

At the End of the Day (2)

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

Spiritual practice demands that we make every moment absolutely important, not just because it is actually the only moment we have since past and future moments don't exist, but because it is only in the present moment that we can effect change. How then to bring that sense of importance into everyday routine tasks, the ones we repeat often mindlessly. Preparing for bed is a prime example. The toiletry, the undressing, nestling into the mattress. Often done at speed to get it out of the way. Or hurled through the process by the longing for oblivion. Or in a sort of semi-consciousness, exhausted from the day's stresses, sleep walking into bed. But there is a way we can make spiritual capital out of habitual rituals, and that is to turn it into a meaningful ritual. And by ritual here I mean to imbue our actions with spiritual purpose. Immediately, Right Mindfulness is brought to bear and with it the Right Intention and so on to Right Action. It's time to care for the body. To remind ourselves of its preciousness. Herein is housed the enlightened-being-to-be. It is through the body that this awakening will take place. So let's care for it. Let us appreciate it as our most valued vehicle. Let's treat it with the same reverence we treat our cars, our mobiles, iPods and jewellery. To bring the same attentiveness to those actions that we often care to disregard. To urinate and evacuate, such Latinate words disguise our disgust. But good old Anglo-Saxon - to piss and to shit - often reveals our true relationship. How can we overcome such negativity to what are natural and therefore neutral actions of the body unless we attend to them. When we attend to them with the Right Intention to care for the body, we can see the role of *tanha* - that deluded distinction we make between pleasant and unpleasant where we indulge the one and annihilate the other. But there is a transcendent way to be with both the pleasant and the unpleasant and that is the equanimity we find in open acceptance - this is the way it is. And the joyful discovery is that the pleasant and the unpleasant still exist and they are ok. To bring our mindfulness to bear to the feel of things. The feel of warm water on our hands and cheeks. The taste of the toothpaste. The comfort of the mattress. And so, to wash the face with the care a mother washes her baby. To brush our teeth as if we really treasured them, knowing how much we don't want dentures! To undress and dress for bed, treating our clothes as if they were the only ones we had. To lie on the cuddling mattress and for a moment bring to mind how lucky we are to live in such comparative luxury. How many are the men, women and children who, this night, have no soap but a stone, no clothes but rags, no bed but a pavement! Let us send them our metta.

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