
ourselves more harm than we receive from others. Stopping this self inflicted harm is in our hands; we have to find a way to help ourselves. We need to find the directions within ourselves and follow that direction without being easily influenced by the outside world.

Last week we finished Verse 11 and we learnt that we receive mental harm from others because we have caused the same harm to their minds in the past. In past lives we have even caused harm to the minds of our spiritual teachers, parents and close friends. The instruction here is to engage in the meditation practice of giving and taking. In this we pray to the Guru Buddha, visualised on the crown of one's head, and imagine that we take upon ourselves all the sufferings of all other beings. These dissolve into the centre of our self-cherishing mind, and we then give all our happiness away to all sentient beings.

We'll stop here because there is not enough time to finish the next verse. If any of you have a question to put to Geshe Doga then you are welcome.

Question:

What if one person finds there is a lot of Spiritual Materialism in the practice, would it be false?

Samdup (clarifying): If delusions increase instead of decreasing when you practise, then what should you do?

Answer:

Delusions, or the negative states of mind, are supposed to decrease as a result of meditation. If the delusions aren't decreasing, this shows that your meditation is not targeted at remedying the delusion. If the meditation is directed towards the delusion, then it will naturally decrease. That's why it's important that we are always clear in our minds that the sole purpose of meditation is to decrease delusions or negative states of mind. Before we start we have to know the benefits of meditation, of overcoming delusions.

Think of the shortcomings of the delusion, for example the shortcomings of having strong desires or attachments. If you have a strong desire then you can't find any contentment. Having strong desire in the mind means the result of more wealth, more possessions is more suffering. You'll worry all the time about your possessions, and losing them brings even more suffering to the mind. If two people lose the same amount of wealth, we can see differences between the person who has little desire and the one who has more desire. The one with more desire clings to the wealth and its loss causes great mental suffering. The person with less desire will not experience such suffering if the wealth is lost. The same can be said for people who lose or are separated from their close friend.

The more we understand the detrimental effects of delusions like desire and anger, the stronger our motivation to challenge and minimise these delusions. As we approach our meditation, we should remind ourselves that its goal is to reduce these delusions. Each has its own remedy and, if we apply the remedy, the delusion will decrease.

If you seek to win over an enemy who holds strong bitterness towards you then begging him for help won't work, you have to find your own way to succeed. You have to do something from your own side; for example, showing him love and friendship might work. Engaging in meditation practice is like engaging in a battle with the delusions. If we engage in meditation in this way then the result is diminished delusion.

All our problems, whether we are single or married, all begin with our own minds. We begin with a small thought which leads to more thought. For example, you may be single and happy and satisfied with the way you are, but then suddenly you have a thought, "Maybe I should find a partner, maybe this is important for my life." You then picture the type of person you want to find. But finding this person proves difficult bringing more frustration and problems to the mind. If you do find the right person, then you'll think about whether to marry, whether to have children, how many and so on. All these lines of thought are generated and you're now bewildered about the direction your life should take. This thought has completely confused your mind. This wouldn't have happened if you had remained content with your life.

Likewise, there are lots of cases where, within a marriage, one of the partners wants to meet others outside of the family because of discontent. Because these people are unhappy they cause unhappiness for the whole family, including the children. So it is important to control our minds and lessen the delusions that reside there. Try to be content with what you have and think that the partner you have is the best one, the right one for you.

If we could settle our minds, we would have less delusion, less confusion and fewer worries.

We'll stop here and chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Again, please sit in a comfortable meditation posture and try to fully calm the mind inward and focus it on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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