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reflected in our actions. The results of these actions are beneficial both to us and to others, who are likely to respond in the same way. We do not like it when someone close to us treats us in a selfish manner. Likewise, our friends wouldn't tolerate the same selfish behaviour from us. If we don't make an effort to correct our day to day selfish thoughts and actions towards our friends, then our actions will be reciprocated, day after day, today and tomorrow. Underneath us all we have a good and caring human nature, but if we don't correct or get rid of the day to day selfish nature in our thoughts and actions, then its as if our good nature never has the chance to manifest itself to others.

So when we think about the meaning of this verse, we don't necessarily have to take into consideration our past life actions. But if you do believe in past lives, then it is helpful to think that the many misfortunes and bad circumstances that arise in this life are due to actions done in past lives. Thinking like this is beneficial in that we don't blame others for our misfortunes, we can keep our friendships and our trust in others. So whenever anyone criticises or complains about us, just think that an action we have done in the past is the cause of that criticism or complaint.

So we are instructed in this verse: "Hereafter lets change and show only kind ways...". We all want to be good natured people, because we clearly know that if we are bad natured it is difficult for our friends and family to get along with us. If our day to day nature is more bad natured than good natured, and our mental attitudes and actions are selfish, then this will affect the people closest to us. Eventually they won't want to be our friends anymore and will become more distant. We could even make more enemies with these negative attitudes and actions. But if we have a good nature and hold a attitude of loving kindness and compassion, then our friendships will last and become more stable, and also we'll have more friends.

So we need to think seriously on the importance of having a more positive nature in our day to day attitude and actions. The outcome of a selfish mind is being all alone. Friends we have will keep their distance. If you can live alone without friends and enjoy life, then that's a different story. But many people find it miserable living in isolation.

When we talk of bringing more happiness to our lives, we don't always think about happiness in terms of more money or more material possessions. But by changing our own mental attitude towards others and likewise changing our actions, we can bring about more positive habits in our thoughts and actions. This results in winning more friends, having more stable relationships and receiving more help from others. Everything naturally seems positive. So when happiness comes to our lives, it is not in the form of people giving us money, clothes, food or drink, but from bringing about some positive change in our own minds and actions.

As usual we will finish by chanting the Buddha's mantra. Once again, choose a comfortable meditation posture and try to calm the mind. Use the mantra as the object of

concentration.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks*

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