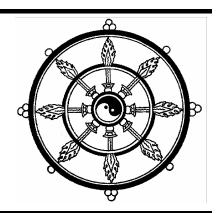
## Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering

७७ तें ह्वेंद्र सर्वेत क प्रविद लें।





We shall begin with a few minutes breathing meditation, so just relax your body as much as possible.

We should reflect upon the purpose of doing meditation practice, which is to gain control over the mind. So, after relaxing the body in the meditation sitting posture, you need to watch and examine the mind, and try to understand why it needs to be controlled – what are the disadvantages for us if it is not controlled, and, if it is controlled, what are the advantages.

Briefly, all the emotional problems we experience result from not controlling the mind. When it is not controlled, the mind gets influenced by distracting thoughts and these distracting thoughts that fill our minds are the source of such problems as confusion, anxiety, stress and restlessness. But if we have control over our minds, we can overcome these unnecessary problems.

So, as we begin the breathing meditation, first try to remove all distracting thoughts, and let the mind settle completely within. Overcoming all outgoing thoughts, we bring the mind inward and try to rest it there for a short time. Then, instead of letting the mind get agitated by external objects again, we place the mind on our breath coming in and out through the nostrils, trying to maintain this single-pointed concentration on the breath. The object chosen for our meditation is like a treasure, and our task is to guard that treasure, that meditation object. Our two main tools are mindfulness, which is like the protector of the object, and alertness, whose job it is to make sure there are no thieves around to steal the treasure.

What we aim to achieve through meditation practice is a kind of inner peace and happiness, which is completely different from the normal idea of peace, happiness and satisfaction. The normal idea of peace and happiness depends upon external things, like having money, wealth, or a beautiful and peaceful environment. The kind of peace and happiness we can achieve in meditation practice is simpler and- it costs nothing!

As a meditator, you should be seeking to experience the peace and happiness that naturally arises through meditation practice, through controlling the mind. When we experience this, we naturally become calm and contented, regardless of outer conditions or whether or not we have material wealth. It is natural for a meditator to have less desire, but more contentment. Desire in this context means wanting to have many things, many possessions. When meditation is done effectively, because the mind becomes calm and controlled, peace

and happiness arise naturally from within. Without controlling the mind or practising meditation, it is impossible to find inner peace and happiness- and a real sense of contentment.

Unless we see real advantages to controlling the mind, we won't take this practice seriously. When we see the advantages, however, we will take the practice seriously, and when we do, our only consideration will be to find the best method of controlling the mind. We know that meditation practice or spiritual practice is the only method we can use to control the mind. Worldly knowledge, instead of helping us control the mind, can be a cause of more distraction.

As we said before, it is important to examine our idea, our concept of peace and happiness. Is this the peace and happiness that we seek? Occasionally we happen upon some experience, which doesn't last, but every now and then we feel ourselves to be very peaceful and happy. The peace and happiness resulting from meditation practice is supreme and lasting – it will be there as long as our mind is calm. The peace and happiness we are talking about here is something that anybody can experience through controlling or calming the mind through meditation practice.

The mind is the source of all our actions and, as each of us wants to be a good person, we have to take responsibility for our daily actions, our mental attitude and physical deeds. If our actions harm ourselves and other beings, in the eyes of others we become a negative person. The force within our mind decides what sort of person we will be; if one's mind is unhappy, we are also unhappy, if our minds are restless, we are also restless.

When we talk of 'mind', are we talking of one single mind, or many different states of mind? There are many different types of mind. If we watch it, we can see that sometimes we have a positive state of mind, other times a negative state of mind. If we want to be a good person and be happy and peaceful all the time, then the mind that accompanies us must be also in a peaceful and positive state. We are talking about the link between ourselves, our minds and perhaps our bodies. What 'I' or the self wants is always happiness, and what we do not want is sufferings. Achieving this largely depends on the state of one's mind and body.

We have a bond with the mind and body in this existence, these two always accompany us. If you believe in the concept of future lives, the mind (but not the body) even accompanies us in our future lives. Through

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 mediation practice or object, we don't need to make strenuous effort – we can just naturally rest our mind and put it at peace. Its 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, its 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 Edited by Mary-Lou Considine Edit checked against the tapes by Richard Garward Edited Version

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