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## Laying the Ground for Insight to Grow

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When starting to practice, be eager like a deer  
trapped in a pen seeking to get out.  
In the middle be like a farmer during harvest  
not waiting for anything.  
In the end be like a shepherd who has  
brought the flock home.

—PALTRUL RINPOCHE'S *SACRED WORD*

# IDENTIFYING IGNORANCE

## *Meditative Reflection*

Consider:

1. All counterproductive emotions are based on and depend upon ignorance of the true nature of persons and things.
2. There are specific ways to suppress lust and hatred temporarily, but if we undermine the ignorance that misconceives the nature of ourselves, others, and all things, all destructive emotions are undermined.
3. Ignorance sees phenomena—which actually do not exist in and of themselves—as existing independent of thought.

## Discovering the Source of Problems

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Attracted by light and heat, a moth flies into a flame.  
Stunned by the sounds of a guitar,  
a deer stands unaware of a hunter.  
Drawn by the scent of a flower, a bug is trapped inside.  
Attached to taste, a fish rushes to a hook.  
Pulled to mud, an elephant cannot escape.

—PALTRUL RINPOCHE'S *SACRED WORD*

How could great poisonous afflictive emotions  
not arise

In those whose minds are based on inherent  
existence?

Even when an object is ordinary, their minds  
Are grasped by the snake of destructive  
emotions.

—NAGARJUNA'S *SIXTY STANZAS OF REASONING*

In one who exaggerates self  
There is always adherence to “I.”  
Through that adherence there is attachment to  
    pleasure.  
Through attachment disadvantages are obscured  
And advantages seen, whereby there is strong  
    attachment,  
And objects that are “mine” are taken up as means  
    of achieving pleasure.  
Hence, as long as there is attraction to self,  
So long do you revolve in cyclic existence.

—DHARMAKIRTI

# THE ROOT OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE

Just as the capacity to feel is present throughout  
the body,

Ignorance dwells in all afflictive emotions.

Therefore all afflictive emotions are overcome

Through overcoming ignorance

—ARYADEVA



## *Meditative Reflection*

Consider:

1. Does the attractiveness of an object seem to be integral to it?
2. Does the attractiveness of an object obscure its faults and disadvantages?
3. Does exaggeration of the pleasantness of certain objects lead to lust?
4. Does exaggeration of the unpleasantness of certain objects lead to hatred?
5. Notice how you:
  - First perceive an object
  - Then notice if the object is good or bad
  - Then conclude that the object's goodness or badness exists inherently in the object
  - Then generate lust or hatred according to your previous judgement.

# Why Understanding the Truth Is Needed

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Much of our planning is like waiting to swim  
in a dry ravine.

Many of our activities are like housekeeping  
in a dream.

Delirious with fever, one does not recognize the fever.

—PALTRUL RINPOCHE'S *SACRED WORD*

Without losing belief in the object of an afflictive  
emotion  
It cannot be abandoned.  
The abandonment of desire, hatred, and so forth,  
Which are related to misperceiving advantages and  
disadvantages,  
Is through not seeing those in objects,  
Not through external ways.

—DHARMAKIRTI

Seeing with their minds that all afflictive emotions  
and defects  
Arise from viewing oneself as inherently existent  
And knowing that the self is the object of this,  
Yogis refute their own inherent existence.

—CHANDRAKIRTI

When selflessness is seen in objects,  
The seed of cyclic existence is destroyed.

—ARYADEVA

# THREE WAYS OF SEEING OBJECTS

There are three modes of mental operation on an object:

1. Conceiving the object to inherently exist, which is what ignorance does
2. Conceiving the object to not inherently exist, which is what insight does
3. Conceiving the object without qualifying it with either inherent existence or an absence of inherent existence, as when just ordinarily seeing something, such as a house.

## *Meditative Reflection*

Consider this:

1. Ignorance leads to exaggerating the importance of beauty, ugliness, and other qualities.
2. Exaggeration of these qualities leads to lust, hatred, jealousy, belligerence, and so on.
3. These destructive emotions lead to actions contaminated by misperception.
4. These actions (karma) lead to powerless birth and rebirth in cyclic existence and repeated entanglement in trouble.
5. Removing ignorance undermines our exaggeration of positive and negative qualities; this undercuts lust, hatred, jealousy, belligerence, and so on, putting an end to actions contaminated by misperception, thereby ceasing powerless birth and rebirth in cyclic existence.
6. Insight is the way out.