

Engineering Mindfulness: Psychoanalytical Navigation Of Sadhguru's Book And Program, 'Inner Engineering' To Harvest Mindfulness

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness can be defined in multitudinous ways, however simply defined; it is the practice of paying attention to everything in the present, purposefully and receptively, deeply and openly, and non-judgmentally to each and every thing that arises in the present moment. It has to be both extrinsic and intrinsic and is synonymous to the Romantic revival moment where the nature poets basked in the revelation of their sensation in the lap of nature. Wordsworth, who was often referred to as the 'High Priest of Nature', had imbibed the elements of Pantheism in his poetry where he informs his readers about the manner of divinity he felt in the midst of nature which he didn't feel in any place of worship. He leapt with joy in nature's presence, becoming an embodiment of the sacredness, that he took with him in the dull and dreary city life and it kept him warm. In *Lines Composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, he talks of paying attention to his surroundings in the present moment when he visited the natural vicinity of Tintern Abbey; he connected to the divinity both inside and around him.

'These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; '

(Wordsworth, William. 'Lines Composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey'. *poetryfoundation.org*. (Web))

In this paper, however attention has been paid to the literary and psychological process of mindfulness attained through Sadhguru's Inner Engineering program which is meant to channel not just mindfulness and bliss but also is an ancient yogic science to create inner and external well being. Also attention has been paid to understand how the way out is inside us through the book which combines elements of Sadhguru's Inner Engineering program with excerpts from his life before and after attaining mindfulness and hence being one with everything.

Sadhguru defines Inner Engineering as,

'Inner Engineering is neither a religion, nor a philosophy or dogma. It is a technology for wellbeing. One does not have to believe or disbelieve, just have to learn to use. Technology will produce results irrespective of who you are.'

(N.A. 'The Making of a Hata Yogi Establishing the Practice'. 'Demystifying Yoga'. 'Yoga and Meditation'. *Isha.sadhguru.org*. September 16, 2013 (Web))

In it is a technology to find immense joy through self transformation which can be achieved by experiencing the limitless nature of who we are. A 'Guru' is needed to guide you into this direction by functioning as a map, a teacher whose meaning itself is 'dispeller of darkness'. Sadhguru explains that there is a lot of written literature to offer guidance but inner experience is all that is needed to navigate mindfulness. Both the program and the book offer wisdom based on authorial experience to help understand what to expect.

In the first half of the book, the author talks about how he observed everything around him from since a very early age and that observation gave him all the knowledge that he has. Hence he asks his reader and practitioner to not to simply believe and digest what they are reading but to be conscious. Awareness comes through conscious observation, a state of 'I do not know' which leads to knowledge. About his observations, the author says,

'When my eyes were open, everything intrigued me—an ant, a leaf, clouds, flowers, darkness, just about anything. But to my amazement, I found that with my eyes closed, there was even more that grabbed my attention—the way the body pulses, the way different organs function, the various channels along which one's inner energy moves, the manner in which the anatomy is aligned, the fact that boundaries are limited to the external world. This exercise opened up the entire mechanics of being human before me. Instead of leading me to a simplistic answer that I was "this" or "that," it gradually brought me to a realization that, if I were willing, I could be everything. It wasn't about arriving at any conclusions. Even the certainty of "me" collapsed as a deeper sense of what it is to be a human being started opening up. From knowing myself as an autonomous person, this exercise melted me down. I became a nebulous being.'

(Sadhguru. *Inner Engineering A Yogi's Guide to Joy*, Part 1. 'When I lost my Senses'. Spiegel & Grau, Penguin Random House. New York, 2016. Page 16)

He asks the readers to do an experiment where he asks them to simply observe the process of eating, breathing and drinking water during a meal. He talks to a great extent about responsibility and responding to it. He distinguishes the popular convention of associating being responsible to being at fault.

'Being fully responsible is to be fully conscious. What you consider to be your body is what you have gathered through ingestion. What you consider to be your mind is what you have gathered through the five senses. What is beyond that—which you did not gather—is who you *are*. Being alive is being conscious.

Everybody is conscious to some degree, but when you touch the dimension beyond body and beyond mind, you have touched that which is the very source of consciousness. You realize then that the entire universe is conscious. You inhabit a living cosmos... Responsibility simply means your *ability to respond*. If you decide, "I am responsible," you will have the ability to respond. If you decide, "I am not responsible," you will not have the ability to respond.'

(Sadhguru. *Inner Engineering A Yogi's Guide to Joy*, Part 1. 'No Boundary, No Burden'. Spiegel & Grau, Penguin Random House. New York, 2016. Page 33)

Responsibility offers you the choice of action but it isn't unbridled action as you get to have freedom of choice. If you are responsible for a hate crime happening miles away in a separate country but you can't be blamed for it but you can respond with emotions or actions. This is similar to the Moses' code present in God's name as told to Moses of 'I am That I am' as creatively written in the book 'Moses' Code' by James Twyman. The code was designed to attract everything one designed and it has been used effectively since its mention in Exodus in Bible, to create miracles. The code, a simple comma (,) placed in the God's name as, 'I am That, I am' deduces the name to become I am that good human as well as I am that bad person, yes I am. Hence I am conscious enough to realize something negative and I can respond to it if I wish but I cannot be blamed for the negativity.

The program emphasizes on the regular practice of Shambhavi Mahamudra, a yogasana meant to awaken the Ajna chakra (pineal gland) or the 3rd chakra, manifesting mindfulness or conscious awareness, through focus on the gazing of eyebrow gesture. This is because the wind wanders with the eye and settles with the settlement of the eyeballs into a fixture. The yoga, improvised by Sadhguru to make it into a 21 minute practice that incorporates the breath after practicing Upayoga, aligns the entire system of the practitioner so that their entire body, mind and emotions function in harmony, establishing a chemistry of blissfulness within them. The official website of the program list the following benefits in practitioners – greater peace and joy, improved sleep quality and energy levels, purification of the five elements of the body, relief from chronic ailments and access to the intelligence within which is the source of creation.

Myriad studies have been conducted on a plethora of its aspects have listed results in its impact on diseases and medicinal use for them, sleep quota, heart rate variability, brain activity etc and the results included on their blog show improved cardiac health, self confidence and energy levels, greater coherence within the brain, improved sleep, attention, inner peace and mental focus and clarity, reduced menstrual disorders, eliminate depression and allergies and many more. Studies conducted at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital Delhi on Shambhavi practitioners have shown 90% reduction in anxiety symptoms, 95% reduction in depression symptoms, 50% stopped regular medications while 25% reduced medication. A study shows those who practiced Shambhavi Kriya regularly for a minimum of 1 year had a Restfulness Ratio of 3.93 (Muralikrishnan K et al). Those who did not had a ratio of 0.54.

The following paper aims to contribute to the given plethora of research proving the positive implications on the practitioners but the aspect that this paper has considered is the level of mindfulness found in the regular and irregular practitioners. The practice of this yogasana has to be done for a minimum of 40 days to have optimum result and this time duration is known as mandala. A mandala in Ayurveda is the length of time that is needed for the medicine to take root in your system. So if you do a certain sadhana/yogic practice for one mandala, then it gets imbibed in your system like software and functions on a completely different level. About the mandala Sadhguru says,

'With any sadhana or kriya, it is customary to establish the practice deeply with a 40 to 48 day cycle. Sadhguru explains the significance of this: "If you bring anything new into your system, it will take about 40 days to become a part of the system. This is because the human physiology goes through a certain cycle every 40 to 48 days, which is known as a 'mandala.' This is also the reason why in Ayurveda, for example, medicine is usually given for 48 days – this is the length of time that is needed for the medicine to take root in your system. So if you do a certain sadhana for one mandala, then it gets written into your system like software and functions on a completely different level. It is important that you do it without a break for that period.'

(N.A. 'The Making of a Hata Yogi Establishing the Practice'. 'Demystifying Yoga'. 'Yoga and Meditation'. *Isha.sadhguru.org*. September 16, 2013 (Web))

To examine the impact of Inner Engineering Program in the levels of mindfulness in the practitioners who have completed the mandala and those who haven't, in other words, those who had practiced Shambhavi Mahamudra twice a day for 40 days and those who haven't; a psychological test was conducted on them. These two categories have also been compared with a controlled group of individuals who haven't been initiated in the Inner Engineering Program as of yet. The test conducted on them was called *Five Facet Mindfulness test* operated through filling up a Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire. *Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire* is based on a factor analytic study of five independently developed mindfulness questionnaires. The analysis yielded five factors that appear to represent elements of mindfulness as it is currently conceptualized. The five facets are observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience.

The study was conducted on people aged from 16 to 24 years of all genders. They were divided into three sample groups. Group A comprised of people who have been initiated to do the Shambhavi Mahamudra and have completed the Mandala period, Group B consisted of people who have been initiated but have not completed the Mandala while Group C consisted of people who were not initiated and don't practice any meditation/yoga on regular basis.

The questionnaire majorly dealt with 5 facets, they are:

- Observe items: Attending to internal and external stimuli
- Describe items: Mentally labelling stimuli
- Act with awareness items: Consciously attending to actions without behaving with automaticity
- Non-judge items: Refraining from evaluation of thoughts, feelings and sensations
- Non-react items: Allowing thoughts and feelings to arise and dissipate without rumination

Average scores of each group have been mentioned below:

Group A's average score is 136 with the highest scoring reaching high up to 169 for people who have been practicing for over 2 years. Group B's average score is 128 while Group C's average score is 114.

- Group B showed 12% better results than Group C
- Group A showed 19% better results than group C and 7% better results than group A

II. CONCLUSION

The research showed a general trend in the increase of mindfulness levels of individuals on practicing Shambhavi Mahamudra regularly. Regular practitioners have shown increase their attention level, increased focus, acceptability of their own thoughts & feelings and refraining from evaluation of thoughts/feelings. Other researchers have already elaborated their positive findings about the initiated practitioners who have completed the tradition 40 day period (mandala) of regular practice and it has been included as literature review in the current paper. The paper at hand highlighted how the program as well as the self help book by Sadhguru, the mystic and yogi himself increased the blissfulness quotient in individuals, making them capable of dealing with delicate as well tough situations with ease. Situations such as improving the overall condition of decayed and dying rivers of the nation with the implication of river rejuvenation bill to improving the overall condition of overall individual lifestyle can only be done through an increased level of mindfulness, where an individual is responsibly conscious and aware.

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