
to settle down the mind, which otherwise is very dispersed and distracted. Maintaining our focus in a clear state of mind is worthwhile and very good training.

It is good to understand the significance of applying the meditation technique in our everyday life. It is a technique to familiarise our mind and being in a positive state. This is what the meditation technique allows us to do. One example is to avert negative states of mind when they occur. We have all experienced the ill-effects of anger many times over and how difficult it is to appease an angry mind. Particularly when strong anger arises, it becomes very difficult to calm the mind. Likewise, when strong attachment arises, it is as if our whole personality gets affected by the attachment. It is very difficult to appease the mind for those who have strong familiarity, and habits, with worldly desires. It is very difficult to overcome an angry state of mind as well.

Our mind has formed strong habits of attachment and anger. These habits become very difficult to overcome. We cannot blame others because there is already a strong habit that is difficult to overcome. However, if we find that our own mind gets overpowered and overrun with strong negative states of mind such as anger, attachment and jealousy, then we need to find methods and techniques to overcome that.

Even though we cannot stop anger arising, when it does manifest, particularly in intense moments, then we need to immediately apply caution, and immediately warn ourselves that if we allow our mind to be completely overpowered by anger or attachment, we will experience the ill effects. It will cause us, and others, destruction. So if we recognise that from the very beginning and not allow the mind of attachment or anger to escalate, then those negative emotions will start to decrease. This practice also comes with familiarity.

There is a marked difference between someone who makes genuine attempts for anger or attachment not to manifest, and someone who has a strong habit of anger or attachment, which is much more difficult to overcome. Whereas someone who does not have strong familiarity with attachment and anger, then even in the event that anger or attachment arises, it's much easier to overcome. These are important points to think about. There is a significant point here that we need to keep in mind. The main thing is not to allow our minds to become habituated with anger, attachment, jealousy and so forth.

Again, it is good for us to train our mind regularly and apply the meditation practice regularly. The main point that I am emphasising is that someone who does take the initiative to apply the meditation technique regularly in their life, even if it is for short time become much better equipped when the negative states of mind or delusions such as anger and attachment inevitably arise, due to that familiarity of the meditation practice. With our meditation tools, we will be well equipped to handle a situation where we don't become completely overwhelmed and overpowered by anger or attachment.

The difference can be seen in someone who practises meditation regularly versus someone who does not practise meditation, who does not know the technique or does not take an interest; someone who allows those

negative states of mind to completely overwhelm them. The person who doesn't practise meditation regularly does not have any techniques to tackle negative states of mind. The difference is that when strong attachment or anger arises, then, because they have not trained their mind in any method or technique, they will be completely overwhelmed. Their negative state of mind will last much longer and it's much more likely that their negative states of mind will cause negative consequences and destruction.

Whereas for someone who has practiced meditation regularly, negative states of mind will still arise, but the difference is that they will not be completely overwhelmed and overpowered by negative states of mind. They will have a little bit more control over their own state of mind. To that extent it will protect them. Delusions do arise and will arise, because as ordinary people, whatever status we may have, the delusions will definitely arise. Thus we need to work out how to deal with them. Delusions are like an enemy. Someone who has trained to ward off an enemy is better equipped to deal with the enemy when it comes. When someone who has not taken any measures to protect themselves from an enemy, they are much more likely to be harmed and defeated by the enemy because they are not equipped.

Delusions are an inner enemy which is there all the time. They always come. So we need a method to overcome delusions. These are essential points that we need to consider as means to protect ourselves from negative states of mind. Each person has their own problems that are unique to them, which means that it is something that they personally experience and hard for others to understand. Everyone has their own issues to deal with, their own difficulties and problems. It is hard to express or share with others, and hard for them to understand. Because it is hard for others to understand your personal experience, it is hard for them to help you to solve your problems. So we need to take the initiative to solve our own problems. We experience suffering so we need to apply the methods that will help us overcome those problems and difficulties. This is one of the main points of this teaching.

To summarise, it is worthwhile that we train our mind in how to tackle negative states of mind or delusions when they arise. There are so many different forms of delusions that can arise, so we need to understand how to deal with them and how to overcome them. It is in understanding how the delusions arise that we find means and ways to overcome them. This is a worthwhile training to engage in.

Question: Geshe-la, you speak about the mind being disturbed. I was just wondering if you could explain the distinction between the clear nature of mind and the deluded mind.

Answer: Even within the delusions there are differences. For example, with anger and attachment, even though they are both deluded states of mind, there is definitely a difference between those two.

To understand the mind as a whole, first of all it is good to understand the definition of mind according to Buddhist psychology. The definition of mind, in general,

is presented as “clear and knowing”. By its very nature the mind is clear and knowing. From that definition we can also assert that even delusions such as anger and attachment have that aspect of being clear and knowing. The aspect of being clear relates specifically to the mind having no colours or shape. The mind as an object is colourless and shapeless. Yet it has ability for everything to appear in it. That’s the general definition of mind. Then, of course, in the tantric teachings there is also the explanation of the subtle mind. There are distinctions between minds in general and the subtle minds. There is also a subtle mind that is said to be predominant from time immemorial. From beginningless time we’ve had what is called the subtle mind.

The main thing to understand here is that delusions are not in the nature of the mind. Delusions are not at one with the mind. A very good analogy presented by Maitreya, is the analogy of how the delusions are not intrinsic to the mind; just as clouds are not at one with the sky or space. If the clouds were intrinsic to space or the sky, then we would always be experiencing an overcast sky. The clouds would be permanently there. So even while the clouds are prevalent and there are immensely dense clouds, eventually when the breeze comes, the clouds all clear away and the actual nature of the sky becomes apparent. That is proof that clouds are not intrinsic or one with the sky because they separate and we have a clear sky again. So in the analogy here, the clouds are likened to the delusions and the clear sky is likened to our mind.

An example of how delusions are not intrinsic to our mind is to consider the delusion anger. If anger were intrinsic to our mind, then that would mean that we’ll always be angry. If we are angry today, then by the next day there will be no change. There will be that same intense amount of anger and we’ll always experience intense moments of anger because it is one with our mind. However we might be extremely angry one day, but by evening or by the next day that anger can subside and we can feel normal again. This proves that anger is not intrinsic with the mind itself, because it can be separated.

Examples of things that cannot be separated include heat and fire. You cannot separate heat and fire because the very nature of fire is that there is heat. In other words, heat is intrinsic to fire because it is its very nature. When a cloth is completely dyed black, then it becomes intrinsic to that; the two cannot be separated. Look at the colour of charcoal; because charcoal is intrinsically black, you cannot separate the colour black from charcoal. Thus, there are certain things that are intrinsic with each other, and in their very nature cannot be separated. However delusions are not intrinsic to the mind, therefore they can be separated. Another good analogy is to look at water and dirt—polluted water. No matter how polluted the water may be, the pollution is not said to be intrinsic to the water. They can be separated. If you leave dirty muddy water for a while, the muck settles down. The nature of the clarity of the water becomes apparent. Nowadays we hear that seawater can be desalinated and can be used for drinking. Apparently it’s not very cost-effective; however it seems that it is a possibility. And

that is again because the salt not intrinsic to the sea water. It can be separated. These analogies were presented by the great supreme master Maitreya, who was a great, noble being. He would not make any flaws in presenting these analogies, which explain the meaning of the mind being intrinsically clear and pure in nature. And that the delusions are not intrinsic to the mind.

That was a good question.

Question: His Holiness mentioned in a teaching that while the positive states of mind can be developed limitlessly the delusions can’t be developed limitlessly. Can Geshe-la please elaborate on this a bit further?

Answer: As I have explained previously, in general, unlike our physical capacity which is limited, the capacity of the mind to develop is limitless. In relation to your question as to why specifically the virtues or positive states of mind can expand limitlessly whereas the delusions cannot, that is because the virtues are based on valid cognition and so they cannot be destroyed. Whereas delusions do not have the support of a valid cognition, thus they can be destroyed.

Question: What particular techniques can we adopt when the delusions arise in our mind?

Answer: As mentioned previously many times, there are various techniques to apply as antidotes for different delusions when they arise. Each of those antidotes is applied appropriately to whatever delusion arises. This is easier if we are familiar with these antidotes by having meditated on those antidotes. There are of course specific antidotes for different delusions that arise. This works because when a positive state of mind is prevalent, then a negative state of mind cannot take over. It is like no one else can take your seat when you occupy it. As long as you are sitting on your seat you occupy that space, so no one can come and take your space because you are sitting there. Likewise, if anger is predominant in your mind, then there is no opportunity for a positive mind to occupy your mind as long as anger is manifest. So if you don’t want anger to be there, then you need to apply the opposite of that, which is loving kindness. The more we meditate on loving kindness; loving kindness becomes more predominate. Thus, when loving kindness occupies our mind it does not allow anger to arise in the mind. When you are feeling angry towards a person, if you develop loving kindness towards that person, then anger starts to subside.

Also, as I mentioned previously, anger is not one with the mind, or intrinsic with the mind. As soon as you start meditating on loving kindness and compassion, anger starts to fade away and it’s replaced with the positive state of mind of love and compassion.

In order to tackle delusions when they arise in our mind so that we are not overwhelmed, and as a way to practise developing a more subdued mind, we need to adopt these trainings. But whether this can be applied to every situation, I am not sure. For example, in a working situation I have heard others say that if they start to develop loving kindness and compassion to everyone at work, then they will be completely taken advantage of, and they won’t be able to work effectively. Some say that

maintaining love and kindness is all very well and good when they are sitting on the cushion; it seems like a good idea then. But applying loving kindness and compassion at work doesn't seem to be appropriate. These people ask me how they should deal with these issues in a working environment.

Even monks, apparently, who have gone out to work in normal settings have also commented to me that going out to work they see many nice girls and then attachment starts to arise. They want to know how to deal with that. What can I say to that? It's something that people have to deal with themselves.

There was an American nun who also made a comment that others had told her that just being around others in a normal environment causes so much attachment that it's difficult to deal with. But she said that's not true. This nun was in Tara House in Kew. The nun said that when she went back to America she returned to university and was surrounded by many good-looking men, but it wasn't a problem for her. She was able to maintain a positive state of mind. She was young and good looking, so it was not as if others wouldn't pay attention to her. She used to come here to Australia once in a while because there was also an Australian called Doctor Nick. She used to be good friends with his mother. Apparently she settled down in Dharamsala and had a small hut there.

She would come and visit the late Geshe Ngawang Dhargye. She used to say that there is no greater teacher than Geshe-la and she would come and visit him often.

She told me that she had two major difficulties in her life. One was having a stomach ailment that couldn't be cured. No one was able to cure it, but Geshe Ngawang Dhargye apparently helped cure it.

Back to the point about meditating on the antidote of anger; loving kindness definitely works in opposing anger. I have some personal experience with that. There really is no more supreme method or technique to overcome anger than to meditate, and develop genuine loving kindness.

Because of my repeated loving kindness meditation practice, I can safely say that anger cannot harm me. While anger does occur—it's not that anger does not arise in my mind—it does not stay long. It cannot really harm my mind. Loving compassion seems to overpower anger rather than anger overpowering my mind. Thus the anger subsides.

The antidote to overcoming anger is meditating on loving kindness.

We can liken our states of mind, including the faults, as insignificant and small because it just depends on the conditions. A series of small conditions can make anger arise, while other conditions will make anger go away. You can try this theory with your companion or partner or with someone that you live with. If they seem to be upset and a little bit annoyed or angry, tell them to relax and take a shower and offer to cook a nice meal or bring them food. This will pacify them. That kind gesture will help the other person's anger to subside, and make them

settle down. This will also make them appreciate you more too! Then you can enjoy a meal with laughter.

I have presented this technique in the past and some people have said that it has been helpful. . When your partner or a friend comes back from work late, for example, don't immediately chastise them or try to question them and demand to know where they have been. This can aggravate them even further. Instead, just welcome them back, let them relax first and sit down. Then you can talk and they might explain why they were late anyway. Otherwise if you start asking questions immediately that can just aggravate them further because they are tired and exhausted from work.

Before we end the session, let us again to take an opportunity to generate a focused mind, this time using the sound of the Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra. Place your full attention and focus on that sound. When the recitation subsides and we are left with silence, that sense of joy that we may experience from that focus will still remain. We can maintain focus just on that sense of joy or that sort of tranquillity in our mind just for a few moments.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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