

Dhamma Talk

Upul Gamage (Meditationslehrer, Sri Lanka),
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Dear Dhamma friends,

We try to practise Meditation; we try to practise Dhamma together during this retreat. And we want to know about Dhamma. Usually we read books and we hear the talks and discourses from various teachers.

When we hear and read more and more things then we have an idea or conclusion “I know the Dhamma”. We think Dhamma is somewhere else. That’s why we want to listen to it or we want to read it.

Books can say something about Dhamma **but they are not the Dhamma**. Dhamma is not there.

It is like reading a map. When you read a map or a Geography book you can see mountains, rivers, oceans, deserts – anything.

After this you may have some ideas that you know where the desert is and where is the mountain, where are the rivers and the oceans.

And you can teach others and you can write books for others but there are no deserts or mountains in the books.

Like that. Dhamma is not in the books, it is in your heart, it is in your mind, it is in your life.

Meditation is a way to see the Dhamma, a way to experience the Dhamma through yourself, through your own life.

When people come to Nillambe or to any other meditation workshop, they ask some techniques, some meditation methods. And they expect some objects like watching the candles or hearing some music or seeing some pictures, clouds or something else.

I use to say: There is no meditation object – and you are your own meditation centre. That’s not all: You are your own meditation master. And I expect their positive respond towards these sentences but they are not happy about this.

They want everything from outside; techniques, places and teachers.

But really: You are your own meditation object. You are your own laboratory; you are the scientist who is going to do this spiritual experiment. That means: Your body and your mind.

We have to meditate about our body. We have to meditate about our mind. That’s all.

All the knowledge, all the wisdom is there. Where ever you are you can meditate because your body and mind are there.

This is my short message to begin this discussion. If you have any questions or something to discuss you are welcome.

M: Which kind of mistakes can I make as my own meditation master?

T: Well, you don't have to do special mistakes for that ☺ whether you try to do no mistakes or not you may do. Full of mistakes.

I am very happy about your question because normally we don't like to see mistakes. We don't like to see others mistakes. If we see we get angry.

Or we try to condemn them. When we know that we have done some mistakes we are not happy and we feel guilt. That means: always we are reacting in a negative way towards our own mistakes and towards other mistakes.

Why? What is the reason? Because we expect perfect behaviour from our self and from others. So we are just maintaining a perfect model – and what ever we are doing or others are doing we try to fit to this model and if it doesn't fit – we react.

We are not looking to our present reality. We don't like to accept our present limitations.

First we have to accept our self just as it is.

Then you can extend your limitations. The password to extend your limitations, the password is hidden in your mistakes.

So we cannot ignore our mistakes. Mistakes are like a treasure.

That doesn't mean that you can repeat your mistakes again and again. You can contemplate about it, you can investigate about it: "Why I have done such a thing?" By doing such an investigation, by doing this experiment you can get wisdom, you can get knowledge.

Therefore each mistake has a message. So mistakes can be your teacher.

M: So maybe mistakes or a category of mistakes have their own mission; so I can find out in future time to execute the mechanism to do not same mistake like before? Have mistakes always the same way how they are working?

M: And people are doing the same thing again and again....

T: It can happen if I just look in an intellectual level. I know some people use to say: "We are Human beings", they try to generalize their mistakes in this way. But you have to see the way how it happens.

It doesn't happen automatically. There are some internal and external factors for each mistake. So you can see – maybe we cannot see all the factors; our knowledge is not good enough to find out all the factors but we can try to see much as possible. So if you can find out some internal and external factors for that mistake then – if you don't want to do it, you can try to remove some factors.

M: If we are doing mistakes, what we point out as a mistake, that there is most properly

a lack of mindfulness. Better to divide in kusala or akusala or what would be your recommendation? Is it enough or is something missing?

T: Well, mindfulness is an important factor for this subject, that is true. When you walk blindly then you do the same mistake again and again. So you have to open your eyes. That is the first step. Then you know what you are doing right now. That's not enough. You need some wisdom. Otherwise you don't know what to do. What is the best thing to do. To get that wisdom we have to go back to our own mistake and to analyze it, to investigate about it and to get the knowledge.

So first step is mindfulness, the wisdom and the third step is you must make some effort. This is a very important thing. I know some people they have very good awareness, very good knowledge but they give not any effort to change themselves.

You can energize yourself by thinking about the result, the result of the mistake or past habit. This is one way - to energize your self by contemplating about the good or bad result.

And the other important thing is – spiritual friends. This is a very important thing to get energy.

The last thing is: from time to time you have to evaluate your practise. That is very important.

M: The biggest benefit you can get from meditation is mental freedom. If somebody can show – if you work with meditation or awareness how much profit you can get right now; you are getting so much profit – then they would do. But somebody must show to them, must do it.

T: Yes, I think there are two kinds of profits that we can get or that we can experience in our life.

The first kind of profit is an “instant” profit. That is the most popular profit what we are attracting. We are living in an instant world now. Everything is instant: instant food, instant wives, instant husbands, everything.

So if you are conditioned to this instant taste then you are loosing patience, you are loosing the quality of waiting.

There is high taste in the meditation, in the Dhamma but it is not an instant taste – it takes some time.

You have to meditate sometime to see the real taste of your life –

We can see so many beautiful books here in this library. The front covers are so beautiful and multicoloured; and beautiful pictures are there. You don't have to make an effort to see that beauty.

I know some people are buying books because of this beautiful cover. But when they start to read it is not an easy thing. No big letters are there and it needs a long time to read a book. But if you want to get the maximum benefit out of this book you have to read it.

So, meditation is like that. You have to do it. You have to go through the cover. You have to let go the desire for the cover

M: In the beginning of my meditation I had a lot of night mares, in which I was killed etc. Now it's done and they disappeared. But I have some friends who like to start with meditation – what was maybe the mistake, what can be a suggestion.

T: It happened after the meditation, right. Actually that is not a mistake. It is a result of the meditation, the benefit of the meditation.

One thing is: When you meditate you may be aware of your dreams, before you have not been aware of your dreams.

People just live - without awareness or mindfulness. They just do things unconsciously. And most of the time they don't know what is happening and what they are doing – even in the daytime. How do they know what is happening in the night time when they are sleeping.

This is the first thing – and a second, a very important thing is –

but maybe we can discuss this thing in another day because it needs some more time? But anyway –

Actually we are creating our dreams. We are making our dreams. Maybe in one of the next days we can discuss about dreams. Dreams can be a very good meditation object.

But if I give a short answer to your question – normally we are judging our emotions. We say: "This is good" or "This is bad". And when we experiencing some bad emotions, so called negative emotions we try to repress them, we try to push them away.

When we try to push them away actually they are not going away. They are going in our unconsciousness mind.

Like when we sweep and we put all the dust in the dust pin. Unfortunately we use our mind as a dust pin - full of garbage.

And we have a very strong cover to cover this dust pin, this garbage.

You can say conscious mind or you can say that strong judgement for this cover, for this top layer.

But if we suppress or repress our negative emotions then they are not going to die. They are becoming more and stronger when they are in an unconsciousness level. When you are meditating you are learning to let go of this strong cover, this strong judgement.

When your conscious mind becomes subtle and calm then the unconscious things can come out.

When you meditate even during the meditation period you may have such stories or nightmares. It is very natural. It can happen during the night time too.

So – be happy (I think it was happening in temporary periods in the beginning..)

You can do two things: One thing is you can continue your meditation without thinking that is a trouble or this is a wrong thing.

The second thing, when you meditate with good awareness, good mindfulness then you can think about these dreams, specially these emotions, about the people who are coming to your dreams. You can think about them. Then consciously you can get rid of these emotions.

And this is not happening to everybody. You must not be afraid to teach meditation to your friends.

If you have a tendency to repress your anger, to control your anger and to try to be a good, innocent and lovely person then you may have this type of experiences. But I know some people; they are not controlling their anger. When the anger comes they just express. They hit others - they do everything. When they start to meditate they will not have such nightmares after the meditation because their entire life is a nightmare.

Anger is not the reason. How you react to the anger – that is the cause for the dreams.

Actually we cannot come to any conclusion because the short time is not enough to find a conclusion. Some effects may come in the future.

M: I spontaneously getting very angry, but when I go to sleep it doesn't come back. I just sleep

T: When you react with anger then it can become a habit of you. Then you don't have any choice when the situation will arise. Anger is reacting, anger is acting. And the anger can become more and stronger and more and more powerful. And you are becoming more and more powerless and weak. Whether you have nightmares or not better to get rid of the anger.

Some more Questions?

(The moderator concludes the discussion with gratefulness to Mr. Upul Gamage)

End of the Talk

