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## Mindfulness as per Lord Buddha's Teachings (Second talk)

On this first of July 1967, I am required to speak on right mindfulness, not only the right mindfulness of the Buddha but right mindfulness as such. This is a heavy subject and I hope people who are here to listen to it will be able to understand it at least and put it in their lives. God bless you.

As I was tuning my mind to the Mind Divine that makes me speak, a thought arose in my mind which is:

“That which is built on an end leads to the end that is death but that which is built on the Source, leads to endless end that is the very Source itself.”

Again, let us go over this thought and then dissect it in detail and see the veracity of it. That which is built on an end, leads to the end which is death, and the second part is: but that which is built on the Source leads to endless end, which is the very Source itself.

There are two parts to this thought. One is: What are the consequences if you build any manifestation on an end product however well the superstructure upon it is built? The other is: That which is built on the Source of that end, leads to the very Source again. The first part of the thought indicates that the manifestation of whatever nature ends in one may say the blind lanes, whereas the second part of the same thought gives us the idea that it leads us into a cycle of life from the Source unto the Source.

The second part is most important for us. All of us have experienced the first part and are living in that part of the thought today. It has also been so from ancient times but not so in those ancient times which were built upon those who were the ancient ones who gave us what was right. However we departed from it afterwards by externalizing our minds into manifestations and building on manifestations, however well-meaning and scientific it may look to our rational human mind.

It is the same story vis-à-vis an individual. In an individual, when he or she is born, he or she is born with certain bases which are end products of previous lives. These end products of previous lives are actually the hindrances for that human mind to know the source of itself. And because we are not properly guided from our childhood onward, we build our thoughts on that, build our thoughts upon that foundation of the past and past, past, lives. Those foundations are also conceptual based upon our likes and dislikes. This type of mind is a collection of thoughts, which we call our finite human mind or what is called the ego mind in average usual terminology. This ego mind is our enemy and particularly the ego mind which is so called good ego mind, doing good for humanity, wanting to do good not only for humanity but even for God.

There is a great difference between the good that is God and the good that is human. The good that is God is eternally good. The good that is human is relative good and the relative is never eternal. It changes from time to time. But the good that is God is only known to those minds who have a direct link with the Mind Divine within them, and through that Mind Divine, the very Source of that Mind Divine, which we would call the Ultimate Source. In comparison, we call the Mind Divine within us which we refer to by different names - eternal consciousness or the soul or atma.

Now our problem is that though everyone of us is born with the spiritual spark or the spiritual mind in us, which is our atma or the soul and which is sustaining our human personality, our human mind does not know it by direct knowledge. Actually, that Eternal Mind is even feeding our human mind with all its contents in it, good, bad and indifferent. So, if we are aiming at the goal that is called nirvana or moksh or mukti or liberation or realization of the Divine, this human mind has to be dealt with in some way. Whatever are the contents of it, has to be step by step systematically purified, and is during the process of purification and afterwards, unified by positive practices. Though it also gets automatically unified when that which is impure is removed. But there are positive ways by which the contents of the purified thoughts can be unified. After these thoughts are unified, they can be given an expression in the external by way of words and works which would be useful for other human minds to follow in the same direction. But even that which we call a purified mind, which has got in it all good thoughts, these are also relative good thoughts. They are not necessarily good from the Divine point of view.

Therefore, even these good thoughts, which have been purified, which make that finite human mind, have to be eliminated in order to know that mind which is the spiritual mind within us. Through that, the Divine Mind that is guiding us or guiding that spiritual mind lets one know what it wants us to do as its servant - as its instrument. For that purpose various Masters have given various ways of purification and ultimately elimination leading to the emptying of the human mind so that the emptied human mind gets filled up with the Divine Mind which is within us.

So one of the methods given by the Spiritual Master like the Buddha has been called 'Right Mindfulness.' Other Masters have given other ways. Some have given the ways of Japa, like some Mantra, whether it is a common mantra or an individual mantra, leading to the state of consciousness as far as it can go but more will have to be done after a certain stage than merely doing the Japa. That is not enough. That is good to begin with and later on as a supplementary help to bigger practices that will follow.

Other Masters have also given bhajans and kirtans that also will lead you up to a certain point but no further. Be very sure of it. Now-a-days the tendency is to attempt to realize God through bhajans and kirtans. Nothing wrong about it but it will only help one up to a point. It is good to grow up to the point we are capable of. More so if our emotions are ruling us at the time when we begin our practices so that through bhajans and kirtans we can grow up to a point where the higher and higher vibrations of the bhajans and kirtans will open up some

higher and higher centers in the human mind. But the Divine is not doing bhajan and kirtan. Ultimate Divine is nothing but Eternal Silence, which includes all.

The real basis of the Divine that is ultimate is the Divine Wisdom. The Divine Wisdom is not merely music and songs and bhajans and kirtans. It is inclusive of all these and much much much more. So, after a certain stage you have to transcend that stage of what is called growing through bhakti or *bhavana*. It is good to begin at that level when one is at that level of consciousness and if it appeals to you, but be sure not to remain stuck at it. If you remain stuck at it, then up to a point, you will get a kind of realization, but it will not lead to that ultimate mukti or liberation.

Then there are others who have given the ways of what is called work or through karma. Be sure that the karma is a bondage. Every type of karma is a bondage and will never lead to liberation. But when you do karma according to the spiritual laws which liberate or which at least do not bind you, then through that karma the bondage of the past karmas also can be to some extent given an expression and provide some relief. When we do that karma which is called Karma Yoga- the yoking of our human mind with the Divine Mind, then side by side with that karma if you will do the internal practice also of one or the other nature as we have talked on as well as what we will talk on subsequently henceforth, then to that extent you will through the combination of Karma Yoga and the internal practice of a sadhana of various types, one will be able to grow to know the Divine within through the process of purification and elimination of the contents in the human mind.

One of the processes of this internal sadhana, which is the gift of our Society to humanity, is the practice of 'Right Surrender.' And we have given the 'Seven Principles of Right Surrender.' One can begin with that and even go to the extent of almost liberation into higher planes of consciousness. You will find that through its practice it will merge in the right way into ultimate mindfulness and then liberation. All these practices are not for the spiritual mind within us, but for our wretched small human mind, which obstructs the spiritual mind from manifesting through our human mind.

So now, we will confine our talks to what is called right mindfulness. The right mindfulness, as has been given by the Buddha. We have talked about this in the previous lecture, but now we will take it up to some extent more in detail and then later on transcend it also.

As we have known, the Buddha gave this practice a very, very great importance. He used to say "Monks! this is the only way." He did not say that this is one of the ways. He said, "Monks this is the only way to nirvana." Of course, there were eight steps that He had shown - eight steps leading to nirvana. But this 'right mindfulness,' which is the seventh of the eight steps, is the culmination of all the previous six steps leading to that which is the eighth, which is the ultimate result of following all these seven steps. That result is the 'Right Meditation' leading to *Jahanas* and the ultimate liberation, step by step,

not the ultimate liberation which is the 'Antim Nirvana, but one step towards nirvana.

This only way according to the Buddha is very, very important up to a very great extent in the sense that it will lead you to the threshold of nirvana - threshold of the practice which will automatically become a natural phenomenon if you practice in the right way, which is the 'Right Meditation,' leading to *Jahanas* and nirvana. But still for the Buddha, not for the average human mind, it is not sufficient. For the Buddha mind there is much. As he himself had said, "Monks! What I am giving you is equal to the handful of leaves but what I know is more than all the leaves in all the forests."

So, one can understand what must be that mind which is the Buddha mind. What he gave was enough for the human beings to practice and to grow through. But what he knew was infinite and it would not be possible for human mind to bear it. Or, it was not possible at that time anyway, but we all are growing to some extent so something more can be shown in this present day way of life. Same thing has been said by the Christ, "I have much to say but you can't bear it now." It is the same story with all the descending souls who knew more than what they gave. And they did not give more because the collective mind of those times, including those who were on the border of liberation, were not able to even understand more than a few steps higher than their own minds.

Now coming to this topic of the right mindfulness, the first Buddha explained is: 'mindfulness in the body.' Now the mindfulness in the body means we have got various aspects of the body. He gave only certain types or certain aspects in the right mindfulness of the body. One was external and the other internal and he went deep enough in the mindfulness of the internal, 'but not deeper than what people could absorb at those times. What he said was as far as sitting is concerned is that when one is sitting, we are not mindful how we are sitting, we are just sitting as we find it comfortable for us to sit without thinking that we are sitting in one way or the other way. That is very gross mindfulness.

Then there are also various aspects outside the place in the surrounding where we are sitting or where we are walking or where we are lying down, but we may not be conscious of them. If we are, this is also gross mindfulness. But more than that is a little deeper and that is when we see things, we don't perceive anything, we just see with our physical eye without perceiving. Our mind is occupied with something else so we are not mindful of what we are seeing with our senses. Then also we hear so many sounds. We are not conscious of those sounds and we just get some kind of an impression of those sounds and this also is another lack of mindfulness.

Then when we are eating also, we are not conscious of what we are eating, how we are eating. Our mind is occupied with various other thoughts. Now this is also though finer mindfulness to put our mind into these senses, it is still not very deep. Then when we go deeper into our body, inside our body functions are going on – functions of the vital organs, like our digestive system,

respiratory system, circulatory system, skeletal system, muscular system. All these are going on without our knowledge.

First of all, we have not been taught what is inside us. It is our duty to know that there are deeper parts within us which are keeping us alive and there is some deeper force within us and that by following the laws connected with that we will not only keep ourselves alive, but we will be able to grow towards health and avoid quite a lot of diseased conditions. Now this is another type of deeper mindfulness. Then also in each cell which Buddha did not mention because in those times there was no question of cell consciousness but now we can go deeper into it. We know that every part of our body is made up of cells and each cell has its own functions and those functions are all co-coordinated and centralized and controlled by the central nervous system. All this is deeper mindfulness. Now this is as far as mindfulness in the finer body and the gross body and things outside the body are concerned.

But mindfulness deeper than that is that every cell and the group of cells which make our body as a whole are being sustained by some life principle. And that life principle is not coming through the food we eat or the air we breathe or the water we drink. It is coming from some deeper source than that, and that deeper source is in and through our chakras, which are invisible centers along the spinal column and our nervous system, including our brain. There are seven such internal chakras. Now mindfulness in these, if it is properly guided and managed, one will be able to know how the life principle is infused into the matter that is the human body and personality. But even that is not so deep because even that life principle has its own source, and that source is deeper than the life principle which we will say is the mind of our atma or soul which is a psychical aspect – the mind which is of our atma. Not the atma, which is the basis, but that which is superimposed on that basis. That basis is the eternal spark within us and through our karmas of the past we have inherited the mind that is superimposed on the atma which we do not know. There are processes by which you can become mindful of these aspects. But the Buddha has not gone so deep into it because it was not possible in his time to explain deeper than what he did. He only gave the mindfulness in the external, the gross and the internal to an extent, but not deeper than that. Now this is one type of mindfulness. Mindfulness in body.

The second type of mindfulness is 'mindfulness in senses.' Mindfulness in what we are able to perceive through our senses. We breathe air and through the air, we get so many sensations of smells. We are not ordinarily mindful unless the smell is very strong. Then also there is the mindfulness on the question of hearing and seeing as we touched upon a little while ago. Then there is also the mindfulness of the taste and the mindfulness of the feeling sensations through the skin which we are not conscious of. As we are sitting just now, the fan is working, the air is blowing and that is touching our skin also, but we are not mindful of it ordinarily. Now this is where the training is needed for the mindfulness in the senses.

Then the third type of mindfulness is the 'mindfulness in the feeling.' This is very important. Mindfulness in the senses, though it is deeper than the

mindfulness of the body or the mindfulness in the body, it is not as deep as 'mindfulness in feeling'. Actually, the human mind is more of an emotional mind than what we call the thinking mind. We claim ourselves to be thinking beings. Really speaking we who claim to be thinkers are coloring our thinking by our own feelings of likes and dislikes. The feeling consciousness, which is our emotion, is more important. Even now, when we are sitting here on this topic of mindfulness, different feelings must be there in different hearers of today. Some may feel this is too heavy and too difficult and why do we worry about it. Some may feel attracted towards it. Some may feel that there is something that they have to think of, e.g., of their homes, of their child or their children. So, these are the pulls through the feeling that affect their thinking. So we incorrectly claim that we are thinking beings. Every type of our thinking is colored by our likes and dislikes and the likes and dislikes by our feelings of emotions. But we are not conscious of it. We are only conscious that we have got a particular thought and we act upon that thought. But the basis of the thought is some emotion, some feeling.

Now when we get a feeling of any nature, if we are mindful of it, then what will happen if we remain mindful at that level of thinking of that feeling and then some difficulties arise? Our mind being attached to that feeling, some conflicts can arise, and if we just watch that feeling without doing anything but just be aware of it, then a stage will come when that particular feeling either will get less and less or the level of our mind will ultimately change and that feeling will disappear. Then behind that feeling, or associated with that feeling of the likes and dislikes, you will become conscious of more objective thinking or thoughts. But this will not be possible until and unless you watch your feelings. Be aware of your feelings. It is just bare awareness of one's feelings that is important. But it is not very easy.

Suppose if we are caught by the feeling of say anger. Now anger is a reaction to something we dislike. Now we are not conscious of what it is that we dislike that makes us behave in this way. We just are angry and manifest the anger and to that extent, we can do many wrong things. So, the anger has got also some deeper basis. In the same way hatred. We just begin to hate because some body said something and it hurt our ego and that person may be at one time a very close friend or a beloved or an associate, but once that ego is hurt, we hate. We hate for no other reason except that our feeling or our emotions or our ego, which is associated with certain thoughts, which it likes, is hurt and so we begin to hate.

In this case, I will tell you as a warning that such types of hurts will come to all *saddhaks* if they really want to grow into realization or mukti. And a stage can come when the very Guru or God Himself will look to that mind like the very devil and they will be prepared to fight God at that level and dissect God. It has been said by the Buddha also and it has been accepted in Mahayana which was more prevalent in the past in Tibet, that when the Buddha gives out the Dhamma to those who cannot easily accept him, he is to them like a Mara – the devil and in Tibetan terminology they call the devil *hirayku*. Now this has been also depicted in various *Tanakas* (which are Buddhist religious art). In them you will see a hideous form – and that hideous form is no other than Buddha

himself but as seen by the *saddhak*, who has been hurt by the saying of the Buddha, that the Buddha is the very devil himself.

In the time of the Buddha, those who could not accept his teachings and particularly those who had been hurt by his teachings, had gone so far as to try and take his life and also in many ways to bring him down in the esteem of many people. It had been the case with the one who had been his cousin called Devdatta. Devdatta went to the extent of scheming against him and plotting to kill him. It has happened in the lives of other Spiritual Masters also. So be careful if you really want to grow and outgrow the limitations of your human mind. Even if it hurts the ego mind like hell, whatever is the truth given out, even if it is in the very field where we have experience as an expert, be very careful not to resist. If you resist, one of the two things will happen. One will be if you cannot fight the source that is hurting you, who can be a guru or a Sat Guru or even God Himself, then you will break off from Him and you will be sidetracked and that is all that the anti-divine wants you to do. That is all it requires, that you just go away from that particular one that guides you in the right way. If you don't go away, and remain where you are without changing through obedience, the force of the right guru will be so powerful without even the words, that you will even break down.

So, either breaking off will be one way or breaking down will be another way by which you will be sidetracked. Now both are not good. Both are against the spiritual goal. But whenever our ego is hurt or hit, the aim should be to break in, come nearer; so that a time will come when you will understand the right behind what is not acceptable at that time. So, this is a great warning I am giving you because I have had many such experiences in this life also, leave apart my previous life, which I have known after I have been pushed into this way of life. So, this is the mindfulness in emotions or one's own human feelings.

Then the fourth type of mindfulness, according to the teachings of the Buddha, is the 'mindfulness in mind' or what is called mindfulness in the thoughts. Though human thoughts are mixed up with emotions, there are times and there are people who are in a position to separate the thinking aspect or the thoughts with their thinking faculty and the emotional aspect to it, if not completely, to some extent or a great extent. But at that time, who even thinks whether that thought is really the right thought from the spiritual or divine point of view? Very few people try to weigh whether this or that thought which they received is right from even spiritual values, leave apart the spiritual guidance. They accept it because it appeals to one's own so called conscience. We go after it and say that this is the right thought for us and this is right for the whole world, though there may be no emotions connected with it or emotions are subservient to that thought. So what is important is that even when we get a thought, try to weigh it with some spiritual basis, spiritual laws which are given as the scales to weigh it with by every religion in different names which are called Commandments or *Sheelas* as in the Buddhism or *Yamas* and *Niyamas* in the Vedic scriptures. So we should try and weigh our thoughts and see if these thoughts are right from spiritual point of view.

One would say it is so very difficult and we have no time and so many things have to be done in time and how could we do it? It is justified also to say that, but the fact is that manifestation is different from reception. When we have to manifest a thought, you manifest it at the level at which it has to be manifested, at the time when it has to be manifested even though one does not know whether it is right or wrong, but it has to be done as a part of a responsibility or a duty. But there are times when we can contemplate on it, think about it and weigh it with some spiritual basis and find out whether we are wrong or right and when we find that what we have done is not right from the spiritual point of view, it is good that we go and see that we set this right by making the amends to it depending upon how one has manifested it.

If suppose one has manifested a thought in the course of one's duty or one's responsibility for the good of the people without knowing whether it is right or wrong and thereby hurt someone, there is no harm in saying that 'I am sorry it has been my mistake and now I realize it.' Thereby at least you will see that the other party does not create further wrong thoughts against you. Thereby there will not be some future conflict between you and the other party. This is what all High Beings have done. And one of the recent examples in our life-time has been that of Mahatma Gandhi. Whenever he did anything, which he subsequently found, was not right, he had openly said 'he had committed a Himalayan blunder'.

Now you can see how such beings who have been much higher than the average minds come out to acknowledge their mistake. It is also a teaching of the higher Masters like Christ who said that if you come to my altar to worship and there you remember that you have created an enemy, leave everything at the altar and first go and make friends with him and then afterwards come and do the needful at the altar. Now it is an important thing. He had given this commandment 'love thy enemy'. Love thy enemy and not tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye as it used to be before him.

Now this is important. The very enemy of God Himself, who is that enemy? Those who have departed from His Will and have asserted their will and have gone away from Him. The king of such ones is no other than whom we call Satan or Mara or Ahreman according to the teachings of Zoroaster. Even that one, who is evil, the Divine Mind loves him. God loves him and supports him. God sees that the devil does not go further away from Him and prepares the way step by step for the devil to come and occupy his rightful place, and that rightful place of that one was a very, very high place. He was one of the very, very high souls. According to the biblical terminology, he was called 'Lucifer'-the beautiful light, the divine light and one of the first born ones of the divine creations. But the Divine Mind does not hate him, even though all the trouble in the creation, not only on the earth but in the whole creation, is due to this divine being having fallen away from the Divine Will. And whatever we are passing through as human beings are reflections of that same disobedience to the Divine Will and there that anti-divine is very much interested. So, 'love thy enemy' is important.



Now here you can see how important it is to watch our thoughts. If we cannot do so immediately, sometime later dwell on it and think on it. Are we right from spiritual point of view or not? Our so called past ingrained ideas or thoughtforms will tell us, "Oh yes, I am quite right. My conscience says so. It is my '*swadharmā*.'" All sorts of stupid nonsense our mind will tell us. But dispassionately weigh these thoughts from the spiritual standards and try to find out the fault within oneself rather than the fault outside oneself. Our human mind is capable of finding fault even with God

There is a story, which comes to my mind of a soldier who is a drunk, and when he is in the parade, he feels that everyone is out of step except himself. Now this is the way we are drunk with our own thoughts, our own so-called conscience and this is how we are able to say everyone is wrong except ourselves who are right. This is a very wrong thing from spiritual point of view.

The spiritual principle in this matter should be: First find out where one is wrong. And there are two ways of finding out. One is: weighing our thoughts against the spiritual values, the spiritual *Sheelas* or Commandments and *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. And if you are lucky, according to the Divine Guidance of those who have transcended these laws or from these laws have come the Guiding Mind, where if you are told you do this and don't do that, however much you differ, accept that and do not reject what is not acceptable to you. Thereby you will be able to set your thoughts right.

Now this is as far as the right mindfulness in mind is concerned which means the thinking faculty. Now the human mind will say why all these bothers. It is so very difficult. And we have got many other things to do. Is there not an easy way to realize God? I would say that you can begin with the easiest way you are capable of, but a stage will come when you cannot escape the right mindfulness. The stage will come when you will have to be mindful, if not of all these four aspects given by the Buddha, which I say five aspects of right mindfulness are necessary. Your mind will be drawn to one or the other of these aspects. Just as suppose one is drawn towards the spiritual goal of Mukti or realization and has come to a stage in which one has got predominance of feeling faculty, he just goes into a kind of a *dhoon* or *bhavna* through Bhakti and grows through it up to point. But this is one of the four or five aspects of mindfulness. It takes you to a point beyond which you cannot go. Then should come the other aspects also.

So all these four aspects given by the Buddha and the five as I say, have to be a part and parcel of the training of a *saddhak* towards the liberation. If one says it is very difficult for us, don't begin immediately but keep that in mind that sooner or later you will have to begin. So, begin with whatever you are capable of at present, but do not reject it. This is bound to come. As you grow, mindfulness cannot be avoided, otherwise, liberation is an impossibility. So it is good to know something about it so that in time to come you will be able to face it, not with ignorance, but with knowledge that this has now come and we have to change in that direction.

Now this is an idea deeper than what we talked on the mindfulness last time, but I will take you deeper and deeper into each aspect of the mindfulness if you people are prepared for it, taking one aspect at a time, going into depth which is applicable to all types of minds or all types of consciousness, finite consciousness and at different levels in the human consciousness. And if you are prepared for it, you may ask me next time.

God bless you.

Editor's note: The above Discourse was edited by the editing team in the month of September 2023 and finalized on October 13, 2023 in Walnut Creek, California. Some words were edited out, some were inserted and some sentences were moved around and others inserted so that the thoughts would flow better and the message becomes clearer