

Bhāvanā cultivating the mind



Bhāvanā in Pali means the development of the mind or spiritual cultivation through meditation. Bhāvanā is an essential concept of Buddhism. However, regardless of religious affiliations, any person can engage in Bhāvanā to obtain peace and calmness in their minds. Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Colpetty, introduces Bhāvanā, where the cultivation of positive thoughts enables the growth of the mind.

By Udeshi Amarasinghe.

Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero explains that in Bhāvanā, a person maintains concentration on one aim. Even if the mind wavers, it is refocused back to a single purpose. Through this process, a person can improve and enhance his mind. Meditation is an excellent daily practice because by thinking of positive thoughts, a person can dispel negative thoughts such as hatred, anger, and jealousy. Therefore, while meditating, even for that particular time, the mind is

concentrating on positive thoughts. Meditation is about thinking positive thoughts repeatedly and also focusing on the Dhamma. Bhāvanā consists of two main segments; Samatha Bhāvanā , and Vidarshana Bhāvanā . In Samatha Bhāvanā , a person focuses the mind on one positive thought or action. Examples of Samatha Bhāvanā are; Anapanasathi Bhāvanā that concentrates on breathing, Maithri Bhāvanā focuses on loving, kindness, and Sakman Bhāvanā focuses on a positive aim or thought where the meditation is done while walking. Vidarshana Bhāvanā is a more complex form of meditation that focuses on in-depth Buddhism.

Meditation has to be done gradually, and a person should first start with the various types of Samatha Bhāvanā, and after that progress to Vidarshana Bhāvanā. Even the meditating duration should be increased gradually. There are postures for meditation, such as seated posture and meditating while walking. The meditation posture will defer according to the situation and type of Bhāvanā a person engages in.



For example, in Anapanasathi Bhāvanā, where we focus on breathing in and out, for a layman or novice, they would not be able to concentrate on that aim for a long time, and other thoughts may come into the mind. At that moment, we need to bring our minds back to focusing on breathing. In Anapanasathi Bhāvanā, a person repeatedly concentrates and focuses on breathing. Thus, a person needs to practice meditation regularly.

Meditation should be done in a place that is quiet and tranquil, without any disturbances. Usually, it is said that meditation should be done in an aranya, forest, or an empty space. Therefore, you can meditate in any place and any time. The ideal time for meditation is early morning or in the evening.

Ven Diypattugama Revatha Thero explains that there is no particular age for meditation. Though generally it is considered that a person should engage in meditation when they reach old age, it is not so. It has been scientifically proven that there are significant benefits to meditating from a young age because it develops the brain, benefitting in education and limiting stress and mental pressure. In certain countries, meditation is conducted for a few minutes before classes begin at school for the day. According to each age group, there are benefits, and it is generally the more mature people who engage in Vidarshana Bhāvanā.

Mindfulness and engaging in mind exercises are forms of meditation but are not precisely Bhāvanā. Mindfulness is being aware of the present moment and the activity that a person is involved in.



By engaging in Bhāvanā calms your mind and reduces anxiety, stress, and mental pressure. The mind feels peace and tranquility. It is beneficial to engage in Bhāvanā daily as you focus on positive thoughts.

Thus, during this pandemic period, it is good to meditate to maintain a healthy mind where you are able to fulfill your daily activities successfully.

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