

## Week Beginning 18th January 2015

### Mind your Mind

Mindful meditation is about being truly yourself and knowing how present you are to your body, to your whole self and to others. It is about realising that you are on a spiritual path called your life, and that you have a choice about how much energy you put into its direction and how open you are to the unfolding of that life. . .

Mindfulness is the opposite of taking things for granted. It is aware of the interconnectedness of everyone and everything, and from this springs true compassion. It avoids the deadly tunnel-vision of personal bias, prejudice or expectation. It is about being our authentic, natural self which follows when we begin to notice the masks we wear, the lies that litter our lives, the pretences that we learn at an early age. . .

We are always thinking. Our mind is like a roller-coaster full of clamouring thoughts. In meditation we stand by its side and simply notice those fast-moving, fast-changing scenes. It is not so much whether or not we have 'distractions'. Because we always will. It's more to do with how we watch them slide by. . .

In mindful meditation we don't actually do anything. We just notice, without passing any comment or opinion. Nor do we have any expectations about improvement or success or having feelings of stillness for instance. Mindful meditation is about letting the mind be as it is, about a deepening awareness of the way it is or of the deceptively simple reality that this is it. These last phrases, which lie at the heart of universal mysticism, remind me to reassure the reader and myself that in the exploration of this countryside of mystery, no one has the full map. No-one has a headstart. It is comforting to note that while we, as beginners, are struggling with this received, distilled essence of the religious and cultural wisdom of all time, the life-long saints, monks and mystics, even to their last breath, saw themselves as beginners too.

(Travelling Light pp 32, 33)

### Follow-up -

Set aside a few minutes each day, say ten to fifteen minutes to start with, to sit and focus on your breathing. During this awareness it is essential not to try to change the pattern of your breathing or to interfere with it in any way. Just breathe and let go. Let everything – your breath, yourself, the whole world- be exactly as it is. You have no desire after anything. Keep your mind relaxed – flowing and free. Notice your breathing when the mind is still and when it wanders, stringing moments of awareness together, breath by breath. Count them if you like, up to ten; then start again. You may manage only five seconds or five minutes. Your concentration may need a little fine-tuning. Yet it is remarkable how swiftly we can slip into that timeless space and, in no time at all, recover a lost joy and find sufficient peace to see us through.

(Travelling Light p36)