

## **The Householder Practice – by Ven Dr M. Punnaji Maha Thera**

There are 5 stages of cultivation in the Householder Practice:

1. Devotion (***Saddhā***);
2. Morality (***Sīla***);
3. Learning (***Suta***);
4. Self-sacrifice (***Cāga***);
5. Insight (***Paññā***).



### **1. DEVOTION (*Saddhā*)**

- Devotion is the **intention** part of the practice which gives direction to a way of living.
- “***Saddhā***” means: **to uphold goodness**
  - “***Sat***” means goodness, “***Dha***” means to uphold.
- Goodness is Selflessness;
- Taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha is to seek help in overcoming the troubles and tribulations of life, from selflessness;
- Devotion is being grateful to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha for showing the way to freedom from suffering;
- Devotion is a wholesome emotional appreciation of Selflessness – along with a rational acceptance of the Buddha, his Teachings, and his Following;
- Devotion is expressed through Homage to the **Buddha**, the **Dhamma**, and the **Sangha** – this includes all devotional activities such as prostration, offering, chanting, meditation, etc that devotees perform;

### **2. MORALITY (*Sīla*)**

- Morality is the **behaviour** part of the practice;
- Buddhist morality is AUTONOMIC morality:
  - Which is the opposite of OBEDIENCE morality;
  - Not based on a reward-punishment or “God-fearing” culture;
  - Morality is a cultivation through encouragement and not enforcement;
  - There are no commandments to follow, only cultivation of goodness in appreciation of the value of Selflessness;
  - Buddhism is based on the essence of civilization which is the selfless way of living.
- Morality is to cultivate the practice of extroversion of intention, which is the discipline of unselfishness (***Mettā***) which is a broadening of our mind by extending our concern for the welfare of all sentient beings.

### **3. LEARNING (*Suta*)**

- Learning (***Suta***) about the importance of unselfishness prepares the mind to accept the Selfless Way Of Living, which is the Cognitive aspect of the Practice;
- We broaden our mind by focussing our attention on all sentient beings instead of narrowly focussing our attention on the concept (cognitive) of a “Self”;

- This way we loose the notion (affective) of a "Self" through an interest in all sentient beings;
- This is what we achieve through expanded interest in all beings (*Mettā*) and deepening of our interest to overcome the distinction between oneself and others (*Karunā*) just as a mother's selfless concern for her child;

### **Mettā, Karunā & Muditā**

- This loosening of the self-centered emotional attitude through the practice of ***Mettā*** and ***Karunā*** brings about an experience of **Altruistic Happiness (*Muditā*)** based on the freedom from self-centered worries and anxieties;
- This altruistic happiness which is cognitive rather than affective is the recognition of freedom from self-centered worries and anxieties and a sense of tranquil euphoria arising from the absence of self-centered emotions which cause bio-chemical reactions and tensions in the body;
- This altruistic happiness is superior to the emotional happiness derived from the fulfillment of self-centered desires and sensual pleasures;
- This form of happiness comes from within rather than from seeking uncertain and unstable happiness that depends on external vicissitudes of life;
- Recognition and appreciation of this fact through experience prepares one's mind to give up the pursuit of sensual pleasures, and to choose purification of mind through meditation;

### **Tranquility Of Mind (*Samādhī*)**

- Altruistic Happiness leads to purity and tranquility of mind (***Samādhī***);
- As the mind becomes pure and tranquil, the attention that is focused outwards begins to turn inwards;
- This introversion of attention is called ***Satipatthāna***;
  - "***Sati***" = attention, "***Upa***" = within, "***Thāna***" = to place
  - ***Satipatthāna*** (Sati+upa+thana) means "**to place attention within**"
  - "***Parimukan satin upatthapetva***" (***Satipatthāna Sutta***)

### **Introspection (*Upekkhā*)**

- The mind that is focussed within through introversion of attention begins to observe what is within (***Sampajañña***), which is **Introspection (*Upekkhā*)**;
- Introspection results in the awareness of the process of perception rather than the object of perception;
- This awareness is what is called **Apperception (*Abhiññā*)**;
- Apperception makes one aware of the process of perception called the **Five Accumulations (*Pañca khandha*)** which are collections of sensory impressions that occur unconsciously depending on conditions;
- This makes one realize the process of perception to be an impersonal process;
- Realizing the impersonality of the process of perception leads one to loose the notion of "Self" that arose through personalization of the impersonal process of perception;
- **Introspection (*Upekkhā*)** leads to the recognition there is no "Self" to attend to.