

Practice Note: A way of Attending

Gil Fronsdal

February 12, 2020

Keywords: mindfulness, attention, meditation, walking meditation, breathing, Dhamma, wisdom, sense-experience, reverence, discovery

And then to say a few words about the practice. A big part of doing mindfulness practice is how we pay attention, and so sometimes attention to how we're paying attention, to the care in which we're attending to, is an important part of it. I want to use an analogy. If you hear that there is a very wise person, maybe has all the qualities of your ideal wisest person you could ever imagine, you get to talk to, and however the person is quite old and is very, very soft spoken. So you're here, you have a chance to hear them, but they are. So they are. But you have to listen really carefully.

You can't strain, because if you strain, it's so soft that straining will just kind of block some of it out. You have to stay very relaxed, very attentive, very respectful. You really want to hear. And so, in the same way, when we sit in reality, we sit and meditate, to walk in meditation or sitting meditation. You might want to think that reality is really wise, and that whatever reality presents you with, it has some depth of wisdom to it if you know how to listen to it.

And how would you listen to your breathing? How would you attend to it? If you thought your breathing was phenomenally wise, being a person who had a wealth of wisdom to share with you as you breathe, how would you do walking meditation? If each step was listened to or attended to with that kind of care and respect, and really hear, you hear the traffic go by, how would you hear that traffic, as if there was wisdom in that traffic? How would you drink water? How would you touch a doorknob?

How would you sit on a toilet? How would you do anything? If that very thing you're doing was the wellspring of wisdom, of something very important that's going to be revealed, and there's not a few, our spiritual people in different religions who will say something equivalent to what some Buddhists will say: that the *Dhamma* is being preached in the traffic that goes by, in the steps that you take, in the breath that you experience in yourself. That the greatest

Dhamma talk you'll ever hear is available for you in each of the experiences that come in through your senses that you experience moment by moment.

And if that's the case, how would you listen? In fact, how you attend, how you be present for each thing, it's actually how you make it into a profound talk. It's how you meet and how you're with something that makes it come alive and expresses for you to discover the *Dhamma*, the truth. So as you go about this morning, you might see if there's a way of attending, a way of attention to whatever is happening moment by moment, even how you stand from your seat, that there's something there. There's some reverence there, or care there, or a respect or attending that makes it really special, makes it come alive in some profound way for you. May each moment of this morning, being had it so, be a discovery of wisdom. Thank you.