



Sati Pasala : Week 03

# Monday

## Being mindful in the present moment

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**D**uring the past two weeks, we have attempted to understand the meaning of mindfulness within the concept of Sati Pasala or Mindful School. If you begin to learn and practice mindfulness at some point, one day there will be a huge change in your life. Therefore, let us see how we can improve on what we have already learnt in the last two weeks and develop mindfulness gradually from there.

We could see what differences mindfulness has made to our lives after learning it during the past two weeks. Do you think you have experienced a significant change? When sitting mindfully or when walking mindfully or when you were mindful in daily activities, did you notice some alertness or wakefulness? If so, you should now try and develop it by practising the same repeatedly.

Not only fellow students, but also teachers, parents and others may have noticed a difference in you. If so, that's a sign of encouragement for all of us.

Whoever learns this valuable practice once, will find it very difficult to forget mindfulness. Similarly, mindfulness will never forget you and let

you down at times of distress. Mindfulness is very dependable and reliable. It will also not come into confrontation with any situation. Mindfulness will help you to face any situation with alertness and wakefulness, and will enable you to deal with such situations with a non-coercive attitude.

Whenever we practise mindfulness silently, we might find disturbances (for instance, unpleasant sounds, pains, thinking, day dreaming, fantasizing, etc.). Then, instead of reacting we should watch these disturbances very mindfully. The stream of mindfulness will then remain uninterrupted. If we don't confront those disturbances and get irritated, mindfulness will always be at the fore front. Always try to watch with sharp mindfulness the irritable situations and obstacles that come your way. Although this will not be easy in the beginning, with time and patience you will perfect the art. This type of non-coercive attitude will make us feel less stressed and then we'll have minimal tension. In fact, we can be quite light-hearted in our daily activities and interactions with people and things. I am sure you wouldn't want to be someone who will erupt at the slightest provocation! However, if you do not react to provocations you might be labelled as a 'weakling' or even a 'coward', but please don't worry about such matters.

Therefore, patience is the key. With an uninterrupted stream of mindfulness coupled with patience, you will be victorious at every stage, just as our fore-fathers who practised patience, were.



Sati Pasala : Week 03

# Tuesday

## Being mindful in sitting

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**T**his Tuesday of the third week, let us reflect on how much being slow and mindful has helped you in sitting mindfully.

When you are seated comfortably, the more relaxed you are, easier it will be to establish mindfulness. You might begin experiencing various bodily sensations which are manifestations that mindfulness is getting established. You may notice the breath or heaviness of your body periodically, and if so this is a good sign of the development of mindfulness.

Even when a machine is constantly in motion while working, it is not possible to see what's happening within the machine. We need to slow down the machine to a reasonable speed to see its operations within. Similarly, we need to sit mindfully for a while to be able to see what's going on within us. Gradually we shall need to allow mindfulness to settle in while we are seated and then we shall see how our body and mind calms down. This needs to be experienced to be understood.

Let us imagine that you are seated mindfully without moving your body. For how long do you think you could sit in this manner? As mentioned

earlier, while we are seated in that manner if we notice what's going on within the body, we shall become more enthusiastic to continue sitting. Supposing you notice your breath or your posture while seated in mindfulness, your enthusiasm may increase further. The more details you notice, the more interested and awakened your mind will become.

Initially having observed your body and your posture, after a while, with practice you will begin to note the mind and your thoughts. You may notice irritations, tension or stress, or any such feeling. This might seem like a disturbance, but in fact it's a good sign that mindfulness is improving and that you are progressing.

Your mindfulness teacher will explain this further. Try to understand this slowly. With mindfulness, you will be able to observe pains and boredom when sitting for a while. The sitting posture is the best posture to be able to understand these natural feelings and emotions mindfully. You have settled into the moment in your posture and soon you shall settle in with mindfulness.

As we discussed, even a machine needs to be slowed down substantially in order to see how it works. It's very difficult to understand how a fast-moving machine works. This is why in the workshop they slow down the machine in order to detect the problem. Let us also slow down 'our machine' and silently allow mindfulness to settle in, so that we could see how we operate when we are in the sitting posture.



Sati Pasala : Week 03

# Wednesday

## Being mindful while walking

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**I**n the Introduction of the book ‘The Power of Mindfulness’, mindfulness is explained as: ‘..just to watch ones steps so that one may not stumble or miss a chance in the pursuit of one’s aims.’

If someone tries to walk mindfully, one would realise how many times the mind strays to different distractions. This means that the mind ‘stumbles’ repeatedly and we might not notice the steps the feet take during that time. Instead, if we walk mindfully we would always watch our steps and we’ll be less likely to stumble and fall. Mindfulness when gradually improved during walking, is less likely to get interrupted, unlike mindfulness we cultivate while sitting.

Therefore, if we practise walking mindfully first and then go for mindful sitting, I am sure it will be helpful. In addition, there are other benefits of walking mindfully: better digestion of food and comfortable sleep are two examples. But since some people aren’t aware of these benefits they may devote more time for sitting mindfully than for walking.

Apparently, a wild elephant has to walk as much as twenty kilometres to find food on a daily basis. If they don’t get that opportunity to walk, they

apparently get diabetes. A similar situation arises with pet dogs whom we lovingly look after at home. I am sure we too will have similar problems unless we walk regularly.

Please remember this lesson when you become older and start working in offices. Try and get used to the habit of walking mindfully every day, and continue developing this healthy exercise.

If not, we are likely to fall sick quite soon!

When we are mindful, we can take our time to do some random acts of kindness; such as helping a weak or a disabled person to cross the road, or to protect and save an animal or insect from harm. You can choose some acts of kindness, to do daily.



Sati Pasala : Week 03

# Thursday

## Being mindful in day to day work

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**M**indfulness gets established easily when we try to attend to all our daily work mindfully. In order to facilitate mindfulness, we should try to attend to our activities slowly and silently.

Another suitable time to try being silent and mindful is when we are having meals. If we eat in haste and rush through our meal, the time available for the food to get macerated as well as mixed with the saliva is reduced. And thereby digestion of food that occurs inside the mouth becomes interrupted and we swallow only partly digested food. Saliva has some important enzymes that digest some parts of the food we take, particularly food rich in carbohydrates. And with poor digestion of starch you could end up with conditions like diabetes! Mahatma Gandhi gave us an interesting piece of advice: 'Drink all your food and chew all what you drink'.

When we get used to do things mindfully in this manner, we learn to be with ourselves and we become our own friend. Moreover, if we get irritated with something and lose mindfulness, we would be harming ourselves. If we have a tendency to get irritated often, this trait of

irritability will settle into our system and we would feel unwell – in body and mind. Even then we might not know why we feel unwell or become heedless.

Therefore, we should always set about our daily tasks slowly and in silence, because then, mindfulness would get established easily. This would bring us many long-term benefits. Even when we make a mistake, if we had been slow in the task we undertook, we get a window of opportunity and accordingly we would be able to correct ourselves soon. Otherwise, if we are in haste, we would be impulsive and very reactive, and naturally we shall have many opportunities to make mistakes! Slow is better – is a useful saying to practice, in order to avoid negligence.

When mindfulness gets into our system in this manner, during daily work, sitting mindfully and walking mindfully become easier.





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# Friday

## Being mindful while doing Glad Games

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**W**hen mindfulness develops, you shall notice that your recollections and memory regarding your actions and speech, become clearer and sharper. Although this is beneficial, if we only remember our mistakes or the transgressions in our actions and speech, and thereby become remorseful, then it is not a good trend. This is where the Glad Game comes in. We discussed this previously.

Although Glad Games can be played easily by those who practice mindfulness, at times even they might find it difficult. However, if everyone around you practices the same, it becomes easier – and that’s the benefit of a Mindful School, because everyone would be doing the same practice. Therefore, all of us should share the Glad Game.

Let us discuss another Glad Game today.

We have a pair of eyes all right, but let’s act as if we are blind. That is, whenever we see an unpleasant sight or an image that is irritating, let’s pretend as if we are blind ('Blind - Glad Game' !). Similarly, let’s pretend to be deaf if we hear what we don’t like. Whenever we hear someone speaking ill of another, let’s play the 'Deaf & Mute - Glad Game'!. The

same principle can be applied for smell, taste and touch. If these sense inputs are unpleasant, let us pretend that we had not experienced those inputs. We could thus protect ourselves from reacting and engaging in conflict. This is the non-coercive attitude and behaviour we previously discussed.

When we practise these for a while, you will understand the difference between coercive behaviour and non-coercive behaviour. This is the secret of how we can be with people and work as a team, and yet not react and get into conflicts. We would also learn how to use our sense organs (i.e. eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) in a beneficial manner. A person who doesn't learn to restrain his/her senses, would not develop the mind, and even though he might excel academically he/she may not develop the skill to organize and manage his/her life accordingly and successfully. Remorse and regret will occupy a good part of the life of such a person.

Using sense-restraint as a Glad Game will have immense benefits in later life.