
all the actions we undertake through love and compassion are beneficial. Apart from this, having a mind of love and compassion is a peaceful and gentle experience – it is not something that brings unease or disturbance to the mind. So all the actions we do out of such a mind are very beneficial and positive, even in the eyes of others.

On the other hand, if we cultivate states of mind such as desirous attachment, anger or resentment, they bring disturbance and distraction instead of peace. Through such states of mind, the actions we perform can be harmful and unpleasant. The essential practice of meditation or Dharma is mind training - transforming negative states of mind into positive ones. The aim of this training is to break negative habits of the mind, because if we do not, we cannot eliminate and reduce negative actions.

As said before, the mind is the cause of experiencing sufferings or problems. Outwardly, we may blame a different cause or condition. For instance, when we experience conflict in our relationships with others, if we really investigate it, the cause is really conflict in one's own mind or in the mind of the other person.

So to resolve the problem, we need to resolve the conflict in our own mind. This may be a belief that we hold to be right. In the mind of the other person, however, it is not right. Even if it is just one thought, the solution to the problem is getting rid of that thought. If we do not change our mind and resolve it, it will cause us immeasurable problems, even if we don't want to cause problems to ourselves or to the other person.

This one thought that we hold in our mind can motivate us to speak harshly to others, and completely disregard their views. The way to resolve such conflicts in relationships is finding a time to discuss your differences with the right mental attitude. Suppose, on the other hand, you have your mind fixed on not giving up your viewpoint; likewise, the other person will hold on to their view, and there will be no discussion.

If we investigate why we have such a strong thought of always protecting ourselves and not wanting to take any loss, we can see it is because of a strong self-cherishing mind. The self-cherishing mind is the root cause of all the problems we face in life. It makes things difficult because, realistically, you cannot always be the winner. Further, our security and happiness depend on others, not just those who are close to us, but others who live in our society.

The cause for everyone in our society to enjoy sustained peace, happiness, and harmony is the mind of loving kindness and compassion. If we show such a mind to the people who are close to us, it will eventually bring them even closer. Through this attitude of love and compassion, you can be a source of happiness to others, as well as a source of joy and inspiration for yourself.

In the long run, it is more beneficial to think of others, to show care and interest in other beings' needs, while trying to reduce your own selfish aims by giving the victory to others or taking the loss upon yourself.

Whatever the outcome of a situation in which we act out of love and compassion to others, there will be justice there. On the other hand, if our actions are selfishly motivated to bring some immediate gain for ourselves, we may look back and feel guilty. This can cause us to be discouraged or depressed.

As the verse says, if we do not challenge this self-cherishing mind, it can bring more suffering to our life, which already has enough suffering and problems. In the example of the relationship situation, there could already be enough conflict and disagreement there. Yet, if you do not try to reduce this self-centred mind, it can add even more suffering to that relationship, an outcome that neither you nor the other person may want. If you do not try to overcome this self-cherishing mind, you will only add more suffering to your life.

We will end the teaching here and, as usual, we will do the Buddha's mantra. Once again, could everyone take up their meditation posture, and just relax the mind and the body:

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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