



Taste of the Dhamma

Monthly Newsletter of the Bhavana Society

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Even the universal king might be born in a hell



The Very Word of the Buddha



Clear Comprehension (Part V)



More Important is not Aspiration but Practice



News @ Bhâvanâ



Even the Universal King might be born in a hell

Birth and death is a cycle. This is called "Samsāra". We are born in different realms, as humans, animals, hungry ghosts and titans, according to our own bodily, verbal and mental volitional actions (karma).



Karma is a vital factor for our birth in such a place and afterwards. When we are born in the human realm, we receive many facilities because of our karma. But there are some folks who do not get enough food and drink. The Buddha said, "Kammam satte vibhajati" (Beings are divided according to karma). Some are born rich and others are born into poverty. Perhaps one becomes a universal monarch because of karma. After his death, he might be born in a heavenly world and then he will live accompanied by a retinue of celestial nymphs, endowed with the five cords of celestial sensual pleasures. But the peril is this: if he has not developed four qualities, after his death he may be

born in a hell. He is not free from the possibility of rebirth in hell realms, the animal realm, or the realm of hungry ghosts. What are the four qualities that help us to escape from these bad destinations?:

1. Confidence in the Buddha
2. Confidence in the Dhamma
3. Confidence in the Sangha
4. Virtue that is unbroken, un-

torn, un-blemished, un-mottled, un-grasped, praised by the wise, dear to the noble ones and leading to concentration.

Let us become wise enough to develop these four qualities to be free from bad destinations.❀

These quotations are from the discourses of the Buddha

Purity and Impurity



Bhikkhus, suppose a cloth were defiled and stained, and a dyer dipped it in some dye or other, whether blue or yellow or red or carmine; it would look poorly dyed and impure in color.

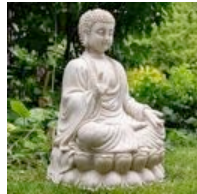
Why is that? Because of the impurity of the cloth. So too, when the mind is defiled, an unhappy destination may be expected.

Bhikkhus, suppose a cloth were pure and bright, and a dyer dipped it in some dye or other, whether blue or yellow or red or carmine; it would look well dyed and pure in color.

Why is that? Because of the purity of the cloth.

So too, when the mind is undefiled, a happy destination may be expected.

(M.N. Sutta N0.7)



MY MENTOR

The all-knowing, all-seeing conqueror:

He is my mentor.

Greatly compassionate teacher
all the world's healer,
this doctrine is his,
unexcelled, leading to ending.

Because of his teachings
is this lack of sorrow acquired.

(Theragātha- Adhimutta 16.1)



Wakefulness

Those who are wakeful, listen!
Those who are sleeping, wake up!
Wakefulness is better than sleep.
For those who are wakeful,
there's no danger, no fear.
Whoever is wakeful,
mindful, alert,
centered, sensitive,
calm, & clear,
rightly exploring the Dhamma
at appropriate times,
will — at oneness —
shatter the darkness.
So be devoted to wakefulness.
(Itivuttaka. 47)

Mind

*Dwelling in the
cave,
the mind,
without form,
wanders
far and alone.
Those
who subdue this
mind are
liberated from
the bonds of
Mara.
(Dh.37)*

Clear Comprehension (Part V)

Some Dhamma Activities at Bhavana

Daily: Morning
5-6:30 a.m.:
meditation and pooja

Daily: Evening
5-6 p.m.:
meditation
6:30-8 p.m.:
pooja and meditation

Saturday: Evening
3-4 p.m.: Pali Class
4-5 p.m.:
Sutta Discussion
class

Sunday: Morning
9-9:45: Meditation
10-10:45:
Dhamma talk

**Pre-Full moon and
New moon days:**
6:30 p.m.-2 a.m.:
meditation /Dhamma
discussion.

The following day
from 10 a.m. to 7:30
p.m.:

Uposatha Day
Program including
Dhamma talks and
Dhamma discussions
among the monastic
& the lay community,
both together and
separately.

You are welcome
to attend any of
these!

Intense greed and anger arise in our world. Our world is in our own body and its consciousness. It is in this world that the entire mass of greed and anger arises. We train ourselves to deal with whatever is happening in this world, and yet we truly don't know anything exactly as it really is in the external world. But when we pay mindful attention to our experience we can know them just as they are – arising and passing away.

When you recall all of your past experiences you can very clearly understand that all of them were impermanent. They have not given you one iota of permanent happiness, permanent pleasure or permanent security. All of them have betrayed you; they deceived you; they changed without giving you any advance notice. You did not have any control over them. This will be true with your present experiences as well as all future experiences. When you clearly see this reality, your sorrow and lamentation slowly fades away. This awareness arouses your mindfulness to face this reality. This is the second purpose of meditation. Removing sorrow and lamentation from our minds never to arise again is the goal of our meditation. This is one of the main purposes of meditation.

(iii) For the disappearance of pain and grief

Because grief and despair are more lasting than sorrow and lamentation, they take much longer to overcome. They repeatedly bother you whenever you try to meditate and calm your mind. You honestly desire

not to dwell upon them; you wish to let them go. Yet they keep resurfacing. You should practice the same mental training that you did when you were dealing with sorrow and lamentation. Look at the impermanent nature of everything in your life. Try to understand that this body, feelings, thoughts, perceptions and consciousness exist to help us gain knowledge and insight. From a deep awareness of what we experience, we come to see from these five groups that everything is impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Everything you have experienced in the past from these five aggregates was impermanent. You come to notice that even your mind as it is watching the impermanence of your emotions, thoughts, and perceptions is also impermanent. All dear ones, all attractive situations, all pleasant moments have vanished forever. You did not have any control over them. Don't verbalize your emotions. Simply notice them. Notice that they change from moment to moment. "She/he was so wonderful. She/he loved me very much. She/he did such and such things for me" arise in your mind. See these thoughts arising and passing away. Another series of thoughts then arises and passes away. Notice them, too. Gradually, your grief and despair slowly fade away.

The emotions of grief and despair are so powerful that some people become very confused. They may even have to seek help from professional therapists. Some people go on grieving for many years.

"Meditate
O monks!
Do not be
heedless.
Let not
your mind
whirl on
sensual
pleasures."
-Buddha-



They may be incapable of getting rid of such emotion until they die.

When you see this reality you can train your mind to look at the dependently arising nature of these emotional states. When you pay mindful attention to them, you will notice soon that they are slowly fading away. It takes time to heal from these kinds of emotions. As your mindfulness and understanding develop, grief and despair gradually decrease and vanish from your mind. The Buddha taught this truth from his own experience.

(iv) To tread the path leading to liberation:

The fourth reason for practicing mindfulness is to follow the noble eightfold path. As we have seen earlier, when the mediator practices these four establishments of mindfulness he is practicing all the steps of the Noble Eightfold Path as given under *Dhammānupassanā*. This is the sure way to attain total liberation from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Mindfulness practice is not an isolated factor. It is the seventh step of the Noble Eightfold Path. If you are really honest about mindfulness meditation (*Vipassanā*) you would never say, "*Vipassanā* meditation has nothing to do with Buddhism." For this is the heart of the Buddha's teaching. When we practice mindfulness and, as our mind becomes pure and clean, we can see the connection between each and every step of the Noble Eightfold Path, the path to overcome sorrow,

lamentation, pain, grief and despair—the end of suffering. As the Buddha said in his first sermon, this the path leading to the end of suffering. Without following this path you cannot end your suffering.

There were many kinds of meditation even in the Buddha's time, some of which he practiced himself before he discovered this unique meditation. Only in the Buddhist meditation system do you find *Vipassanā* meditation, translated into English as mindfulness meditation to gain insight. When you sincerely practice *Vipassanā* meditation, you can see clearly its connection with the Noble Eightfold Path. You practice Right Mindfulness to attain Right Concentration. The Rightly Concentrated mind can see things as they really are. This means one who has attained Right Concentration can see and perfectly comprehends the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness of all phenomena in his own five aggregates, which is the entire universe. Then he does not conceive any of the aggregates with desire (*Tanhā*) as "This is mine" (*etam mama*), or with conceit (*māna*) as "This I am" (*eso 'hamasmi*) or with wrong view (*ditthi*) as "This is my self" (*eso me attā*). "This is self" is a wrong view that he does not have. "This is not self" is the right view that he has. Completing the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path in this way liberates your mind from suffering and then arises the knowledge that you are liberated. With liberation and the knowledge that you are liberated are added to the

"We should go through the whole Noble Eightfold Path asking the question,

"Is this the understanding I should have? Is this intention suitable? Is this speech suitable? Is this action suitable to reach my lofty goal?"

We must ask these questions not only when we select a place, posture, clothes, or food, but also when we do everything at any place."

"One by one, little by little, moment by moment, a wise person should remove his/her own impurities."

-Buddha-

Noble Eightfold Path you will have the Ten-factors in the Noble Path. One who is endowed with these ten limbs is called Arahant (*dasa angehi samannāgato arahāti vuccati*).

(v) Attaining Nibbāna:

The final reason for mindfulness meditation is to attain Nibbāna, total liberation from endless suffering. This is the supreme goal of our meditation; everything else is peripheral and ephemeral. A serious meditator should keep these purposes in mind all the time—whether sitting, walking, standing, eating, drinking, talking, taking a shower, answering the call of nature, and even observing silence. He should keep these purposes in mind even when he goes to bed. He certainly cannot meditate in sleep, which is caused by sloth and torpor. He goes to bed, however, thinking that he wants to meditate to achieve these goals. This is a commitment he makes before he falls asleep and when he wakes up these goals will arise in his mind as a friendly reminder (*sati*) prompting him to meditate. This means he should not forget these very lofty and noble purposes of mindfulness meditation.

(2) Clear Comprehension of Suitability:

Suitability is always something wholesome that guides us to our goal. We must ask, "Is this practice wholesome? Is this practice proper? Is this practice suitable for achieving the

aforementioned fivefold purpose? Am I applying sufficient energy when the mind is sluggish? Is my energy proportionate to the degree of my laziness? Am I applying too much of it or too little of it or the right amount of it to overcome my laziness? Is my faith strong enough to continue my practice without slackening my effort? Is my faith based on something superficial? Do I spend too much time supposedly concentrating without gaining any insight, just sitting sleeping on the cushion?"

We should go through the Noble Eightfold Path asking the question, "Is this the understanding that I should have? Is this intention suitable? Is this speech suitable? Is this action suitable to reach my lofty goal?" We must ask these questions not only when we select a place, posture, clothes, or food, but also when we do anything at any place. Clear comprehension of suitability refers to subjects of meditation, which are appropriate to your own temperament. You should ask, "Is the practice of mindfulness of breathing suitable for achieving the goal?" You should ask, "Is this the way to contemplate 32 parts of the body to liberate my mind from mental impurities?" And "Is the practice of loving-friendliness suitable for getting rid of greed, hatred, or should I practice something else to get rid of hatred?"

To be continued in the next issue in September

More important is not aspiration but practice

By Bhikkhu T. Seelananda

*Honor
thy
mother
and
father*



" Though being well-to-do, not to support a father and mother who are old and past their youth — this is a cause of one's downfall."
The Buddha

Buddhism is not a religion in which we pray for anything. It is easy to pray and aspire for things. However, the teaching of the Buddha is otherwise. Through aspiration, Buddhists can gain nothing. The Buddha's constant teaching is to make effort, to practice and develop tranquility and spiritual faculties to gain insight and Nibbāna.

One has to practice both serenity and insight (Samatha vipassanā). It is for this purpose that the Buddha taught the Four Establishments of mindfulness. Nothing will be gained merely by aspiring or wishing for anything, such as saying "May I receive this status or that". When the necessary conditions are developed, the stages of the holy life and different states of mind become inevitable. In order to illustrate this today I would like to discuss a sutta from Anguttara Nikaya (A.N. VII.67).

Here the Buddha says, "Suppose monks, a hen has eight, ten or twelve eggs, but she does not sit on them sufficiently long and they are not well warmed, not developed enough for hatching. Although that hen may wish, 'Oh, that my chicks

might break the egg shells with their claws and beaks and emerge safely!' Yet these chicks will not be able to do so. For what reason? Because the hen did not sit on the eggs sufficiently long, so that they are not well warmed and developed enough for hatching. Similarly is it with a monk who has not applied himself to the meditative development of his mind.

"If, however, a monk has applied himself to the meditative development of his mind, even if he should not wish, 'Oh, that my mind might be free from the taints by non-clinging!', still his mind will be freed. For what reason? Because he has developed his mind. Developed it in what? In the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of success, the five spiritual faculties, the five spiritual powers, the seven factors of enlightenment and the Noble Eightfold Path. Now, suppose, monks, a hen has eight, ten or twelve eggs, and she has sat on them sufficiently long, so that they are well warmed and developed enough for hatching. Even if she did not wish, 'Oh, that my chicks might break the egg shells with their claws and beaks and emerge safely!'

yet still the chicks will break through the shells and emerge safely. For what reason? Because the hen sat on the eggs sufficiently long, so that they are well warmed and developed enough for hatching. Similarly is it with a monk who has applied himself to the meditative development of his mind."

Providing another simile, the Buddha says, "Suppose, monks, a carpenter has an axe and its handle shows the marks of his fingers and thumb. He will not know that so much of the handle has worn away today, so much yesterday and so much at other times; but he will just know of what is wasted that it has worn away. It is similar with a monk who applies himself to the meditative development of his mind; thought he has no knowledge that so much of his taints have worn away today, so much yesterday and so much and so much at other times, yet he knows of what is wasted that it is worn away. Or suppose, monks an ocean-going boat rigged with ropes, having been exposed to the water for six months, has been dragged to the shore for the winter. Then the ropes that had been affected by wind and sun, when soaked by the monsoon rains, will easily go to waste and rot away. It is similar with a monk who applies

himself to the meditative development of his mind; his fetters will easily be loosened and rot away"

This is the wonder of the teaching of our Great Master, the Buddha. He gives us very simple similes to understand the Dhamma better. Is there anyone who cannot understand these similes? So, what is most important is not to aspire or pray for many things but to practice and develop mind. As we all know, it is through practice one becomes Perfect.

What is to be practiced? First, one must tame the senses. We all have six senses, though today most of our students do not know them all. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are the six senses. They are controlled by consciousness (viññana). If one understands this, and strives to restrain them, that is one's virtue, morality. At the second level one has to practice meditation. For this one has to sit at a congenial place, closing the eyes and observing the breath as it is. Practiced in such a way, one can experience serenity. When there is serenity, one can see the arising and perishing of all things. That is the third level, which is called Vipassanā, which opens the door to the deathless. Let us strive to experience it today.



Bonds



"How blissful it is, for one who has nothing, who has mastered the Dhamma, is learned. See how they suffer, those who have something, people bound in body with people."

The Buddha

**The Buddha
is my
matchless
refuge!**

NEWS @ BHAVANA

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We're on the
Web at

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See our
schedule
and
consider
one
of the
meditation
retreats
offered
throughout
the year.



Family Weekend Work Retreat from Sept. 2-5, 2011
Thanks everybody for your co-operation and participation



They all are busy with their projects

