
even in our mundane affairs we wish for activities that are easy to do and make money quickly. The reality, however, is that to make more money we have to work harder, to achieve a higher goal we have to exert more effort. Likewise, what we expect to achieve in our spiritual practice is a higher goal. Therefore, we have to encourage ourselves to make more effort, even if the result of our spiritual practice does not ripen quickly, like a flower blossoming overnight. Such a thing is only possible if, in our past life, we amassed enormous merit. It is important in spiritual practice not to lose our motivation - even if progress is very slow, it is important to continue with our practice.

Whether we are pursuing a spiritual or a worldly goal, if it is something higher, we have to make a greater effort, show greater determination and courage, and utilise more skills and knowledge. If our goal though is small, we require less effort, less spirit and less resources to reach it. There are spiritual beings like the Bodhisattvas whose goal is to achieve full Enlightenment to benefit all living beings. Bodhisattvas do not just think of their own needs but the needs of all other beings. So the effort they make is enormous and the spirit and determination they show in achieving their goal is also enormous - far greater than that of a spiritual practitioner following a lesser path, like a hearer or solitary realiser who seeks a lesser goal.

Even in our daily life, it is important to check our desires. If we wish for too many things, or things that are too expensive, we have to realise that to fulfill these desires we need more resources, more skills, more knowledge and harder work. If we are not prepared to work harder perhaps for a long period of time, or if we do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfill that desire, there is no point in having that desire. Maintaining that desire is just a source of frustration, bringing more discouragement and hopelessness to our lives. If our desire is great, we cannot afford to be complacent - spending time lazily with no interest, no willingness to do things - because this will bring more suffering. Try to realise this in your spiritual practice too. If our aim is something lasting and ultimate, in order to reach it we have to generate a strong determination to make the effort as long as it takes - days, months, years. Then, if one puts in some effort continuously, it is possible to eventually realise that far-reaching goal.

That is the end of the teaching. To finish this session, we will chant some Buddha mantras. Once again, try to relax yourself and calm your mind, and use the mantra as an object of concentration.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks
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