the object is the span of one length of one's body when one is prostrating.

One of the most important preparations, before engaging in actual meditation, is to generate a very positive motivation for doing the practice. As the meditation practice itself is a virtuous deed, one is already inclined to engage in a virtuous deed. Therefore to have a positive motivation at the very outset helps the actual practice to be positive and virtuous. It is important to maintain a virtuous frame of mind during our meditation practice and at the end of our practice. To dedicate the practice will help to maintain a virtuous frame of mind at the end as well. In this way all three stages of our practice, the beginning, middle and end will be secured to be virtuous. Dedication specifically means to direct the virtuous merit that one has accumulated during practice towards the goal that one intends to achieve. That is what dedication means. It means to focus or direct the virtuous merit that we have accumulated towards the goal that we wish to achieve.

Generating a positive motivation specifically means to develop a sense of love and compassion towards others and, based on an attitude of love and compassion towards others, doing the practice towards the end of benefiting others through love and compassion. Love is when one wishes others to be happy and joyful. Compassion is where one wishes others to be free from suffering. It is good to train in these attitudes in a practical way with those that one associates with on a daily basis such as one's relatives, family or partner, whoever may be close to one in one's daily life. It is really important to practice with those who are close to one. These are the very beings that we can train with. As we train in developing a sense of love, which is wishing them to be happy, and compassion, which is wishing them to be free from suffering, and engage in means to

make them happy and free from suffering there is definitely an immediate result. After training our mind with those that are close to us, those that we associate with on a daily basis, we can expand that scope and extend it towards others. That's how, on a practical level, we should engage in a practice.

To engage in this practice and extend one's attitude of love and compassion to those that one associates with on a daily basis can definitely bring about a good result for oneself. The benefit for one can be reducing aversion towards others that one deals with, reducing strong attachment towards others, pride and jealousy. When one reduces these negative states of mind such as pride, jealousy and anger, it definitely brings about a relatively more peaceful, calm mind for ourselves.

When we talk about love and compassion, we are talking about trying to develop a real, true sense of love and compassion by genuinely wishing others to be happy and to be free from suffering. If our relationship with others is merely based on attachment, if the love that we have for others is based only on attachment, others may seem appealing and attractive and you may wish to help them during the state of mind of attachment but when things go wrong and you start getting a negative attitude from the other, it is very easy to immediately turn into aversion. It is important not to base our relationship with others merely on the attractive attachment one feels towards others. Instead we need to develop a genuine sense of care and love.

If, from one's own side, from the very start, trains in developing genuine love and compassion towards others, that sustains one's relationship with others. Due to the positive frame of mind that one begins one's relationship with others and then tries to maintain that, the natural result, or affect, would be that when a situation arises where one is having a difficult time, for whatever reason, those that one has extended one's real genuine sense of love and compassion towards will turn around and really benefit us. They will help us in whatever way that they can because of our genuine loving attitude towards them. We can take the practical example of our own parents. As children grow up, whatever age they may reach and even if they leave home, when it really becomes difficult and there's a real problem, who's there to help them but their parents? In whatever circumstances the children may be, parents will try to extend their help in whatever way they can. We can see this many times over. This is because a parent's love towards their children is far beyond the fleeting love we have towards others. Of course we cannot say that there is no attachment from the parents' side to their children. There is attachment, but there's a stronger degree of a real sense of care and love towards their children. So, in difficult situations parents will come to the children's aid and help them. We can use this as an example of how, with a true sense of love and care, anyone would go out of their way to try to help others. To deserve that care for oneself, one needs to train in the positive attitude of a real sense of love and care towards others. If one extends that unconditionally from one side then, naturally, it will come back to one when one is in

real need.

This attitude we're talking about, unconditional love and compassion, is something that we all possess as a basis. We all have the potential to develop whatever love and compassion we have now to the point of it being entirely unconditional and extended towards all. It is important to recognise that we have this potential and that we have that basis within ourselves. In what we call the normal love that we have towards others, even though it is based on attachment, there is some basis for love there as well. It is important for us to analyse and recognise what is true love and which is just attachment and try to enhance the compassion and love within oneself and extend it towards friends, family, whoever it may be. We should try to really develop that true sense of love and care towards others and slowly minimise the negative side, attachments. In this way, even in our normal relationships, we can really train our mind in developing a true sense of love and care for others. Even though they may not seem to appreciate it in the beginning, or there may be some who may not appreciate it, one can definitely see the good results that come from it in the future. If we train our mind now with the very basis that we have, to whatever degree we may have love and compassion within ourselves, it can expand to the limitless unconditional love and compassion that we talk about as qualities of the other, greater beings.

There is another example of how love and compassion can be definitely felt and appreciated by others. We can see this in animals. Animals definitely respond to our love and compassion. We can see this in those who have pets and care for them. As a result of feeling the love and compassion extended towards them they are very comfortable and at ease with their owners. They sleep very comfortably with them. They live with them very comfortably and you can see how much appreciation pets show for a master who is loving and kind towards their animals. If a being in the lower realms such as an animal can definitely appreciate this there's no question about a human being accepting the love and compassion that we extend to them. A human being is, of course, much more intelligent and has much more understanding. Therefore there's no question that a human being will definitely appreciate and accept the love and compassion that we extend towards them.

To use the practical example of the relationship between a human and an animal again. This can definitely bring a certain amount of satisfaction, ease and happiness in the owner's mind as well. The owner of the pets will definitely feel comforted and feel joy in having the animal with them because of the natural response that they get from the animal. That shows that humans need affection. Even if they get it from animals, it is worthwhile. That affection that one gets from animals is a mutually beneficial thing for the animal as well as for the human owner. What it really shows is the connection of the minds. If you're kind towards others, be it an animal or human being, what you get in return is kindness and affection as well. If you show affection what you get in return is affection, and we all need affection. Affection

definitely brings a certain amount of ease and happiness in our mind. The more genuine the affection or the love, the more happiness it brings to oneself and others.

It is actually a quite useful focus to expand our mind and look into the reality of the situation with animals. The relationship one has with an animal is based on a connection of the minds where one shows affection to each other. It is because you get a response of affection from the animal that the mind is happy. To give a further example of this. Take another object like a watch or a clock. No matter how much you may like the clock you don't really get much in return. You don't get any affection in return from the clock or a watch. Whereas with an animal if you give affection and are kind to it you can definitely feel affection in return from an animal. That is because the animal has a mind. The difference between a clock and an animal is that one has a mind and the other doesn't, it's not sentient. If you extend love and compassion and affection towards a sentient being, because it possesses a mind, you get that same affection in return.

The summary or conclusion that you should understand is that if you extend affection towards a sentient being, a being that has a mind, you get affection in response, and this is a benefit for oneself. If you show hostility and negativity towards another sentient being, what you receive in return is also negativity, which harms one.

Now we set our meditation postures and we sit in an upright but relaxed posture using our own breath as the object of focus. We try to maintain a complete focus on the breath. We draw our minds away from external distractions and try to keep the mind 100% on the breath and focus on the natural inflow and outflow of our breath. In this way we can spend a few minutes in meditation. *Pause for meditation.*

4.2.2.1.2. The actual way to take the essence

4.2.2.1.2.1. Training the mind in the stages of the path of the small capable being

4.2.2.1.2.1.1. The actual way of training in the motivation common to the being of small capacity

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2. Relying on the methods for achieving happiness in future lives

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1. Developing the faith of conviction in karma and its effects.

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.1. Thinking about the Law of Cause and Effect in general

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2. Reflecting on the individual divisions

We have covered the text explaining, or identifying, the ten non-virtues and their opposite, the ten virtues. To put it in a simplified way, that which brings about a desirable or beneficial result for oneself is a virtuous deed, virtuous act or virtuous karma, and that which brings about an undesirable, unpleasant result for oneself is a non-virtuous or negative deed.

The results that either a virtuous or non-virtuous deed, or karma, bring about can be categorised in three different ways:

- the fully ripened result,

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- the causally concordant result or effects, and
 - environmental effects.

Firstly, we can explain the results or effects of non-virtuous karmas or negative karmas. The fully ripened result, or effect, of a negative karma. We can take killing as an example. The result depends on the severity, or weight, of the negative karma that has been created in relation to killing. As explained earlier in the sessions, the negative karma of killing depends on the attitudes, the manner of the killing and so forth. An act of killing can be either a very heavy negative act of killing, a medium level of karma of killing, or even a minimal karma of killing. The heaviness of the karma brings about the corresponding results. The result of a very heavy negative karma would be to be born in the lowest of the realms, the hell realms and experience great suffering. A medium level of negative karma of killing would bring rebirth in the hungry ghost or hungry spirit realm and the minimal, negative karma result of killing would bring about rebirth in the animal realm.

As mentioned earlier, the natural consequences of engaging in a deed, be it virtuous or non-virtuous, is to bring about either a favourable or unfavourable result in the future. So the fully ripened results of a negative deed such as killing brings about a negative result of rebirth in what we call the unfortunate realms. When we relate to animals we can understand that they had created negative deeds in the past to be reborn in a realm that is, in relation to a human realm, generally a more unfortunate state. To be reborn as a human being is a result of having created positive deeds in the past. Rebirth as a human being is a much more advantageous rebirth.

The first two results, which are the fully ripened result and the causally concordant results or effects, are said to be something that one possesses within oneself. The environmental result relates to the actual environment that one lives in or that one is reborn in. It relates to the external environment. The first two results are results that are experienced by the beings themselves. They are within the sentient beings.

As we study the teachings about the results or effects one experiences as a consequence of positive and negative karmas it is very important that we try to relate these to ourselves in our daily lives and experiences. For example, we can definitely consider ourselves as extremely lucky compared to many others, even other human beings. The English word is 'luck'. In Tibetan, the actual word we use for the equivalent of luck means 'meritorious'. We have a lot of merit to experience.

The good results we are experiencing now are that we have plenty of food, clothing, shelter and live in an environment which is relatively peaceful. We don't have to worry about our normal sustenance. Even in the human realms we can see there are many people who are suffering and are just barely able to survive. It is our good luck or good fortune to have all these plentiful resources. Even having a good job is extremely lucky. There are many who don't even have a job. The means

we have for our maintenance and survival in a very conducive environment is definitely a result of the positive karmas we have created in the past. These results that we experience now, what we would call luck, is not just mere luck but instead is the natural consequence or effect of good deeds we have done in the past. Our current situation does not come about without having first created the cause. So, it is a result, of positive deeds.

Within this conducive environment we may still, of course, experience suffering. Mentally or even physically. Whenever a difficulty arises, mentally or physically, it is good to try to relate that to karma and understand that the negative consequences that we experience are not without any cause. If we think that something may be causing our negative experiences we might relate them to immediate conditions that we see outside of ourselves such as people or a situation in the world. We may relate it to that but, in reality, the immediate surroundings serves only as a mere condition. The real causes lie in the past where we have committed negative deeds.

We are experiencing the result of some karma that we created in the past. As we experience these hardships or difficulties, whatever they may be, it is good to relate that to one's own karma and think how we are experiencing the results of previous karma and expending our karma in that way. In this way, as you relate to karma as the cause for what we experience, when we have a positive frame of mind and we relate to the positive, conducive environment and the good resources we have now and feel lucky about, we should actually contemplate on how extremely good it has been that one has created the causes for these conditions in the past; By developing a loving and kind attitude towards others as mentioned earlier, and engaging in other virtuous deeds.

In this way we create further karma to experience good results in the future. As we experience negative karmas now, and recognise it as a result of negative karma we have created in the past, it should instil a determination within oneself that, "I am now experiencing the results of negative karmas that I've created in the past. I can't do much about that now but, from now on, I will not engage in negative deeds so I will not have to experience such consequences in the future". That should add to our determination to avoid engaging in negative deeds and minimising the negative states of mind. In this way we use the understanding of karma in a very practical way in our daily life. Whatever understanding one gains and the practical use we put that to becomes a real means for protecting oneself. That is the real protector. Understanding karma and thus adopting the virtuous and avoiding the non-virtuous karmas becomes a real protection for ourselves.

Are there any questions?

Question: You were talking about killing and motivation and the results of that before. What sort of karma does killing insects create?

As mentioned in the earlier lessons, for the negative karma of killing an insect to be a fully-fledged negative karma of killing it would have to have the four

conditions intact. If all four conditions were intact when one engaged in the killing of an insect one does create a negative karma of killing. But there may be times that one has killed insects mindlessly, not intentionally wanting to kill with the full four conditions mentioned earlier. As one cleans the house, or as one does things, insects might accidentally die in that process. A killing has been done and there's some negative karma involved, but not as heavy. Depending on the manner of how that act of killing has been done, the karmas vary.

If one remembers that and develops a sense of regret in one's mind that already helps minimise and purify the negative karma. One should understand that negative karma, no matter what kind of negative karma it may be, can be purified. There's a saying in the teachings that generally negative karma has no good qualities except one, which is that it can be purified. That's the one good quality of negative karma. It can be purified. When one develops a strong sense of regret by remembering a particular instance of negative karma one has created in the past and then, with that sense of regret, one engages in some counter-measure practices it is said to be a very powerful way to purify that negative karma.

Question: In the war in Lebanon, people are trying to kill certain people but instead are killing other people. Is it still an intention to kill if it's the wrong person and is it all still the karma of killing? ie trying to kill Hezbollah but in fact killing children.

This was actually explained earlier when we talked about the discrimination or the perception. If from the very onset one has an intention to kill, and in a war where the intention is to kill anyone in that area, then whatever object has been killed would be a fully-fledged, negative karma of killing. The intention was already set out to kill, regardless of whom is around. In that case, even what would be considered an accidental killing would, in fact, be a fully fledged negative karma of killing because the discriminatory attitude from the very beginning is not specific and not caring and just sending out bullets or bombs, in order to kill. There would be no difference, in that sense, in the karma of killing.

The example given in the teaching of not needing a specific discrimination for an act of killing to be a fully fledged act of negative karma of killing is the specific example where someone goes to war and the army as a group, or even an individual, has the intention to kill and is sent out to kill the so-called enemy. Whoever gets killed creates a negative karma of killing by the army or the person. I don't know about how the system is here nowadays, but I have heard that apparently when you enrol yourself in the army you have to make a promise that, "I will engage in acts of killing". You have to actually make that promise.

Question: In Israel they say they are killing Hezbollah in order to protect themselves. Is this different from killing for its own sake?

From a Dharma point of view, that the attitude, even though it may be called self-defence, comes from a self-cherishing mind. It is from a self-cherishing mind that we

create negative karma. The self-cherishing attitude is, "If they harm me, I will harm them back before they harm me. If they harm me once, I'm going to harm them twice." This way negativity increases and having a strong self-cherishing attitude is completely contrary to wanting to develop patience. When a mosquito lands on your arm some people just squash it. The reason they want to squash and kill it is because they do not want to endure the small pain or harm that the mosquito is inflicting on them. Therefore they just kill it. It's the same situation, more or less.

It's hard to communicate and try to reason with those who have that attitude, a righteous attitude of fighting and killing in self-defence. They feel that they have a very good reason, but basically you can't communicate much with them. They go and kill and each time they kill they rejoice about it, "We did some killing, it was good". That sort of attitude is definitely prevalent.

Question: When you use the term sentient being and then you use the term mind, does the mind contain memory or is it just a life force? And if it's only a life force, does a vegetable or a fruit fall into the category of a sentient being, if it's not related to memory and it's only life force?

That which, in Tibetan or Buddhist terms, has life also connotes that it has a mind. In English, when you say something's living it doesn't necessarily seem to mean that it has a mind or is sentient. I think sentient means that you have mind. In English we know that we call a plant or a tree 'living', but do we call it 'sentient'? In Tibetan we won't even call it 'living'. I mean we might use the term loosely, but generally from Buddhist terminology, we wouldn't call a tree a living being. It wouldn't be a being. In summary, a living being is a sentient being which has a mind and there is memory to a certain degree.

Question: But memory is in the brain and we are taught that mind is not the brain.

Geshe-la has heard that scientists are actually now discovering, or coming to some sort of consensus, that there's something beyond the brain which seems to maintain memory and has feelings and so forth. Even scientists are beginning to ponder the possibility of something beyond just the brain.

Apparently there was an accident in which someone's brain was damaged. Apparently the person was still living. Scientists began to actually wonder when even though there was some brain damage they found that the person was still not completely dead. That brought doubts into the scientists mind that there might be something more than just a brain that sustains someone. The conclusion in Buddhism is that the brain, being a physical matter is definitely not the mind, and it's only the mind that holds the actual memory as such.

Question: Scientists are now discovering that DNA holds a certain type of memory.

(Translator: I think I'll have difficulty trying to translate DNA in Tibetan)

The equivalent, well maybe not exactly equivalent but

something similar, to what scientists call the DNA would be in Buddhist medical terms the four elements. These are something on the physical level that is said to be passed on from one generation to the next. Our body itself is made up of the four elements. It is said that a lot of things that we would normally say are done out of memory actually are just a natural activity. What we would call instinct is actually the workings of the four elements within the body.

To give one example. The heat element helps to digest the food. It doesn't necessarily need a conscious thought or memory to digest food. It just happens naturally and that is due to the heat element that we have in the body. Similarly, most of the activities of the body, even on a very subtle level as well, are said to be done through the wind element. It's very, very subtle and hard to measure it with normal instruments, but the wind element is something that does a lot of functions for the maintenance of the body itself. That would be something like an equivalent of what we call DNA, which is again, not the mind per se, but something that is within our body.

There is another thing to do with what would be called the DNA that comes from the parents, the forefathers, the ancestors and so forth. Even though it's not specifically mentioned in the teachings as such, there's obviously something to do with the lineage or something that we get from our parents and forefathers. It seems that if there was someone who was very intelligent in the ancestry then one of the children from the following lineages seems to naturally have some sort of intelligence as well. There seems to be something to that as well, something related to lineage.

Question: We were talking about giving loving kindness to people earlier. What if you give loving kindness to someone who doesn't want it eg a dog that was mistreated and then bites you or someone with a mental illness or with an alcohol problem?

If loving kindness is not accepted or appreciated then for one's own practice, it is important to realise how they cannot accept this due to the blockage and the ignorance they have in their mind. It is not because they don't need it. Obviously everyone needs love and compassion, but it's due to their circumstances now that they cannot accept it. They don't know how to accept it. Therefore it should become an extra means for one to develop compassion and think how pitiful the situation is where even when they do need help, when they do need kindness and love, they are not able to appreciate or accept it. In order for us to not give up on them, one should develop patience in oneself, but in terms of understanding of the situation in general one should develop compassion.

When we think about it, it is really an object of compassion. When wholehearted, true compassion is shown to others and it's not accepted and sometimes, rather than accepting it, you get abuse and harshness in return it is a real situation for pity or compassion. As one of the great masters has mentioned, when harshness is

shown in return to kindness, then that object is an object of real compassion and one should further meditate and develop compassion. This shows that without the others removing their ignorance it is very difficult to give help to them.

Before we end this session, we will again spend a few moments in meditation. Sit in an upright and comfortable position, and this time we will focus our mind completely on Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra.

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