

# MINDFULNESS

## A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE

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by Neeraj Yadav\*

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### ABSTRACT

Is mindfulness is a great tool to increases focus and concentration? Answer is yes. Than another question arises how? Answer is Buddhist approaches means Buddhist teachings. This paper examines the value of mindfulness in present world. In this globalized world we always lives in hurry. Contemporary work spaces demand that we be able to perform under pressure. These situations gives us stress and results came in the form of anger depression etc. With the mindfulness one can live better life and for the fulfillment of this Buddhist approach play a unique role. Even neuroscientists have confirmed that mindfulness as a part of workplace training has extraordinary benefits for both individuals and organizations. Mindfulness practices are shown to make people more innovative as they observe without judgement. This allows the mind to less rigid, more flexible, and hence, solve problems quickly and more easily. Mindfulness also increases the quality of leader and he embodies leadership presence by cultivating focus clarity creativity and compassion in the services of others. Right mindfulness makes the mind comfortable in the present. And a person will be fully aware with his work. As the mind settles more and more solidly into the present, it gain strength. An attempt to try to focus on how to use mindfulness to face the problems lie pain,

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anger, tension illness etc. However, mindfulness can offer a way of detaching yourself from the pain while you are living with it. The people who have developed mindfulness through meditation can be aware of the fact.

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Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment and accepting it without judgment. Mindfulness is being aware with every movement. The thing is that when we notice every detail of our surrounding is called mindfulness. Presently when people are busy with their life and depressed with the hectic life styles only mindfulness is a mode through they can come out from their depression. “Mindfulness has recently been in the news a great deal. It is recommended by the Department of Health.”<sup>(1)</sup> National Institute for clinical excellence also see it as an effective therapy for our stress-filled lives. Now it is practicing in schools for good mental health. Even this therapy used in treating the dangerous disease like HIV, ME and MS. By counseling with the patience and practice them with mindfulness reveals of positive outcomes.

Mindfulness always helps human in many forms like increased the level of calmness and gives relaxation, increased self-confidence, decrease stress, depression, addiction (any kind). Especially through mindfulness calmness increases and with the results compassion for others increases and it can also become the cause of peace too. “A decade later, psychotherapists in Canada and the UK began to understand that mindfulness interventions may also be useful for reducing and improving psychological disorders.”<sup>(2)</sup> The first publication in 2002 on Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for depression in which earlier practice of wisdom was interwoven with cognitive therapy to help patients not to relapse into depressive episodes. In present time Mindfulness based cognitive therapy and Mindfulness based stress reduction therapy and used to treat a multitude of illness including trauma, chronic-pain, stress, eating disorders, addiction etc.

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1. Patrizia Collard, *The little book of Mindfulness: 10 Minutes a Day to Less Stress More Peace*, UK: Octopus Publishing Group, 2014.

2. J. Mark G. Williams, *The Mindful way through Depression*, New York: Guilford Press, 2007.

From ancient time to present modern world each and everyone wants peace. In 21<sup>st</sup> century when man became machines to fulfill their desires and results comes in the form of illness like stress, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorders and addition etc. “Mindfulness may not actually ‘heals’ all ills, but what it will do is change our perspective on discomfort and open new possibilities for moving from just ‘being’ and ‘struggling’ back towards adventurous living”.<sup>(3)</sup> In contemporary world we tend to lose our touch with the peace which is important for everyone.<sup>(4)</sup> Mindfulness is a significant elements of Buddhist custom and established on vipassana and meditation practices. Buddhist meditation teaches us how ignorance cleanse our own minds and other delusions like attachment, jealousy, pride, anger and hatred-which obscure our mind’s clean light nature and are the real cause of the suffering we experience and to develop desirable attributes such as kindness, love, compassion and concentration which become the cause of our happiness.<sup>(5)</sup>

All the sentient beings can attain enlightenment, the highest possible state of mind, happiness. Buddhist meditation cleanse our mind and develop love and compassion. In simple form Buddhist meditation is of two types- Analytical and Concentration.<sup>(6)</sup>

Analytical Meditation	Concentrative
Logic	Point
Reason	Object
Determine	Physical exercise
Clear vision	

These two methods support each other. By practicing concentration trying to overcome from illusion and clear with the reality we can live peacefully. Buddhism teaches us to do every

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3. Patrizia Collard, *The little book of Mindfulness: 10 Minutes a Day to Less Stress More Peace*, UK: Octopus Publishing Group, 2014.

4. Thich Nhat Hanh, *The world’s most revered Zen master*, with a forwarded by His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

5. Nicholas Ribush, *Mediation in Tibetan Buddhism*, Italy: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

6. *Ibid.*

work with compassion and thinking about the suffering of others.<sup>(7)</sup> In this way our everyday actions like sleeping, eating and working can be convert into the cause of enlightenment. Concentrative meditation starts with learn to focus on the breath (*āna-pāna*).

Apart from Buddhism there are many explanations of mindfulness like – In the words of Shakya Kumar, It is a form of Mental fitness Training. “We know that we need a certain level of physical fitness in order to maintain our physical health and well-being. In the same way, we need a certain level of mental fitness, in order to maintain our mental health and well-being.”<sup>(8)</sup>

“Mindfulness is not just about feeling less stressed, it is about realizing you have a limitless capacity to develop and refine your mind and therefore improve your performance at work.”<sup>(9)</sup> Performances always depends on the stage of mind when person is in stress the performance decreases due to ill-heath, depression and illness of mind.<sup>(10)</sup> Mindfulness is now being examined scientifically and has been found to be a key element in stress reduction and overall happiness. There are many benefits of Mindfulness. It supports many attitudes that contribute to a satisfied life. Scientists have discovered that mindfulness techniques helps improve physical health. Mindfulness can help in reduce stress, treat heart diseases, improves sleep and reduce chronic pain. Psychotherapists discovered that mindfulness meditation is a tool for the treatment for number of problems like depression, anxiety disorder and couples conflicts. This also discovered that mindfulness supports many attitudes that contribute to a satisfied life.<sup>(11)</sup> Mindfulness has the potential to improve our mental and emotional health and increases our attention and awareness in the present moment. Our brains produces thoughts and this is the reality of life. Rather than trying to suppress

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7. Glenn H. Mullin, *War and Peace in Tibetan Buddhism*, Buddhism and Armed Conflict, Clear Light Publishers, 2001.

8. William Van Gordon, E. Shonin, Mark D. Griffiths, & Nirbhay N. Singh, *There is only one mindfulness: Why science and Buddhism need to work together*, *Mindfulness*, New York: Springer, 2014.

9. Jeff Wilson, *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American culture*, Oxford University Press, 2014.

10. *Zen at work Mindfulness Training* ([www.Zenatwork.co.uk](http://www.Zenatwork.co.uk))

11. Jonah Paquette, *Real Happiness: Proven Path for Contentment Peace, and well-being*, Pesi Publishing & Media, 2015.

our thoughts, here mindfulness gives us a way towards developing a balance relationship with our thoughts and feelings.

We all live in the world where violence and conflicts are norms of society in spite of exceptions to the general rules. Violence and Conflicts are the caused and sustained through our thoughts. The main caused of these conflicts is our way of understanding the things. Here already discuss about the Mindfulness can awake our thoughts in positive manner and can help in building a sustainable peace. Most of the problems we face are developed by human beings. The problems like social injustice inter-group antagonism and violence are the main problem that must be removed for the peace for the world. The main cause of all these is our own thoughts.

“Mindfulness means disciplining our minds by focusing on a certain object of thought and be letting go of all thoughts and observing whatever arises in consciousness.”<sup>(12)</sup> Mindfulness promotes awareness of internal states such as thoughts, anger, love, fear, behave and activities.<sup>(13)</sup> Peace is based on the practice of multiple functions of mind. Compassion is an exercise of our courage to transcend dualistic view of human relation to interdependent and interconnected one.<sup>(14)</sup> Compassion is a capacity to feel others pain, suffering as our own, but it is also truth that at the same time an ability to have clear awareness of interdependent origination of phenomenon of any kind.<sup>(15)</sup> When compassion arises than compassionate mind inspires the development of a quality of loving kindness a universal love that extends from ourselves to friends, family and to all people. It arises our mind and strike us to do good actions. Our well-being and others are not separable, means our any kind of peace would be impossible to achieve without considering and acting to promote others.<sup>(16)</sup> This kind of action is a transition

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12. John Kabat-Zinn, *Catalyzing Movement Towards a More Contemplative/ Sacred- Appreciating/ Non Dualistic Society*, New York: Pocantico, 1994.

13. Edward E. Brantmeier, *Connecting inner and outer peace: Buddhist meditation integrated with peace education*, Journal of Peace education and social justice, 2007.

14. Jin Y. Park, *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Buddhist Postmodern Ethics*, Lexington Books, 2010.

15. Mei Hoyt., *Engaging Bodhisattva Compassion in Pedagogical Aporias*, Paideusis, 2014.

16. FrancesVaughan, *What is Spiritual Intelligence?* Journal of Humanistic Psychology, SAGE Publication, 2002.

from self-centered and dichotomous tensions of in-group and out-group process to an all-inclusive state of consciousness of our fundamental interdependence and interpenetration. The mindfulness express us to make an effort to classify the basic needs of all and promote justice for those with different personalities as well as for ourselves. In reality, meaning of basic needs and justice depends upon each of us. The non-dualistic peace related to that we come to become always conscious of interdependent and interpenetrating nature of different ideas of peace, basic needs and justice to make a mutual contribution to help each other's peace. The ultimate non-dualistic nature of human relationship paves the way for unity in diversity. Diversity does not mean differences exist separately. This is a function of coordination enriching interdependence.<sup>(17)</sup> Unity in diversity in non-dualistic peace means that those with different reference engage in an exploratory everlasting process that explicates new values to gain their liberating and transformative rational dynamics.

“Apparently it is not poverty that causes crime, but rather the resentment of poverty. This latter condition is as likely to embitter the ‘subjectively deprived’ in a rich society as the ‘objectively deprived’ in a poor society.” These words Lewis Lapham explains that the mental attitude and the actions to which they lead are the key.<sup>(18)</sup> The minds of all living beings are totally interconnected and interrelated, whether they are consciously aware of it or not.

If we concentrate on putting our own minds at peace, then we can broadcast peace mentally and generate peace through our action. Everyone should use mind in peaceful manner, with the peaceful mind our acts will be peacefully for the world. Buddhism see the problem of war as a Karmic activity, the solution is seen as the practicing ethical behavior. For example if you plant melon seeds, you get melons; if you plant orange seeds, you get orange. If you plant the seeds of war, than you get war and if you plant the seeds of peace than Karmic process give the result in the form of peace.

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17. Peter D. Hershock, *Valuing Diversity: Buddhist Reflection on Realizing a More Equitable Global Future*, New York: Albany, 2012.

18. Ron Epstein, *Buddhist Ideas for Attaining World Peace*, Lectures for the Global Peace Studies Program, San Francisco University, 1988.

Buddhism is founded by Buddha and developed by the masters throughout its history. The main focus of Buddhism is Mind (*Chitta*), which is beautifully stated in *Dhammapada*. That all experiences is preceded by mind led by mind, made by mind. Mind is the source of every activity.<sup>(19)</sup> In this manner *Surangama Sutra* (*Surangama Sutra* is a *Sutra* in Mahayana Buddhism. Especially it has been influence Chinese Chan Buddhist School) states, “Tathagata has always said that all phenomena are manifestations of mind and that all causes and effects all things from the world to its dust take shape because of the mind.”<sup>(20)</sup> This signify that “all the qualities of the things come into existence after the mind, are totally dependent upon mind and are made up from mind.”<sup>(21)</sup> The things of the world around us is only reflections of the condition of our own mind.<sup>(22)</sup> It means the condition of our mind frames the state of the reality, the root of the problem which face by us is also attributed to our mind and it is also stated in the *Dhammapada* (The holy book of Buddhism) “Speak or act with a corrupted mind and dukkha follows as the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox.”<sup>(23)</sup> On the other side, when we overcome the cause of suffering, we can achieve internal serenity and well-being: “Speak with a peaceful mind and happiness follows like Shadow.”<sup>(24)</sup> So, there is a question that how mind can be root cause of violence and how it can be overcome with our understanding of an inner dynamics of problems and its solution. The answer is “The doctrine of great Four Noble Truths.” The Four Noble Truth are Buddhist teachings and doctrinal frame work of every school of Buddhism. In the words of Pereira and Tiso, the Four Noble Truth are “pain, its origin, suppression of pain and the way to suppress pain.”<sup>(25)</sup> First truth explains that our life is filled with suffering

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19. G. Fronsdal, *The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations*, Boston: Shambhala, 2005.

20. Charles Luk, *The Surangama Sutra*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2001.

21. Whalen Lai, *The meaning of 'mind-only' (wei-hsin): An analysis of sinitic Mahayana Phenomenon*, Philosophy East and West, 1977.

22. K. Venkata Ramanan, *Nagarjuna's philosophy as presented in the Maha-Prajnaparamita-Sastra*, Delhi: Motilal Banaridass, 1978.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha taught*, New York: Grove Press, 1974.

and trouble.<sup>(26)</sup> Each and every thing is Dukkha or Suffering. Birth is dukkha, illness is dukkha, separation with dearone is dukkha, means each and every thing is dukkha. When everything is dukkha than what is the root cause of dukkha? The second truth examines the cause of suffering. The cause of our suffering is ignorance. The basic feature of ignorance it that we tend to see things including human being as having a fixed nature and cling to anything that reinforces our concept of performance, pushing away those views that deny it.<sup>(27)</sup> Ignorance gives rise to three mental defilements such as Anger, Greed and Delusion.<sup>(28)</sup>

Suffering is neither everlasting nor beyond human reach, since our own ignorance and carving is cause of suffering. We can remove it when we properly analysis those causes. All this (ignorance, carvings) are created by our own minds and we can overcome from it through our own efforts. This is in Third Noble Truth.<sup>(29)</sup> The Fourth Noble Truth explains the way to remove suffering and achieve mental peace and real happiness, the Fourth Truth generally called the Noble Eightfold path.<sup>(30)</sup> These are:

- i. Right View;
- ii. Right Thought;
- iii. Right Speech;
- iv. Right Action;
- v. Right Livelihood;
- vi. Right Efforts;
- vii. Right Mindfulness and
- viii. Right Concentration.<sup>(31)</sup>

The gist of the Fourth Noble Truth is that when three angles-

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26. *Ibid.*

27. Geshe Tashi Tsering, *The Four Noble Truths: The Foundation of Buddhist Thought*, volume I, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005.

28. Andrew Olendzki, *Buddhist psychology: The Mind That Mindfulness Discloses*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010.

29. J.Y. Park, *Buddhism and postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the possibility of Buddhist post-modern ethics*, United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2010.

30. Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha taught*, New York: Grove Press, 1974.

31. *Ibid.*



ethical conduct mental discipline and wisdom are practiced in integrative manner, through this we can overcome suffering. When wisdom-an insight into reality that is, impermanence and interdependence, mental discipline the observing internal dynamics of our mind and ethical conduct – a good moral life with honesty and compassion that takes into account others feelings perspectives, well-beings and ours equally – are well integrated we surly can break suffering and construct a positive, harmonious relationship and peace.”<sup>(32)</sup>

Mindfulness is refer to discipline our minds by focusing on a certain object of thought and be letting go of all thoughts and emotions and observing whatsoever arises in consciousness.<sup>(33)</sup> *Mahasatipatthana Sutta* states, “A monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world; he abides contemplating feelings as feelings; he abides contemplating mind as mind; he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly away and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.”<sup>(34)</sup> Mindfulness is awareness of inner states such as emotions, thoughts, feelings and behave. Instead of being controlled by our internal states, we can change the direction of our internal dynamics into the object for reflection.<sup>(35)</sup> The practice of observing help us to discover the role of our mental habits in framing our right perceptions towards the reality.<sup>(36)</sup> Through this we can reach to intellectual inside into the nature of reality to address absolutized conditioned state that becomes the causes of negative feelings.<sup>(37)</sup>

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32. Geshe Tashi Tsering, *The Four Noble Truths: The Foundation of Buddhist Thought*, volume I, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005

Juichiro Tanabe, *Exploring a Buddhist Peace Theory*, Japan: Cultural and Religious Studies, 2016.

33. John Kabat Zinn, *Catalyzing Movement Towards a More Contemplative/Sacred-Appreciating/Non-Dualistic Society*, New York: Pocantico, 1994.

34. Maurice Walshe (trans.), *The Digha Nikaya – The long discourses of the Buddha*, Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2012.

35. Tobin Hart, *Teaching For Wisdom (Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice)*, Carrolton: State University of West Georgia, 2001.

36. D.W. Chappell (ed.), *Buddhist Peace Work: Creating cultures of peace*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999.

37. Hossain B. Danesh, *Towards an integrative theory of peace education*, Journal of Peace

This is true that the synthetic practice of contemplative mind and compassionate mind is not easy. However, since our mind-state affect how we act and how we speak, this is essential for us to control our mind to act and speak harmoniously.<sup>(38)</sup> “Peace is a multi-factor process involving many distinct substantive aspects and dimensions.”<sup>(39)</sup>

Building social settings is essential to gratify basic human needs of each individual. Building those circumstances will empower each and every individual to nurture capacities to practice multiple functions of mind to turn towards sustainable peace between those with different frames of identities.

Buddhist activities of mindfulness create the way for peace. The Karmic influence gives the result in the same way of our actions. Here is the need to reduce the atmosphere of violence and killing. Another thing is constantly being mindful of your own thoughts, words, and actions and trying to purify them, we can become part of the force for peace rather than part of the force for war. Another thing is compassion which arises with the mindfulness. Therefore one can say that our actions for peace effects through our compassionate nature which can change our painful and stressful life into happy life. In short, every moment and action of our life can be an opportunity to embody the inner resources to create sustainable peace.

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education, 2006.

38. Peter D. Hershock, *Buddhism in Public Sphere: Reorienting global interdependence*, London: Routledge, 2006.

39. Linda Groff, *Contributions of Different Cultural-Religious Traditions to Different Aspects of Peace – Leading to a Holistic, Integrative View of Peace for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Interdependent world*, Future takes Transcultural Futurist Magazine, 2008.

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