



Sati Pasala : Week 05

Monday

Being mindful in the present moment

Children dears, you have now come up to the 5th week since you started learning about mindfulness. If you feel some relaxation, rest and comfort, it means that now your mind is “getting friendly” with mindfulness. Do you feel that your thoughts are less conflicting? Don’t you feel that your thoughts are getting less attracted to things (unlike previously) Why is that? That is because if you like something, you get to know it immediately as something you like; likewise, if you do not like, you get to know that too as something you dislike. Then you do not get panicky or react to things as you used to do all this time. You have some space in your mind facilitating you to just to be aware, to think before responding or reacting. This reminds us the valuable proverb “Think before you leap”.

There are many benefits of mindfulness. Shall we see how it helps us to be patient? Let us say, a friend comes and tells Sama “You know, that girl Maya scolded you a lot. She also told many bad things about you” So, in the past what would Sama usually do in such a situation? She would go with that friend to meet Maya and scold her badly.

Instead, as a good student of the Sati Pasala, what does Sama do now? She sensed that a fit of anger came to her mind. However, she did not react. She thought “If I go and scold Maya, eventually I will defile my own mind!” Thus, Sama got to know the ill-effects of being angry. Then she remembered the nice advice given in the Sati Pasala: to act like a tortoise! As Sama did not scold Maya, the tell-tale friend learnt a lesson, and became a real friend of Sama. Then Sama met Maya, as she entered the classroom. She smiled with Maya, and asked “How are you, Maya?” and sat down in her own chair. In a little while, Maya came to her and gave a ‘Veralu’ fruit. Sama accepted it with a smile, thanked her, and ate it. While eating, she thought “True, she scolded me; but there were many days when she was very friendly with me”.

So, what has really happened here? Sama’s mindfulness made her mind to be silent. The silent mind saw the correct thing to do. Therefore, she became patient. That was why our ancestors used to say, “Patience brings contentment”.

Dear children, isn’t mindfulness very beautiful? It shows you what is good and correct; it also shows you what is bad and wrong. You do not get attached to or react to either of them. If you do something correctly, you accept it - “All right”. If it goes wrong, that also you accept - “All right”. In order to accept either of this, you need lots of patience. Mindfulness shows us the path to this excellent quality of patience. That was why Sama managed to show tolerance towards Maya.

You all are now lucky and happy kids who practise mindfulness. You all practise mindfulness while sitting, while walking, and while doing your daily work- at least in some activities. When you do so, your mind gradually becomes very gentle and flexible. Your listening ability improves, also your patience and equanimity develops, and then your interaction with others will invariably improve.



Sati Pasala : Week 05

Tuesday

Being mindful in sitting

You would remember that yesterday we learnt how we develop patience because we are mindful. Today we will learn how patience develops while we are seated mindfully.

Look at what Sama did after the school is over, in Sama's words;

The bell rang to say the school is over. I took my satchel, said "Bye" to friends, and rushed to the bus halt to catch a bus. The bus came, and I quickly got in and took a seat. Many other children rushed in, shouting, laughing, joking, and playing pranks. The bus conductor shouted over and above this chatter. "Oh! What a terrible noise!" Then I remembered "S M S". I tried to bring my mind to the seated position. Then I felt the hardness of the seat on the buttocks. I felt the bag on the lap, felt the soles of the feet inside the shoes. Then I realised "Ah! Here now I am with myself!". Then the din of the other children did not disturb me anymore. I saw them shouting, but ignored it. I heard them pushing and pulling in the rush. But I just did not care. When ever I used to see this mad rush, what happened in the past? I became impatient, angry, or at times I

enjoyed all of that. That means I reacted or responded to the situation. But today I simply ignored the chatter. Why? Today I am with myself, and not with outsiders. And it is so soothing and relaxing when I am with myself, mainly because only I know that “I am with myself”, and no one else knows it! How interesting!

So, I am very glad thinking “Ah, I managed to keep my mind in the seated position at least for a little while”. It was a healthy feeling. My mind, which had been angry and reactive / loving and responding / confused / uncontrolled at other times, is now patient and somewhat stilled. Did those children confuse my mind and make me angry in the past? No. Now I realise that it was I who reacted to their behaviour, got annoyed and angry. Of course, today too they behaved in the same manner, but I was not affected by them; I did not react to them. Their chatter frequently caused my mind to go out from my seated posture, but as soon as I was aware of this, I managed to bring it back. This happened again and again, and, with that, my patience developed gradually. It was my mindfulness that enhanced my patience. It was really interesting.

Therefore, it is not outsiders that make me like or dislike things and I realised this fact just because I was mindful. Also, the teachers who explained mindfulness to me have said that my own habits, ideas, attitudes, concepts, experiences etc. make me like or dislike things. So, why and how did I realise this fact today, and not earlier? Just because I practised mindfulness. How nice if I can be mindful in my seated position during the day, as much as possible!!

Mindfulness showed me that I am the one who agitates my own mind or disciplines it, and no one else is responsible for that. If someone is unmindful, there is a great possibility of getting the mind confused and agitated. When I was in the bus, I managed to prevent my mind from being undisciplined, because I was mindful. Even at times when I am not mindful, I still can manage without reacting, as I have learnt to be patient. How did I learn to be patient? Purely by practising mindfulness.

Yes, Dear Children, Mindfulness empowers us to be good natured. This makes us very happy. Mindfulness helps us to develop patience, relaxation, happiness and makes you contented. At times, even when we are unmindful, still we become patient, but then we do that by suppressing and controlling our anger or displeasure. That is very bad for our mind and body, because we do it forcefully and not spontaneously or kindly. Then you can develop stress and strain. On the contrary, patience borne in a mindful mind is relaxing and pleasant; that is the real, genuine patience, and not a forcefully created one.

Because When you were mindful inside the bus or anywhere, you could experience that you do not mind whether there is noise or not. That means, whichever happens, it is all the same to you. You simply have patience for either. So, the anger or annoyance you experienced in the past does not come now; instead there is a pleasant patience.

That is why we must practise mindfulness. Mindfulness develops good and wholesome qualities in our mind.



Sati Pasala : Week 05

Wednesday

Being mindful while walking

Yesterday we learnt, through a practical lesson, how to be mindful while being seated and its benefits. We generally walk much more than we keep sitting. In fact, walking is a very good habit. It helps us to be healthy both physically and mentally. Do you know the proverb “He who walks experiences the world”?

Shall we see what our Sati Pasala says about walking? All our life we are used to go about while thinking of thousands of things. That might create problems, as the diffused mind does not see things on the road properly or pay attention to the surroundings. Therefore, Sati Pasala advises us to be mindful when we walk – that is, to be aware that we walk. Then we can avoid mishaps of unmindful walking, such as knocking our toes on stones, stepping into muddy water, brushing past people etc. We might even be knocked down by a vehicle! Many road accidents occur due to unmindfulness of the pedestrian or the driver. We avoid all that when we walk mindfully. Accordingly, we would not get annoyed, angry, impatient or stressful and may even avoid danger. Further, we would not become a nuisance to other pedestrians. Further, this will help you to get to your destination quicker without getting lost or wasting time unnecessarily.

One of our patriotic poets in the past expressed some very nice sentiments that are somewhat relevant in this context.

“The path is clear – And you have eyes to see. Then why grope in the wilderness - As if you have lost the way!”

The mindful person is not confused. He lives in the present moment. If we develop the habit of walking mindfully, our mind as well as the body becomes healthy. Also, it would enhance our mind with good qualities. Let us take an example. The class teacher tells “Sama, please give this letter to the Principal”. So, Sama leaves the class to go there. Sati Pasala has taught her to be mindful while walking. Accordingly, she knows that she left the classroom and she is now going to the principal’s office. She knows that she is at the door, knocks at the door, waiting to be called in “Come in”. Then she knows that she is going in and handing over the letter. She is also aware that the principal asks questions and that she answers well. So she is very glad. Now he says “Please take these books to the library”. She is aware that she is carrying them to the library which is situated a bit further away. Then she knows that she returns to the class. Sama was happy as she went to the class, since she realised that she did all these tasks mindfully.

However, the teacher is little annoyed, because Sama got a bit late due to the extra errand. The teacher asks “Where were you all this time? Don’t you know that when you are given a job, you should do it quickly?” At once Sama gets angry, and then sees that she is angry. As she has developed mindfulness while walking, she stays calm. She says “I am sorry, teacher” and goes to her seat. Teacher too may have calmed down because Sama did not talk back. Once the class is over, Sama goes to the teacher and explains matters. The teacher is very glad. She says, “Sama, you taught me a good lesson today. I learnt about being patient today”.

Do you see how useful it is to be mindful while walking, whenever we can? The patience developed through mindfulness is so valuable in our lives. We, living in Sri Lanka, are very fortunate in that we can walk

barefooted! Do you know that in so many countries, children cannot do so even if they love to, due the very cold or very hot climate? We can walk with our bare feet, soles touching the ground and then feel various sensations. And it is the constant touch and the sensations in the soles that improve our physical and mental health. So, let us get the maximum benefits of this valuable gift, by walking leisurely, slowly and mindfully!



Sati Pasala : Week 05

Thursday

Being mindful in day to day work

During the last few days we learnt how our patience, among some other qualities, improves with mindfulness. The mindful mind has patience. The patient mind is calm and relaxed. Shall we see today what happens when we are engaged in day to day activities?

During daily activities, our postures change all the time: from sitting to standing, walking, bending, lying down, in accordance with various activities. Also, all our sense doors i.e. eyes, nose, mouth, ears, skin and the mind - too get sensations simultaneously and act accordingly. This is how we live from the moment we get up in the morning until we fall asleep.

Generally, we begin the day with a plan to do many tasks during the day. When we fail to perform all of that, we get impatient, angry and even frustrated. That is why we teach you to be mindful in day to day activities as well. True, it is difficult to be mindful amidst so much of work, as we move from one job to another with haste or agitation. That is the very reason why we taught you, a few days ago, to pick up one activity and do it mindfully.

Can you remember how you learnt this: start with brushing your teeth; see how it can be picked up as a mindful activity. If you can do this every day, you shall eventually see how mindfulness could be extended to other activities gradually. Then, after some time, it would become a spontaneous process, and not a single volitional activity. So, your mind gets used to doing one daily activity mindfully, and you do it properly and nicely; you would eventually do this gladly, efficiently and skilfully. You will see the concept of “S M S” taught by the Sati Pasala in action now. So, now that you are well equipped with mindfulness, you will be able to plan and organise your daily activities efficiently by leaving out unnecessary things and doing necessary thing productively. All this will discipline your mind. Your patience will develop simultaneously. Furthermore, you will begin to do things slowly.

Some people would say “Oh! Doing things slowly might delay the work to be done and we might have to even give up some work”. But in actual fact, this is not so. Such people do not know what mindfulness really is. Now, kids, don’t you agree with me when I say that “if you do things in a hurry, you tend to do more errors, break more things, drop or forget many things, you get angry many times, you get more and more confused, agitated, fed up”. Do you know the reason? We do one thing physically, while attending to many things mentally! Accordingly, because we are not mindful in what we do, it cannot be performed well, and we get tired mentally and physically. In this context, by asking to do things slowly, we do not mean laziness. What we mean is, not to allow the mind to wander hither and thither, but to focus to the job at hand. Then you can do it better, quicker, happier and easier, and with patience. All this is embodied in this nice proverb: “More haste, less speed”.

With your mindfulness training, you can sleep well, and accordingly you wake up joyfully. This is why we say “Children are like blooming flowers”. You know why? Mindful children are always happy, pleasant, enthusiastic, smiling and, above all, exude fragrance.

When you develop mindfulness in relation to one activity, you can try to extend it to other activities as well. You might even see that it happens automatically. That is a remarkable quality of mindfulness. It is like making a garland of flowers - mindfulness is like the thread, joining together one activity after another. When this happens, you would notice that during daily life, bodily postures. change somewhat spontaneously. Also, whenever you see, hear, smell, taste, feel or think, there will be some discipline and calmness in your senses and in your mind. You know why? Because now you practise mindfulness in every posture and every act. This slowly growing discipline enhances your patience.

So, in conclusion, let us determine to be mindful, and consequently be successful and contented in our life.



Sati Pasala : Week 05

Friday

Being mindful while doing Glad Games

Children dears, it is when you live happily and contented at home, in school and in the society, that your life becomes successful. Mindfulness is your greatest friend who helps you to achieve this. Mindfulness and happiness are reciprocal, helping each other to enhance. They go forward with us, taking us hand in hand. However, generally we live in a fairly busy atmosphere, and therefore being mindful all the time is very difficult. So, while practising mindfulness gradually in many of your activities, we introduced some Glad Games during the last few weeks. The purpose of that is to introduce mindfulness into your minds in an easy and enjoyable manner.

When you play these games, it is easy for you to live happily without getting angry or being too attached. However, we are lucky to be able to improve mindfulness through all these methods. Some of the life situations can be converted into a Glad Game.

I am sure that you kids watch News in the evening. Generally weather reports are broadcast with nice pictures. They tell you that tomorrow would be a sunny day, this evening there will be a light shower of rain,

tonight a storm is impending etc. Do the authorities plan the weather, the rain, sun or the storm? Do they request for a sunny or rainy day? No! All those are natural phenomena. They simply come and go. The Sky and the Earth just bear them up. However much the storm bears down with thunder, lightning and heavy rains, the sky tolerates all that. However much the rain pours down and thunder flashes on the earth, it just tolerates all that. They do not get angry. They are equanimous.

In the same manner, we simply cannot stop the thoughts coming in to the mind. They come and go without informing us. Therefore, if your friends try to annoy you, just try to be like the sky, or like the earth. Usually, if a friend scolds, we tend to scold or retort back. But now, since we practise mindfulness, we tolerate all that. The mindful child watches the Weather Report and tries to apply these ideas into his life situations.

It is like this: the impending weather situations come and go without any prior notice to the earth and the sky. Likewise, in the same way, our thoughts too come and go. There are many reasons for weather situations. In the same way, our thoughts too have many different reasons. You know very well that the sky and earth are unable to control any of those weather conditions and yet they are equanimous. Of course, we too can practise to be like that. If we become mindful, we can discipline our thoughts. Do you know how? Mindfulness enhances the excellent and essential quality of patience. Patience helps us to accept whatever thoughts that come to our mind as it is. At the same time, it paves the way for us to enhance our mindfulness. So you see, those two always help and support each other! In the end, the mindful mind helps us to accept everything, whether good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, with equanimity.

Shall we go for another nice Glad Game? Now, you get the short interval in school. What do you usually do during that time? You have your snack and begin chatting with friends, or play a little. Mostly those “chats” could be unnecessary “chattering”, which might even create problems. Now I wish to suggest a nice activity for you: You can run up to the playground,

and at the fence there are many trees. You all can pick up some fresh leaves and dry leaves. Go to a shady place and sit down with your friends. Now just look at those leaves and observe their colour, shape, texture and size. Then look at a fresh leaf carefully. It is moist, soft and smooth, not easy to crush into small pieces, it cannot be blown off in the wind easily. Next, take a dry leaf. It is dry and not moist when you feel it. Also, it is rough. You can crush it into tiny shreds, and you can even blow a dry leaf off the wind easily. Thus, you can compare and contrast the fresh leaf with the dry leaf.

Now, this conveys an important message to you. How the leaves of the same tree change with time, and how their characteristics, both internal and external, change accordingly. You observed this with your own simple test and you experienced it yourself. Likewise, our body and mind too change with time, not only during long periods, but even momentarily. Let us consider our mind. As you all know, it changes very rapidly, much more rapidly than the body. We ourselves know this by experience. Now, we can take the example learnt on Wednesday. Maya scolded Sama, then, a little later, she came and gave her a 'Veralu' fruit. You see, the same mind changed in such a short time. As Sama acted mindfully and wisely, the friendship remained intact.

With mindfulness, we can improve patience, and thereby face any situation with equanimity. We learnt that lesson today, because we observed and handled different leaves of the same tree mindfully. You see, that is a very effective Glad Game, coming from Nature, isn't it?

Children, let us always live in harmony with Nature, admire it, appreciate it, protect it and conserve it. We are simply a tiny part of Mother Nature. We belong to Nature but Nature does not belong to us. If we harm or damage it, that means that we are damaging an essential part of ourselves. Let us talk about it later. Thank you, for the time being.