

beginning to really question their own assertion that there is merely one mind which is related to the physical brain. His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentions, scientists are taking a keen interest in this question and are using whatever instruments and devices they can to try to detect the nature and activity of the mind.

The main point that is being emphasised here is, of course, the importance of using our intelligence to investigate and reason things out, especially when it comes to defining reality and so forth. In fact, there are teachings that mention that of the two states of mind, a clairvoyant mind and an intelligent mind, the latter is much sharper and firmer. Of course, we may think that a clairvoyant mind is a very advanced mind, but as the teachings explain, an intelligent mind can advance much further when it comes to practice and study. This is an important point to keep in mind.

There is a story in relation to this about the great masters Asanga and his younger brother Vasubandhu. Apparently their mother was a very compassionate woman. At one point in her life she was feeling very distraught about not being able to help the Dharma to flourish. So she made this strong fervent prayer, 'May I bear sons who will propagate the Dharma and help it to flourish extensively'. Later, she bore the brothers who became the renowned masters Asanga and Vasubandhu.

As they were growing up they had a natural tendency to engage in debates which at times become argumentative. Asanga apparently had already obtained certain level of clairvoyance from past lives. However, it was known that Vasubandhu had more intelligence. One day, when they were engaged in a debate trying to outwit each other, their mother wanted to appease the situation and drew their attention to a cow that was about to give birth. 'Rather than arguing to prove who is right', she said, 'I want you to predict the colour of the calf and what kind of markings it will have.' Asanga attempted to use his clairvoyance and predicted that the calf's forehead would be white. Vasubandhu, not being able to perceive the calf with clairvoyance, instead used his intelligence and wisdom. He knew that when the calf is in the mother's womb it would have to be curled up, so he calculated that the tip of the tail would naturally lie on top of the forehead. So he proclaimed, 'It's not the calf's forehead but the tip of the tail that is white!'. Sure enough, when the calf was born the tip of its tail was white and not the forehead! This goes to show how Vasubandhu outwitted Asanga through reasoning and logic.

(31) Inopportune Avarice

This refers to being attached to the possessions or property of others. So if one develops strong attachment regardless of whether the object belongs to oneself or to others, it is a defect or fault. This is to be understood.

Here the root text mentions:

*420cd Inopportune avarice is attachment
To the property of others.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The thirty-first, *inopportune avarice*, is a covetous attachment to the property of others.

As explained here, inopportune avarice is an attachment to the property of others, so it is a mind of covetousness. For example, when you go window shopping, you might see many things that you like and you think, 'Oh, that is very nice, I wish I had that!', and then you notice something else and think, 'I wish I had the money to buy that; it really looks nice'. Or if someone else is wearing something beautiful, you

keep thinking, 'What they have is really beautiful and nice, I wish I had that'. Each time we think in that way we have a covetous longing or desire to possess something that belongs to someone else.

While wishing to possess something that belongs to someone else may seem like a harmless thought, it becomes the basis for further negative deeds. There are those who become so obsessed with possessing something that belongs to someone else, that they may even resort to stealing it. So theft and so forth are motivated by covetousness. That is how we need to understand the ill-effects of being attached to the property of others.

(32) Irreligious Lust

The first two lines of the next verse of the root text are:

*421ab Irreligious lust is desirous praise
Of women who ought to be avoided.*

Here, Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

The thirty-second, *irreligious lust*, is out of attachment having the intention to utter *desirous praise of women who ought to be avoided*.

As explained here, irreligious lust is, in the case of a man, praising a woman out of lustful desirous intentions. It is a fault to have ulterior or devious motives when one offers such praise as, 'Oh, you are so good', 'you're really beautiful and intelligent', and so forth. Offering such praise makes the other person excited and can be a cause for them to become attached to you. So this defect is offering praise with that sort of intention.

One needs to understand this in its correct context, and be able to distinguish between offering appropriate praise and praise that is based on irreligious lust. One ought to praise women for the qualities they possess, and in fact denigrating women is one of the root transgressions of the tantric vows. If we don't understand this in its proper context, we may easily misinterpret what is being presented and think, 'Oh, I should not be praising women at all', which would be completely missing the point. It is appropriate for a man to offer praise out of respect for a woman who possesses unique qualities. But if it is done out of lust or pure attachment, then it is irreligious lust. In tantric teachings the extensive qualities of women are mentioned.

(33) Hypocrisy

*421cd Hypocrisy is to pretend that one possesses
Good qualities that one lacks, while desiring
ill deeds.*

On this Gyaltsab Je states:

The thirty-third, *hypocrisy*, is to pretend that one possesses good qualities that one lacks, while desiring ill deeds.

This, as stated previously, is a fault about which we need to be really mindful. If we are not careful, we may be prone to pretending that we have good qualities for the sake of securing praise from others, when in fact one does not possess them. That is what is defined as hypocrisy.

(34) Great Desire

*422ab Great desire is extreme greed
Gone beyond the fortune of knowing
satisfaction.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary makes a minor addition to further clarify the point:

The thirty-fourth, *great desire*, is, because of strong longing for possessions, *an extreme greed gone beyond the fortune of knowing satisfaction*.

When there is an excessive longing for possessions, that greed can go beyond the fortune of knowing satisfaction. Being obsessed with greed and never feeling satisfied is said to be the most extreme level of greed. The real purpose of having possessions, good fortune and so forth, is to develop a sense of satisfaction from them. It is explained that material wealth and so forth serves its purpose when one experiences a sense of satisfaction from it. In contrast, when there is a lack of satisfaction, then no matter how much wealth and possessions one may have, even if it is wealth equal to the gods, it will not bring any sense of joy. Thus the real culprit is the greed that goes beyond any measure of satisfaction.

The quality of knowing contentment and having less desire, as you would be aware, is one of the main requirements for someone who wishes to develop calm abiding. It is really important, particularly for ordained monks and nuns, to embody the quality of contentment and less desire. However it is something we all need to be mindful of.

(35) Desire for Advantage

*422cd Desire for advantage is to want to be known
By whatever way as having superior good
qualities.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

The thirty-fifth, *desire for advantage, is to want to be known by whatever way, specifically by wishing others to proclaim, that one has superior good qualities.*

Desire for advantage is a particular sort of desire of wanting others to know that one has good qualities. This implies waiting to hear praises like, 'Oh you are so lovely' and 'Everyone mentions how wonderful you are'.

(36) Non-endurance

The first two lines from the next verse are:

*423ab Non-endurance is an inability
To bear injury and suffering.*

As the commentary explains:

The thirty-sixth, *non-endurance is an inability to bear injury caused by others and one's own suffering.*

As explained here, non-endurance is a lack of patience. It is a defect that is to be abandoned, while its opposite, patience, is to be adopted. As explained previously, the definition of patience is a mind that does not become disturbed in the event of harm or suffering. As it is explained here, its opposite, non-endurance, is when one has an inability to bear injury whether it is caused by others or by one's own suffering. The state of mind of non-endurance is actually one of agitation and anger. We need to understand that the virtue of patience is practised when we don't allow our mind to become disturbed in the event of injury or harm caused by others, or by our own suffering.

(37) Impropriety

The second two lines from the verse explain:

*423cd Impropriety is not to respect the activities
Of a teacher or spiritual guide.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The thirty-seventh, *impropriety, is not to respect the activities of a teacher or spiritual guide.*

This is easy to understand.

(38) Not heeding advice

The first two lines of verse 424 cover this:

424ab Not heeding advice is to not respect

Counsel concordant with practice.

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

The thirty-eighth, *not heeding advice, is to not respect counsel concordant with practices, such as thinking, 'It doesn't matter whether I am virtuous or not'.*

Basically, this refers to showing a lack of respect for good advice or counsel by responding, 'It doesn't matter whether I am virtuous or not' rather than acknowledging and accepting that advice. This is an inappropriate response.

This is explained in more detail in the Vinaya texts, which explain that it would be inappropriate if, rather than accepting good advice or good counsel, one replies: 'You need not advise me on whether I am virtuous or not. Likewise, I will not concern myself whether you are virtuous or not'.

(39) Intention to meet with relatives

The next two lines of the verse read:

*424cd Intention to meet with relatives
Is sentimental attachment to one's kin.*

As explained in the commentary:

The thirty-ninth, *intention to meet with relatives, is sentimental attachment to one's kin.*

That is quite clearly explained. We can relate this defect to the Lam Rim teachings. On an ordinary level, love for one's kin mostly arises out of attachment. In fact, on a worldly level, there is hardly any kind of love that is not mixed with attachment. When we carefully analyse the love we feel for our relatives, we find that it comes from a self-cherishing mind: 'I love them because they are related to me, or I love them because they are my relatives'. This type of love is based mainly on how it relates to one personally, which is not a genuine sort of love. A clear sign that it is based on attachment is when the attachment begins to wane, and the love that one felt for the other vanishes. When the attachment is gone love goes as well, which is a clear sign that the love one feels towards others is based on attachment.

In contrast to the ordinary or worldly expression of love there is the love that bodhisattvas have for other beings. Even though a bodhisattva views all beings as being appealing, they don't develop any attachment because of the wisdom they have cultivated within themselves. Hence there is no fault when a bodhisattva sees all beings as being appealing and expresses genuine love and compassion towards them, because the bodhisattvas' wisdom enables them to overcome attachment. That is how their love is different from ordinary love.

(40) Attachment to objects

*425ab Attachment to objects is to relate
Their good qualities in order to acquire them.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The fortieth, *attachment to objects, is to relate their good qualities, even if it may have defects, in order to acquire them.*

Out of strong, obsessive attachment, one may be blind to the faults in the object, and only see good qualities. There are cases where one may initially see a lot of good qualities in someone, but when the attachment starts to wane, one begins to notice their defects. His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentions that when there is intense anger, any good qualities in the object are obscured, and the object is seen as having only faults and being totally at fault. That is another

example of exaggeration, and when one's anger subsides, one will begin to see that this is not the case and that the object actually does have some good qualities. So in cases of both anger and attachment, there is the excessive mind that exaggerates the qualities or the faults, which obscures the actual reality of the object or the situation. We need to really understand this important point.

We might hear someone comment, 'Who would be attracted to such an unattractive or ugly person?' Yet when attachment for an object that is commonly seen as being unattractive develops, then even that unattractive object will appear to be beautiful and attractive. That is because attachment has that element of exaggerating the qualities of the object due to inappropriate attention. That is how attachment obscures the actual attributes of the object.

It is the same with anger. Even though there are good qualities in an object, at a moment of extreme anger the anger obscures those qualities. Again, this is due to the inappropriate attention that exaggerates the faults or defects of the object, thus obscuring any good qualities. This results in seeing the object in a totally negative way.

When we understand how the mind works in that way, then we can see the appropriateness of practising meditation. The meditation practice for overcoming attachment is said to be meditating on the faults of the object. Because attachment is a state of mind that exaggerates qualities and obscures any faults, the more the object seems attractive and appears beautiful, the stronger the attachment to that object will be. Thus in order to overcome such strong desire and attachment to the object, we try to contemplate its faults or natural defects. This will help to reduce the exaggerations in the mind that focuses on those qualities. Then attachment is reduced, and can thus be overcome. So, one can see the appropriateness of that practice.

Likewise, as explained in the teachings, one of the best remedies for overcoming anger is to meditate on love for the object of one's anger. This is done by focussing on the attractive or appealing attributes of the object, which can help to reduce the level of anger in the mind. Seeing the object as appealing and attractive can help to subdue a very negative hostile mind. Focussing on that appealing aspect of the object can help to develop a fondness or some closeness to the object, and from that one can develop a genuine sense of love as well. So that is how it is to be understood.

It is really important that we ponder these points on how attachment develops in our mind and how it obscures our perception, and how anger arises in our mind and obscures the actual reality of the object and the situation. As explained in the teachings, if we further analyse how attachment or aversion arises in our mind, and where it stems from, we will find that it comes from that strong sense of an opinionated mind, which actually comes from the root cause of grasping at the self or the 'I'. [*Geshe-la interjects in English*]

We say 'I'm here', 'I like that', 'I don't like that', 'I like to be happy', 'I don't like it if you come here' ... 'I, I, I' If you say 'I don't like it' then you can make bad karma. That's very, very important. If you decide that you like something that's very, very good, but if you decide you don't like it, that's very, very dangerous. [That] makes this life dangerous, and the next life dangerous.

As Geshe-la has just explained, thinking about what we like and don't like comes from a strong sense of 'I', an opinionated mind thinking 'I like' or 'I don't like'; everything stems from that. Attachment in relation to your

friends or relatives is none other than because, 'I like them and that is why I am fond of them'. We say of people that we disagree with, 'I don't like them', and we develop an aversion towards them. It is all based on how things relate to the 'I'.

Instinctively we have that sense of 'liking' or 'not liking' in relation to the 'I'. This is a fact that we cannot deny. It's not so much a fault as a matter of what that sense of liking or dislike is focussed on. The main thing for our progress and transformation is to incorporate this into our Dharma practice and really investigate and analyse, 'What it is that I want and like?' and 'What is it that I don't want and don't like?' If one has a liking and a longing for something that is virtuous, then that is good, and in accordance with our practice, and will help us develop our practice even further. If we don't like and don't want negative deeds and non-virtue then that is also in accordance with our development and practice. You can certainly rejoice about that! One can feel happy and joyful about liking and wishing to engage in virtue and not wanting to engage in non-virtue. In this way we can encourage ourselves to further engage in the practice.

In contrast, if one shuns and abandons opportunities to accumulate virtue, and thus engages in non-virtuous activities, then one needs to acknowledge that. Throughout the day, we need to check, 'OK, where is my mind going?' At the end of the day we assess, 'Have I spent my time seeking opportunities to acquire virtue or has it been in mostly non-virtuous activities?' If it has been non-virtuous, then one needs to develop a strong sense of regret, and a keen determination to purify the negative or non-virtuous deeds one has engaged in. Make a strong commitment to not engage in non-virtuous deeds again, even at the cost of one's life. Remind yourself, I must definitely avoid causing harm to myself in this life and in all future lives'.

If we conduct ourselves in this way on a daily basis, it is a sure and certain way to progress and transform our lives. If you have accumulated virtue and engaged in good deeds during the day, don't just rejoice in that, but dedicate it towards benefitting all sentient beings and the ultimate state of enlightenment. It is in this way that one secures one's virtue so it does not go to waste.

I cannot claim that I do any high levels of practice in my daily routine, however, these are the points that I regularly try to consider, and investigate within myself. I check into my mind to see whether it is heading in a virtuous direction or a non-virtuous direction. That simple investigation ensures that one is adopting a virtuous activity, and brings a great sense of joy and happiness. That is something I can attest to, so I am sharing it with you.

To summarise the main points: If we can maintain a joyful mind in our daily life, then that is much more conducive for us to engage in virtue, and with a joyful, happy mind we are inclined to accumulate more virtue. It is really important to ensure that we have a joyful and happy mind.

With that, we can conclude for the evening.

Just to remind you, the next session, as everyone will be aware, is the discussion, followed by the exam. As mentioned regularly, it is good to be really mindful about engaging in the discussion in a most appropriate way, in the spirit of sharing and learning from each other. Also do the exam with a clear and good motivation. That is something we need to keep in mind.