

Discipline and Precepts are Favorable for Self-Development

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Devotees observe sil.

Generally, beings and human beings like to live in peace and harmony. It depends on non-other than discipline. Discipline is like an ornament for human beings which depends on precepts. It is also a characteristic of a good human being. Generally, it is said there is a difference between animals and human beings, as human beings have discipline. It is further intended as: if human beings get only: food, water, and shelter and procreate, they fulfill only basic needs similar to an animal. Real human being seeks protection of worldly and internal with empathy. When it is fulfilled, he looks for love and friendship with society. Besides that, most human being expects 'acceptance' from society. Because naturally, he likes pride or 'esteem need', and then he reaches the insight. According to Abraham Maslow's Theory, the "Hierarchy of Needs" is categorized as psychological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. But some people rarely get self-actualization, and some move half of the journey, while others move very nearby. That must be the 'Meaning of Human Life.' That must also be the answer to some people who frequently ask, "What is the meaning or purpose of life?"

According to Eastern philosophy, humans compare to a Lotus Pond, consisting of some lotus buds, half- bloomed, and full-bloomed lotus. Because, regarding self-actualization, human beings are also different from each other. Their ability to understand something is different, and their knowledge is also different. It is explained in Ariyapariyesana or Paṇḍarasi Sutra by Buddha's words as: "As I surveyed the world with the Buddha-eye, I saw beings with little dust of defilement in their eyes (of wisdom), with much dust (of defilement) in their eyes (of wisdom), with acuteness or dullness in their intuitive faculties, with good or bad intuitive capacities, easy or difficult to teach and some beings who dwell seeing danger in the fault of the other world and some beings who do not see the fault of the other world."

After surveying the world, The Buddha compared the beings in the world to a pond. “For example, among the clump of uppalalotus or of paduma lotus or of pundarikālotus in a pond, some lotus plants that germinate under water, develop in the water, do not rise above the water and grow sub-merged in the water. Some others germinate underwater, develop in the water and come up level with the water’s surface. Yet, others germinate underwater, develop in the water and rise above the surface of the water, unmoistened with water.”

So, according to Buddhism, they must pass a series of steps to reach a higher standard of wisdom. Therefore, one can start the path to self-development from the beginning to reach the goal. According to the canon, in the beginning, newcomers can follow the

“Thri Shiksha” – (Three Disciplines): ..

1. Training in moral conduct – Sīla .

2. Training in concentration – Samādhi 3. Training in wisdom – Paññā

So, one can practice this in an orderly and can start with the Sīla. Because training in moral conduct-Sīla helps to train in concentration- Samādhi. Training in concentration Samādhi helps to prepare in wisdom- Paññā. On the other hand, Paññā also helps to develop Sīla and Samadhi; were interconnected.

According to this process, Buddhists in Sri Lanka observe ten precepts four days a month, especially on Full Moon pōya day. Besides, they used to observe precepts daily and on some religious or special occasions.

However, a real Buddhist has to abide by the rules of the five precepts. It is sake for him and for the whole society. Besides that, keeping calm and peaceful in the entire world is beneficial. Why is it useful for a person and society? Because they prevent doing any harmful things to society; for example – killing. A person who appreciates a disciplined life does not intend to kill even small animals, so there is no need to talk about human beings. So, how important is it for a society like today, where we have to live with the fear of missile weapons and atom bombs? How much do we spend on those unnecessary things while so many poor people die of starvation?

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What are those discipline rules, and how do we practice them? As we explained above, the five precepts are the common Sīla (precepts) very important for ordinary people. It is beneficial not only to a person for self-development but also for the development of the whole society, which is described as five precepts: refrain from killing, refrain from stealing, refrain from miss sexual conduct, refrain from lying, refrain from consuming alcohol. Besides this, Buddhists observe 'Ten Precepts' for special occasions, like Full Moon Pōya days. The devotees who observe it in the morning protect it until evening, but some devotees protect it till the following day to cease it. After ending the precepts, they observe five precepts again until the next Full Moon Pōya day. Usually, those precepts were preached by a monk or a learned, elderly devotee.

On Pōya day, besides observing Sil – Ten Precepts, they must follow a religious program to get the real benefit of observing Sil. For the first step, they used to pay homage to the Triple Gem: The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, and offered the Puja with flowers, incense sticks, water, and food. After that, they can have the Upasaka Daṇa (breakfast). In the morning session, they listen to Dharma preaching and participate in Dharma discussions until noon Daṇa – lunch followed by the Puja. After a short break, the second session is to be commenced. This session also included preaching and Dharma discussions until evening Puja. In this service, some devotees end the sil, some reobserve the Ten Precepts, and they stay in the temple until the following day. Then, they end sil at that time and observe the Five Precepts before leaving the temple.

If one analyzes those Five Precepts or Ten Precepts, he can understand how vital self-development and well-being are for society. And we can see those who maintain these religious rules lead a good life without harming themselves and society. Therefore, this practice doesn't help all people in the world maintain peace without any religious prejudice?

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✖ Inculcating discipline from an earlier age is a characteristic of a good human being.

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