

Sat Chit Anand

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Living the Dharma

“The Buddha, through attaining enlightenment, proclaimed the awakened heart. Walking out of the boundary of pervading norms, Buddha gave the gift of a new consciousness to beings, a new conscious outlook of seeing things; sharing with people, based on his own experience, a means towards awakening that is universal, attainable by all people without exception. That is the incredible activity of the Buddha.” [KARMAPA]



How to practice Dharma and how to live life in a proper way are very similar. The Dharma must have a strong relationship to our life. It must become one with our life, so that we live the Dharma. The Dharma is to transform our minds, our way of being, our personality, into a positive way of being. See where you have attachment, anger etc. Look inside and try to reduce this emotion. You can practice anywhere – look at how you act and react, at how you relate to other people. Examine yourself and work in this way. This kind of Dharma practice is very important.

We must try to keep all beings in mind. The main practice of Mahayana Buddhism is not to give up on sentient beings. If we have the happiness and suffering of many people in mind, this will help to change us. If we only think of ourselves, there is no need to change. If we think about many people – their happiness and problems – and we feel concern for their welfare, then our own welfare becomes less important. This transforms our way of thinking, and the self-cherishing ego becomes less. This kind of loving-kindness and compassion towards all beings is like a wish-fulfilling gem. We benefit and others benefit, so everybody benefits.

When we start thinking like this, then it becomes easier to give up what needs to be given up. Generally, it is very difficult to give up the control of negative emotions. We understand

the disadvantages of the *kleshas* but we don't see them as totally negative. When you totally fall in love, you give up all else. When you totally see the negative emotions as negative with no uncertainty, then it is easier to let them go. Understand what is good and brings positive things; and what brings negative things and suffering and give the latter up. This kind of wisdom removes conflict, confusion and indecisiveness and your mind becomes clear. The purpose of life becomes clear, and it becomes easier.

The Dharma can be practiced in many ways, both formally and informally. Work becomes Dharma practice if you do it with good intentions to help and serve others. Family life becomes Dharma practice if you have intentions to raise children to be of benefit to the world. We should deliberately set our motivation like this every day, then this becomes like formal practice.

We need to bring peace and joy to our minds. We need to give our minds some rest and relaxation. When we do sadhanas and meditation, this is what we do. Otherwise our minds do not experience any peace. This is the purpose of formal practice – to bring rest and peace to our minds. We must use Dharma practice to bring us inner peace. Make time for yourself to rest your mind. We have to give our mind a home to come back to where it can find rest. Let your mind relax and be at ease in the present moment. Stop worrying about the future and the past. Let go of hope and fear. Feel satisfied with your accomplishments so that you can rest your mind and not be caught up in perpetual ambition.

In honor of WESAK, anniversary of the Buddha's birth, death, and parinirvana
Extract from 3-day teaching given in Bodhgaya in January 2009 by His Holiness the KARMAPA

Photo: big Buddha statue in Bodhgaya

Mindful Hatha Yoga

Tuesday evenings: 18h00 - 19h30

Wednesday afternoons: 16h30 - 18h00

Cost: R50 per class

Classes include some teachings on yoga philosophy, a sequence of basic asanas (yoga poses), guided relaxation, pranayama (breathing exercises), and meditation

Spiritual Teachings

Thursday evenings: 19h00 - 21h00

Cost: by donation

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