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profound knowledge because your understanding of what determines a person as “good” or “bad” really comes down to the state of mind that person has in a particular moment. You will see that it is the person’s state of mind and not the person that is causing him, or her, to appear “good” or “bad”.

This understanding is very beneficial because when someone is acting inappropriately and doing things that seem negative, you can remember that the person is not bad, but is affected by a negative state of mind. Further, you will know that the positive state of mind can be developed within the person so that the bad behaviours or inappropriate gestures you are seeing will not be present any more. This enables you to develop more tolerance and acceptance of the person’s negative behaviours.

So, if you have a deeper understanding of the value that is within all other people, you can go beyond the immediate reaction you may have when faced with their inappropriate gestures or behaviours. The determination of a person as bad is really just a matter of their negative state of mind in that moment, and how they are affected by that negative state of mind at that time. They are simply the victim of a negative mindset, and that negative mindset can be changed. This deeper understanding is a great source of accepting others so the practice of looking at this point deeply has great value.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama emphasised during his recent visit to Uluru that inner beauty is much more important than external beauty. He went further and described inner beauty as the qualities of love and compassion, and explained how these qualities are much more valuable than external beauty.

The value of love and compassion is understood by us all, because when we think about difficult times we have had, it is a person who has love and compassion that comes to our aid, not necessarily a person who looks beautiful on the outside. External beauty is based on the pleasantness of the skin so it is surface-level. This kind of beauty can mislead you regarding the true qualities of a person, and it can give rise to further complications and disappointments in your life.

His Holiness’ advice is profound. He is advising us to pay attention to the real source of beauty, which is the internal qualities of love and compassion. I think this advice is particularly relevant for the younger generation, who need to be cautious in making choices in their life by really looking at internal qualities and not just falling for exterior looks. Indeed, His Holiness’ guidance is profound because his advice can be related to on many levels, whether those levels are spiritual, or connected to everyday practicalities.

I feel His Holiness’ advice carries a lot of weight and is noteworthy because it is a message that can be spread to the world and benefit many people. Many great-minded non-Buddhist philosophers have praised His Holiness’ deep insights and kindness, and acknowledge his qualities.

Desmond Tutu, a famous retired Anglican archbishop from South Africa, has said that the Dalai Lama is like a

precious jewel that the whole world needs to cherish. He said this in India a few years ago and also mentioned that we must look after His Holiness and keep him well, because he is incredibly valuable. His Holiness and Desmond Tutu are close friends. I have heard that they are collaborating on a book in order to help others.

The friendship between Desmond Tutu, a revered and influential Christian, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a renowned Buddhist master, is remarkable and inspiring to see. Earlier this year, Desmond Tutu made a trip to India so that he could visit His Holiness, and His Holiness went to the airport in Delhi to receive him. Gestures like this from great religious leaders are very significant. Desmond Tutu went all the way to India just to visit the Dalai Lama and His Holiness personally received him at the airport. Such actions show that their intentions go beyond cultural norms and religious faith, and that they have a genuine sense of great respect and real reverence for each other. This is really remarkable. There is a Tibetan saying that “those who are proficient and knowledgeable shine amongst others who are proficient and knowledgeable”. That means it takes a great-minded person to acknowledge another great-minded person.

His Holiness ensures that he meets with leaders of other faiths and interacts with them, which is very beneficial because it is what fosters interfaith dialogue and religious harmony. When there is genuine understanding between different religions, genuine respect develops between the followers of each religion, and that has a positive impact on the world. This is one way how His Holiness fosters religious harmony and brings so much benefit to the World.

A few years ago I was invited to a prayer ceremony in an Adelaide church, and the priest there told me how the deeds of the Dalai Lama are wondrous, because he actively brings about interfaith dialogues and religious meetings. The priest said that this benefits everyone, because it could bring about real world peace. He said that most of the conflicts in the world arise from misunderstandings, but when there is genuine respect and understanding between different religions, there is a significant positive impact on world harmony.

So, the point is that many great-minded people see the purpose of interfaith harmony and pay it a lot of attention because of its large-scale benefits. Of course, it is good to acknowledge and praise His Holiness’ active approach in this, but we should not be biased about His Holiness’ qualities, or think that only Buddhists think in this way. Many great-minded people in all religions understand the purpose and benefits of fostering harmony between religions.

Recently I was having lunch at Pauline’s house, a long-time friend of mine, and she mentioned that there were some quotes from His Holiness in a novel she was reading. It seems like many mainstream books and magazines have quotes from the Dalai Lama, which I think shows the extent His Holiness’ words are respected and valued. This is very positive because it means he can benefit many more people.

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So, I have explained that the most important aspect when you meditate is to have a positive motivation. The meditation practice itself is a technique to intentionally put your mind's full attention on a chosen object. There is also a commitment to keep your mind focused on the chosen object and to not allow it to wander off and be distracted as various thoughts arise. What you are attempting to do is bring about a clearer state of mind, through the use of your mind's single-pointed focus.

This single-pointed focus ensures that your mind can become settled and is not agitated. You can see from your own experience that you can make many mistakes when you have an agitated state of mind. This is because this state of mind is completely distracted and in turmoil, so it is very easy for you to become upset and get angry. Anger, for example, arises very easily when the mind is already agitated. However, when the mind is settled and stable, there is less opportunity for aggression to arise in your mind. So, even to that extent, meditating is a definite virtue and of great benefit for your state of mind.

When your mind becomes more settled, it naturally becomes more peaceful and calm. This calm and peaceful state of mind is the basis of a happy state of mind. This is the value of the meditation technique and the purpose of meditating.

You can now withdraw your attention from all other objects and bring your focus within to concentrate on your breath. You can focus solely on your breath for the next few minutes and engage in the meditation practice in this way.

*[Single-pointed breathing meditation.]*

That will be sufficient for now.

If you can think about the main purpose and significance of meditating, which was mentioned earlier, particularly in relation to generating positive states of mind, and how a meditation practice promotes those states of mind, it would be worthwhile and beneficial for you.

*Question:* Geshe-la, when His Holiness was recently here in June, there were many people publically criticising him. How do you feel about that?

*Geshe-la:* Of course, it is common for people who are not happy about something to be critical. This happens in the Christian faith too where Christian leaders are publically criticised. I know that even good, genuine practitioners can be judged harshly. This is something quite normal, because there are always some who have a critical mind.

The people who were recently protesting against His Holiness were predominantly doing so for financial benefit. That is what it mainly comes down to.

One thing they accused His Holiness of doing was lying. Most people in the world can see that His Holiness is honest and he speaks the words of truth. As I mentioned earlier, even those who are not Buddhist admire His Holiness and consider his words to be very valuable. Many people have told me that they admire the Dalai Lama and what he says. One man told me that he did not follow any particular religion, but if he had to choose one, he would probably choose to be Buddhist! *[Laughter.]* Actually, a lot of people say that to me.

So, most people in the world can see that His Holiness is honest and truthful, and would find the idea that he is a liar ridiculous. An intelligent person would immediately see through this claim, and see there is no basis for those accusations.

These accusations are very similar to those of the Communist Chinese Party that say the Dalai Lama is a liar and a traitor. There used to be widespread propaganda in China that the Dalai Lama is not truthful, and although there are many Chinese leaders who still have this indoctrinated belief, there are also many Chinese leaders who have met with the Dalai Lama and have openly said that he is completely opposite to how he has been portrayed in the propaganda. Nowadays, the Communist Chinese Party leaders seem to have a less aggressive approach, because they realise that accusing His Holiness is a bit ludicrous when he is renowned worldwide for being honest and peaceful. So they seem to have a different approach now! *[Laughter.]*

Actually, the present leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping, seems to be quite genuine. His Holiness said recently at the Uluru public talk that he knows the leader and is good friends with him. He said that Xi Jinping is making some reforms within the Chinese Communist Party and has tackled a lot of corruption to make processes transparent. His Holiness also mentioned that Xi Jinping has said on two separate occasions, once in India and once in France, that the Chinese culture is really a Buddhist culture. Xi Jinping is the only Chinese Communist Party leader so far to make those sorts of statements.

So, while it may make our eyes sore to see people protesting against His Holiness, it is very clear that it does not affect him at all. In fact, His Holiness has told the Tibetans who have made the attempt to cross the border from Tibet to hear him teach in India, "When you are back in Tibet, if the Chinese police force you to say bad things about me, do not hesitate to say those things. It is far better that you say those things against me than to suffer and be tortured. Your own safety and wellbeing is much more important. You being forced to say those words does not mean that they are true. The whole world already knows whether I am doing something wrong or not. So do not worry if you are forced to make accusations against me. Just do it. It's okay."

Therefore, if the criticism and protests do not affect His Holiness in a negative way, and if there is nothing we can peacefully do to stop the protests, then the next best thing we can do is to not allow the protests to disturb our minds. If the protests do not disturb His Holiness' mind, then it would be a shame if we let it disturb ours.

His Holiness mentioned that some time ago when he was in Europe, there was a group protesting against him. He saw them so he bowed and smiled, and they in turn bowed and smiled back! *[Laughter.]* There was a picture of this in the newspaper. His Holiness said how nice it was that the protesters and the person they were protesting against were bowing and smiling at each other! *[More laughter.]*

This goes to show that people protesting against His Holiness may only be doing so because they have been

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asked to do it, but personally they have nothing against the Dalai Lama. There can be no animosity against the Dalai Lama if they are smiling at him.

There were not many people at the protests during His Holiness' recent visit here, and some of those people had come from overseas. There are protesters from different parts of the world that go where the Dalai Lama visits, but they do not really have anything personally against the Dalai Lama; they do it because it is a requirement of the organisation they belong to.

Recently there was a confession from a person who belonged to this group and used to protest against the Dalai Lama. He admitted that the group receives money from Chinese officials to conduct the protests. So, monetary benefits is definitely a reason why there are these protests. This person said he was part of the group, but now he regrets taking part in the protests, and wants to come clean by speaking about what is going on. He gave very detailed accounts of how money is distributed to protesters through connections in the Chinese consulate in Nepal. In this person's case, it was clear that he did not have anything deep inside against the Dalai Lama, but temporarily, because of the lure of money, he protested, and later felt what he was doing was not right and regretted his actions.

This is a good reminder that the lure of money might make it hard for us to acknowledge, or see mistakes straight away.

As far as our own attitude and practice goes, it's best to see the protestors as an object of compassion. They are doing things out of misunderstanding, or ignorance, and so are an object of compassion. That is exactly how the Dalai Lama relates to them: as objects of love and compassion. In fact, His Holiness often refers to the Chinese as his old friends.

The protesters that were at His Holiness' recent visits in Australia have centres established around Melbourne. So, being aware of this, and letting others know to be cautious when they attend these centres is important, otherwise they could be negatively influenced.

Ignorance is the essential reason these individuals think they have legitimate reasons to protest against His Holiness. To misinterpret and misunderstand His Holiness' genuine words and his concerns for the world is a very clear sign of ignorance. After all, if there are a thousand people who admire and see someone as being very valuable and have tested out that value, then, if four or five people disagree with the value of that person, their opinion does not carry much weight really.

I am not someone who normally criticises others and I am not being critical now. However, the reality is that this issue will come up so when someone asks about it, being able to understand it and explain it clearly is best. I am not saying that the people who protest are evil or bad. I do think that they are protesting based on a lack of real understanding, and that there is some ignorance involved. The qualities of the His Holiness are quite apparent for all to see, so I do not think that there is anything wrong with me saying that his qualities can be trusted.

Just to reiterate, I am not saying, "Oh, they are wrong and I am right." What I am saying is that the majority see value in attending His Holiness' teachings, and through that there can be many positive results, so I am just acknowledging that as a fact.

Before we end the session for the evening, let again take an opportunity to spend a few minutes in meditation. This time we can use the sound of the mantra to be recited as an object of our focus. When the recitation subsides, we can remain in the space that the sound leaves behind and focus on it.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

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