
even for a short time.

So when you get up in the morning, if you have some daily spiritual practice as a commitment, like reciting a mantra or doing Sadhanas such as the Tara Sadhana, it is good to start the day with the thought of fulfilling this spiritual commitment. You prepare yourself for the practice and chant the mantra, then pray to Tara. Try to begin the day with some meditation practice. In the meditation practice, you try to see as said before, what you want to achieve through meditation—you want control of your mind, of your life. So you try to pray to Tara that you can succeed in achieving your spiritual goal. If you don't do such a spiritual practice, there are many ways through which you can lift your mind and feelings, like getting up and singing a song, or doing something relaxing. Even if we can temporarily put aside the problem mind, that is beneficial.

For instance, if you have strong attachment, the temporary solution is to try not to think of the object that you desire so much, try to forget that object. The way to do that is to direct your energy into whatever you have to do. Likewise, if you have the problem of anger or hatred, the immediate cause is thinking of the object of anger or hatred. Although we may think that this is not solving the problem at its root, it does help us to reduce the problem so that it doesn't become bigger. Sometimes it is possible that—because you forget the object for one day, then the next, and direct your attention to other things that you have to do in your life—slowly, day by day, you will have completely forgotten about the object. Afterwards, even if you remember that object, it no longer arouses desire or attachment or hatred.

There are many instances where we may face a serious problem, the actual cause of which is our own way of thinking—there isn't any real cause. Some people may worry a lot about losing a small amount of money, even 10 or 20 dollars, and can't stop worrying about it. This is due to a narrow way of thinking. Rather, you could think that it is a small amount that can be made up for, and that the money already lost cannot be recovered, so why worry? You just do some extra work for an hour and recover the amount, rather than thinking of the problem and what you can do to solve it. It is essential that we always take responsibility for ourselves in this life and in the future. This is the best way to solve problems and achieve what we want to achieve in life. The Lord Buddha said that you are the master of your own self—other than yourself, who can be your master? While we all want to achieve some things, and avoid other things, the Buddha said that what is most important is to take responsibility, to try and stop thinking that someone else will rescue us from the problem, and grant our wish—there is no such thing as help from outside.

With this determination or strong sense of self-responsibility, we also have to prepare ourselves for whatever work we undertake to improve our life or solve our problems. Whether that work is big or small, there are two factors—favourable factors and hindrances—that

we have to face. The most important factor in challenging hindrance is our own inner tolerance or patience, which is like a strength. If we have that, we are able to face problems. Whereas if we do not have much endurance or tolerance, even the minor difficulties we face can be overwhelming. Even if the work you undertake is minor, you will find it difficult to accomplish its purpose.

In following the Buddha's advice that you are your own master, you have to know that what you want and do not want does not merely come from outside material conditions, that is one of the main implications of the Buddha's teaching. It mostly comes from within us, and depends on our mind.

That is the end of the teaching tonight, so as usual we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Like before, we try to adopt the meditation posture and, making sure that our body is relaxed and the mind is inward, we focus the mind on the breath.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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