

# 11

## (Satipaṭṭhāna) Sati Sutta

The (Satipaṭṭhāna) Discourse on the Mindful | S 47.2

or Ce Sato Sutta The Discourse of Mindfulness

Theme: Mindfulness is being here and now

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2023

### 1 Sutta summary and significance

#### 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

The (Satipaṭṭhāna) Sati Sutta (S 47.2), the (satipatthana) discourse on the mindful, is a short statement by the Buddha on the practice of keeping the mind properly focused on a meditation object or the mind to keep it in the present moment of true reality. The Sutta serves as an introduction to the full exposition of satipatthana, especially in the **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), SD 13.3.

#### 1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE

##### 1.2.1 Mindfulness (in brief)

**1.2.1.1 Mindfulness** (*sati*) is the minding of or attending to the body, to feelings, to thoughts or to dhammas (states or realities) as meditation objects. The **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) carefully words such a minding as follows:

a monk <sup>1</sup> dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful, <sup>2</sup> [2.1.1]			
contemplating the body	in the body, <sup>3</sup>	<i>kāye kāyānupassī</i>	[§§4-31]
contemplating feeling	in the feelings,	<i>vedanāsu vedanā'nupassī</i>	[§§32 f]
contemplating mind [thought]	in the mind,	<i>citte cittānupassī</i>	[§§34 f]
contemplating dharma	in the dhammas,	<i>dhamme dhammānupassī</i>	[§§36-45]
			(M 10,2/1:56 (SD 13.3))

The curious syntactical structure “the body *in* the body,” “feeling *in* the feelings,” “mind *in* the mind,” and “dharma *in* the dhammas” highlights that each of these satipatthanas (focuses of mindfulness) as meditation-object should be “closely seen” (*anupassī*) *as it is*, as it arises and falls, that is, in the present moment.

**1.2.1.2 Mindfulness** here is *the close attention* we give to the meditation- or mind-object. The meditator should here be “exertive, clearly aware, mindful” (*ātāpī sampajāno satimā*). In this Pali phrase, we need to read the last word first, that is, “mindful (*satimā*): we need to be “exertive” (*ātāpī*) in bringing the mind back to the object whenever the mind wanders off; we need to keep it “clearly aware” (*sampajāno*) so that the mind does not wander into the past or chase the future. We need to do this until the mind merges with the object; then, there is concentration, even dhyana.

This mindfulness is a gentle but firm focus; it is far from being “non-judgemental.”<sup>4</sup> The very idea of being “mindful” is that the mind is only “full” with a *true* vision of the mind object. It is **wrong**

<sup>1</sup> Here “a monk” (*bhikkhu*) may refer to either an ordained monastic or anyone who is meditating (here, doing satipatthana) (DA 3:756; MA 1:241; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251): see SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5). [§4 n]

<sup>2</sup> *Ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā, domanassam*. In this para, we see 4 of the 5 faculties (*pañc'-indriya*) in action [2.1.1.2].

<sup>3</sup> “Contemplating body in the body” (*kāye kāyānupassī*). See SD 13.1 (3.4).

<sup>4</sup> This notorious error prob started with Nyanaponika's *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, London, 1962:32, 42. This error was famously and profitably perpetuated by J Kabat-Zinn's notion of medical “Mindfulness” [SD 60.1e (1.1.3.4)].

**mindfulness** (*micchā sati*) when we superimpose a memory (the past) onto it or when we project the future (imagination) onto it. The point is that when doing satipaṭṭhāna, we need to be mindful of neither falling back into the past nor projecting into the future. “The past is gone, and the future has not yet come.”<sup>5</sup> We call this “**mindfulness of the present.**”

**1.2.1.3** However, there is also what we can call the “**mindfulness of the 3 times.**” In certain practices, such as the recollections (*anussati*), we can be wholesomely mindful of the past or be wholesomely mindful of the future, or be wholesomely mindful of the present. There is an important teaching on this mindfulness of the 3 times in the **Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 61), (SD 3.10).

The Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhul’ovāda Sutta records the Buddha’s teaching on the “mindfulness of the 3 times” regarding the 3 karmic doors, that is, reviewing our bodily act, speech and thought, thus:

- (1) This action I want to do with **the body**—**will it** harm me, will it harm others, will it harm both?
- (2) This action I am doing with **the body**—**is it** harming me, is it harming others, is it harming both?
- (3) This action I have done with **the body**—**did it** harm me, did it harm others, did it harm both?”

(Knowing) it is **unwholesome** ... with painful outcome, painful result,  
then, Rāhula, you should **give up** such an action with the body.

(Knowing) it will be a **wholesome** ... with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,  
then, Rāhula, you should **do** such an action with the body ...

[Similarly with “speech,” and with “the mind.”] (M 61,9-11/1:415 f), SD 3.10

In the case of (1), reviewing an action <u>before</u> doing it is	<i>mindfulness of the future.</i>
In the case of (2), reviewing an action <u>while</u> doing it is	<i>mindfulness of the present.</i>
In the case of (3), reviewing an action <u>after</u> having done it is	<i>mindfulness of the past.</i>

In short, this is the “**mindfulness of the 3 doors** over the 3 times.”

### **1.2.2 Clear awareness (in brief)**

**1.2.2.1** In sutta usage, we see mindfulness (*sati*) and clear awareness (*sampajañña*) working together; hence, we often see the dvandva (twin compound) **sati,sampajañña**, “mindfulness and clear awareness” or simply, “mindfulness and awareness.” Hence, as we have stated [1.2.1.2], mindfulness, far from being “non-judgmental,” but carefully minds the mind-object, keeping it just as it is, whether it is in the present moment, about something in the past, or about something in the future [1.2.1.3].

Technically, we can say that while mindfulness *directs* the mind to the object and *keeps* it there, it is clear awareness that works to “clear” away whatever prevents this full mental attention from occurring, whether a present-moment object (eg watching the breath), a memory as an object (such as in the recollection of the Buddha), or wise consideration of a future action [1.2.1.3]. In other words, mindfulness *does judge* the mind-object with “clear awareness.”

**1.2.2.2** The Commentaries explain further that **clear awareness** not only fully minds the meditation-object, but it also minds or ensures that the meditation itself is done properly. In other words, we should be clearly aware that we have the right purpose for meditating, that we have the right object for our meditation, that our meditative nature takes *every* daily activity mindfully [below], and that the goal of our meditation is to gain wisdom or non-delusion that frees us from delusion.

<sup>5</sup> *Yad atītaṃ pahīnaṃ taṃ | appattañ ca anāgataṃ: Bhadd’eka,ratta S* (M 131,3/3:187), SD 8.9; *Ānanda Bhadd’eka,ratta S* (M 132,3/3:191), *Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd’eka,ratta S* (M 133,5/3:193), *Lomasak’aṅgiya Bhadd’eka,ratta S* (M 134,3/3:200). (SD 8.9 (2.1.1)).

**The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) defines clear awareness (*sampajañña*) comprehensively in the following 7 ways, covering all our *conscious* activities, thus:

One is **clearly aware** of what one is doing:

- (1) in [while] going forward or going backward [stepping back];
- (2) in looking forward or looking back;
- (3) in bending or stretching;
- (4) in carrying one's upper robe, outer robe and bowl; [while dressing and working]
- (5) in eating, drinking, chewing and tasting;
- (6) in voiding or peeing;
- (7) in walking, in standing, in sitting, in sleeping, in waking,<sup>6</sup> in talking, or in remaining silent.

In short, the meditator is mindfully present with clear awareness in their actions even outside of formal meditation. This is the true and full contemplative life.

### **1.2.3 Sati,sampajañña and vitakka,vicāra**

**1.2.3.0** It is very interesting to examine how mindfulness and clear awareness are mentioned at the start of the attaining of **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana** (*paṭhama jhāna*). The stock passage on the attaining of the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana reads as follows:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Quite detached from sense-objects, (detached) from unwholesome mental states,             | (1) |
| having attained, one dwells in <b>the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana</b> ,                         | (2) |
| accompanied by <u>initial application</u> <sup>7</sup> and <u>sustained application</u> , | (3) |
| accompanied by <u>zest</u> and <u>joy</u> , born of solitude.                             | (4) |

- (1) *Vivicc'eva kāmehi akusalehi dhammehi* | (3) *sa,vitakkaṃ sa,vicāraṃ* |  
(4) *viveka,jam pīti,sukhaṃ* | (2) *paṭhama-j,jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

(D 2,75.2/1:73), SD 8.10<sup>8</sup>

**1.2.3.1 (1) “Quite detached from sense-objects”** (*vivicc'eva kāmehi*) means that the meditator's mind is free from the distraction or influence of the physical body as a whole. This signifies “physical (or bodily) solitude” (*kāya,viveka*), that is, the mind no more has to process any sense-experiences or sense-data, including thoughts regarding them. Generally, “physical solitude” also refers to being free from any external distractions, that is, being in an environment that conduces to meditation progress and mental growth.

**“(Detached) from unwholesome mental states”** (*akusalehi dhammehi*) means that the mind, too, is (temporarily) free from greed, hatred and delusion. As a whole, this means that the mind is free from all the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*): sensual desire (*kāma-c,chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*).<sup>9</sup> This denotes “mental solitude” (*citta,viveka*), that is, the mind is fully free, calm and clear.

**1.2.3.2 (2)** It is then said that **“having attained, one dwells in the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana”** (*paṭhama-j,jhanam upasampajja viharati*) when all the 5 mental hindrances [1.2.3.1] have been overcome and the mind

<sup>6</sup> “In sleeping, in waking,” *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference), lit, “while asleep, while awake.” Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, reclining.” For details, see SD 13.1 (3.6.2). See also SD 60.1f (4.3.2.5).

<sup>7</sup> The 4 dhyana-factors have been underscored.

<sup>8</sup> On the dhyana-factors of the 4 form dhyanas, see SD 8.4 (5).

<sup>9</sup> See **Nīvaraṇa**, (SD 32.1); (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12.

is fully unified (in samadhi) and naturally radiant. In this case, one does not only get a glimpse of the free, radiant mind, but actually remains in it for as long as one has aspired to do so.<sup>10</sup>

**1.2.3.3 (3)** This first dhyana is said to comprise these 4 **dhyana-factors** (*jhān'aṅga*)—the basic “limbs” of dhyana—initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), zest (*pīti*) and joy (*sukha*). Of special interest to our current study is the presence of the dvandva “initial application and sustained application” (***vitakka, vicāra***). *Vitakka* is our directing attention to the meditation object; *vicāra* then carefully examines the object, thus keeping the attention there, deepening the focus and concentration in due course.

We can thus see *vitakka* and *vicāra* respectively act as *sati* and *sampajañña*: initial application is the mind “applying” itself on the meditation object *mindfully*; sustained application is when it keeps itself *aware* of the meditation object, freeing the mind from the body (sense-objects), as a result of which zest and joy arise. [1.2.3.4]

**1.2.3.4 (4)** We have just mentioned that zest (*pīti*) and joy (*sukha*) arise as a result of the mind fully attending to the mind-object on account of *vitakka, vicāra* [1.2.3.3]. **Zest** is an *exuberant* joy of the mind at the feeling of being fully free of the senses and thoughts; **joy** is a calmer *sense of satisfaction* (or resolution) at the resultant *stillness* of mental oneness and *solitude* of inner aloneness. Hence, it is said to be “zest and joy born of solitude” (*vivekajaṃ pīti, sukhaṃ*).

In other words, this is not ordinary mindfulness and awareness, but mentally focused meditative application of attention to the meditation object and keeping it anchored there until the mind attains concentration and dhyana. This is called ***samatha***. Further, upon emerging from dhyana, with the wake of the dhyana that is *calm and clarity*, the mind clearly sees the true nature of true reality, beginning with impermanence. This is ***vipassana***.

**1.2.3.5** We can thus see that *sati, sampajañña* is closely related to the experiences of **calm** (*samatha*) and **insight** (*vipassanā*). Theoretically, when we keep applying the mind (attention) to the meditation object, even without closely examining the object, joy will still arise. This is then followed by the arising of *sukha* (joy or happiness). Here we see *sati, sampajañña* working as **the 7 awakening factors** (*satta bojjhaṅga*)—(1) mindfulness (*sati*), (2) investigation of states (*dhmma, vicaya*), (3) effort (*virīya*), (4) zest (*pīti*), (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi*), (6) concentration (*samādhi*), and (7) equanimity (*upekkhā*).<sup>11</sup>

Here we see the 7 awakening factors begin with (1) **mindfulness** (*sati*), followed by **awareness** by way of (2) investigation of states (*dhmma, vicaya*) and (3) effort (*virīya*). This is then followed by (4) zest (*pīti*) (the joyful free mind) and (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi*) (the stilling of all sense-experiences and thoughts), leading to (6) concentration (*samādhi*), and resulting in (7) equanimity (*upekkhā*), the peace of dhyana and the on-looking calm and clarity that follows.

<sup>10</sup> Traditionally, on account of bodily limitations (the body needs food), a meditator normally can only stay in dhyana continuously for 7 days at the most.

<sup>11</sup> On the 7 awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*), see (**Bojjhaṅga**) *Sīla S* (S 46.3), SD 10.15; **Mahā Sakul'udāyī S** (M 77,20) + SD 6.18 (7); **Aggañña S** (D 27,30), SD 2.19.

## 2 Sati and sampajañña

### 2.1 MINDFULNESS (*SATI*)

#### 2.1.1 The basic satipatthana formula

**2.1.1.1** The definition and usage of the dvandva (a pair of terms), *sati,sampajañña*, is found in the well known **basic satipatthana formula** (on the 4 focuses of mindfulness,<sup>12</sup> which opens **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) and **the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22), thus:

Here, bhikshus, a monk, ... dwells exertive [ardent], clearly aware, mindful, ... putting away covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world.

*Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu ... viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā,do-manassam.* (M 10,8), SD 13.3, = (D 22,4), SD 13.2<sup>13</sup>

Firstly, we should note that this basic or auxiliary satipatthana formula gives the essence of practical meditation, that is, the establishment of mindfulness (*sati'paṭṭhāna*). Hence, we can clearly see how this formula is based on the framework of the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*), those qualities that define, harmonise and fulfil our meditation.

**2.1.1.2** Four of the 5 faculties are clearly evident from the way this satipatthana formula is worded, thus:

effort [energy]	=	"exertive";
wisdom	=	"clearly aware";
mindfulness	=	"mindful";
samadhi	=	"putting away covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world." <sup>14</sup>

The faculty of **faith** (*saddh'indriya*) is the first and most basic of the faculties and underpins all these 4 faculties: we must have faith in our effort, wisdom (understanding), mindfulness, and samadhi (mental concentration). This is a practical or "hands on" faith, that is, the willingness and ability to apply these "satipatthana faculties" for the attaining of mental focus, which is then applied for attaining liberating wisdom. Hence, faith underpins all these 4 satipatthana faculties.

#### 2.1.2 Mindfulness in early Buddhism

**2.1.2.1 Mindfulness**, a well-known and widely accepted translation of the key Pali term **sati** can mean anything to any scholar, especially the mind scientists (a broad term for psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, etc). Such modern definitions are "purpose-driven" or "professionally limited," depending on the purpose of the professional using them.<sup>15</sup> Such definitions often quickly attract criticism and are often debunked within a generation. To determine which of such terms are useful in the study of a history of modern psychology, we need to keep to the sutta-based definitions and implications of the term, *sati*, if we are interested in Buddhist studies and practice.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See SD 13.1 (3.1.2).

<sup>13</sup> For details on *sati,sampajañña*, see SD 13.1 (3.6).

<sup>14</sup> Covetousness and displeasure are synecdoche for the 5 mental hindrances [4.2.5], the removal of the hindrances implies some level of mental concentration. See §4.2.

<sup>15</sup> This is sometimes called "the scholars' Buddhism": see SD 60.1c (6.3).

<sup>16</sup> For other meditation terms in modern usage (but not necessarily current), see SD 60.1f (0.3). For a detailed survey on modern conceptions of "mindfulness", see SD 60.1e (1-5).

If the “**professional notion of mindfulness**” is a psychological Scylla, then there is the “sectarian notion of *sati*” that is an ethnic Charybdis.<sup>17</sup> In the competitive market of ethnic Buddhism, **sectarian teachers** tend to come up with their own, often curious, even bizarre, definitions or interpretations of *sati* and other early teachings. Those who put the teacher above the teaching are easily and profoundly driven by such developments. Again, such personal and private teachings often last only as long as the teacher lives. Although such teachers may have produced prodigious writings on their systems, such sources are hardly read by their followers, but can be useful to research scholars studying the development of Buddhist dogma or some aspects of comparative Buddhism.

**2.1.2.2** In this lesson (SD 60.11), it is essential and sufficient that we understand that ***sati*** is not “present-moment awareness” but simply *minding the object in mind*. It is **awareness** (*sampajañña*) that discerns whether the object is wholesome or unwholesome: the former to be cultivated and the latter to be abandoned. Thus, we have both mindfulness and awareness (*sati, sampajañña*).

Secondly, mindfulness is *not* merely awareness of the present; it is also minding past objects (memories) and future objects (imagination). It is awareness that discerns these aspects of the object and deals with them accordingly, such as letting go of the past and of the future. It is awareness that watches the present rising and ending of mental states; mindfulness keeps the focus to effect the process.

Finally, it should be noted that mindfulness as a pregnant term—that is, as “mindfulness and awareness”—has a significant presence throughout our spiritual training, thus, **mindfulness**:

- (1) stands at the head of **the 7 awakening factors** (*satta bojjhaṅga*);
- (2) stands right in the middle amongst **the 5 faculties** (*pañc’indriya*) and **the 5 powers** (*pañca, bala*); and
- (3) stands near the end as the 3<sup>rd</sup> training amongst **the 8 path-factors** (*magg’aṅga*).

Mindfulness appears like a captain commanding the ship that is our conscious body; it works as awareness investigating states (*dharmā*) as they arise. Mindfulness as effort keeps going on the proper course; this brings on zest, which leads on to tranquillity (the body fully settles leaving the calm and bright mind). In this profound peace, the mind focuses in samadhi, resulting in equanimity (including dhyana).

While we are meditating, mindfulness is the conductor or moderator that harmonizes *faith* with wisdom, and *effort* with *concentration*—they work as the 5 spiritual faculties—so that we mentally progress on a sure and even keel. With *awareness*, mindfulness penetrates ever deeper into seeing true reality until we are mentally free with the attaining of some level of concentration, even dhyana.

As path-factors, that is, qualities bringing about the path of freedom (even if only a momentary vision of it), right mindfulness is preceded by right effort and fruits in right concentration. In simple terms, *right effort* keeps away distractions and cultivates the right conditions, bringing on *right mindfulness*, when the mind focuses on the object, and this results in *right concentration*, that is, dhyana.

Underlying all this process is, of course, mindfulness and awareness at ever more refined levels.

<sup>17</sup> Scylla and Charybdis were mythical sea-monsters in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Greek mythology locates them on opposite sides of the Strait of Messina between Sicily and Calabria (on the Italian mainland). Scylla was a 6-headed sea-monster (rationalized as a treacherous rock shoal) and Charybdis was a whirlpool. Here this allusion refers to a difficult choice best avoided by resorting to sutta-based definitions informing our own experiences. On this mythology, see SD60.1c (6.2.3).

## 2.2 CLEAR AWARENESS (*SAMPAJAÑÑĀ*)

### 2.2.1 The 4 applications of clear awareness

The same advice is given in **the Gelaṇṇa Sutta 1** (S 36.7), the first discourse on the infirmity. The Sutta Commentary explains at length the practice of **clear awareness** (*sampajañña*).<sup>18</sup> Clear awareness or full knowing (*sampajañña*)—often simply “awareness”—has been discussed in a number of places in the suttas and the SD series.<sup>19</sup>

The Commentaries give detailed explanations of **clear awareness** (*sampajañña*) as having these **4 applications**, that are, briefly, as follows:<sup>20</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (1) clear awareness of <u>purposefulness</u><br>( <i>sātthaka, sampajañña</i> ) | discerning the wholesome worth of our actions;                    |
| (2) clear awareness of <u>suitability</u><br>( <i>sappāya, sampajañña</i> )     | discerning the proper means for our practice;                     |
| (3) clear awareness of <u>the resort</u><br>( <i>gocara, sampajañña</i> )       | being mindful of one’s meditation in daily activities;            |
| (4) clear awareness as <u>non-delusion</u><br>( <i>asammoha, sampajañña</i> )   | seeing our actions as being conditioned, without an abiding self. |
- (DA 1:183; MA 1:184, 253 f; SA 3:182-190; VbhA 347)

By “clear awareness” here is meant that we are clearly knowing or fully keeping in mind the true **purpose** in taking up the Dharma, of our **practice** of mindfulness and meditation, of our **daily activities**, and of **the true nature** of these activities leading to mental concentration and liberating wisdom. In other words, we are not using Buddhism for worldly gains or any self-centred agenda except for a life of outer and inner renunciation for happiness. [2.2.2.1]

### 2.2.2 The 4 phases of clear awareness

**2.2.2.1** The Buddha’s teaching has only one **purpose**: that of **renunciation** (*nekkhamma*). All the sutta teachings in some way address or result in the renouncing of unwholesome states, the cultivating of wholesome states, and the attaining of mental freedom. This is the true purpose for practising the Buddha’s teaching and for renouncing the world to join the monastic sangha.<sup>21</sup>

Just as the Buddha Dharma has only one purpose, that of renunciation, it also has only one goal, that is, freedom (*vimutti*), which here refers to self-awakening itself. Thus, **the Pahārāda Sutta** (A 8.19) uses the parable of the great ocean, playing on the word *rasa*, “taste,” to mean “goal.” Hence, it is said regarding **the clear awareness of purpose**:

Pahārāda, just as *the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt—*  
so, too, Pahārāda, this Dharma-Vinaya has only one taste, the taste of freedom.<sup>22</sup> [§16.1-2]  
(A 8.19,16) + SD 45.18 (2.6)<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> S 36.7/4:211,1-19. For trs of this teaching, see Soma, *The Way of Mindfulness* [1941], 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Kandy, 1975: 83-132; Bodhi, *Discourse on the Fruits of Recluseship*, Kandy, 1989:96-134.

<sup>19</sup> See SD 13.1 (3.6). On “full or clear awareness,” see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22; M 10), SD 13.1 (3.6.3); **Sāmañña, phala** (D 2,65), SD 8.10 = **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,33), SD 1.7

<sup>20</sup> For a contemporary explanation, see Nyanaponika, 1962:46-57.

<sup>21</sup> On meditation as renunciation, see **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 22.3/3:9-12), SD 10.12; **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (14.7); **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (1.6.2).

<sup>22</sup> *Evam evarāṃ kho pahārāda ayaṃ dhamma, vinayo eka, rasa, vimutti, rasa*. Cf Maitrāyana Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad 6.35: sacrificers dissolve in that ocean like salt, and this is the oneness with Brahman. On the parable, cf Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.11.

**2.2.2.2** As a rule, we do not often have the opportunity to choose the **suitable conditions** for our practice. For various reasons, it is not easy for us to practise Dharma when we are old or ill, or when food is difficult to obtain, or in times of social strife or when the sangha is split. Hence, **the Samayāsamaya Sutta** (A 5.54)—a teaching on the clear awareness of the suitability of practice—records the Buddha as stating the wrong times for Dharma practice and the 5 right times, as follows:<sup>24</sup>

**Wrong times for practice**

- (1) when one is old
- (2) when one is ill
- (3) when there is a famine
- (4) where there is social unrest
- (5) when the sangha is split

**Right times for practice**

- (1) when one is young
- (2) when one is healthy
- (3) when food is plentiful
- (4) when people dwell in concord
- (5) when the sangha dwells in concord

A 5.54/3:65-67 (SD 51.15)

**A rule of thumb** for the clear awareness of the right conditions for Dharma practice is as follows:

- (1) the best time for practice is *now*;
- (2) the best meditation-object is *the here and now*;
- (3) the best teacher is *our own sufferings*;
- (4) the best effort is *not to give up*; and
- (5) the best awakening is that *our body and mind changes all the time*.

**2.2.2.3** When we have the clear awareness of purpose and suitability, the clear awareness of the proper **resort** for practice comes easily: we are mindful and aware of the kinds of **people, places, food** and **habits** to avoid, as we have a better understanding of how our body and mind work. Simply put, we clearly know that, or are inclined towards, bodily acts that are wholesome, speech that is wholesome—both of these constitute our moral practice and virtue—and thoughts that are wholesome, which we guard and cultivate with mindfulness and mental concentration.

**2.2.2.4** With the preceding 4 kinds of clear awareness, it is not difficult for the clear awareness of **non-delusion** to arise and guide us. The main root of delusion to be aware of and avoid here is that of *identifying* with our body (our body-parts and looks) or with our mind: feelings, perceptions (memories), formations (karmic acts, words and thoughts), and consciousness (sense-experiences and the mind).

When we do not identify with these 5 aggregates, which bring about clinging (*upādāna*), or at least work to lessen such an identifying, we are less likely to feel “entitled” to the notions “this is mine” (craving), “I am this” (conceit) or “this is my self” (view).<sup>25</sup> These are, in fact, the roots of **narcissism**. We tend to be overwhelmed by any of these views through the habit of **self-identity** (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), a view arising from identifying with any of the 5 aggregates.

The basic and constant reflection we need to cultivate in this connection is that *all my body and mind are impermanent*. Whatever is impermanent is also unsatisfactory: we can never be fully satis-

<sup>23</sup> The parable (in a set of 8 parables) are also found in **(Aṭṭhaka) Uposatha S** (A 8.20), SD 59.2a, and **(Samudda) Uposatha S** (U 5.5), SD 59.2b, and Vinaya’s Pātimokkha Thapana Khandhaka (Cv 9.1-2 @ V 2:237-240), SD 59.2c.

<sup>24</sup> A 5.54/3:65-67 (SD 51.15).

<sup>25</sup> *Etam mama, eso’ham asmi, eso me attāti*. These are “**the 3 graspings**” (*ti, vidha gāha*), ie, of view (*diṭṭhi*), of craving (*taṇhā*), of conceit (*māna*) (MA 2:111, 225). The notion “This is mine” arises through craving; the notion “This I am” arises through conceit; the notion “This is my self” arises through views. These 3 considerations represent respectively the 3 kinds of mental proliferation (*papañca*) of self-view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), of craving (*taṇhā*), and of conceit (*māna*) (Nm 280; Vbh 393; Nett 37 f). The opposite formula, *n’etaṃ mama, n’eso’ham asmi, na mēso attā ti*, is applied below to the 5 aggregates [§§17-21]. See §17 n. See Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. For detailed studies, see **I: The nature of identity**, SD 19.1; **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a; **Mine: The nature of craving**, SD 19.3.

fied with what is ever-changing. What is impermanent and unsatisfactory does not have any abiding essence with which we can identify as “I,” “mine” or “me.” When we habitually renounce the self-identity view in this way, we will attain **streamwinning** in this life itself, if not, at the very moment of passing away—as stated by the Buddha in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1).<sup>26</sup>

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## (Satipaṭṭhāna) Sati Sutta

### The (Satipatthana) Discourse on the Mindful

S 47.1

**1** At one time, the Blessed One was dwelling at Anātha,piṇḍika’s park monastery in Jeta’s grove outside Sāvathī.

**2** There the Blessed One addressed the monks thus, “Bhikshus!”  
“Bhadante,” replied the monks.

The Blessed One said this:<sup>27</sup>

**3** “Bhikshus, a monk should dwell **mindful and clearly aware**: this is our instruction to you.”<sup>28</sup>

#### Mindfulness

**4** And how, bhikshus, is a monk<sup>29</sup> **mindful**?

Here, bhikshus,

(1) a monk<sup>30</sup> dwells<sup>31</sup> exertive, clearly aware, mindful,

**contemplating the body in the body,**<sup>32</sup>

removing<sup>33</sup> covetousness and displeasure [discontent]<sup>34</sup> in regard to the world;<sup>35</sup> [M 10,4-31]

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<sup>26</sup> S 25.1/3:225 (SD 16.7).

<sup>27</sup> Here the Buddha gives the essence of **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), ie, the basic satipatthana formula [M 10,3] and the section on “clear awareness” [M 10,8] (SD 13.3).

<sup>28</sup> *Sato bhikkhave, bhikkhu vihareyya sampajāno. Ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsānī.*

<sup>29</sup> “Monk” (*bhikkhu*) is a synecdoche for a meditator [M 10,3A n, SD 13.3] or sutta audience [SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1)]. On laity attaining “monkness” (*bhikkhu, bhāva*) during meditation, see (M 10,3A) + n, SD 13.3; SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5); SD 16.7 (1.1.1.2).

<sup>30</sup> Here “a monk” (*bhikkhu*) may refer to either an ordained monastic or anyone who is meditating (here, doing satipatthana) (DA 3:756; MA 1:241; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251): see SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5). Note that in **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97) Sāriputta teaches the divine abodes to the layman Dhānañjāni (addressing him directly) (M 97,32.2), SD 4.9, and that in **(Nānā,karaṇa) Mettā S 1** (A 4.125), the subject of each of the stock passages on the 4 divine abodes is “a certain person” (*ekacco puggalo*) (A 4.125,2 etc), SD33.9.

On meditation as renunciation, see **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 22.3/3:9-12), SD 10.12; **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (14.7); **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (1.6.2).

<sup>31</sup> *Ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhiijjhā, domanassam*. Here we see 4 of the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc’indriya*) in action [1.2.1.1].

<sup>32</sup> “Contemplating body in the body” (*kāye kāyānupassī*). See SD 13.1 (3.4).

<sup>33</sup> *Vineyya* can mean “would or should remove” (as pot or opt, like *vineyya*, Sn 590) or as “having removed” (as ger or absol, like *vineyya*, Sn 58, or *vinayitvā*, Pm 1:244), and both senses apply in Satipaṭṭhāna S. U Silananda similarly ends the sentence with “removing covetousness and grief in the world” (1990:177); also 1990:22-25. See Sn:N 170 n58 + 284 n590. See SD 13.1 (4.2c) above.

- (2) he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful,  
**contemplating feeling in the feelings,**  
 removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world; [M 10,32 f]
- (3) he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful,  
**contemplating mind [thought] in the mind,**  
 removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world; [M 10,34 f]
- (4) he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful,  
**contemplating dharma in the dharmas,**<sup>36</sup>  
 removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. [M 10,36-45]

In this way, bhikshus, a monk is mindful.

## Clear awareness

### 5 And how, bhikshus, is a monk clearly aware?

Here, bhikshus,<sup>37</sup>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) in [while] going forward or going backward [stepping back],    | one is clearly aware what one is doing. |
| (2) In looking forward or looking back,                            | one is clearly aware what one is doing. |
| (3) In bending or stretching,                                      | one is clearly aware what one is doing. |
| (4) In carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl, <sup>38</sup> | one is clearly aware what one is doing. |
| (5) In eating, drinking, chewing and tasting,                      | one is clearly aware what one is doing. |

<sup>34</sup> "Covetousness and displeasure," *abhiññhā,domanassam*, alt trs: "desire and discontent," "desiring and disliking," or "longing and loathing." Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders it as "hankering and fretting [in regard to the world]." See SD 13.1 (4.2).

<sup>35</sup> "World" (*loka*). See SD 13.1 (4.2.4).

<sup>36</sup> "Dharma" (*dhamma*) here refers to either mental states or realities (truths) that arise during the meditation or generally as "mind-objects." See SD 13.3 (5D).

<sup>37</sup> In this set of clear awareness of one's bodily activities, the Chin version (MĀ 98/T1.582b25) has fewer activities than both the Satipaṭṭhāna Ss (D 22, M10): it does not mention such activities as *looking forward and looking back, eating and drinking, or voiding and peeing*. These same activities seem to be absent from the passage on clear awareness in Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra: frag S 360 fol 167V6 (Waldschmidt 1950:15) continues after *saṅghāticīvarapātradhāraṇe* right away with *gate sthite niṣaṃṇe śayite*. M 10,8 (1:57,7), on the other hand, follows *saṅghāṭi,patta,cīvara,dhāraṇe* with *asite pīte khāyite sāyite* and *uccāra,passāva,kamme*, and then on to *gate ṭhite nisinne sutte*. Chin Dīrgha Āgama version, DĀ 2 (T1.14a3), mentions clear awareness regarding looking in different directions as well regarding eating and drinking (cf Yit's tr, 2008:273 n17), as does the Śrāvaka-bhūmi (Shukla 1973: 111,12; ŚSG 1998:20,5; T1579 (T30.397b17)); for a detailed exposition of clear awareness: Shukla 1973:111,11; ŚSG 1998:172,1; and T1579 (T30.413c29). The set of activities described in D 22,4 (2:292,25) and M 10,8 (1:57,5) appears to be a pericope for proper conduct in the suttas. The importance of such proper conduct is reflected in Cātumā S (M 67,16/1:460,9), SD 34.7, and Ūmi,bhaya S (A 4.122/2:123,29), SD 47.9, according to which a monk's unwillingness to submit to instructions on how to undertake these activities can eventually lead him to disrobing. A description of proper conduct in the Jain tradition (Deo 1956:487), also mentions voiding and peeing.

<sup>38</sup> This whole line: *Saṅghāṭi,patta,cīvara,dhāraṇe sampajāna,kārī hoti*, lit "upper robe, bowl, outer robe ..." Traditionally, **the "3 robes"** (*ti,cīvara*) are (1) the outer robe (*uttar'āsaṅga* = "one-sided robe," *ekaṃsika cīvara*), (2) the under-garment (*antara,vāsaka*, also called *nīvasana*, V 1:46) and (3) the upper robe (*saṅghāṭi*) (V 1:94,8 = 2:272,11 ~ 5:175,2). When "amongst houses" (ie, outside of the monastery, eg, for almsround) the outer robe must cover both shoulders. However, when showing respect to elders or the sangha, it should be placed on one side (*ekaṃsaṃ uttarā,saṅgaṃ karitvā*, V 1:45,32, 46,5, 2:126,32). *Cīvara* is a generic term, meaning "robe," and can refer to any of the 3 above. Here, however, the context clearly refers to it being used as an "outer robe," *uttar'āsaṅga*. See CPD: *uttarāsaṅga*; also C S Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, Varanasi, 1975: 88-91.

- (6) In voiding or peeing, one is clearly aware what one is doing.  
(7) In walking, in standing, in sitting, in sleeping,  
in waking,<sup>39</sup> in talking, or in remaining silent, one is clearly aware what one is doing.

In this way, bhikshus, a monk is clearly aware.

6 Bhikshus, a monk should dwell mindful and clearly aware; this is our instruction to you.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>39</sup> “In sleeping, in waking,” *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference), lit, “while asleep, while awake.” Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, reclining.” For details, see SD 13.1 (3.6.2). See also SD 60.1f (4.3.2.5).