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meditation practice, we are trying to ensure that the mind-state accompanying us is positive. Additionally, we are responsible for our physical health. If that is not right, it can bring us suffering. Sound physical health is a great asset throughout one's life.

So through meditation practice we always observe our minds and, as much as possible, try to understand each of the thoughts and emotions we generate and the effect they will have on our future. Based on this, we try to get rid of those thoughts that bring bad results, while making an effort to develop those that bring positive results. For instance, when anger arises in the mind, if we let it overpower us, think of the destruction it could bring to our own and others' lives. Even if it is not always easy to stop anger, by being aware of the destruction it can bring to our lives, we can weaken the force of the anger. When we are not aware of anger, all our actions are completely influenced by it. Likewise, desire can be a big problem when we are completely overpowered by it. It can drive us mad, making us travel all over the place, wasting our time and money, all for nothing. So through knowing the detrimental effects of negative states of mind, we can be more determined to stop them.

The success of our meditation depends on how familiar we become with the meditation object, or the meditation practice. When we become very familiar with the meditation practice or object, we don't need to make strenuous effort – we can just naturally rest our mind and put it at peace. It's like when the mind desires a beautiful object, we don't need to make effort to like that object; the mind just gets attached to it naturally, because it is familiar with attachment and desire. The reason why, at the moment, we cannot rest our minds on the meditation object for even a very short time is that we haven't done the practice enough, we haven't become familiar with the object of the meditation practice.

We need to understand that meditation practice can bring us peace and happiness now and at the time of death and, if you believe in future lives, even beyond this life. As we have already discussed, calming and controlling the mind can make a difference to our day to day lives. Now if we think about the time of death, even though we usually avoid thinking about it, we know that one day we will face old age and death, and we already know that when we are at that stage, everything else fails to help us in terms of securing peace or happiness in the mind. This is because, as said before, the peace and happiness we usually seek has less to do with mind training or spiritual practice, and more to do with indulging the mind with external, sensual objects.

We have to realise while we are still young that the pleasure we seek in life cannot completely satisfy us. Imagine possessing good material conditions and having many friends and relatives around us to talk to and help us – despite all of these things, it's not enough, we lack peace and satisfaction. Now imagine getting older and facing the death – even those conditions that help us now will fail us then, so imagine what the mind will go through. Try to see the advantage, here and now, of becoming familiar with meditation practice and, through

it, finding peace and happiness. Not only is it an advantage to us now, but also at the time of death. Because of our familiarity with the practice of calming the mind, we will have no problem in doing the same practice at the moment of death.

Due to such practice, even if we experience physical pain or discomfort, we can sustain mental peace and still experience joy. Thus, you won't experience any fear or any fright, in terms of your future life, and it is said that your state of mind at your last moment of consciousness is a determining factor. If your last moment of consciousness is a state of virtue, then it is guaranteed you will find will be a better form of rebirth. So you can see that the meditation practice of calming the mind is beneficial at all times, at all stages of our life – in the beginning, the middle and the end.

We will finish the teaching; we are now going to chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Make yourself comfortable in the sitting posture and calm the mind, using the mantra as the object on which to focus the mind.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks  
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