

## VIRTUES OF VIPASSANĀ

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Nowadays, in the Myanmar Nainggan there is wide spread effort to propagate the practice of Vipassanā. Many persons have spent one or two months at the Meditation Centre to practise Vipassanā. However, on their return home their efforts to practise Vipassanā gradually wind down to a stop.

To practise Vipassanā it is not essential that you go to the meditation centre. It can be practised in your own home, in the shrine room of your home, or if there is no place in your house, at the Dhammasālā or any pagoda or any suitable place. It is the will that counts and Vipassanā can be practised anywhere. The time and place should not be any barrier and the advantage gained will be dependent on the extent of practice of Vipassanā. Even five or ten minutes or any available time to practise Vipassanā will be beneficial.

Only on the attainment of Enlightenment of a Buddha, can Vipassanā be understood and practised. Even during the period before the attainment of Enlightenment by a Buddha, the opportunity exists to resort to Dāna, Sīla and Samatha which however are many times lower in level and of lesser benefit and virtue.

The practice of Vipassanā is definitely on a higher plane than Dāna, Sīla, and Samatha. It will certainly close the doors of The Four Woeful States and provide freedom from all sufferings. The Lord Buddha in His teachings on Buddhism emphasized the attainment of Nibbāna as the apex of every Buddhist's aim, in other words, the practice of Vipassanā is the best, most truthful, and the shortest and most effective way to the attainment of Nibbāna. That was preached again and again by Lord Buddha in His sermons.

One may be able to live one hundred years but if one fails to notice the five aggregates of mind and matter as a cycle of creation and destruction of the law of impermanence from the perspective of Vipassanā one would derive no benefit at all. If one can live longer

by one day with the realisation that the Five Aggregates of mind and body constitute a cycle of creation and destruction of the law of impermanence one would benefit. That was an example of Lord Buddha's teaching to Paṭācārī.

In this world, human beings can be classified into nine types viz.(1)Arahat (2) Trainee or learner to become Arahat.(3) Non-Returner(Anāgāmi) (4) One practising to become Non-Returner.(5) Once Returner (Sakadāgāmi).(6)One practising to become Once Returner (7) Stream-Winner (Sotāpanna) (8) One practising to become Stream-winner (9) Ordinary people (Puthujjana).

Out of these nine types the first eight belong to people who are practising Vipassanā to attain Sotāpatti-magga are free from being worldly, ordinary people. (Puthujjana)

At anytime of the day while remaining silent without talking, the person practising Vipassanā should continuously observe and meditate vipassanā. It is not sufficient to go to meditation centre, monastery, cave or forest to practise vipassanā for about a month or two. On the return home, at any time of the day and at any place at the first available opportunity to practise Vipassanā continuously without losing the tempo. The Venerable Mahāthera Waibu Sayadaw preached that just as the roof of a house should be covered continuously, it is essential that similar efforts be made to erect the vipassanā roof.

To be able to study and understand Vipassanā one should approach good and qualified teachers for systematic learning with the help of good reference books. Sustained efforts are needed to repetitively and continuously study the prescribed reference books until the subject matter is mastered and digested. Studying vipassana is not sufficient, it is the practice that counts. In one of His sermons, Lord Buddha emphasized the importance of practice of Vipassanā over and above, reading, learning and teaching of Vipassanā. Also in the "Magga Vagga of the Dhammapada" Lord Buddha preached again

that in reality it is one's own effort that will enhance one's own education and knowledge will degenerate and fade away.

In the **Mahā Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta** Buddha instructed as follows-

- (a) If you wish physical deprivation and mental unhappiness to cease, observe and practise meditation.
- (b) If you wish your wisdom and intellect to advance to the pinnacle, observe and practise meditation.
- (c) If you wish to attain the Path (Magga), the Fruition (Phala) and Nibbāna, observe and practise meditation.

Therefore if you wish to escape from the physical woes and mental unhappiness and all kinds of troubles in life observe and practise meditation.

In the **Mahā Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta** it is stated that while eating, moving, living irrespective of various postures at any time and place, one must be mindful of and observe and practice to be noble. If one questioned why, the answer is because destruction of Ignorance and Craving is achieved.

In a way, one who is mindful of vipassanā and concentrates and meditates on it at all times, at any place, while eating, moving and living, is overcoming physical woes, and mental unhappiness to a certain degree at these times of mindfulness and meditation also, enhancement and progress of his intellect is also achieved and finally attainment of Nibbāna gets closer.

In the **Cakkavatti Sutta** of **Pāthika Vagga** the Buddha stated that one should have a firm belief in dependability and reliability of Dhamma and to exert unflinching effort to meditate, propagate and practise. The Buddha had preached that if mental development is exercised and meditated continuously with unflinching effort then longevity,

personal beauty, physical and mental happiness, prosperity and physical and intellectual enhancement will be the benefit.

Therefore in mundane or in super-mundane or in both, if you wish to have progress and successful advancement to a higher level, meditation and mental development should be a must and if physically practised in this manner success and progress will certainly be achieved. If asked why should it be so, the answer is because these methods are as preached and instructed by Buddha.

If you wish to have all your desires fulfilled and if you and other people are to benefit you will have to observe and practise in the following manner as prescribed in the *Ākaṅkheyya Sutta* of *Mūlapaṇṇāsa*.

(a) (For monks) If you wish to win love and respect from the fellow monks meditate and practise *Vipassanā* accompanied by *Sīla* (morality) (For Laymen) If you wish to win love and respect from people around you and from your friends meditate and practise *Vipassanā*, accompanied by *Sīla*.

(b) (For monks) If you wish to be well supported for food, robes and shelter meditate and practise *Vipassanā* accompanied by *Sīla* (For Laymen) If you wish to be well supported for food, clothing and shelter meditate and practise *Vipassanā* accompanied by *Sīla*.

(c) (For monks) For the well being and beneficial merits for the good deeds of your supporters who have contributed generously to your food, robes and shelter meditate and practise *Vipassanā* accompanied by *Sīla* (For Laymen) for the generous and good deeds of your supporters who have contributed to your food, robes, and shelter, if you wish them to enjoy beneficial merits for their good deeds, meditate and practise *Vipassanā*, accompanied by *Sīla*.

The Buddha, in this way delivered sermons that meditation and practice of *Vipassanā* accompanied by *Sīla* will bring meritorious

benefits both in mundane and supermundane worlds not only to those who practise and meditate Vipassanā but also for others.

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