
practice. We will now have one aim; to subdue our minds and to transform all our actions from negative to positive.

In contrast to the spiritual way of living, there is the worldly or the mundane way of living. If you have chosen the spiritual way of living, then the way that you think and your daily way of doing things has to be different from those who choose the mundane way of living. In the mundane worldly life judgements about people are made on the basis of material achievements like the amount of wealth amassed, or what sort of position they hold in society, what title they have or how famous they are. So in order to live a successful worldly life, all these things - material gain or good name - all become important. But do these people find satisfaction and peace in their lives? In most cases they don't, because mental peace and satisfaction is not something that material wealth or success can give us.

There is a connection between wealth and happiness: the more desire a person has for wealth, the more unhappiness and dissatisfaction there is in his or her mind. If your mind is not content, then there is no end to seeking more fame, more reputation or a higher position. People who live like this undergo great struggles; they have to put up with feelings of jealousy and unease when others achieve the position or reputation they themselves wanted. When we aren't content with our level of wealth, our reputation or the material objects we own, then we can't have mental peace because there is so much unease and restlessness in our minds.

Even someone who has chosen to follow a spiritual path can go through this type of mental torment if his or her mind is not calm and controlled. For example, some spiritual practitioners spend a lot of time studying and practising in order to achieve a good name and reputation. They can feel great suffering and mental torment when they can't achieve the position or the recognition that they seek. When a spiritual practitioner undergoes this sort of jealousy and pride, then they are no different from any worldly person. Even in the eyes of worldly people they are not seen as spiritual practitioners because they are no different to themselves - with the same types of delusions, anger and so forth.

Whatever religion we follow teaches us about overcoming the negative states of mind within us. All spiritual practice is a remedy to some form of negative state of mind or mental delusion. So it is very important that whenever we apply a spiritual practice in our lives, that we make sure it is remedying some delusion within the mind. When people call themselves a follower of a particular religion, they should have some sense of responsibility for protecting their religion, as often people judge a religion based on its followers. So when they see a follower of a religion who is aggressive and behaves in a negative way, then they may criticise or disparage that particular religion, even though it is the follower's fault.

Try to understand that whenever we practise Dharma, that the practice is a remedy to the delusions in our minds. Understand the delusion you wish to remove

and understand the spiritual practice that will achieve that. For example, the practice of giving charity to the poor benefits not only those who receive from us but it is a remedy to our own delusion of miserliness. Even if you have wealth, if you are used to giving your possessions to others from the heart, your mind is not bound by that wealth. Being free from miserliness means being free from the problems that our own possessions can bring. Giving our possessions freely gives us some satisfaction when we think back over our lives - 'I gained wealth in this life and was able to help others through this wealth.' When we look back we can say that our practice was a source of joy and mental fulfillment.

Basically we just have to make sure that our spiritual practice doesn't become another material pursuit. It is not just another thing that worldly people would do in their lives.

In the same verse it says 'hereafter let's work with pure one pointed effort to nourish the wish to gain freedoms far ashore'. This should be included in our motivation when we engage in any spiritual practice. There should be no worldly motive, whether it be the pursuit of wealth or reputation. We should be looking at the ultimate view of complete enlightenment, and think that our spiritual practice will achieve this ultimate state of enlightenment to benefit all sentient beings.

So we will finish the teaching here and we will now chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. So, just like before, try to relax your body and mind and use this mantra as an object to focus your mind on.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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