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achieve complete enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings must put in even more enthusiastic effort on the path.

After finding out how important enthusiastic effort is for our practice, we need to know what joyful effort is. The Tibetan term for joyful effort is *tsundu*. By definition, it refers to a mental factor or state of mind that focuses on and engages in virtuous objects with delight or enthusiasm. The *Bodhisattvas Way of Life* says, 'Joyful effort takes delight in virtue.' Any normal effort doesn't have the attribute of delight and enthusiasm in engaging in virtue.

We can also make an effort to engage in non-virtuous or unwholesome actions. In Tibetan, the generic term for effort is *tsolwa*. Generally, effort does not necessarily have to be aimed at virtue or taking delight in undertaking virtuous actions, as we can also take delight or pleasure in engaging in non-virtue. However, when we talk about joyful effort, we are referring to an effort or state of mind that takes delight in virtue.

If we move to the types of joyful effort, there are three types: *armour-like joyful effort*, *joyful effort in gathering virtue* and *joyful effort in benefitting sentient beings*.

*Armour-like joyful effort* means making a commitment and determination to engage in virtue. We make the commitment that until we achieve complete enlightenment, we will not give up working for the sake of others, making an effort on the path and achieving our goal. Wearing armour as a shield when we go into battle helps to protect us from our enemies. Likewise, with this armour-like effort we will be able to overcome all the obstacles that impede us in maintaining our effort and diligence in our practice.

The *joyful effort of gathering virtue* has the same meaning as the moral ethic of gathering virtue. It refers to the effort and enthusiasm that we generate in gathering virtues that we have not yet gathered, and to further increase and prevent from decline those virtues that we have already gathered.

The third type of effort is the *joyful effort of benefitting sentient beings*. We can again go back to the moral ethic of benefitting sentient beings. We have talked about the eleven ways of benefitting other sentient beings. It is the same here. It is referring to the joyful effort that is directed towards benefitting sentient beings.

We apply joyful effort in our practice in the same order as we listed these three types of joyful effort. It is important that we generate armour-like effort. As mentioned before, this refers to committing ourselves by generating and affirming the thought and strong commitment that we will work towards the welfare of all sentient beings at any cost, and for this purpose we need to achieve complete enlightenment. Therefore, we must first generate armour-like joyful effort if we are to benefit all sentient beings. It is indispensable if we are to accumulate and increase virtue. Then we will be able to engage in the act of benefitting other beings.

We should also understand the benefits of generating joyful effort. The benefit is easily and quickly accomplishing all our immediate and long-term goals. With joyful effort we take pleasure in what we are doing.

Even big and difficult tasks will seem small and easy. Conversely, if we lack joyful and enthusiastic effort, even small tasks become very difficult to manage and we can succumb to laziness. So, joyful effort is essential for success in accomplishing whatever goal we wish to achieve.

There are obstacles and hindrances that we need to overcome if we are to generate joyful effort. The main obstacle is laziness. We may have the ability and all the necessary resources to achieve our task, but laziness can impede our progress. For example, there is the laziness of procrastination which will delay beginning the task, and the laziness of low self-esteem or self-contempt thinking, 'I am not good enough or I don't have the capacity to achieve this' can affect us. Likewise, the laziness of being attached to meaningless activities can hinder us from engaging in virtue.

There can also be the procrastination that involves time. It happens when, instead of making an effort straightaway, we keep delaying, saying we will do it the next day and the next day, and putting it off and never doing it at all. That is a form of laziness that can be an obstacle to joyful effort.

There can be other obstacles that will also prevent us from engaging in joyful effort. There is the form of laziness of being attached to meaningless activities. If we indulge ourselves and become attached to something which has no meaning or real purpose, it can prevent us from engaging in practice or engaging in the task that we are supposed to undertake.

One Tibetan master named Je Gungtang Rinpoche said, 'Twenty years is wasted by not having even a thought of practising the Dharma. The next twenty years is wasted by saying, "I will practise, I will practise". Then another ten or more years are gone by saying, "Now it's too late, it's too late". This is the story of an empty life.' This statement reminds us that our life will be wasted if we fall under the influence of laziness.

We can apply an antidote to overcome the various forms of laziness.

To overcome the laziness of procrastination, meditate on death and impermanence. Reflect on the fact that death is certain, for the end of birth is death. The time of death is uncertain in the sense there is no guarantee and no fixed time when it will occur. So, when we reflect on death and impermanence, we will become aware of the preciousness of our life and our time, and thereby make the best use of every moment in life.

The *Golden Light Sutra* mentions that the Lord Buddha went into the state of parinirvana that is the state of death. The Buddha is not subject to death because he is free from it. So, the question is why he left us and passed away and manifested parinirvana? The main reason was to teach his followers about death and impermanence, the preciousness of their life and time, and the importance of making their life meaningful. If the Buddha had not manifested the deed of parinirvana, then his followers might procrastinate and not practise the Dharma, thinking that they can always do it later because Buddha will always be there with them. We might think there will be an opportunity to hear the teachings later. We can see that

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this is a possible obstacle to our practice. If you read that sutra carefully it explains that the reason Buddha manifested parinirvana was to illustrate the teaching of death and impermanence, and to appeal to the minds of his followers to engage in the practice.

As an antidote to overcome the laziness of being attached to meaningless activities we should reflect on the truth of the law of karma and its result, and reflect on the various types of suffering, such as the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change and the pervasive suffering of conditioning.

We have taken a life as a human being. Of course, sustaining this life depends on suitable conditions that we must have. We must utilise all our actions of body, speech and mind to gather the conditions to just make a living. We also need to recognise the greater and deeper purpose of life and that we need to utilise our time and conditions to go beyond making a living to sustain our current life.

We should also understand that our life has the potential and the higher purpose of achieving complete enlightenment. To achieve and reach the highest complete enlightenment we need to make continuous joyful effort. As we discussed before, what obstructs joyful effort is the form of laziness called the laziness of discouragement. I will explain how to overcome this laziness of discouragement next week.

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