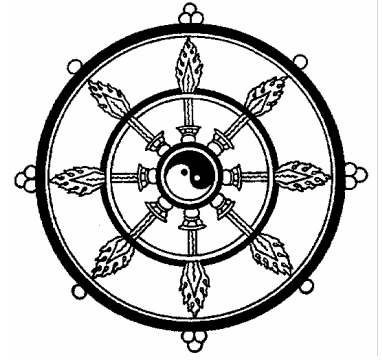


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འདྲེན་ལྷན་པའི་མཚན་མོ་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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As usual, start with a few minutes breathing meditation. Make yourself comfortable in the sitting posture and then try to fully relax your body. It is recommended to keep the back of the body straight, so that the psychic channels are straight and then the wind energy in them will flow smoothly and naturally. This in turn helps stabilise and calm your mind.

The next thing is to bring or rest the mind fully inward. Try to get rid of all disturbing thoughts - be they thoughts concerning any object, or something of the past, future or present. When we stop all these kinds of thoughts from arising, and are very stabilised within, then our mind will naturally become very still. After this we should begin the breathing meditation, focusing the mind single-pointedly on the inhaling and exhaling of the breath, without getting distracted by any other object.

Tonight we continue the commentary on the thought transformation text *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. We are at Verse 86, which reads;

By making the habit of anger and passion,
We come to despise everyone that we meet;
And by making a habit of jealous resentment,
We ascribe fruits to others, disclaiming their worth.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release

Basically this verse is all about the shortcomings of anger, desire or attachment and jealousy and any other kind of mental delusion. Here we should try to identify these mental delusions and what they do to our life; how they influence the actions we undertake. Due to attachment and hatred, even what we call religion - something which is supposed to guide people to more peace, harmony, stability and so on - can become a major source of problems, or even the very cause of disputes in the world. When we look to the reason why even religion has become some of the major causes of problem in the world, it is because those who follow the religions have very prejudiced minds, very biased mental attitudes. They are so attached towards their own belief systems or own sides, but have great hatred or animosity towards other systems and sides. They disregard other systems, and try to criticise them and find ways to bring down their reputation.

The reason why people do such faulty actions is because of the delusions in their mind, like attachment and hatred. It is important that we don't blame the actual religious systems or teachings. The problems arise from the faulty actions committed by the followers of the particular religions. There is no major religious teaching in the world which teaches or encourages people, even its own followers, to show hatred

towards others who do not follow their systems, and thereby to hurt them. If we understand how attachment and hatred is the source of all our faulty actions towards others, then we can at least minimise our hatred towards others and the religions they follow. Through this, we can also prevent generating wrong views towards other religious systems. It can be so easy to criticise and blame other religions when we see that the actions of the followers of particular religions is deplorable.

When we talk of attachment and hatred, it is important to try to relate to the attachment and hatred within oneself - to recognise and learn about one's own attachment and hatred. If we understand this as very negative states of mind, which can serve as a source of problems, then we should try to point our finger to the attachment and hatred in our mind, and try to see that as a problem. Even if we develop some understanding of the shortcomings of attachment and hatred and so forth, if we don't try and relate this to our mind and don't make any effort to diminish this within ourselves, all we will do is try to use that knowledge to blame or bring other people down, by saying they have a problem controlling their anger, attachment and so forth.

Generally speaking, we know attachment and hatred is something very destructive and negative. However, we tend to point to other people and say how they have a problem of attachment, lust, short temper and so on, without ever focusing on our own mind. In fact, if we turn the focus to our own mind, then we will see how our own mind is completely filled with attachment and hatred. Rather than trying to focus on or recognise someone else's attachment and hatred, try to recognise one's own attachment and hatred, and see what influence this has on one's actions. In another word, we should be spectators for our own thoughts and actions. If you do this, then there is a lot to watch, a lot to see. You will understand more about how all these unending problems arise or are derived from attachment and hatred. Having seen this, then we need to think about what we can do to remedy or eliminate these mental delusions.

When we talk about attachment and hatred and all the other negative states of mind we generate, we are talking about something which destroys peace and happiness within oneself. Externally we would recognise someone who causes or brings us loss as an enemy and then naturally do something to challenge that enemy. Likewise, when we look at the outcome of all these delusions we generate in our mind we can see that they are also like enemies, because they deprive us of the peace and happiness we always seek in our life. If we observe these negative states of mind over and over again we can see that they are not external to oneself. They are due mainly to our

mistaken way of thinking. Just as we feel strongly about a person who has caused a lot of harm to our life, we should see our negative way of thinking as our number one enemy.

It is said that if you observe and develop an understanding of these delusions, then eventually it is possible to almost pinpoint our delusions. In other words, it is so clear that all these problems in our life and those that we bring to other people, are all due to these delusions. When we recognise this, then of course naturally we understand that if we do not challenge these delusions, they become stronger and cause more harm to oneself. Like our outer enemies, if we do not do anything to defeat them, then they can become more powerful. Once we have recognised the delusions within us as enemies, then we can begin to think we should do something about it, because without doing anything, there is no chance for us to experience inner peace and happiness. In order to overcome this, we have to learn about how this delusion arises, for instance, how attachment and hatred arise. Attachment arises because the given object appears to our mind as very appealing, very attractive. It is very clear that attachment arises mainly because of the way the given object is perceived by our mind.

One of the main remedies to overcome attachment is to engage in meditation, by focusing or reflecting on the negative aspects or down-sides of that object. When we perceive the object as being very beautiful, we generate attachment. Likewise, if we perceive the object as being very ugly, by considering all the ugly, negative and unattractive aspects of the object, then naturally we can't have attachment for that object, or the attachment would at least diminish. When it diminishes, the effect is of having removed something that has been a major cause of suffering and problems in our life.

We can also overcome anger or hatred by meditating on the practice of patience or tolerance, or by meditating on cultivating loving kindness. It is important to see the logic of how all this meditation works to overcome or remedy a particular state of mind, or disturbing emotions. It is not something you are following blindly. Working with the mind through meditation, we can see the ugly side of the same object we perceived as beautiful. We can understand this not only through logic, we can also understand or prove this through our own experience. Through this meditation, we can experience how there is absolutely no way that attachment can arise in one's mind. Likewise, when we engage in this meditation of cultivating loving kindness, then there is no way we can feel hatred towards other beings at the same time.

As we develop more understanding of the spiritual teachings, and develop our spiritual practice, we can see that any unhappiness or any dissatisfaction that arises within us can be overcome. We have within us a remedial force that we can apply to overcome any kind of mental delusion.

This verse also mentions jealousy, which is so unnecessary, yet causes so many problems in our mind, and can be a cause for us to inflict harm upon others. We normally experience jealousy as bad feelings towards the accomplishments or other good qualities of someone else. When we feel this jealousy, we immediately lose our own mental peace and stability. We can gain greater personal understanding of this by contemplating the various

circumstances when we experience jealousy and how others also the problem of jealousy of other people. For instance, a mother may feel jealous of the girlfriend of her own son. Like this, there are many other instances you can think about, in which people generate jealousy. And while they have this jealousy, consider whether they have any peace and happiness. They do not, of course. The way to overcome jealousy is to find a new way of thinking whereby, instead of feeling negative towards whatever goodness the other person possesses, we should find a way to rejoice in their goodness, to feel positive about their goodness. If we can find a way to do this, jealousy can be prevented.

Geshe-la said that some people have asked whether all forms of attachment or desire should be seen as something negative, to be eliminated. Geshe Doga said he's presuming that when people ask such questions, they are concerned about how there can be pleasure in one's life, how one can find satisfaction in one's life without having some desire or attachment. There are people who get upset by talking about attachment and desire as negative things. They think that without these there can't be any enjoyment in their life. So, right from the beginning they just don't want to hear about this teaching, and show no interest. But we do not have to think that we have to overcome all our desires and attachments all at once. Rather, it is better to focus on the form of attachment or desire which is most forcefully disturbing to your mind, something that is obviously causing you suffering. So, rather than trying to overcome desire and attachment in general, focus on whichever issue that you can recognise as being an obvious disadvantage to you, something that even others can see as causing problems in your life. It is best and easiest to work with these delusions first, because it is so easy to see how they are very harmful and destructive to oneself. So try to apply these teachings to overcome this kind of attachment. In this way, one can slowly make progress. Later on, one can extend the same remedy towards the other forms of delusions that are less obvious.

The rest of this line in the verse implies that the root cause of all the delusions which arise is one's self-cherishing mind. We generate all these delusions because we lack any thought of concern for, or feelings of, cherishing other beings. Therefore it is important to try to overcome or diminish this self-cherishing or self-centred mind, while trying to cultivate and increase the mind of cherishing other beings.

We will leave the teaching here, and recite the Buddha's mantra. So once again we sit in the meditation posture, relaxing our mind and bringing it inward, and we focus our mind on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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