

October 2019 Newsletter

Hull Unitarian Church

Chamberlain House, Park Street, Hull, HU2 8TA



HHH: Holidays, Home & Hospitality

It was on the last day of our holidays, as we were preparing to leave, we met our hosts to say goodbye. The day before after following some of my Facebook posts she sent me a friend request, and I accepted.

She was a very attentive and informative host. We both appreciated that aspect of her role. So it should not have, but did catch me off guard, when she asked...

“You are a Minister?”

“Yes”

“Protestant like me?”

I laughed and said, “Well I am Unitarian, and we are a bit further into the radical....”

And then I thought, no she doesn't need all the usual Unitarian explanations, and finished it with...

“Yes, Protestant like you.”

Later in the car Ashley explained that she was of Huguenot descent, and in fact when she asked me about being Protestant she held up the tradition Huguenot cross that identifies their community. What we learned was that the region was at one time heavily Protestant, so much that the Roman Catholic Church planted monasteries in the region to convert them to Catholicism. They did so well that our host was the last Protestant in the village. The others who held on to their faith moved to another region.

The area of France where we were was a hotbed of dissent, no wonder I felt at home. The Cathars, Knights Templars, and of course the Huguenots. These people formed communities and their mark is still there, one story I know is of one of the Huguenot villages during the Vichy and later direct Nazi occupations, they opened their homes and their village to help Jewish children and adults escape with their lives. If you want to read their story pick up a copy of the book “Lest Innocent Blood be Shed” by Phillip Hallie.

One of the marks of a growing faith community is its ability to welcome the stranger, and one another. This ideal of hospitality is embedded in many faith traditions in story and ritual. From the stories around Abraham, to the Hindu greeting of Namaste, we find a welcome and openness to the stranger that leads us to the meeting of the divine.

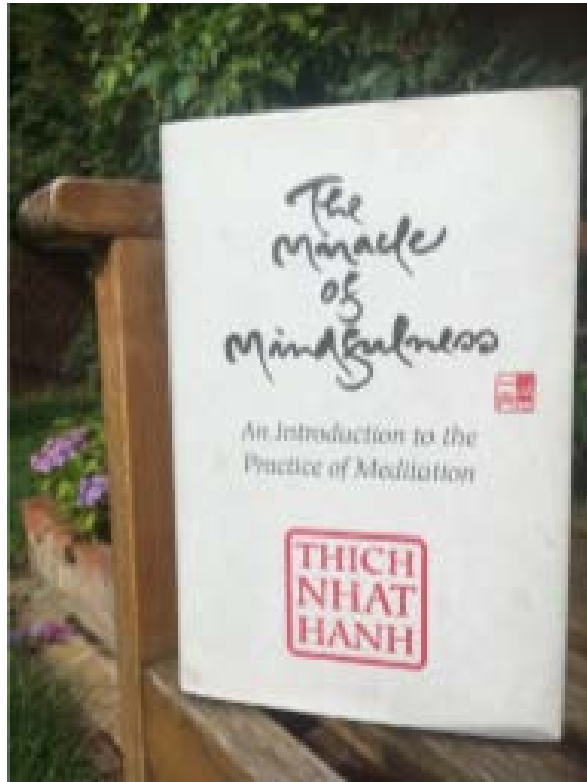
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Book Review

The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh



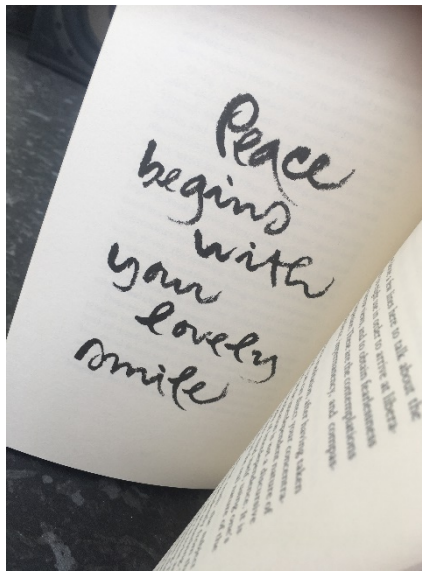
Reviewed by Graziana Presicce

This book was originally a long letter written in 1974 by the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh and addressed to Brother Quang, a staff member of the School of Youth for Social Service in South Vietnam. The book comprises seven short chapters—making it a nice read to spread across different days, if you enjoy reading a little at a time. Between a chapter and the next, we can also find the author’s calligraphy works ‘which embody his insight and compassion’, as well as a group of pictures of Tich Nhat Hanh in the inner section of the book.

The author describes mindfulness as ‘keeping one’s consciousness alive’, and ‘alive in the present reality’ (p.11). The translator of the book, Moby Ho, gives as an example a little story in the preface (which I recommend reading to appreciate a better understanding of the book’s context and Tich Nhat Hanh’s life), of one encounter with the author:

‘There was the time I was cooking furiously and could not find a spoon I’d set down amid a scattered pile of pans and ingredients. As I searched here and there, Thay (“Thay” means “teacher”) entered the kitchen and smiled. He asked, “What is Moby looking for?” Of course, I answered, “The spoon! I’m looking for a spoon!” Thay answered, again with a smile, “No, Moby is looking for Moby.”’

According to the Buddhist monk, mindfulness should be practiced right now, in the daily life, not only in meditation sessions. The author patiently guides the reader through different approaches to mindfulness (such as one’s awareness of the breath), but also giving personal accounts as examples, which I particularly enjoyed reading about. Among the various areas of discussion, it also explains how life and death are two faces of Life, and that both are needed for life to exist, just like two sides of a coin are needed for the coin to exist. And if a concept may seem a little complicated at first, do not worry: things will clarify with the examples that follow. However, overall, the book is a pleasant read and very accessible.



This is an ideal book particularly if you have never tried mindfulness before. At the end of the book, Thich Nhat Hanh provides a series of 'Exercises in Mindfulness': these are brief paragraphs explaining clearly and simply different ways of practicing meditation; simple steps which anyone can take to practice mindfulness at any time of the day or night, and on any occasion.

Overall, if you would like an introduction to mindfulness, or to contrast the rushing lifestyle which easily takes the lead of our daily routine, I strongly recommend this book. As the author invites us to, we should enjoy the present: 'every second is worth living' (p.51).

Yorkshire Unitarian Union AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union will take place at our church on the 26th of October from 11 AM. Lunch will be provided.

A Musical Cavalcade

Hull Unitarians member Bernard McHugh is organising a series of musical events at Park Street to raise money for anti-slavery causes, in association with the Salvation Army. The first of these events will be at the church, 2 PM on Tuesday the 1st of October, and will feature a ukulele orchestra. Donations will be welcome.

Mindfulness at Park Street

Every Thursday we gather from 2.00 pm for meditation from 2.30 pm to 3.20 pm followed by discussion and refreshments. Please note that the timing of meditation is under review. Ask James Bell for more information.

Date	Leader
3 rd	Revd John Carter
10 th	James
17 th	James
24 th	Mark
31 st	Pat

Unitarian Sunday Services in October at 11.00 am

If you have not attended worship in a Unitarian Church, it is not quite what some people imagine. No one will tell you what to think, but what you hear may start you thinking. Your ideas are welcome and people enjoy the fellowship and the thoughts that are shared. We always conclude with refreshments and time for sharing.

Date	Worship Leader	Topic	Music
6 th	Revd John Carter	TBC	TBC
13 th	Jenny Jacobs	Harvest	Recorded/Chris Carr
20 th	Revd John Carter	Day of Unitarian Peace Prayers	TBC
27 th	Rory Castle-Jones	TBC	Andrew Palfreman

Jenny is from Harrogate and part of the York Congregation; at her harvest service on the 13th we will welcome donations of food, toiletries and clothes. Rory is the Unitarian Communications Officer and a new trainee minister. He is taking our service a day after the AGM which is happening in Hull (see above).

Charity Coffee Mornings - Fridays 10.30 to Noon

Our coffee mornings are an opportunity for enjoyable refreshments and good fellowship. Funds raised will be used for the relief of need in our community and to help to subsidise our next outing.

Fundraise for a Charity of Your Choice

Would you like to raise funds for a charity that you support? You can by organising a Friday coffee morning at the church. You will receive £15 to purchase raffle prizes, and there is bric-a-brac stored in the church that you can sell. Invite representatives of the charity to join you, and let our members and friends learn about the charity that you support. Please contact Daniel to express your interest.

Making Changes to the Newsletter

As you can see we're experimenting with a longer four-page format for the newsletter including articles and other features, and may be changing to an "every two months" schedule. We hope you'll enjoy it, and feedback is welcomed along with content submissions.

Dates for Your Diary

October 1 Musical Cavalcade

October 26 Yorkshire Unitarian Union Annual General Meeting

How to Contact Hull Unitarians

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