

## April 2021

Greetings!

I hope everyone is doing well. I just had my second dose of the Covid vaccine, and I have to say that I have a feeling of relief, knowing how serious and deadly this virus can be. Things here in Seattle are about the same. I have been doing some work in the garden, but the major work is still about a month away. As far as the meditation groups that I am leading are concerned, it looks as if none of the facilities will be opening anytime soon. I am very much looking forward to when things can return to some degree of normalcy. A few weeks ago, I went down to the temple for a retreat, and as is always the case, it was very helpful for my training. The virtual meditations have been going well and I have received a lot of positive feedback. I think that I will continue these meetings even after things get rolling again.

I would like to go over some aspects of our daily active practice that are critical in determining the way in which we interact with the world. But first, I want to express how our daily formal meditation is of the utmost importance. It is said that a nutritious breakfast each day provides us with a sound foundation for the rest of the day. The same goes for our meditation. It provides us with a spiritual foundation that really helps us to be mindful during the day. I cannot stress enough how important mindfulness is as we go about our daily lives. We need to be aware of when our feelings and emotions are pushing us off course. We have to be very mindful of all that pulls us out of our true Home - the place of the Eternal's peace, compassion, and pure love.

Recently, I gave a talk about mindfulness, and a particular metaphor came up for me. Years ago, I went to help in a temple to dig trenches for their electricity and plumbing. This temple had a strong clay base. Now the properties of clay can be very different at different times, but it is always difficult to work with. Sometimes it can be very, very hard, where all you can do is pick off pieces a few at a time. At other times it can be very moist and spongy, and you have to keep wiping the clay off your tools. This reminded me of the egocentric self in our daily lives. Sometimes it can be hard and stiff, displaying strong opinions and emotions, causing us to get angry very easily. In this mode, the egocentric self is effectively putting up a barrier that impedes the loving flow of the Eternal. On the other hand, the egocentric self can be very soft and pliable. In this mode, there is little resistance to the influence of life's circumstances and emotions, and we tend to become less focused and less mindful, easily falling into despair, and holding on to sadness. We may find that much of the time we are in a fog-like state, with our view obscured by the ever-shifting cloud of feelings and emotions.

During the course of our daily lives, we can go back and forth between these states, or remain in one or the other for a long while. This is where mindfulness comes in. We want to catch ourselves when we fall into one of these pits, by just letting go and allowing the loving flow of the Eternal to wash over us, and through us.

Mindfulness takes a lot of effort and awareness. Our training will help us to become more mindful, and avoid many pitfalls in our daily lives. As I have often said, to live in a state where the Eternal is flowing freely is well worth the effort. Take care.

With all my heart  
Rev Basil