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THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY of each of us is to free every sentient being from suffering and its cause and bring them to enlightenment, by ourselves alone. In order to do this, we first need to attain enlightenment ourselves; we need to achieve the omniscient mind that sees all sentient beings directly. Then we can read sentient beings' individual minds, see all their characteristics, levels of mind and karma, and know all the methods that will suit even one sentient being's mind to lead that being from happiness to happiness to full enlightenment.

To reach enlightenment ourselves, we need to actualize the path, which doesn't happen without cause and conditions. That is, we need to actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment, to follow the graduated path to enlightenment, the lamrim. That's the only way to complete the path. And to bring realizations, the steps of the path have to be practiced in the right order. By just meditating on the bits we like and avoiding the bits we don't—like the sufferings of the three lower realms, impermanence and death, and the suffering nature of samsara and life—by not thinking about or meditating on what we feel to be unpleasant, not putting these teachings into practice, and focusing only on the parts that sound good, we can't really achieve any realizations.

For example, without meditating on samsara as only in the nature of suffering, without feeling as if we're caught in a fire or trapped in a tank of raw sewage or sitting naked in a thorn bush, we can't develop total aversion to samsara or renunciation of it. Without that, we can't realize compassion for other sentient beings or bodhicitta, and therefore we can't enter the Mahayana path. In other words, we have to achieve the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment.

- To free all beings from suffering we must first achieve enlightenment ourselves
- Every topic in the lamrim needs to be practiced, and in the right order
- This is the only way to achieve realizations and complete the Mahayana path