

AN 7.61
Pacalāyamāna Sutta
“Dozing Off”

Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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This is what I personally heard.

At one time, while the Blessed One was staying at the Deer Park, on the Sunsumāra Hills within the Bhesakala Forest, among the Bhaggas, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, who was living in Magadha, in the Kallavalaputta village, was seated in meditation, but had been dozing off.

Now, the Blessed One, with his Divine Eye that is pure and far surpassing that of the human, saw the Ven. Mahāmoggallāna dozing off during his sit, in the Kallavalaputta, in the kingdom of Magadha.

And, just like a strong and agile person would quickly extend or flex his arm, so too the Blessed One disappeared from the Bhesakala Forest and instantaneously appeared in front of the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, and sat on the prepared seat for him, and said to him.

“Moggallāna, were you dozing just now?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Moggallāna, when you are drowsy like that in your sitting, you should not continue using nor applying the same object of your meditation. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should carefully think about and ponder on the Dhamma, mentally dissecting various aspects of the Teaching that you have learned and studied, as you observe and experience them in the mind during the sitting. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should recite the Dhamma that you have listened to and memorized. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should pull on both ears and rub the body with both hands to create and activate more blood circulation. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should get up from your sitting by moving the body, rubbing the eyes with water, looking in different directions by rolling the eyes, and going outside under the stars to look at the stars above you. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should concentrate on the perception of light, seeing the brightness of the day in the mind in this manner: “the brightness of the day shines equally at night – the brightness of the night shines equally during the day.” Thus, keeping your mind fresh and open, the mind should be developed with luminous alertness. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should start walking forward and backward, thus being vigilant and alert of what is in front of you, as well as whatever is behind you, while keeping your faculties sharp and the mind collected. When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“But Moggallāna, if after having done this, you still notice that the drowsiness did not disappear, then you should lie down on your right side in the lion’s posture, one leg resting overlapped over the other, mindful and clearly knowing what is taking place, as you determine to yourself the time for rising up. And when it is time to wake up, you do not remain lying down indulging in a relaxed posture, as you remind yourself: “I shall get up immediately, and not enjoy nor lounge in the pleasure of sloth or drowsiness by going back to sleep.” When you make this shift of focus, it becomes possible for you to shrug off the drowsiness and no longer doze off.

“Further, Moggallāna, you should train in this manner: “I will not approach families nor their homes conceited with the arrogance or pride of being somehow superior to them. That is the way to train yourself. After all, families have many tasks and responsibilities to attend to daily, so, when a Bhikkhu arrives at their door, at first the householders might not notice him standing there nor attend to him immediately. That, however, should not lead the Bhikkhu to think: “Well, this family seems to ignore me completely! Someone must have turned them against me! They must have now found themselves another recluse to support than me! They do not like me anymore!” And because of such thinking, the Bhikkhu feels humiliated, and this leads him to get restless, resentful, and agitated; and because of his agitation and restlessness, the Bhikkhu loses his sense of restraint; and by losing his restraint, he becomes far removed from experiencing the peace that is the collectedness of mind.

“Further, Moggallāna, you should train in this manner: “I will not engage in debates nor involve myself with contentious discussion. That is the way to train yourself. After all, when people engage in debates or are involved in contentious discussion, many words are exchanged. When that takes place, the minds become restless and agitated; and because of agitation and restlessness, people lose their sense of restraint, and therefore become far removed from experiencing the peace that is the collectedness of mind.

“Further, Moggallāna, I neither promote associating with others, nor do I stand against associating with others completely. I do not, however, encourage association between Bhikkhus and householders, but I do appreciate and encourage resorting to secluded places that are quiet and far from the noise of the crowds, far removed from social activities, where the Bhikkhu can peacefully practice and gain from the benefits of seclusion.”

When this was said, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna spoke thus to The Blessed One:

“Bhante, is there a concise and succinct teaching that can be defined, with the help of which a Bhikkhu, by following it closely, gets liberated through the destruction of craving, thereby becoming supreme among both *devas* and humans? A brief and encapsulating instruction that could allow one to reach the highest goal of the Holy Life, thus winning freedom from bondage, once and for all?”

“Indeed Moggallāna! Now, listen and attend closely.”

“Yes, Lord!”

“Here, Moggallāna, the Bhikkhu ponders how ‘nothing is suitable to be held onto.’ When the Bhikkhu ponders how ‘nothing is suitable to be held onto,’ then he comes to directly know and understand everything, and one’s relationship to everything.’ Now, Moggallāna, once the Bhikkhu directly knows and understands everything thus, observes each of his feelings that arise, whether pleasant, painful, or neutral, he sees that each of these are in fact, impermanent and never lasting. When he sees this, he also understands how each of these feelings fade away and vanish, which leads him to become disenchanted with them. Then, in seeing and understanding how each of these feelings cease in their intensity, the Bhikkhu becomes dispassionate towards them. And this leads him to relinquish his grip from holding onto anything. By not grasping anything thus, he no longer becomes anxious, restless, or agitated. And by not becoming agitated anymore, he experiences the ultimate relief that is *Nibbāna*. At that instant, the Bhikkhu knows with direct understanding: “Birth is now finally destroyed. The Holy Life has now been fully lived, with its Goal achieved. There is no more coming back to any state of becoming.”

“This, Moggallāna, is the brief and concise way by following which, the Bhikkhu becomes supreme among both *devas* and humans; having liberated oneself through the destruction of craving, by reaching the highest goal of the Holy Life, thus winning freedom from bondage, once and for all.”

Sadhu

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