
The Condensed Lam Rim

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We can spend some time in meditation as usual. For that purpose we will sit in a comfortable and upright position. As we attempt to engage in meditation we should remind ourselves of the main purpose of meditation. The main purpose can be understood when we look into how we respond when someone asks us, "How do you feel?" Normally if we are feeling quite well, physically and mentally quite sound, we have an immediate response, "Oh, I'm doing well". However when we are not feeling well, particularly if we are not feeling very happy in our mind, we can find that there's a hesitation. It's not an immediate response, where we can say, "Oh, I'm very well". That shows that if our mind is not really happy we cannot really respond to others that we are well. This shows that there's a definite connection between our mental happiness and our general wellbeing. That is basically very true. Our wellbeing is not related only to our physical body, but very much to our mental attitude and how we feel inside ourselves. It's really very clear that our wellbeing is very much related to having a happy mind.

When it becomes clear that our wellbeing is related to having a happy mind, the next question that arises is, "How do we bring about a happy mind? How can we work towards bringing about a happy mind?" This is where meditation comes in. If we further investigate what contributes to a happy mind we would come to realise that a happy mind comes as a result of having a peaceful mind. A peaceful mind is a mind that is not disturbed, which is naturally calm and tranquil. Then we have to look into what disturbs our mind? What are the factors that disturb our mind? The teachings identify the delusions within one's mind, such as desires and distractions, aversion or anger, to the extremes of hatred and egotism, these sorts of negative attitudes or negative emotions, as the factors that disturb the mental peace of our mind.

Meditating is an attempt to quieten down or slowly subdue the mind. This process is, of course, a gradual process. We may intellectually agree with and understand that. That is the first point. The first step is to understand that what contributes to the disturbances in our mind are the delusions and that a tranquil, subdued mind contributes to our happiness. It is important to firstly identify this and understand it fully.

However, after having understood and identified this one may come to feel, "I still have an unsubdued mind. Just knowing that doesn't seem to help. I cannot get a peaceful mind". This is where we can become a little bit hasty and think, "Well, if it is possible to have a subdued mind, I would want it right away". Realistically, we have to understand that a calm, peaceful mind cannot come about immediately, or quickly for that matter. It takes time. Only after engaging in the practice of meditation on a continuous

basis, slowly, slowly do we find that it reduces the negative tendencies in the mind. As we familiarise the mind in a positive way, in a virtuous way, do we find that slowly, slowly, our mind becomes calm and peaceful. From that little experience we can go further. That is the realistic approach.

One can identify the main factors that disturb the mind and those that contribute to the happiness of our mind. Disturbance comes about from allowing the mind to be influenced by non-virtuous states of mind and following the delusions. The factors contributing to bringing peace to the mind are avoiding allowing one's own mind to be influenced by the delusions and protecting the mind. Therefore the initial main practice is to cultivate what we call alertness and with that alertness guarding the mind and protecting it from the influence of the delusions. We need to protect and guard our mind from the delusions. The delusions are not something that comes from external factors but from within one's own mind. The delusions arise within the mind. Guarding one's mind means looking within oneself and identifying the delusions when they arise and trying to overcome them and not allowing the mind to be completely influenced and overpowered by them. We make this attempt over and over again.

If you investigate and analyse in this way, after a certain amount of time you will really come to realise that there's definitely a change that takes place within one's mind. One would notice, when one compares one's mind with previous times, that there's definitely a change as a result of one's attempt to subdue the mind. As a result, after a period of time one will come to realise that there's some stability within one's mind. One will find that normal, insignificant things that earlier would have made one upset do not cause one to get as upset as easily any more. Where previously an incident may have caused one to be miserable for the whole day or for many days, one has now gained some stability in the mind and one would notice that even if one does get upset one is not daunted and is able to overcome it quite quickly and remain quite calm and peaceful. When this result has been experienced within one's own mind it brings about the real confirmation for oneself that meditation definitely benefits one's mind.

With that experience of finding that there's been a shift and a change within one's mind one confirms that having made the attempt to guard one's mind has brought about noticeable results within oneself. When one sees that benefit the determination to further develop and guard one's mind from the delusions and protect oneself from delusions will come about naturally. One can then put some continuous effort in attempting to further progress in one's meditation. That should come about naturally.

If you are still not convinced about the benefits of meditation you can do a test for yourself. One morning attempt to do some meditation and go to work and work normally as usual. See what effect the meditation has during the day. Even when incidents arise, what sort of attitude does one have in one's mind in comparison to a morning where you miss a meditation. Maybe if you purposely don't meditate one morning you can check out what sort of attitude one has during the day. One will come to notice that there's actually a big difference where one has attempted to start the day with a positive motivation and some meditation versus the morning where one has not engaged in a meditation. There

will definitely be some difference in one's mind. One will notice that on the day that one has started with a good motivation and a meditation, one's mind will be relatively more tranquil and peaceful.

The main point I'm stressing here is to be happy, and there's none of us who don't want to have happiness, which is related to having a happy mind. If we wish to have happiness in our life and a happy mind it is extremely important that we exert ourselves in a continuous effort to protect our mind.

The attempt that we make to generate a positive motivation and do some meditation in the morning is, of course, not an easy process. It is not something that comes about easily because we are not accustomed to doing that. We are accustomed to waking up in chaos and then spending the day in chaos. Most of us naturally go to sleep with chaos in our mind. Because of that it's doubtful whether we are going to sleep well or not. Even if we do fall asleep, because we slept with a chaotic mind when we wake in the morning our mind will naturally be quite chaotic. That is what we are mostly accustomed to. It's like a snowball that just gets bigger and bigger.

When we can actually stop and determine for ourselves that we do not wish to continue in that chaotic way with a chaotic style of life and that we want to have a more peaceful life we can begin to make a shift to familiarising oneself to a different way with different attitudes. This involves trying to start off differently in the morning. This is initially difficult. No one is to be blamed for that because we are not familiar with it. However everything comes with familiarity and it is definitely something that is achievable. We are not talking about something that is not possible. It is definitely possible. There are those who are meditating and are continuously benefiting from their mediation. We are no different. We have the same mental capacity and ability to benefit from meditation. Everyone's mind has access to that benefit.

It's a matter of making the decision, making up one's mind every morning, to spend some time in contemplation, meditating and generating a positive attitude. That effect, as has been mentioned earlier, can be carried through the day and when one ends the day one could naturally have a comparatively more relaxed and subdued mind. If one then goes to sleep with a more relaxed mind the next day can naturally be much easier. One can rise with a more positive frame of mind. This is the way that we can definitely make progress for ourselves. This is all possible. It is something within our reach and our ability. If, while wanting to be happy, we don't take this opportunity to engage in the causes of gaining happiness for ourselves, it's like the act of an insane person.

If we think about ourselves and without looking outside we ask ourselves, "I want happiness, don't I? Yes. So why am I not then engaging in the means to gain happiness for myself?" It is definitely something that is quite absurd. A practical example of this behaviour arises in daily life when parents see that their children enjoy spending money. They like to have money but when they are told, "Well, if you like money, you have to work for it", but the child may say, "Oh no, I cannot work for it. I don't like to work for money". The child seems to be crazy. They want money, they like to spend money, but they don't wish to earn their own money. That's like an act of insanity.

Having mentioned the benefits of meditation, we now can

try to attempt to engage in some meditation. First of all let us just again reflect on the situation of our mind and the importance of trying to subdue the mind. When we think about the state of our mind right now we should recognise that as long as we allow the distractions to influence us our mind will be in a perpetual state of confusion and anxiety and we will have an unhappy state of mind. Therefore we need to attempt to try to stop the mind from being influenced by external distractions. When we look into the situation of our mind we see it is easily influenced by the distractions. We can use the analogy of imagining cotton being blown by the wind. Cotton is very light. When it's blown by a strong wind it can be moved in every direction and to any corner. If we use that analogy to reflect on our own mind, the mind that is like cotton and the distractions are like the wind. As long as we allow the wind of distractions to blow our mind about like cotton the mind will always be disturbed and confused. The contaminated conceptual thoughts that arise in the mind are the distractions.

If we withdraw the mind to remain focused on just one object and don't allow the mind to be influenced by thinking about everything else and repeatedly return the mind to the object of focus, then, that brings as a natural consequence a settled mind. Therefore in the initial stage of meditation we choose one object to focus on and try to maintain our focus on that very object. In the next few minutes the object that we choose to focus on is the breath. As we maintain our focus 100% on the breath we remind ourselves that, "For these few minutes, I will not allow my own mind to be influenced by the distractions". The focus is the natural inflow and outflow of our breath. We maintain focus on that with our full attention. Sitting in the upright and proper position we will do that for the next few minutes. *(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

Within the classifications of karma, we were touching in the last session on the type of karma which is classified as 'certain' and 'uncertain' karmas. Karmas that are classified as certain karmas are karmas whose results will definitely be experienced. Karmas that are known as uncertain karmas are karmas the effects of which are not definitely experienced. Those karmas that have all the conditions intact, a complete path of karmic action, are classified as certain karmas. Those karmas that are not complete are uncertain karmas and their results are not definitely experienced.

Also in this classification are karmas that are engaged in but not accumulated and karmas that are accumulated but not engaged in. We can give an explanation of the classification of karma that is engaged in but not accumulated, the karma

that is accumulated but not engaged in, and that karma that is both accumulated and engaged in. We can take killing, the first of the ten non-virtues as a particular instance. To engage in an act of killing involuntarily, where one does not have any intention or wish to kill, but nevertheless was put in a situation of having to kill another being, would be an act where there has been an engagement in the act but because there was no intention at all from one's own side, no wish to kill, one does not accumulate the karma of killing because the motivation is lacking. This would be an instance or example of a karma that has been engaged in but not accumulated.

The second instance would be an act where someone has a complete intention and motivation to kill but has not had the opportunity yet to engage in the act. They may not in fact find the opportunity to engage in the act at all, but nevertheless an unceasing intention or wish to kill is still in the mind. In this case the action, the killing, hasn't taken place but there's the unceasing intention or wish in the mind to kill. If the opportunity were to arise there would be nothing to stop this person from killing because there's definitely the wish to kill. Even though they may not end up engaging in the act they nevertheless accumulate the mental negative karma of killing because of harbouring those wishes and intention to kill for a long period of time. In fact the longer one holds that intention in the mind the more one commits negative karma. This is the second instance where karma has not been engaged in but nevertheless has been accumulated in the mind.

The third instance of both accumulated and engaged in would be a voluntary act of killing that has been completed with the intention of killing the object. The karma has been both engaged in as well as accumulated.

There's yet another classification of karma which is firstly those karmas whose results can be experienced in one lifetime, secondly those karmas whose results can be experienced in a future lifetime, and thirdly those karmas whose results can be experienced in other lifetimes.

Now to give an instance of each of these three types of karma. The first of these karmas is where the results are experienced in this lifetime are a complete karma which is created very intensively. Those karmas which are created in a very intensive manner, virtuous or non-virtuous, can be experienced in this very lifetime. Intense karma was explained earlier in much detail. The results of some particular intensive karmas can be experienced in this lifetime.

There are other karmas created in this lifetime where the results may not be experienced in this lifetime but the conditions for that karma are to be ripened in the very next lifetime. The immediate next rebirth. That is the karma whose results are being experienced in the next lifetime.

Then there are other types of karma that one may engage in and create or accumulate in this life whose results will not be experienced either in this life nor the immediate future life but in lifetimes after the next. We call these karmas that are experienced at a much later time. From this classification of karma we come to understand better situations we find around us, whereby certain people may seemingly engage in virtuous karmas or virtue, be a very good person, be kind and generous and so forth, but nevertheless may experience physical hardships such as having a lot of sickness or other kinds of difficulties in life. There are many who question

why they would experience negative results when they are a good person. We should understand that the negative results that they experience are not the results of the virtue they are creating in this lifetime but are, instead, the results of non-virtue that they have created in many past lifetimes. Similarly there are those who may seem very evil. They are not kind and are harmful to others and engage in non-virtuous activities such as cheating others and so forth, and yet they may seem to have quite a prosperous life. Things seem to go well for them. Here one must understand that they are not experiencing the results of karma created in this lifetime. The prosperity and so forth that they are experiencing are the results of a virtuous karma created in previous lifetimes. In this way we can understand the workings of karma in a little more detail.

For those of us who wish to abide by the understanding of karma, or wish to integrate the workings of karma in our life, it is very important that we understand this point. If we just understand karma on the face value of cause and effect and maybe more immediate cause and effect it may bring about these doubts in one's mind when a seemingly very good person is experiencing negative results and, vice versa when someone seems to be very evil but things are going very well for them. This is a very short-sighted understanding or view of the workings of karma that relates it only to this lifetime. When we have that broader, more detailed understanding of karma, of how it can expand over many lifetimes, that will remove that doubt from our mind and we will be able to accept karma on a deeper level, which can be helpful for our mind.

In these instances where we see that people who don't seem to be generous in this lifetime but have a lot of wealth and, vice versa, those who seem to be generous but don't have much wealth, should instil a further belief that there have been past lives and consequently there are future lifetimes. There must be a reason why that is so. The causes for such persons to experience that can then be understood as having been created in the past. The acceptance of past lifetimes should become stronger with that understanding.

The main point is that even with our limited experience in life we can see that, without a cause, things don't just randomly happen. There has to be a cause for anything to occur. There has to be a cause for happiness or unhappiness, wellbeing or its opposite. If it is not created in this life then it must come from a past lifetime.

We seem to have taken quite a bit of time for this explanation. Maybe we can stop here for this evening. This evening, as well as previous evenings, I spent quite a bit of time explaining meditation and the importance of meditation. I keep re-emphasising it over and over again and you must understand that the reason I am doing this is because I feel some benefit from meditation myself. I wish that it could be a practical benefit for you, if you were to attempt meditation. If it can bring some benefit to your mind, produces a happy mind, then that actually helps me in return. Whenever I see a happy person, it makes me happy. It doesn't matter who it is, it doesn't matter from which tradition, which race or where they may be coming from, just seeing a happy person wherever I may be, makes me feel happy. If you do find benefit in the teachings, particularly the explanations of meditation, then if you were to apply it in your daily life, you might definitely find it can contribute to a happy state of mind.

I must also emphasise and remind people that when I share the knowledge of meditation and the techniques of meditation it is done in an unbiased way. I have no requirement that those of you who attempt to meditate become Buddhists. That is not my intention at all. As I mentioned earlier, my sole concern is whether it can be of some benefit and contribute to a happy state of mind. I also have to abide by my own teachers, the Dalai Lama's wishes. The Dalai Lama has given specific advice to teachers like myself that teaching in the west, you must never have the intention that you want to try to convert others, or to try to make others like Buddhists. That is not the intention that you must hold in your mind. The sole intention is to benefit others. If it can bring some benefit to others, can help their mind, then you should feel happy with that result. Our intention as Buddhists, as spiritual followers, is not to try to convert others and bring more people to our own faith. That is not the point. The main point is to make people happier. If it can contribute to people's happiness that serves the purpose of the teachings. Therefore I'm attempting to follow my teacher's advice as well.

Question: "What is the Buddhist view on the theory of evolution ie the view that we came from monkeys, and the origin of karma ie the first karma that was created by humans?"

Each race or each community or civilization may have their own interpretation of how humanity came about. It's hard for us to determine that one is right or one is wrong. For example, the Tibetans as a race, not as a religion, have their own interpretation. It is something similar in that it comes down from conception of the monkey and so forth. However there's no generalization that is given in the teachings. It is generally left up to different civilizations to figure that out for themselves.

If we were to talk about the race of the Tibetans, there are actually two versions. There's one line of belief that the Tibetan race originated from India. As a race, Tibetans migrated from India in ancient times and slowly began to populate Tibet. However there's another line of origin as mentioned earlier. There was a conception that a manifestation of Avalokiteshevara, Chenrezig the patron Buddha of compassion, manifested as an ape and copulated with an ogress and through that, the first race of Tibetans emerged.

In either case, as mentioned earlier, each nation would have their own explanation of their civilization. For example, the actual original people of Australia are explained to be the aboriginals. I wonder if there's a history of where aboriginals originated. How they were first established here? It's something that is hard for us to really determine. I've also heard that, for example, there's a theory that the original people of New Zealand, the Maoris, came from Tibet. They actually have similar features. Apparently there's also the theory that the continents were more or less joined in the past in ancient times. Therefore it was easy for people to migrate from one part to another, and then slowly as time passes on, the continents started to break up and divided as they are now.

Same questioner continues: "I think my question was: Is there anything in Buddhism that says that the origin of life is on earth?"

If we are talking about actual origin of beings, human or otherwise, the Buddha's explanation is that there is no origin, meaning there's no beginning point of existence of

beings, of the mind. It's beginningless. The reason why it is said that there's no beginning for mind or beings is because you cannot point at one point and say that from this time beyond, there was no living beings, no sentient beings, no mind and it was from this time that the sentient beings, or living beings', minds started to exist. There's no point in time that anyone can point to. The Buddha couldn't point to that time so the Buddha himself said there's no beginning for our mind.

It is definitely difficult to determine that this was the beginning of anything regardless of the mind being non-physical. Even with physical things, such as a seed, when we talk about the origin of that seed, we can say it came from another fruit, but then where did that fruit come from? That fruit came from another seed earlier, and likewise when we go back, it is very hard to determine, "This is the first seed" which produces the rest of the fruit. Even with physical things it's very, very difficult to point out the beginning of everything.

It is because of these reasons that the Buddha's teachings explained that there is no beginning to samsara but there is an end to individual samsara. There's no beginning to samsara because there's no time and point where we can say that we didn't exist without ignorance. There is, however, a time and point in the future where, through practice and so forth, we can remove ignorance from our mind and become enlightened. When one becomes enlightened or liberated one has stopped one's own samsara.

An analogy is used for sentient beings' progress. The analogy used is again an external object such as a seed. As mentioned earlier, it is very difficult to determine the beginning of a seed. Even when we point to one particular seed it is difficult to point to the beginning of that seed. The seed has a continuation in the past. It is hard to determine that, whereas it is easy to determine an end of that one particular seed. If, for example, that seed is destroyed in a fire then the continuation of that particular seed has ceased. It's hard to determine the beginning of seeds in general but you can see the end of one particular seed. Likewise for one individual being, when the ignorance of grasping to the self is removed through the wisdom realizing selflessness or emptiness, and through that process ignorance is completely removed from the mind without any stains the mind becomes an enlightened mind. For that particular being, samsara has ceased from then on, never to be experienced again.

That is what is said to be the end of samsara for that individual being. That is why it is explained in teachings that there's no beginning to samsara yet there's an end to samsara. Has that helped to satisfy your question a bit? If you can be satisfied with that for a while, then I hope it will contribute to a good night's sleep tonight.

As previously, we will now spend a few minutes in meditation. Sit in an upright, comfortable position, and focus on the mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni and maintain the focus on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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