



Sati Pasala : Week 07

Monday

Being mindful in the present moment

We are able to understand ourselves better, when we study mindfulness. Therefore, even if we are at fault, we will forgive ourselves and try to correct it without getting upset; likewise, if other people do a wrong thing to us, we will not get angry with them straight away. Even though we get upset we would be silent, because mindfulness shows both what is right and wrong in us, and the similarity between me and the other person. Then we realise that it is the nature of the mind and this understanding gives strength to the mind to rectify the conflict situations slowly, mindfully and silently.

If a dog is given the leadership in a pride of lions, that pride will be defeated frequently. Because the dog barks for everything it encounters without discrimination, it increases the risk of calamity. If a lion is given the leadership in a pack of dogs, that pack will win frequently. Why? Because the lion always investigates and checks, so the danger is less there. Our thoughts are also like dogs. If we give the leading role to our thoughts, they will react to each and everything without thinking twice, like the dog. It is all right to have thoughts but if mindfulness is given the leadership to the stream of our thoughts we will be successful in our life.

Because when thoughts arise, mindfulness will show us the right and wrong aspects of our thoughts.

We have monkey minds, always jumping here and there. Also we have streams of thoughts that frequently react like dogs. The judgmental nature of our mind and thoughts provoke us to fight with each other, be jealous, selfish, competitive, angry, to tell tales, and accept to do impossible things. If we give the responsibility of the monkey -mind and thoughts known as the dogs to mindfulness, they will be friendly with mindfulness and will work as brave as lions – and work slowly, mindfully, silently. By practicing mindfulness, we kids can be like lions. Here the intention is not to be proud of being a lion. The mindful mind generally sees the truth as it is, therefore it does not get panicky, and the mind become stronger to accept things as it is, whatever it receives. When you throw a stone towards a dog, he will jump and try to bite it, but if we do the same to a lion, he will try to find from where the stone came. There is a valuable proverb - “Think before you leap”. A person who is mindful is similar to a lion and would think before taking a sudden decision that will protect him and help other people as well. Therefore let us develop a good understanding of ourselves, thereby gaining insight and perception to do many useful things, to see the life as favourable and to look at others with equanimity. In this way we develop loving kindness – in other words, love - to others and ourselves.



Sati Pasala : Week 07

Tuesday

Being mindful in sitting

The moment you are sitting, you can begin to be with yourself, seated peacefully and comfortably, eyes closed slightly, in a place where there is no noise, away from smells, you are also without tasting anything. Now you are friendly with your body. You love yourself very much. At this time, when any one comes to your mind, as there is no conflict in your mind, you love that person. Here the love is not the strong attraction, but accepting everything about myself and the other person as it is. The true love that arises in this manner will reduce all the problems in the world. Are you aware of the strength you add to your inner and outer peace by improving your mindfulness at least for few minutes during the day? Other than a person who has developed at least some amount of mindfulness, no one else knows this secret.

Sama likes practicing mindfulness very much. When she comes to school early, she likes to sit under the mango tree. Today when she is going towards the grounds she saw Maya sitting under the mango tree and crying. Sama goes to her and asks “Why Maya, do you have any pain in your body? No Sama, apart from my mother who loves me, I have no one else who loves me. My mother works very hard and she has no time to

be with me. She works as a seamstress in a shop. My father has left home in anger and he doesn't come home. There is a possibility that he will not come again to live with us. Now I can't sleep at night and I get irritated easily. This morning, when I was coming to school, I saw your father dropping you and then leaving after embracing you lovingly. That reminded me of my father."

"Oh, dear! I am so sorry to hear that. Come and sit with me"

Sama invited Maya with compassion, and expressed her love by embracing Maya. Then she said: "Do you understand the meaning of embracing with love? It is something that goes from "heart to heart" and "mind to mind". Because, your heart and my heart, your mind and my mind are the same. We all have emotions such as suffering, anger; rage, sadness and we have sensations in common. Everybody thinks that only they have these feelings. Often, I think that my mother loves my brother more than I. Therefore, I cry and fight. The reasons for suffering are either slight or strong, but the suffering is suffering, it is the same.

"As we have some free time today, can we two sit here and be mindful for a little while? Come, we will sit at ease as our teacher instructed and relax the tightness in our body. Keeping the right hand over the left hand and slowly closing the eyes just by keeping the eyelids lightly together. Now let us focus the mind to the sitting posture and be at ease with us. We know that we are sitting now, doing nothing. We might hear chirping of birds, cool breeze will touch the body, thoughts also will come, but it is ok, they will come and go. We were told that things come to go away. Therefore we will keep our sitting posture, knowing that we are sitting. Then let us open eyes when we hear the bell."

So, they were seated mindfully, silently and peacefully for some time. "Oh! Sama, there goes the bell! I feel very happy now, my mind is less heavy, I remembered my father and mother, those thoughts came and went away. Felt sad, that also came and went away. But now I remember my father again."

“It is all right Maya, if you know that you are suffering then it is called mindfulness. We were told that if we know the things come to our mind as it is, then that mind is mindful. Likewise, we know suffering because we know that there is pleasure. When you were sitting under the mango tree, you felt that your mind was at ease. When you are aware of painful feelings arising, simply look at them without giving any attention; if possible, try to fix attention to your present posture. Then your mind will get adjusted to be at ease. Let’s go to the class now.”

Both of them went to the class and sat down. The teacher came in and checked with the class about the essay they were given as homework yesterday. Maya has not done her homework. The teacher said, “Maya, why haven’t you done your work today as well? Every day you fail to do your work, you are in a different world even though you are in the class. Come and meet me after the class” and continued her work in the class. Maya felt sad, fear also came to her mind, but she noticed the sadness; then a teardrop fell and she noticed that too. Then Maya remembered what Sama was telling her about what The Sati Pasala Teacher explained “we understand sadness because we know about happiness”. Maya wiped her tears, turned towards Sama and smiled. Sama returned a bright smile. Maya felt a slight easiness and she was encouraged by that sweet smile. Then she was able to give an answer when the teacher asked her a question. Maya felt love gushing towards her. Why was that, dear kids? Because Maya got some confidence of her own the capabilities. When you realise that you love yourself, you can look at other people with loving-kindness.



Sati Pasala : Week 07

Wednesday

Being mindful while walking

Walking makes the body and mind healthier in adults as well as in little ones. Hippocrates, known as the father of medicine has said, “Walking is man’s best medicine”. (He also has said, “Be closer to Nature to become healthier”). Likewise, Friedrich Nietzsche has said that “All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking”. Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher, a cultural critic and a poet whose works have made a profound influence on Western philosophy and modern intellectual history. Therefore, you can see how valuable the lesson we learnt from Sati Pasala is, on how to be mindful while walking. Our ancestors also have a Sinhala adage that describes the value of walking ,”The feet that have tread are worth a thousand times”.

During this exercise of mindfulness, we walk easily, walk peacefully, and walk leisurely and naturally. Then we feel lightness in our mind and it is focused on the walking posture. The mind that is at ease is able to peep into our inner world and see who really I am. We develop equanimity in our mind accepting the fact that others and I have both good and bad qualities. This helps to develop trust and compassion towards myself and to develop equanimity towards others.

As usual, Sama went to school today but she did not see Maya when she looked around. With a doubtful mind, she decided to go and see Maya after school. Sama clearly saw the doubt in her mind. This helped her to relax her mind to continue with her studies.

In due course, the bell rang and the school was over. Sama went to Maya's house with her father. Maya came to answer the door and when she saw Sama, she burst into tears. Sama's father told Sama to stay with her friend and he would come to pick her up in the evening.

Sama asked, "Why didn't you come to school today". "My dad came yesterday, I felt so happy and ran up to him. But he pushed me aside, and went to my mother; then they argued with each other and my father went away saying that he would never come back. My mother went to work in the morning but after returning home, she didn't eat her dinner. My head ached and I was scared too, so covered myself with a bed sheet and went to sleep".

"Oh! I am so sorry Maya, but please do not cling to it. Let's do something nice. Don't worry. Oh! Maya, I have got a bright brainwave!! I'll tell you, Maya. You know that shaded footpath near the school, Shall we both walk there for a little while?"

Maya agreed and they both went. "Maya, all these incidents have already occurred and they are now in the past. We will walk for a little while so that it will be forgotten. It is very soothing to the mind to walk outside. Shall we remove our shoes and walk barefoot?"

So, both removed their shoes. Sama commented on the compassionate feeling she felt as soon as she put her bare feet on the ground, and said that she like the earth very much.

You know why? I can remember what Sati pasala taught us. Even if it gets polluted by people dumping rubbish on it, even if the trees and foliage get destroyed by a powerful storm, even if there are damaging floods

with raining, thunder and lightning, even if there are tsunamis destroying everything with terribly strong sheets of sea water, the earth would never complain. Again, the earth would never be proud by the wealth of its gems, other precious stones and immense treasures, by enchanting waterfalls and rivers, by crystal white snowy mountains and beautiful trees and flower gardens. I feel that mindfulness is similar to the earth. If we become mindful, we will also act like the earth.

“Therefore, shall we walk by putting our bare feet on the earth and taking the strength from it? “Maya, can you remember how our teachers in the Sati Pasala taught us to walk mindfully?” “Oh, yes, they asked us to walk with ease at first. If you know that your attention is on the feet touching the ground, keep your attention there and continue walking, knowing that you are walking. Thoughts will come, you will hear sounds, but if you keep your attention on your feet, they will just come and go”. “Oh! Maya, excellent! you remember all that?” “Why not? When it was taught, you helped me in the school “. “Then shall we walk for half an hour, being aware that we are walking?”

So that was exactly what they did.

“Sama, how can I thank you for the support you are giving me?” “But see, in return I am also learning things from you Maya.” “Sama, throughout this walking session, I remembered from time to time, the incident of last night. At first, that bothered me a lot, but then I thought about the earth and I put a lot of effort. Gradually, I was only aware of my feet touching the earth. My mind went to my home when I was turning to walk back. That means I lost my mindfulness when I was turning and then thoughts came in. But after a little while I felt that “I am with myself”. Sometimes we are mindful and sometimes we are not; we know both these because we are mindful, and this feeling is very joyful.”

Do you know what The Sati Pasala teacher said last week? The Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, known as the Father of Mindfulness in the West, says (If you are walking, then walk by getting

friendly with the earth, as the soles of your feet touching the ground.)
“Walk as if you are kissing the earth with your feet”.

Now our mindful walking was effective because we walked barefoot.

“Sama, you know, I am taking treatment for depression. My mother took me to the doctor because I get scared in the night. I feel sorry for her. She doesn’t take her meals regularly and sometimes she gives me her food telling that I need to eat because I am taking medicine. The medicine makes me sleepy and I felt sleepy when I was walking.”

We learned that “Walking is considered as the best medicine for every ailment, isn’t it Maya. Your sleepiness may be due to the feeling of lightness in your mind after a good session of mindful walking. Teachers from Sati Pasala have told us that sometimes we can feel sleepy when our mindfulness is good. I think mindful walking is a wealth to be earned, because it leads to healthy body and mind. I can remember my grandmother saying “Generally, in a family, father brings home money from his job to spend on food, health and protection in order to make us grow healthier and stronger. Mother is the person who uses them wisely for us to have a healthy body by feeding, and cleaning and helps to develop a healthy mind, guiding us by showing with empathy what is right and wrong and thereby to take correct decisions”. Therefore, I think “father represents mindful walking and mother represent mindfulness”.

Walking makes you strong in body and mind. We learnt earlier that mindful walking as the best medicine for the body and mind and this function is similar to the father in our life. A healthy and strong mind gives us protection. For whatever reason, if you don’t have your father physically with you, if you do mindful walking every day, it gives the sense that your father is with you, providing you with health, strength and protection

Considering Maya’s experiences, maybe you get the emotion that no one loves you, but it is not true. Mindful walking helps to relax your mind, which in turn helps to develop loving kindness towards yourself, which

means you truly love yourself. Then there is no need of getting love from outside. This doesn't mean that you don't need your father's love, but if your father is not there, what is the solution? Emotions such as sadness will harm your mind. Do these sad feelings bring your father back to you? The strength and the happiness in the mind enriched by mindful walking makes the mind free. Such a person will love himself and others.



Sati Pasala : Week 07

Thursday

Being mindful in day to day work

Everyday life, actions and speech are similar to a continuously flowing river. Everybody's life seems to be moving in fast speed. We can see that everyone including small, young and old are adapted to a busy life style. We need to rescue our children from this situation. The aim of Sati Pasala and mindfulness training workshop sessions is to introduce to our small children the true meaning of love. It is very difficult to be mindful in every moment of your life. Training children to do at least one thing mindfully during the day or be in the present moment "Now – I am – Here" whenever possible, is a valuable asset to add to your life. It is better than nourishing them with good food and protection. Do you know why? The child who learns to be "Now – I am – Here" will accept the food, clothes and other things he has, as they are, without judging or criticising. The most valuable asset Sati Pasala offers to our children is teaching them to be mindful or to be aware of every moment of our day-to-day life.

See What Maya and friends do as day to day mindfulness.

As the school sports competition and the Ordinary Level exams came closer there was uneasiness among students. They felt they have to go for sport practices as well as prepare for the forthcoming exams. “Maya, can you remember, last year lots of our friends became angry with each other because of the competition among them? Do you know why? We were not aware of the difference between competition and competitiveness. Shall we do the games this year with a new initiative because we are learning mindfulness?” “How can we do that?” “We will compete without competition.”

“When we play sports, we do compete. Here, we can remember teachings of the Sati pasala about Competition. The purpose of a competition is to enhance unity and friendship, to learn about peace, to bring serenity and comfort to the body and mind, to accept loss or winnings gracefully and with equanimity. Competing with each other and trying to win somehow or the other are characteristics of an angry and too ambitious mind. Today most of sports competitions are based on the ambition of wining somehow, using whatever means to defeat the opponent.

Maya, I have an excellent idea. Shall we help planning our sports competition this year under the theme of peace and happiness? I have written a leaflet to promote this concept. We will give this to our class teacher to be distributed to other class teachers, do you agree?” “Oh! Super! You are marvellous! Show me, what did you write Sama? I am impatient to know”

Please listen and correct where I am wrong.

“As our school is a member of Sati Pasala, in our sports competition this year, we will play with unity and accept winning and losing equally, just like children of one mother. During our practices, we will be mindful. In olden days in Greece the winner of Olympic games was garlanded with a crown made from olive leaves, symbolising peace, happiness and health.

The olive tree grows slowly and survives for a long time. Greek people believed that the olive tree had powers to bring them happiness, wealth and peace. Even now most parts of the olive tree are used to achieve a healthy body because of its medicinal properties.

Therefore, in our forthcoming sports event, as children of Sati Pasala, keeping the olive tree in our mind and believing in Nature's helping hand, we will do every event with enthusiasm and mindfulness to bring happiness, serenity, peace and wealth. We will promise with mindfulness that we will accept loss and winning with equanimity" – So, there you are, Maya!".

"Oh, Sama! Great! That note is very beautiful. We learn a lot from Nature and become aware of these things because of mindfulness. Now I think about the earth and console my mind little by little. When I move around the house I try to walk mindfully as much as possible. I am adjusting myself to the absence of father in my life and now I feel less gloomy and hurt. I am developing the courage to bare the suffering when it surfaces in my mind.

"Even though I was eating 'Veralu' all these years, I was not aware of the beauty of the tree. Yesterday when I was sitting under the "Veralu" tree I saw leaves that are turned to red and leaves that are green, small fruits, ripe fruits, fallen ripe fruits. I saw all these very beautifully one by one. Two ripened fruits fell while I was there and one fell on to a stone and got squashed. "Then I heard a soft noise and saw two pretty and cute birds sitting on a branch chirping to each other., just like you and I chatting! I looked at them carefully, and then I saw many birds with a small thatch on their heads, yellow birds, blue birds, and birds with colourful feathers and different shapes and features. I haven't noticed or seen them before. One of them touched a fruit with his beak and it fell from the tree, but the bird continued with his singing. He seems to be OK with it. Everybody including animals don't get what they like to have.

“Then I heard my mother’s voice and instantly my mind moved away from the tree. I realised that all this time I was with the tree. All these years I have consumed ‘Veralu’ from the tree but it was only today that I saw the reality of the tree. I wondered about the affection, the mindfulness has for small kids like us. Today I saw the beauty of the ‘Veralu’ tree, which I have never seen before. I cry for things that I don’t have, without seeing the happiness I have with me. Isn’t that mindfulness, which taught me all these things? Each and every day’s mindfulness brings us happiness. If we have happiness we love ourselves and we love others in return. Many thanks to Saati Pasala for teaching us true living.



Sati Pasala : Week 07

Friday

Being mindful while doing Glad Games

Dear children, we like Glad Games very much. Do you know why? Because we can have a lot of fun when we play glad games. Likewise, mindfulness also gets closer to our lives like a true, genuine friend – “Kalyana mita”. It is very easy to learn mindfulness through Glad Games even for a person who is sick and sad or who has problems. Glad games are a good method for children, especially small kids, to learn mindfulness.

Sama and friends are much happier doing Glad Games.

Sama and Maya went to school on Saturday for sport practices. Leela, who was already there, said “Sama, I saw your note on the olive tree. It is a very valuable example for us. When I read that, I also got a good idea for a glad game.” “What is your idea, Leela?” “As usual, we have to decorate our sports house tents this year as well. In the past, we used to bring our decorations secretly and try to do the decorations to compete with others, to look better than the other houses. This time shall we meet with the House Captains to discuss, to decorate all the four houses in the same style? Even though we practise for the games separately, isn’t there

beauty and delight when we do the decorations together.” “Oh, Leela! You are marvellous! That is a very good idea.”

“I have a good idea how to do it. We will fix a white sheet on the inside of the back wall of the tent. We will have posies made out of small sprigs from ‘Veralu’ tree as we don’t have olives in Sri Lanka. Then let’s have orchid flowers representing the colour of each house and arrange them randomly to look stunning on the white cloth.”

Sama says “Leela, wouldn’t it be like a very beautiful flowery chintz cloth – “මල් මල් වික්ක රෙද්දක්” “mal mal cheeththa reddak’?” “Yes, Yes, this marvellous design will stand out because we shall be competing in the sports events without being competitive and decorating all four houses under the same theme. Oh, Leela! this will be an excellent opportunity for us to show our unity and solidarity as students of Sati Pasala to be a role model for the whole sports world.

“What a magnificent idea, Leela! I will bring sprigs of “Veralu “leaves cut in to small, nice pieces,” says Maya. Rose says that she has yellow orchids at her place and she will bring them. Meena says she has purple orchids, which she will bring. Durga says she has red orchids at her house, Affana says she has green orchids. “Excellent! Now we have all the four colours to represent each House, I will bring white thread and a needle to sew the posies on to the white sheet” says Sama.

The students who flocked there were so happy and each had something to say: Would not it be a very fascinating mindful sports competition? We all will help you on that day. The process of making those posies together will be the “Unity is the Strength”. Likewise, when we attach the posies we make one by one slowly, mindfully, silently, can’t we say “Mindfulness is the Strength”.

That day Maya went home with contentment, thinking about the ‘Veralu’ tree and that she had something to offer for the decorations. Maya has few people to help her at home, but even though she doesn’t have an

olive tree, which gives happiness, wealth and health, Maya has the 'Veralu' tree, which brings her happiness.

The day before the Sports Day, Maya went to the 'Veralu' tree to pluck some branches. Maya plucked some twigs from the branches, which she could reach, but she found difficult to reach the higher branches. Maya saw her father coming towards her, when she turned to bring a stick.

"What are you doing?" "Oh, Dad! It is so nice that you came. Please get me some sprigs of leaves from the tree". Father climbed the tree, plucked and dropped some sprigs onto the ground. Then he climbed down and helped her to collect the sprigs and then both went to the house. As mother was not at home, Maya made a cup of tea for her father. While he was having his tea, he was looking far away through the window thoughtfully, and then he said "I will go now" and then he went away. When Maya told him to come again, her father, with a slight smile, touched Maya's head and went away. Maya felt sad. Maya saw that she is sad. Maya thought, "Why can't I be happy? When I thought I had nobody, my father came at the right time to help me. Why should I get sad? I can be content with what I get." Maya felt very pleased with herself.

When my farther who doesn't live here at home, who went away saying that he will not return, came near the 'Veralu' tree, and my mind didn't get upset. When I was a plucking sprigs from the tree I knew I was plucking. When I went home, I knew I am going. When I was making tea, I knew I am making tea. I saw my father looking at the sky through the window. I heard my father saying that he is going, while stroking my head. I saw sadness creeping into mind. I saw the contentment in the mind when I realised that my father came to help me when I thought that I had nobody. Humble satisfaction came to my mind. I love myself. I love my father. I Love him irrespective of the fact whether he stays at home or not. That means I am at present moment, I felt delighted.

“The moment that judgment stops through acceptance of whatever it is, you are free of mind. You have made room for love, for joy, for peace.” Eckhart Tolle. (Eckhart Tolle is a German-born resident of Canada, best known as the author of the *Power of Now* and *A New Earth*. He is widely recognised as one of the most original and inspiring spiritual teachers of our time.)