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must depend upon many things.

It is important to understand what brings happiness. For instance, if wealth is a source of happiness, we have to create the causes to increase wealth. In the spiritual teachings, one of the main causes to increase one's wealth is the practice of generosity and giving. If we increase our possessions, we also need to be able to fully and freely utilise them.

Of course, possessions are not the only source of happiness; we also need a good form of life, like this human one. The main cause of this is practising moral ethics. Our happiness also depends on having a good circle of friends. The cause for this is the practice of patience. Also, we want to see the end of whatever task we begin, and be successful in whatever we do. The cause for this is the practice of joyful effort. If we possess all of these sources of happiness – wealth, a good life, friends, and so on – and they become a cause of more delusions, we defeat the purpose and our lives become meaningless. The cause of preventing this is to practice concentration, meditative stabilisation, and discriminating wisdom.

The text says: “We have little endurance for hardship and suffering”. Why do we have such little endurance? When we undertake study or a job, as soon as we face problems, we can easily lose our motivation. This shows how weak our sense of determination is to confront the situation. Part of the reason we have such little endurance is that, throughout our lives, we have never had to suffer any really difficult situations. Rather, even when some slight problem or loss happens, we easily get disturbed. This shows that we have not learned about true hardship and suffering – our life so far has been too easy.

The next line says: “Yet ruthlessly we push for the things that we desire”. As said before, if we have a strong wish to be happy, we have to create the causes. If we have a strong desire and do *not* create the causes and cannot endure hardships, we lack the ability to fulfill what we want to achieve. Yet, even if the degree of ambition and determination we require to fulfill a desire makes it completely out of the question, we may still crave it.

For example, there are some people who put very little time into study, yet still wish to become great scholars. And even if they have qualifications, skills, and experience, they still may have a great desire to be a person in a high, influential position. In spiritual institutions, for example, there are some people who lack knowledge, experience, and the intention to put an effort into their study. Yet they dream of being the head of the institution and becoming a teacher to many others! This craving only acts as a source of frustration.

The point of considering this is that we need to check the mind, to see what sort of things we desire, and whether we are ready to create the causes to fulfill our desire or not. This is how we can find out what we wish to achieve in our lives, and find more satisfaction, lead a more contented life.

If our desire is not checked, there can be a huge difference between what is going on in our mind, and

what we can actually do. Unfulfilled desire is the cause of frustration and depression. Not being able to fulfill one's desire can make one feel incapable. As said before, if we desire something big, we have to put in a greater amount of effort, make a bigger commitment, and be more determined to fulfill that desire. We must examine the causes for fulfilling our desires, because if all the causes can be fulfilled, we know that our desires and wishes can be fulfilled. But if these factors cannot be fulfilled, it means that our desires cannot be fulfilled. However, normally we do not consider this.

There are two causes for fulfilling desire: one is the suitable factors, and the other is the hindrances. Suitable factors are those we have to gather to fulfill the desire, and hindrances are what we have to avoid, or factors that must be confronted and not allowed to become hindrances. The text is saying that with endurance, any obstacle we face does not stop us doing what we have to do. But if we lack endurance, the obstructions we face can discourage us and cause us to discontinue what we are doing.

As a result, we feel that we have failed. We put ourselves down and have a low self-image because of not being able to fulfill our desires. Geshe Doga advises that it is important, especially when you are young, to be prepared to show endurance as much as possible, and not be frightened, not run away from hardships. Rather, it is important to confront them. For example, if you are studying, you may face hardship. Whatever you are doing, try to think of taking on all the hardships and difficulties of your life at this early age. With this type of determination, you can accomplish more things in your life.

To lead a happy life, you do not necessarily have to be a religious practitioner. How you live your life and whether you find happiness or suffering is all up to you. If you think about living to seventy or eighty years of age, what are the things you can do that will bring more happiness and minimise suffering in your life? The answer is obviously that the best time to begin is when you are young – physically and mentally fresh and with more energy. There are many things for which, if you put more effort into them from an early age and face up to the challenges and difficulties, at a later stage in life you will find easier.

The attitude of trying to enjoy as much as possible at an early age – and leaving problems and hardships for the future – can be misleading. We should not simply let desire rule our lives. Rather, we should try to think, as said before, of how we might fulfill a desire. If we cannot possibly fulfill that desire, we should try to think of getting rid of it.

We will leave the teaching here, and we'll do the Buddha's mantra seven times. As before, we can sit in the meditation posture, making sure that the body is fully relaxed. Then we can chant the mantra, and focus the mind on it.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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