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# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨོ སྒྲུབ་མཚན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།

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We will do some breathing meditation as usual. Just sit in the most convenient and relaxing posture. Then you should try to discipline, and relax the mind by gradually removing all distracting thoughts. It is important to first to bring the mind inward, and then without becoming distracted by any other object, you focus the mind just on your breath and follow the breath coming in and going out. (*Pause for meditation.*)

It is very important to make some effort in controlling or training one's mind. We meditate in the hope that it can bring more inner peace, inner strength, stability and happiness. So it is important to see that the benefit of meditation is to one's life, and not just the short time that you call your meditation practice.

Through your mind becoming more calm, more gentle, and softer meditation practice should affect your whole life as well as your day-to-day life. If your mind and actions were all very aggressive and very rough before you applied meditation practice to your life, then the set aim of your meditation should be to transform that rough nature of your mind and your thought energies into something very soft and gentle.

If you could achieve this transformation within your mind then naturally the mind becomes more stable, more peaceful and stronger with less cause and reason to worry and become confused and so forth. Of course we also have to see that by making an effort in meditation practice it is actually it is possible to bring this positive transformation within the mind, and so reap all the benefits of practising meditation.

It is possible to achieve these benefits of meditation because if we investigate, then we see that the main source of our problems is because our mind is not happy, not satisfied, and not resting. That is our main problem. Why is our mind like that? If we check by observing our mind we can see that our mind needs to be disciplined to be calm as it is always wandering here and there after things.

However many of the physical objects, ideas, and desires our mind is occupied with are not within our reach. They are something that we do not possess. There is no end to our problems and worries if we do not stop this mind from always being occupied with such 'problems'. You can see that whether they are very high or low or middle class, people always have some problem. Nothing is perfect.

If we think of our life in a very negative, pessimistic and worrying way then that is the way we experience our life. There is definite benefit if you could just overcome or minimise this mental habit of always worrying about something through meditation practice. As said before, in

order to stop or minimise such worrying thoughts, then of course we have to learn about, and develop more knowledge of our own mind. We do this through observing the mind, and then knowing what sort of objects our mind is drawn to, and the effects of allowing our mind to be occupied with such objects.

You can see that when our mind is occupied with some objects then we have no peace, but just feel very disturbed. So if these objects of thought are not very desirable, then you look for other types of objects that might can bring more peace and more positive states of mind. Knowing that if we could train our mind to use these more positive objects as the object of our mind, and that this can if bring more peace and happiness then we practise meditation. The purpose is to try to discipline the mind to develop the concentration on those objects - in other words to habituate our mind to those objects.

As we follow meditation practice we must be very clear about what we are trying to achieve, and what we are looking for in the meditation practice? We should be looking to find some very useful, wonderful things from within ourself. Why? Because even if we lose useful, desirable external things, we are not completely confused. In other words if when we do not have something from our own side to guide and protect us, and give us strength, hope and vision, then whenever we confront some outside problem, some unexpected change, some bad thing, then we can experience a lot of suffering, depression, frustration and so forth.

What is that useful and very valuable thing that is within us? To identify it, as said before, we have to examine our own day-to-day thoughts and actions. In our daily life one day we are in a very happy mood but the next day we can be very unhappy. Likewise with our relationships. We see changes in our relationship with other people, and we have to see what is the main thing that is determining these changes.

First we have to see that we have two types of thoughts and deeds. One is a definite cause of happiness to ourself and to others, and the other type is the cause of problems and suffering to ourself and to others. If we simply look back to our own past experience, and the type of actions that we shown to others, in terms of our mental attitude or our verbal attitudes, or our actions of body. If we observe and investigate this very well, we can see very clearly there are certain things that we say or do to other people that hurts or upsets them. As a result, they say the same back to us, and then we become very angry with them. There are some actions that just destroy our own peace and happiness, and

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destroy that harmonious relationship with others.

Therefore we are saying that the type of actions that we perform have a direct effect to not only on ourself, but also on other people, and that those other people have some effect on our actions. If you ask, 'Who are those people?', then they are none other than the people who are closest, like your parents, partners, children, and very close friends.

Therefore we have to understand that whenever we do something wrong, whether it be through our mental attitude or through our speech, or through our body, then we are causing harm to those people to whom we are closest, and in whom we place some trust. So the best meditation is the one which can actually transform us into a very good human being, in terms of our ways of speaking to others, our daily actions, and our physical actions.

We have to see that bringing about such transformations to our daily actions of body, speech and mind is most beneficial to ourself, and to other people, particularly those who you are close to us. In order to bring about this positive change in our actions then the most important thing is first training our mind to a better way of thinking. If our mind becomes more and more used to this positive way of thinking, used to the friendly loving kindness and caring understanding thoughts of other beings, then naturally then this will be reflected in our actions of speech and body. That is because our outer actions are driven by the preceding thoughts in our mind.

If we look, then we see that we have a good state of mind, and a very negative state of mind. We have to be able to discriminate between these two and make an effort to try to use as much as possible this positive virtuous state of mind as our motivation before performing any actions. When we talk of meditation practice we are not just talking about achieving some silent concentration. Meditation is more than just closing our eyes and then trying to focus on our breath. Practicing such meditation is just like observing a mouse that is scurrying around.

Of course we do sit and watch our breath, but our main goal is to bring more positive qualities to our mental and physical actions. With such a goal we cannot rush to make progress in meditation very quickly. To achieve such a goal we have to practise for a long period of time, and slowly, slowly get rid of all our bad habits, and habituate ourself to good ways of doing things.

As said before, the purpose of meditation is to develop these positive qualities within your own self, and the benefit of meditation is something which not only benefits this life, but it is also of benefit beyond this life, and even at the time of death. The qualities that we accomplish in meditation are always with us, and if through meditation we develop loving kindness and a good heart towards others, then for as long as we live we will have a very kind mind. Because of this there is not only benefit to others, but there is also some happiness and joy for oneself, even at the time of death. That is because of the way that you live your life as a very good person, showing a good heart to others and so forth. Then at death, there is no regret. Rather there is great joy in one's mind, and furthermore it is said that these qualities of good heart that one has developed in this lifetime also continue in the future life. So in this way it also benefits the future life.

Whenever we engage in meditation practice we should always focus on our own thoughts and deeds, and try to identify both the positive and the negative sides. Then as we become more aware of our own mind and our own actions, it is natural that we will see that we are not perfect. We will see there are some good qualities, but at the same time we will see that we have faults in our mind that we need to overcome, and faults in our actions that we need to try to minimise.

Based on this understanding of our own thoughts and actions then it is natural then we can be more understanding of other people. If someone shows some anger then have to see that is not something that is unexpected. They are also like yourself, and like you they are not a perfect being. When we understand how imperfect we are, then this will at least stop us from expecting others to be perfect.

Some people say that they cannot find a perfect partner. However, as said before, they see themselves as perfect. Some people complain that their partners are very short-tempered, and when you do not know yourself it is so easy to complain about the faults of others. We have a Tibetan saying that people can identify the fault of others even if it is as small as a louse, but they cannot see their own fault, even if it is as big as a yak.

The spiritual teachings are called Dharma, and Dharma teaches one how to talk to others in a good manner in positive ways, knowing even the type of facial expression one should show to others. We have to realise that why we need to study and practise Dharma is because there is something at fault in our way of thinking and in our mental attitude, and that there are so many faults in our actions of speech, and action of body. We need to counteract, or at least try to minimise, these faults. Why? Because if we do not minimise these faults then the consequence of these actions is to bring harm to our life and to others. We have to see the spiritual teaching or Dharma as a remedy to overcome all the faults in one's actions of body, speech and mind, as well as the means of increasing all the positive sides to one's the body speech and mind.

On behalf of the Tara Institute I would like to thank you all for all the support and effort you make in for supporting the Centre, and all the effort that you make in coming to the teachings throughout the year. I pray for your good life and success and happiness in the new year.

We will now chant the Shakyamuni Buddha mantra. Sit in the meditation posture, remove all distracting thoughts, and then focus your mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Gaye Lewis-Radcliffe*

*Edited by Adair Bunnnett*

*Not checked*

*Edited Version*

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