



Mindfulness and Negligence

A Dhamma Talk

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Today, the Dhamma talk will be about a Verse spoken by the Buddha and recorded in the Dhammapada.

**“Appamadarato Bhikkhu
pamade bhayadassi va
abhabbo parihanaya
nibbanasseva santike.”**

The English translation is:

**“A bhikkhu who takes delight in mindfulness
and sees danger in negligence
cannot fall away;
he is, indeed, very close to Nibbana.”**

This is the 32nd verse as found in the Second Chapter called Appamada Vagga

First, we should understand 2 words:

Appamada which means Mindfulness and

Pamada which means Negligence.

You, yogis, are practicing Vipassana meditation to develop your Mindfulness (Sati). Without Mindfulness, we cannot obtain progress with our Vipassana Insight. Eventhough today, you are practicing with a small group, but as long as you can make progress, your practice is most beneficial.

The Buddha, after his own Enlightenment, has spent 45 years preaching the Dhamma to his disciples and all beings. During those 45 years, every day, as he came back from the alms round, after washing his feet on a stone slab, he always reminded his disciples:

“Appamadena bhikkhave sampadetha” which means “O bhikkhus, be mindful and try to achieve Vipassana insights.”

All the teachings of the Buddha, as recorded in the Tipitaka, may be summarized in that one advice.

Now, you yogis are practicing according to the Buddha’s teachings. You may know that it is not easy, that it is a difficult practice. That is why the Buddha kept reminding his disciples to be mindful every day.

Mindfulness and Negligence are two opposites. Beings live with negligence all their life,

from childhood to the present. Negligence has become a deeply ingrained habit. To undo it, the task has to be very difficult.

Some yogis may think: “we are not negligent, we mostly remember our responsibilities, works, and schedule.” But the Negligence that the Buddha want his disciples to eliminate here is NOT the negligence pertaining to daily activities but the rather Negligence referred to as “**Without Mindfulness**”.

Negligence or “Without Mindfulness” means to forget to be aware of the physical and mental phenomena which are happening within oneself, to forget to be aware of their arising and disappearing. Negligence or “Without Mindfulness” also means to forget to do wholesome deeds (Kusala Kamma).

For example, we breathe all day, 24 hours a day, without stopping, even when we sleep or eat or talk. We are always breathing. And yet, we are not aware of the breath when we exhale and inhale, we are not mindful of our breathing. This is an example of Negligence also known as " Without Mindfulness".

Other examples can be found with our walking, doing activities, etc. A meditator is one who is dwelling in **Mindfulness** (Appamada). A non-meditator dwells in **Negligence** (Pamada). In other words, what a yogi is doing is: he or she is trying to replace Negligence with Mindfulness.

A yogi may ask: Why is there so much Negligence in my life? It’s because not only in this life, but in innumerable past lives, that one dwells in Negligence. Through the many existences in the Samsara, we have continuously dwelled in Negligence.

But the yogis should not be discouraged by thinking: “Oh, we can never be able to replace this Negligence because we have so much of it and in the meantime, we have so many hindrances in our practice and so many defilements in our lives.”

Instead of the feeling of discouragement, yogis should replace it with SAMVEGA which is a Sense of Spiritual Urgency. With this SAMVEGA, with this Sense of Spiritual Urgency, yogis will see the “danger in Negligence”. Once being able to see the danger in negligence, yogis will increase their efforts in Vipassana meditation and eventually, will take “delight with Mindfulness” (Appamada).

The Buddha has pointed out 2 important factors in the Verse:
“Appamadarato” - “finds delight in mindfulness” AND
“pamade bhayadassi va” - “sees danger in negligence”

We need to see both factors clearly and practice accordingly so that we will not “**fall away**” (abbhavo parihanaya). The Buddha has taught: that once a person sees danger in negligence and finds delight in mindfulness, he cannot fall away from the noble path (Magga), fruition (Phala) and final emancipation (Nibbana).

When you practice Vipassana for one month, one week, one day or even one hour, you must try to see clearly the difference between mundane and supramundane, between daily activities and Vipassana practice, between worldly obligations and Dhamma efforts. That way, you will not be confused

about the meaning of the word Negligence in daily life and in Vipassana practice.

You have obligations and responsibilities. You are busy with your family, community and Sasana works. Sometimes 'Negligence' cannot be avoided. But when we practice Vipassana, yogis must remember to replace this 'Negligence' with "Mindfulness".

Once, during the time of the Buddha, there was a female lay devotee named Visakha. She was the foremost female lay devotee, spending her life supporting the Buddha and his disciples. She also had a large family and many social obligations. Everyday she went to the monastery, paid respect to the Buddha and listened to his Dhamma talk.

One day, the Buddha asked her:

"Visakha, you are so busy with worldly responsibilities, Sasana works as well as Dhamma practice. You came here to practice the Dhamma every day. How do you balance your worldly affairs and the Dhamma practice?"

Visakha answered: "Venerable Sir, when I take care of my family and community works, I just put my mind in doing them. And when I come here to practice the Dhamma, I left them all behind and concentrate on the practice only."

Upon hearing her answer, the Buddha gladly exclaimed: Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Here, a question may be raised about Visakha: With all the merits from her wholesome deeds and her Dhamma practice, why can't she obtain higher level of enlightenment? She was a Stream-enterer (Sottapanna) since she was seven years old and did not reach any higher Path and Fruition (Maggā and Phala) for the rest of her life.

The answer is: In her past life, Visakha has made the aspirations to be reborn in celestial realms, moving to higher realm birth after birth, as the result of her wholesome deeds. That is why she did not reach the higher Path and Fruition of the next higher attainment, that of a Once-Returner (Sakadagami).

So, yogis should remember that Mindfulness and Negligence are two exact opposite directions. When one walks toward one direction, automatically, he will be far away from the other. Consequently, the Buddha preached that when a yogi dwells in Mindfulness, "he is, indeed, very close to Nibbana." - "nibbanasseva santike."

When a yogi practice Vipassana meditation and achieve Insight Wisdom, he or she will be able to enjoy a taste of Nibbana (or Nirodha).

Nibbana or Nirodha means "cessation of all Nama and Rupa, cessation of all mental and physical phenomena." This is the meaning of Nibbana.

So, Nibbana means "Cessation of all mental and physical phenomena."

Regarding Nibbana as Cessation of all mental and physical phenomena, there are two kinds.

The first kind of Nibbana is the Cessation of all mental defilements but the five aggregates remain (nama-rupa). It's called **Sa-upadi-sesa Nibbana**. This is the case of a person attaining Arahanship and is still alive. He still have the five aggregates (body and

mind) but no defilement will ever arise in his mind again.

The second is the Cessation of all mental defilements as well as all aggregates when the Arahán passes into nibbana. For him, the round of rebirths has ceased. It's called **Anu-padi-sesa Nibbana**. Like a flame extinguished, here the cessation of all mental and physical phenomena is total and final.

As a meditator progresses in his Vipassana practice, he will obtain the first lower stages of Insight and will experience Momentary Cessation (Khanika Nirodha).

With the middle and higher stages of Insight, he will experience Temporary Cessation (Vikhambana Nirodha).

And finally, when his practice reaches to the level of perfection, he will experience Complete Cessation (Samuccheda Nirodha).

This Complete Cessation is Nirodha or Nibbana.

To conclude, may all yogis have much Patience (Khanti) with their Vipassana meditation. Even if you cannot obtain your final goal of Nibbana this life, you are increasing your Perfection with each practice, your mind becomes peaceful. Your practice will help lessen defilements in your mind. You can solve your problems better and you can face the difficulties in your life better.

May all yogis obtain more Vipassana Insight.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!