

## Beyond Mindfulness

There is no doubt - mindfulness is a hot buzzword at the moment. Internet is flooded with information about the benefits of mindfulness, and also about the benefits of meditation as a tool to develop mindfulness, as a method through which someone may learn to live mindfully.

People have been practicing mindfulness for thousands of years, whether on their own or as part of a larger tradition, but this phenomenon gained much of the popularity during the last couple of decades. Modern Western practitioners and teachers of mindfulness learned about it from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, however mindfulness also has roots in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. There is also a lot of similarities between mindfulness and yoga, some forms of yoga and some forms of mindfulness are striving for the same goals.

Concept of mindfulness was popularized in the West by writers such as Jon Kabat-Zinn, who integrated Buddhist teachings with scientific findings, defining the mindfulness as *"the awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally."* Called "self-observation" by Russian philosopher, mystic, and spiritual teacher Gurdjieff, mindfulness is furthermore one of the aspects of the eightfold path that was described by Buddha. Someone who is mindful is attentively present in the here and now, observant without judgement and accepts what is.

Today, there are many informal ways to practice mindfulness, involving practicing mindfulness during everyday activities such as mindful eating, washing the dishes, mindful walking, or even mindful conversation. Mindfulness plays an important role in positive psychology, and there is no doubt that mindfulness is a healthy and welcomed antidote to many of the personal and social difficulties we face in a modern society. Numerous scientific studies have proven the beneficial effects of correctly practiced mindfulness. The fact that it has found so many devotees among both religious and secular communities, shows the universality of its teachings.

But the question now becomes - is there's more to life than being mindful? Is Mindfulness part of a means to a greater goal? What if mindfulness is just a gateway, an important step on a much longer journey, that ultimately can lead us to honest, genuine and authentic spiritual awareness?

Ultimately, if our aspiration is to tap into the full potential of human life, mindfulness is not enough. There is a pathway beyond mindfulness that leads to a direct realization and awareness, that is sourced in love, made of love, and leads to love. That path beyond mindfulness is more full, far more complete, and more deeply fulfilling than we could ever imagine.

Throughout the history, the great saints and sages of both East and West have consistently described a path that leads beyond mindfulness to authentic spiritual awakening. This means that today, just as there has always been, there exists an entire universe of possibilities, waiting for each and every human being, as they deepen their inner understanding. At the core of that possibility there is the fundamental promise and potential to finally “wake up”.

In the world today, mindfulness is used mainly as a means to reduce stress and overcome and prevent physical and psychological complaints, thus improving the functioning of the *personality*. However, within the spiritual traditions - it is not the body or the personality that is central - but the *Soul* and the *Spirit*. Buddhists speak about “loving friendliness”, a quality of the soul that is nowadays referred to as compassion, and Vedic sage Ashtavakra calls it “awareness”. He says: “Right or wrong, joy and sorrow, these are of the mind only. They are not yours. It is not really you who acts or enjoys”.

The path to the “other shore” begins in this ordinary nature. It starts with a personality which is entirely one with this nature, since it is in this order of existence, that the personality is conscious of. This personality discovers that it exists in a nature of death, which is governed by the law of antitheses. It discovers that the values, powers and abilities it possesses are not absolute, they are constantly turning into their opposites. When, as a result of all this experience, the personality-being realizes that all his troubles are fruitless, that everything comes and goes, and all kinds of questions begin to come up in his mind, the voice of the rose can awaken in his heart. The nuclear principle of the microcosm can begin to speak, urging him to undertake the journey to the true life. He descends right down into the deepest depths of his being, and in this way the soul is born.

What is the soul? To our usual way of thinking, soul is a mystery as explained in the book “Mysteries and symbols of the soul”. It is neither a subject nor an object, yet it can be experienced. It has no shape, it goes way beyond time and space and still it can grow within us. When we connect the concepts “consciousness” and “soul” with one another, then we mean being aware of your consciousness as something that characterizes humanity. It is good to realize this fact since, according to spiritual principles, consciousness is the basis of all manifestations.

The path of the soul situated between heaven and earth, between the personality and the inner being, will at some point arrive at a border. The human being at the border is aware that he/she could still evolve in a number of ways. The social, cultural and scientific horizons have not yet been reached by far... But what lies beyond these horizons? Are all those opportunities for development really contributing to finding the Truth? Is achieving this development what one really wants?

Well, beyond that border, two paths diverge: the outer path which we have been following for so long, and - an inner path. At this crossroads the human being who consciously chooses the inner path, due to an irresistible urge, will actually give shape to the inner being. On that path, the outer person can learn, step by step, how to best fulfill the mission and vocation as a "creative being" and give way to the other-one-within. He makes the paths straight for the one who comes after him.

The high reality of life "beyond the horizon" will inevitably make itself known to those who feel themselves alienated from the world around them. This nostalgia lifts the heart to a higher plane and closes it off from flimsy appearances of the outer life. Then there is a willingness and openness to become the "disciple of the soul", and to listen to the inner voice that indicates a completely different direction.

Because as soon as we experience the great nostalgia, when we experience the deep longing for life beyond the horizon, there will be two processes taking place within us: the ever-more-consciously-experienced pointlessness of our existence, and an increasingly strong desire for a higher life.

There is a grand divine plan unfolding in the universe – not only in the world of time, space and matter so familiar to us, but above all - in the worlds, dimensions and spheres which exist beyond our imagination. We are only barely aware of the fact that we are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are essentially spiritual beings having a human experience, and we are linked to the divine world. Yet we are not just dual beings, but rather we constitute a living, dynamic tri-unity thanks to our soul. The new soul, the Other-One-within-us, is an intermediary between the bodily figure and the spiritual figure. The soul's nature and mission is to connect the heavenly with the earthly, to build a bridge between heaven and earth. However, linking holy spiritual power with a rather stubborn and unconscious earthly personality - is not a simple task.

That is the reason why living a mindful and heartfelt life is only a step of the spiritual path. On the basis of awareness and receptivity for the truly holy and inner elevation, twofold garment of the soul will gradually be woven as one progresses on the gnostic path. First the shining garment of the soul, symbolized by the pentagram or five-pointed star will be woven, and subsequently the golden robe of the spirit-soul will emerge. Spirit-soul development is now more important than ever, but it does not unfold automatically. If you want to get to know the soul, you must become the soul! This process is the goal of humanity! Material human being has the purpose to fulfill the task of receiving, bearing and propagating the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by means of the Soul.

Therefore, what truly matters is the Knowledge of the Only Good. This Knowledge does not well up from our mental thinking, but from the immortal nucleus within us, the divine spark. As our mind separates everything into good and evil, the divine spark

gives us a synthesis, as a glimpse of a deep memory, the memory of our original, divine state of life, a pre-memory like a deep, inner knowledge, Gnosis. This knowledge and this pre-memory are linked to the Divine spark in our heart.

Ever more people now discover that they not only need their head, but also the intelligence of their heart to function properly in the current, changing world. They discover that their mind needs the warmth of their heart to achieve insight with regard to all essential things of life. The time, in which we live, demands an open heart, because Light that is omnipresent around us, can only approach us and forge a link with us at the moment when our heart is open.

Thoughts and ideas may, therefore, rise up from the open heart. We can recognize them as stemming from another Source. This Source is indeed primordial, and generates thought images, stemming from the original Unity. This is how we are able to distinguish between the prison of our mental thinking and the liberating thoughts, awakened by the pre-memory within us.

This deep longing with which our heart can be opened is the key. If we were now to allow ourselves to grant the right to exist to this undefined feeling of homesickness and longing, and we would, instead of ignoring it, concentrate on it with our full attention and self-surrender and link ourselves with it, then we would nourish this longing in our heart. Our rational thinking will immediately take a step back, and our heart will become soft and open to receive "The Light", the Gnostic Light power.

If we have an open, pure heart, our thinking will be fertilized by the Light that was received by the heart. Then a completely new way of thinking is generated that, due to the cooperation and the link with the heart, is nourished by Light and Love. Complete harmony between head, heart and hands, between thinking, feeling and action will develop.

Then our thinking is no longer bound to the self-centered power of the ego, but linked with the all-encompassing, higher Love Power of the beginning. Then we will think new thoughts and no longer be bound to the mental thought clouds that dominated us before. They will have come to rest, and silence will descend into us. And in this silence, the Light of the Divine Sun can spread its breath within us.

"The mind is a fantastic instrument, but most human beings unfortunately suffer, rather than benefit from its capabilities. If you can rise beyond the influence of your mind in full awareness, then you are naturally one with everything" says Sadhguru, Indian yogi and Author.

We can only fully be human beings ensouled by the Spirit when, on the basis of a receptive heart, we are open for other forms of consciousness that we do not yet know. Beyond mindfulness a candidate goes to the inner source of change in their lives, they

go into a state of a truly open heart. Liberation from the imprisonment of our earthly thinking requires purification of our thought life, the emptying of our head of I-central thoughts and dissociating from thinking in terms of good and evil. Truth will be the result of a different mind, of an objective mind, a mind that is truly silent. Only after unification of the head and the heart, the mind will become silent and clear, and then we can start to gain increasing levels of self-awareness through this new objective consciousness.

The human being who is truly searching for life will spontaneously be willing to adapt to the pure teachings of the soul, and to become its pupil. In mystery schools it is not only the pupil, but also the soul who is taught and supported in order to consciously allow body, soul and spirit to be forged into a unity.