



THE LOTUS BUD

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Dear Sangha,

In the 'Diamond Sutra' we encounter the words; 'out of nowhere, the mind comes forth'. We don't really know who we are or where we come from, but here we are.

As Thich Nhat Hanh says: it is miracle and each moment of conscious awareness is to be marveled. And so each and every moment can, as Rabbi Heschel explains, be an experience of amazement. Thus Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity share a sense of the wonder of presence. Whatever our faith tradition it should be our practice to keep reminding ourselves of this and to return again and again to 'our true home'. 🧘

Chris / True Dwelling of the Mind

Radical amazement

Wonder or radical amazement is the chief characteristic of the religious man's attitude toward history and nature. One attitude is alien to his spirit: taking things for granted, regarding events as a natural course of things.

To find an approximate cause of a phenomenon is no answer to his ultimate wonder. He knows that there are laws that regulate the course of natural processes; he is aware of the regularity and pattern of things. However, such knowledge fails to mitigate his sense of perpetual surprise at the fact that there are facts at all. [...] 🧘

As civilisation advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an

alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder. Awareness of the divine begins with wonder. It is the result of what man does with his higher incomprehension.



The greatest hindrance to such awareness is our adjustment to conventional notions, to mental clichés. Wonder or radical amazement, the state of maladjustment to words and notions, is therefore a prerequisite for an authentic awareness of that which is. Radical amazement has a wider scope than any other act of man. While any act of perception or cognition has as its object a selected segment of reality, radical amazement refers to all of reality; not only to what we see, but also to the very act of seeing as well as to our own selves, to the selves that see and are amazed at their ability to see.

The grandeur or mystery of being is not a particular puzzle to the mind, as, for example, the cause of volcanic eruptions. We do not have to go to the end of reasoning to encounter it. Grandeur or mystery is something with which we are confronted everywhere and at all times. Even the very act of thinking baffles our thinking, just as every intelligible fact is, by virtue of its being a fact, drunk with baffling aloofness. Does not mystery reign within reasoning, within perception, within explanation? What formula could explain and solve the enigma of the very fact of thinking? 🧘

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel
[Online source](#)

The moment is perfect

No matter what we experience when we're meditating, it only has meaning when we take it out into our daily lives. There is nothing we experience—from the simple act of eating to the complications of work and relationships—that we cannot approach with the mindfulness and compassion we develop in our meditation.

Take the time to eat an orange in mindfulness. If you eat an orange in forgetfulness, caught in your anxiety and sorrow, the orange is not really there. 🍊

But if you bring your mind and body together to produce true presence, you can see that the orange is a miracle. Peel the orange. Smell the fruit. See the orange blossoms in the orange, and the rain and the sun that have gone through the orange blossoms. The orange tree that has taken several months to bring this wonder to you. Put a section in your mouth, close your mouth mindfully, and with mindfulness feel the juice coming out of the orange. Taste the sweetness.

Do you have the time to do so? If you think you don't have time to eat an orange like this, what are you using that time for? Are you using your time to worry or using your time to live?

Spiritual practice is not just sitting and meditating. Practice is looking, thinking, touching, drinking, eating, and talking. Every act, every breath, and every step can be practice and can help us to become more ourselves.



Image by Bill Gracey

The quality of our practice depends on its energy of mindfulness and concentration. I define mindfulness as the practice of being fully present and alive, body and mind united. Mindfulness is the energy that helps us to know what is going on in the present moment. I drink water and I know that I am drinking the water. Drinking the water is what is happening.

Mindfulness brings concentration. When we drink water mindfully, we concentrate on drinking. If we are concentrated, life is deep, and we have more joy and stability. We can drive mindfully, we can cut carrots mindfully, we can shower mindfully. When we do things this way, concentration grows. When concentration grows, we gain insight into our lives. 🧘

The principle of the practice is simple: to bring our minds back to our bodies, to produce our true presence, and to become fully alive.

Everything is happening under the light of mindfulness. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, we say, "We're doing everything in the presence of God." That's another way of expressing the same reality. When Jews have a shabbos dinner, they lay the table, pour the milk, and cook the food aware of the presence of the divine.

In Buddhism, God is mindfulness and concentration. Every single thing that takes place is exposed to the light of mindfulness and concentration, and that energy of mindfulness and concentration is the essence of the Buddha. Mindfulness and concentration always bring insight, and insight is the factor that liberates us from suffering, because we are able to see the true nature of reality. 🙏

If you are cutting carrots, you should invest one hundred percent of yourself into the business of carrot-cutting. Nothing else. While cutting the carrot, please don't try to think of the Buddha or anything else. Just cut the carrot in the best way possible, becoming one with the carrot, becoming one with the cutting. Live deeply that moment of carrot-cutting. It is as important as the practice of sitting meditation. It is as important as giving or hearing a dharma talk. When you cut the carrot with all of your being, that is mindfulness. If you can cultivate concentration, and if you can get the insight you need to liberate yourself from suffering, that is because you know how to cut your carrots.

You can clean the toilet in the spirit of mindfulness, investing all of yourself into the cleaning, making it into a joyful practice. Do one thing at a time. Do it

deeply. There are many wonders of life that are available in the here and the now. Without mindfulness, you may be angry that you have to clean the toilet or feel resentful, and neglect and ignore the wonders around you.

When we cook, when we clean, when we walk, each movement can be made with mindfulness, concentration, and insight. With each step we take, we can touch the earth and become one with it. Our fear and loneliness dissipate. There is no other way. With every breath, we can generate mindfulness, concentration, and insight. Insight is our liberation. Insight liberates us from our fear, our ignorance, our loneliness and despair. It is this insight that helps us to penetrate deeply into the nature of no-birth and no-death, and the interconnected nature of all things. This is the cream of Buddhist practice—and we can do it by means of the very simple practices of breathing in and breathing out, being mindful of each step, and looking deeply. 🙏

Thich Nhat Hanh

[Online source](#)

Our true heritage

The cosmos is filled with precious gems. I want to offer a handful of them to you this morning.

Each moment you are alive is a gem, shining through and containing earth and sky, water and clouds.

It needs you to breathe gently for the miracles to be displayed. 🙏

Suddenly you hear the birds singing, the pines chanting, see the flowers blooming, the blue sky, the white clouds, the smile and the marvelous look of your beloved.

You, the richest person on Earth, who have been going around begging for a living, stop being the destitute child.

Come back and claim your heritage.

We should enjoy our happiness and offer it to everyone.

Cherish this very moment.

Let go of the stream of distress and embrace life fully in your arms. 🙏

Thich Nhat Hanh

[Online source](#)

WHO WE ARE

The Communities of Mindful Living are inspired by the Buddhist teachings of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (pictured).



We aspire to live fully in each moment for the peace and happiness of ourselves and all beings. We meet regularly to observe the art of mindful living and to foster a supportive community of practitioners. 🧘

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We would love to hear from you.
We want the The Lotus Bud to be a place for sharing our experiences and building the Sangha; so why not write a short piece about your experiences with mindfulness ?

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Reading bell

As you read this magazine you have an opportunity to go back to the present moment.

You will notice a bell: 🧘 throughout the magazine.

When you come to each bell, you may like to stop reading, clear your mind and return to your breath before continuing.

Our activities

Wednesday Mindfulness
Meditation
Sydney, Inner West

We welcome all to come join us for meditation practice. We meet at 7:30 pm each Wednesday at the Buddhist Library, Church St, Camperdown, Sydney.

Meditation and monthly
Mindfulness Days at
Canley Heights

Southwest Sydney - 7.30pm
Friday Night Meditation and
Monthly Mindfulness Days.
49 Ferngrove Rd Canley
Heights.

Mindfulness Days at Nhap Luu
(Entering the Stream)
Meditation Centre
221 Maria's Lane
Beaufort VIC 3733
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0431 470 172

Online sources for articles in this issue

[http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=1080:](http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=1080)

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/mystic-sounds/the-moment-is-perfect-by-thich-nhat-hanh-/535779769861985>

<https://www.facebook.com/Thich-Nhat-Hanh-gems-319228401438031/>