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Meditation in Buddhism, MBSR, and the Bible: Examining the Implications for Christian Counselors

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

**“Meditation in Buddhism, MBSR, and the Bible:
Examining the Implications for Christian Counselors”**

written by

Kara DeLaune

and submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for completion of

the Carl Goodson Honors Program

meets the criteria for acceptance

and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

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April 16, 2021

OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

**MEDITATION IN BUDDHISM, MBSR, AND THE BIBLE:
EXAMINING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS**

HONORS THESIS

**BY
KARA DELAUNE**

APRIL 15, 2021

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Abstract

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) has become a popular treatment in clinical settings for a variety of conditions. The term mindfulness was first used in relation to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.¹ This passage from the Buddhist texts contains instructions regarding *sati*, which roughly translates from the Pāli language to English as mindfulness. Mindfulness is a key component of the Buddhist religion, finding its place in both the Threefold Way and the Seven Factors of Awakening, or Enlightenment. Mindfulness falls under the umbrella of meditation.² Meditation takes several forms. Meditation is extremely useful for Christians, but not every type of meditation is Biblical. This paper examines meditation in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, and the Bible to determine their purposes and goals and whether MBSR contains Buddhist elements that render it unfit for Christians.

¹ *Suttas*, also known as *Sutras* in Sanskrit, are part of the Pāli Canon, which is the sacred literature of the teachings of the Buddha according to the Theravada tradition, as preserved in the Pāli language.

² In this paper, the word meditation will be defined as “the act of engaging in contemplation, reflection, or a mental exercise.” Mirriam Webster furthers the definition to include “for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness,” but the different purposes of meditation according to Buddhism, MBSR, and the Bible will be discussed in each section.

Introduction

Meditation is a term well known to societies across the world, but the concept itself is ambiguous and complex. Many who practice meditation in the West are unaware of the rich history and origins behind the practice. Meditation finds its place in several religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. Those who practice meditation for religious purposes understand the practice through their own texts and teachers. However, more and more people have come to practice meditation in a secular way, especially as the awareness for mental health grows. The immense variety within the practice has its value in serving the needs of many individuals with different religious beliefs and goals, but with the expanse of variations within the practice and the many forms that the meditation takes, comes confusion about what meditation truly is, and who can benefit from it. Questions surrounding the types of meditation and their unique purposes and goals as well as who can practice meditation arise especially among those who do not claim the Buddhist or Hindu faith, as meditation is strongly attached to these religions.

The influence of Eastern religions, specifically Buddhism, has grown substantially in the West as a push for wellness and holistic health has become a popular topic and goal for many. In the area of meditation, mindfulness has become prominent in its use in clinical and lay settings in treatment for various mental health disorders, stress reduction, and overall wellness. As Christians, and more specifically Christian counselors, it is necessary to assess practices that claim to bring health to the mind, body and soul, especially when they have been influenced by another religion as the Bible tells us to “guard our heart and our mind.” Furthermore, as different types of meditation are being advertised not only in religious circles, but also quite commonly in the secular fields of healthcare and counseling, the question arises as to whether or not Christian

counselors should include meditation in their practice and if so, what types of meditation are appropriate in following Biblical principles. The worldview and religious beliefs of both the therapist and the client, and the motivations and end goals of meditative therapy are extremely important to evaluate before beginning any meditative therapy. Meditation practiced with the wrong beliefs and motivations can be detrimental to a Christian. The most popular meditative therapy is Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, commonly referred to as MBSR. For counselors, it is important to understand that mindfulness is a term that is used liberally and holds different meanings for different people in different circumstances. Counselors should strive to understand the meanings of mindfulness in regards to Buddhist mindfulness, mindfulness in MBSR, and mindfulness when discussing Biblical meditation, as these differ, yet are sometimes mistakenly interchanged. Christians cannot practice Buddhist meditation without undermining key truths found in the Bible, but MBSR can be an appropriate method for Christian counselors to integrate into their practice if adequate attention to possible changes is given to the purposes, goals, and techniques during the process of these therapies in order to ensure its alignment with Biblical scripture regarding meditation.

To support this thesis, this paper will explore foundational concepts of Buddhism with a focus on meditation in the *sutta* concerning mindfulness, specifically examining its motivations. The goals and results of meditation in MBSR will also be discussed. In regards to meditation in the Bible, the goals and results will be evaluated through exegetical studies of several verses. Finally, the goals and results of meditation in Buddhism and in MBSR will be compared with those of scripture to determine their suitability for Christian counselors to use in their practice for the treatment of their clients.

History of Meditation

The history of meditation is one that goes back thousands of years with no clear beginning, yet it has many clear records of use and teaching as well as having a significant place throughout religious texts through the years. Mentions of meditation have been found in records as far back as 1500 BC in India.³ Here the terms *Dhyāna* or *Jhāna* are used to discuss practices for training the mind in the traditions of Vedantism. Other notations of meditation are recorded from a few hundred years BC in Buddhist Indian scriptures, but are less detailed about the practice. In early Chinese written records from 600 to 300 BC, Laozi, a Daoist Chinese philosopher, references meditation.⁴ When specifically focused on Buddhist meditation, from which much of the current secular meditative practices stem, the sutras on the Pāli Canon discusses meditation in India within the Theravada tradition dating back to 100 BC.⁵ For most people, meditation has a somewhat immediate connotation with Buddhism or the Buddha. For many non-Buddhists this is in part due to the iconic image of the a sitting with legs crossed and arms rested on his knees which is the traditional body position for meditation and known in popular culture across the world. Many may assume that the Buddha, also known as Siddhārtha Gautama in Sanskrit or Siddhattha Gotama in Pāli, invented meditation during his journey to enlightenment. However, as previously mentioned, meditation has been documented for hundreds and even thousands of years prior to the birth of the Buddha in 623 BC, and furthermore, the Buddha looked to and learned from other teachers who taught meditation as a

³ Elaine Mead, "The History and Origin of Meditation," *Positivepsychology.com* (January 9, 2020) Online: <https://positivepsychology.com/history-of-meditation/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

spiritual practice. He did, however, become very influential in the spread of the practice due to his many followers for years to come, and because of his role in the writing of the Buddhist scriptures, which contain the many references to meditation.

According to the Buddhist traditions, every sentient being has the ability to reach enlightenment, where the mind is no longer confined by ignorance, and meditation is the foundation for the clarification of the mind. Meditation's goal is to recognize and remove the "delusions that spring from it [ignorance], such as attachment, jealousy, pride and hatred - which obscure our mind's clear light nature and are the actual cause of all the suffering we experience - and to develop desirable attributes such as love, compassion, tranquility, concentration and divine intelligence, which are the cause of all happiness."⁶ Although meditation is not unique to the Buddhist religion, there are many Buddhist influences in the popular meditation that is practiced today, especially in mindfulness meditation. In regards to Buddhist meditation, the goal is to end suffering, and this can be done by the self. There are many practices and steps that go hand in hand with meditation, but the ultimate purpose stays the same: enlightenment, or the release from suffering which is unavoidable while in the cycle of rebirth, and only achievable through enlightenment and eventually Nirvana.

Meditation in Buddhism

Meditation has its roots in the East, but it is specifically tied to Buddhism because of its foundational role in the religion. The Buddhist religion grew from the teaching of Siddhārtha Gautama, or the Buddha, as he journeyed to enlightenment, teaching others along the way. Buddhism by definition is "a religion of eastern and central Asia growing out of the teaching of

⁶ Nicholas Ribush, "Meditation in Tibetan Buddhism," *Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archives* (October 2000), <https://www.lamayeshe.com/article/meditation-tibetan-buddhism>.

Siddhārtha Gautama that suffering is inherent in life and that one can be liberated from it by cultivating wisdom, virtue, and concentration.”⁷ Although there is not a central higher being nor a god, Buddhism is still considered a religion, not just a philosophy, but in many senses it is both. The religion has grown substantially since the Buddha's teachings while on earth, and has three main classifications: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.⁸ In order to practice Buddhist meditation and specifically mindfulness, one must understand the structure and philosophies of Buddhism.

A major concept in Buddhism is the cycle of rebirth or *samsara*. While trapped in the cycle of living, humans experience pain and suffering. “Life as it is understood in the Dispensation of the Buddha is unsatisfactory until one can through moral joy, meditative tranquillity and wise understanding reach mental invulnerability to suffering,”⁹ which can be rephrased in simpler terms to say that life is unsatisfactory until one is incapable of suffering. To end the cycle, one must be liberated through an awakening or enlightenment. The goal of Buddhism is complete loss of suffering and attachment, which is seen in the Four Noble Truths: suffering, origin of suffering, cessation of suffering, and the path that leads to the cessation of suffering.¹⁰ In the *Alagaddupama Sutta* of the Pāli Canon, the Buddha says, “Monks, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering, and the cessation of suffering.”¹¹ It is important to understand the motivation behind the practices of the Buddha, which is clearly to end suffering,

⁷ Merriam-Webster, “Buddhism,” *Merriam-webster.com*

⁸ Christopher Partridge, *Introduction to World Religions* Third ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 217.

⁹ Soma Thera, “The Way of Mindfulness: The Satipatthana Sutta and Its Commentary,” *Accessinsight.org* (1998) Online: <https://www.accessinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wayof.html#notes>

¹⁰ Partridge. 234.

¹¹ Johannes Bronkhorst, “Buddhist Teaching in India,” *Academia.edu* (2009) Online: https://www.academia.edu/3288020/Buddhist_Teaching_in_India

so that one can connect these to the purposes and goals of Buddhist meditation and mindfulness. While on earth, still in the cycle of *samsara*, the purpose of a person is to find inner wisdom and liberation, to combat ignorance, which leads to suffering. Every sentient being has the ability to reach enlightenment, where the mind is no longer confined by ignorance. Meditation is the foundation for the clarification of the mind. Despite the expanses of texts and differences in practices between the three schools and even various practices among monks across the world, meditation continues to stand as a pillar in the religion.

Once one has grasped the Four Noble Truths, they have started the path to enlightenment. The Buddha gave insight on how one can continue on the journey with the Eightfold Path. The path contains eight practices that are intended to work together in order to clear the mind and be liberated of all attachments and desires. The Eightfold Path is divided into three parts, or the Threefold Way: Ethics, Meditation, and Wisdom. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration comprise the meditation category.¹² The meditation category of the Threefold Way is described as the concentration discipline section of the path.¹³ Right Mindfulness is the translation of *samma sati* in the Pāli.¹⁴ *Sati* is a key element in the Buddha's teaching as seen in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

In the first section of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha introduces mindfulness as “the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbana [Nirvana].” Soma Thera, a Theravada Buddhist monk, adds that mindfulness involves both insight (*vipassana*) and concentration (*samatha*). Here, the reader can note that the Buddha

¹² “Buddhist Beliefs,” *bbc.co.uk* Online: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zf8g4qt/revision/3>

¹³ “Right Mindfulness: *samma sati*”, edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, (November 5, 2013) Online: <http://www.accesstoinight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-sati/index.html> .

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

himself states the motivations and purposes for mindfulness is purification of beings, overcoming sorrow, ending of suffering, and reaching Nirvana. The passage also includes that being mindful will overcome covetousness and grief. In order to achieve these results, the Buddha lays out the Four Arousals of Mindfulness: the contemplation of the body, the contemplation of feelings, the contemplation of consciousness, and the contemplation on mental objects. Each of the four contemplations has further contemplations and explanations.

The First Arousing of Mindfulness, the contemplation of the body, is purposed with correcting the meditator's wrong idea that the body is beautiful. Within the contemplation of the body is the mindfulness of breathing, the modes of deportment, the four kinds of clear comprehension, the reflection of the repulsiveness of the body, and the reflection on the modes of materiality. Its goal is to bring the meditator to the correct understanding of reality that "the body is ugly."¹⁵ The most likely origin of the common practice of breathing meditation is the first section of the First Arousing, the mindfulness of breathing. Also included in the First Arousing of Mindfulness is the modes of deportment. This practice focuses on awareness of the movement of the body in certain activities. In the reflection of the repulsiveness of the body, the body is minimized to only the physical components such as skin, nails, bile, pus, blood, and tears.¹⁶ There is no mention of a soul or the personality of a human. The reflection on the modes of materiality contains nine contemplations which follow the decay of a body, each becoming more morbid and repulsive than the one before. This is how the meditator should view their own body, leading to a lack of clinging. The passage states that the body exists only to the extent needed for knowledge and remembrance.¹⁷

¹⁵ Thera.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The aim of the Second Arousing of Mindfulness is for the meditator to understand that “feeling is suffering.”¹⁸ The contemplation of feelings reflects on current feelings of pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain of the meditator. As seen in the reflection of the body, the meditator must believe that feelings exist only to the extent needed for knowledge and remembrance. “Consciousness is impermanent” is the right belief that comes from the Third Arousing of Mindfulness. The contemplation of consciousness includes the conscious with lust, and the conscious without lust, the conscious with hate, and the conscious without hate, the quieted conscious, and the not quieted conscious. Again, the existence of consciousness is to the extent of the body and feelings. The Fourth Arousing, the contemplation on mental objects, is taught “to convince such errant folk of the fact of the soullessness or the insubstantiality of mental things and to destroy the illusion which clouds their minds.” The fourth contemplation, the contemplation on mental objects includes the contemplation of the five hindrances, the five aggregates of clinging, the six internal and six external sense bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths. The five aggregates of clinging focus on the arising and disappearance of the material body, feelings, perceptions, formations, and consciousness.

The purpose of the arousings of mindfulness is to “cast out the illusions concerning beauty, pleasure, permanence, and an ego” respectively to each of the four contemplations. Therea states, “This Middle Way of Mindfulness is clearly not based on revelation, dogmas, nor vacuous beliefs like those in a Supreme Creator God and an Eternal.” He also states that mindfulness is the objective way of viewing the world because the mind is free to receive truth without the hindrance of one’s own mind-talk, and things are able to speak for themselves, presenting all

¹⁸ Ibid.

aspects. In this way, the mind leaves all biases and is tolerant and adaptable to all thoughts.¹⁹ To reference the Buddhists scriptures examined, see Appendix..

Meditation in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Meditation is not just popular in religious circles or those who consider themselves spiritual; according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), “the use of meditation increased more than threefold from 4.1% in 2012 to 14.2% in 2017.”²⁰ This means that over 46 million people in the United States practiced meditation in 2017. In all purposeful practices like meditation, exercising, or eating healthy, there must be a goal or purpose and also an end result that is motivating the action, and without this goal in mind, there will be less motivation to practice it. This specific goal or purpose may be unknown to the one who is practicing it, which can be dangerous and lead to results that were unintended, or lead to little if any results. If the goal of Buddhist meditation is Nirvana, what then is the goal of meditation for the everyday person? This is something that one needs to consider and decide before practicing any meditation.

Many students have been guided toward meditation by supervisors because of their stressful and overwhelming academic load. Students at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) are encouraged to participate in the MBSR program.²¹ UAMS states that the goal for MBSR is “to develop practical skills and techniques that can help you cultivate

¹⁹ Thera.

²⁰ Clarke TC, Barnes PM, Black LI, Stussman BJ, Nahin RL., “Use of yoga, meditation, and chiropractors among U.S. adults aged 18 and over.” NCHS Data Brief, no 325. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. (2018).

²¹ UAMS. “Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program in Arkansas.” *Mindfulness Program*, 2021, Online: mindfulness.uams.edu/mindfulness-meditation/classes/mbsr/.

positivity, inner strength and peace, which can be useful in times of difficulty, stress, illness and pain.”²² Loyola University Counseling Center provides a resource on meditation listing its benefits including lower heart rate, lower blood cortisol levels, more feelings of well-being, less stress and anxiety, and improved immune function.²³ Yet, interestingly, following these benefits, they provide a paragraph with the purpose of meditation.

The purpose of meditation is not to achieve benefits. To put it as an Eastern philosopher might say, the goal of meditation is not a goal. It is simply to be present. In Buddhist philosophy, the ultimate benefit of meditation is liberation of the mind from attachment to things it cannot control, such as external circumstances or strong internal emotions. The liberated, or "enlightened," practitioner no longer needlessly follows desires or clings to experiences, but instead maintains a calmness of mind and sense of inner balance.

This explicitly introduces the Buddhist purposes of meditation. It goes as far as to mention an “enlightened practitioner.” In addition to this, there is also a mention of clinging, which reflects the Five Aggregates of Clinging. Brigham Young University (BYU) defines that the purpose of meditation is “to promote calmness and wellbeing, detach from anxious thoughts, improve concentration and mental clarity, develop greater self-awareness, etc.” Their website also states that “regular meditation trains the attention and awareness and brings mental processes under voluntary control through mindfulness, or being attuned to the present moment.”²⁴ BYU includes both concentrative and mindfulness meditation in their resources from the counseling and psychological services. For concentrative meditation, their definition is “a kind of meditation involv[ing] focusing on a single object such as a sensation of one’s breath, or a sound such as a ticking clock, or the repetition in one’s mind of a simple phrase or word, or an object such as a burning candle or a painting.” This proves the infiltration of Buddhist ideas and concepts into the

²² Ibid.

²³ Loyola University. “What is Meditation?” *Loyola Counseling Center*, Online: <https://www.loyola.edu/departments/counseling-center/services/students/relaxation/mindfulness-meditations/overview>

²⁴ Brigham Young University. “Meditation” *BYU Counseling Center*, Online: <https://caps.byu.edu/meditation>

mainstream education system, and it is not only public schools and universities, but also shows that religiously affiliated institutions are not immune from this.

With so many people practicing meditation, it is not surprising that it is also taken root in the field of psychotherapy and counseling, and has developed into a widespread and accepted practice in the field. Meditation was originally viewed as a topic only for philosophers, religious persons, and intellectuals until the 20th century.²⁵ One of the first and most influential teachers of meditation outside of these previously mentioned fields and instead, in the field of medicine in the United States was Jon Kabat-Zinn.²⁶ In 1979 he founded the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The clinic focused on a wide array of clients including those with “chronic back pain, victims of industrial accidents, cancer patients and sometimes paraplegics.”²⁷ While studying at MIT, Kabat-Zinn was introduced to Buddhism and later on was a student of the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh who is known around the globe for his teachings on mindfulness.²⁸ Although Kabat-Zinn does not make many specific connections to Buddhism itself in his current teachings, his ideas and teachings have an unarguable Buddhist foundation. He has even cut ties with Buddhism, as it is not part of the framework for his program now called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction or MBSR. He states, “I bent over backwards to structure it and find ways to speak about it that avoided as much as possible the risk of it being

²⁵ Mead.

²⁶ Christopher Shea, “A Brief History of Mindfulness in the USA and Its Impact on Our Lives,” *Psychcentral.com* (October 28, 2016) Online: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/a-brief-history-of-mindfulness-in-the-usa-and-its-impact-on-our-lives#l>

²⁷ Robert Booth, “Interview: Master of mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn: ‘People are losing their minds. This is what we need to wake up to,’” *Theguardian.com* (October 22, 2017) Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/oct/22/mindfulness-jon-kabat-zinn-depression-trump-grenfell>

²⁸ Liam Fitzpatrick, “The Monk who Taught the World Mindfulness Awaits the End of This Life,” *Time.com* (January 24, 2019) <https://time.com/5511729/monk-mindfulness-art-of-dying/>

seen as Buddhist, new age, eastern mysticism or just plain flakey.”²⁹ As for a definition of mindfulness, Kabat-Zinn says it is “the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally.”

Counselors and other health clinicians do not prescribe actions and treatment without an end goal in mind. With specific goals in mind, and even more important, a clear end result, there is a direct reason why a counselor would use a treatment such as cognitive behavioral therapy for a client. In the same way, meditation in counseling must have a goal or an end result in mind for there to be a reason for its use. In an article for the American Association for the Advancements for Science, the goals stated for Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy are “to foster stress resilience and improve mental and physical health.”³⁰ Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is “used for treating a variety of illnesses such as depression, anxiety, chronic pain, cancer, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, skin and immune disorders.”³¹ It is currently used in hospitals, clinics, educational institutions, businesses, etc. across the world. MBSR is a stress reduction program based on mindfulness, with one practice each day.³²

There are several practices included in MBSR including “body scans (a meditative exercise), sitting meditation, yoga and other forms of gentle mindful movement, and loving

²⁹ Booth.

³⁰ Veronika Engert, Bethany E. Kok, Ioannis Papassotiriou, George P. Chrousos, Tania Singer, “Specific reduction in cortisol stress reactivity after social but not attention-based mental training,” *Advances.sciencemag.org* (October 4, 2017) Online: <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/3/10/e1700495>

³¹ Asfandyar Khan Niazi, Shaharyar Khan Niazi, “Mindfulness-based stress reduction: a non-pharmacological approach for chronic illnesses,” *North American journal of medical sciences* vol. 3,1 (2011): 20-3. doi:10.4297/najms.2011.320

³² “What is MBSR?” *Institute-for-mindfulness.org* Online: <https://www.institute-for-mindfulness.org/offer/mbsr/what-is-mbsr>

kindness meditation.”³³ Body scan meditation is used to bring awareness to each part of the body and the sensations that occur within. This is said to help better coping skills with pain and difficult emotions.³⁴ Sitting meditation is the practice of being attentive to the breath moment by moment, noticing when attention shifts, and “without judgment bringing it back to the sensations of breathing.”³⁵ Mindful yoga focuses on awareness of sensations during movement instead of perfection of motion.³⁶ Expanding awareness “begins with attention on the breath, expands to awareness of body sensations, sounds, thoughts, emotions, and then opens to all of these.”³⁷ These are practiced together in an 8 week course by a trained teacher.³⁸ It is extremely important to recognize the similarities and differences in Kabat-Zinn’s program and Buddhist mindfulness. Much of the concerns for the existence of religious undertones can be put to rest with his strong comments regarding his separation from the religion, but it is still important to pay attention to key phrases and concepts that may still contain Buddhist ideas. The most significant difference is the end goal of MBSR in contrast with Buddhist mindfulness. As explained previously, the goal of Buddhist meditation is the release from suffering or Nirvana, which occurs when the mind is clear of ignorance and attachment. The goals of MBSR vary with specific mental and physical conditions such as depression, anxiety, and chronic pain, but overall the goal is to improve mental and physical health with results comparable to other medical treatments.

³³ “What is MBSR?” *Mindfulleader.org* Online:
https://www.mindfulleader.org/what-is-mbsr?gclid=Cj0KCOiAlpyCBhCtARIsAHaY_ScpENnKJdWbe42gGjH0bzRcjla-xRYntx6O6OEhjISBdSVJuHyaBysaAjcvEALw_wcB

³⁴ “MBSR Guided Practices,” *Hospitals.jefferson.edu* Online:
<https://hospitals.jefferson.edu/departments-and-services/mindfulness-institute/mbsr-guided-practice.html>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction has been the method in several studies to evaluate its utility in treating a variety of illnesses. In a recent study, MBSR was used as a treatment for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD).³⁹ During this study, 70 adults with GAD either completed the 8 week MBSR training, with daily home practice and one weekend retreat, or were placed in an attention control class. Both groups were administered the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST) prior to any treatment. Relevant hormone and cytokine levels associated with acute stress were measured before and after the 8 week trial. For those who completed the MBSR, the concentration of these biomarkers were significantly reduced in comparison to the control group when measured in accordance with the TSST post trial (See Figure 1).⁴⁰ This shows that the MBSR reduced symptoms in the participants with GAD.

Change in Plasma AUC Concentrations with Treatment (pg/mL)

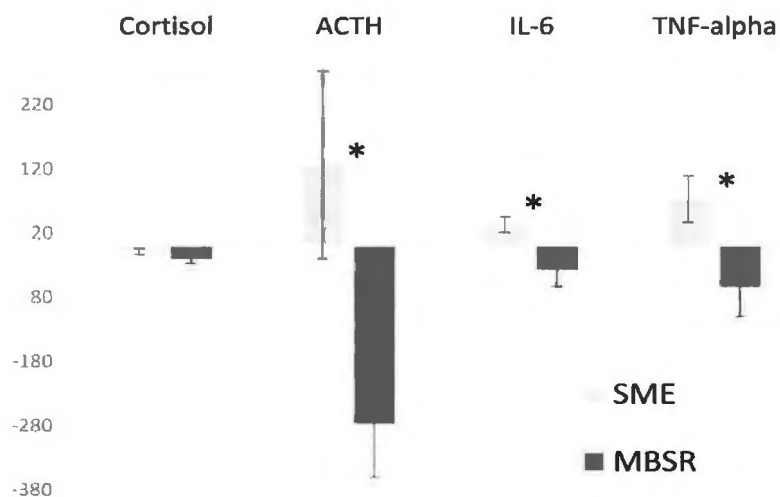


Figure 1

*p<0.05

³⁹ Hoge, E. A., Bui, E., Palitz, S. A., Schwarz, N. R., Owens, M. E., Johnston, J. M., Pollack, M. H., & Simon, N. M. "The effect of mindfulness meditation training on biological acute stress responses in generalized anxiety disorder," *Psychiatry research*, 262, 328–332. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.01.006>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Another study was conducted to determine the usefulness of MBSR in the treatment of social anxiety disorder (SAD). The study evaluated the changes in emotional reactivity and regulation of negative self-beliefs.⁴¹ Sixteen participants with SAD reacted to negative self-beliefs and were given two emotional regulation tasks, breath-focused attention tasks and distraction-focused tasks during a functional MRI. For the next 2 months, they attended MBSR with the standard protocol as well as one half-day meditation retreat. After completion of the program, 14 of the 16 participants returned to complete the tests again under neuroimaging assessments which showed a reduction in negative emotions during the same tests (see Figure 2). The results showed that those who completed the 8 weeks of MBSR had improvement in anxiety and depression symptoms as well as increased self-esteem.

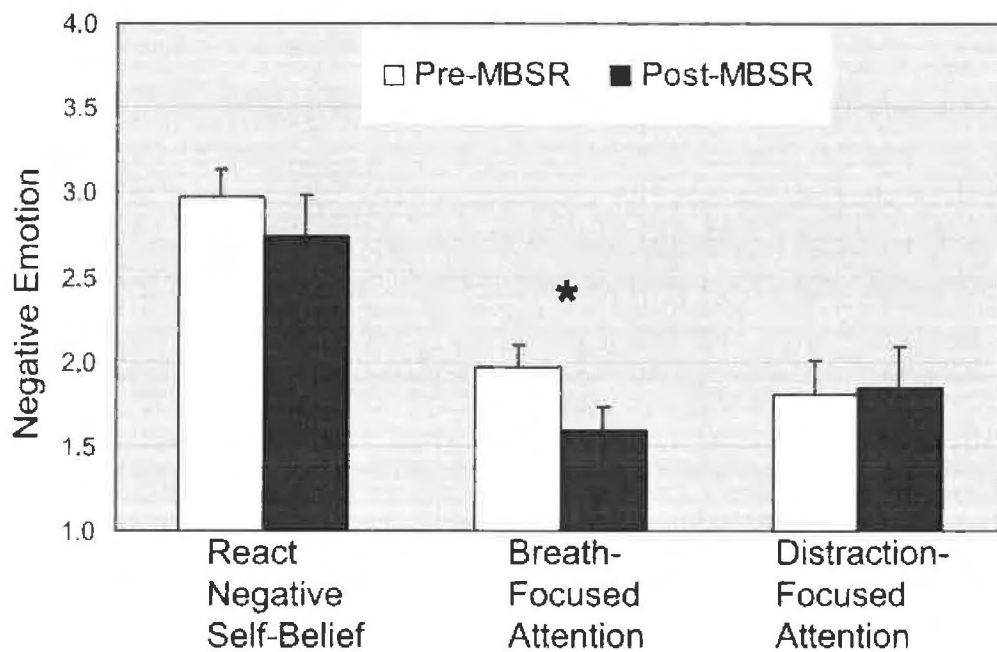


Figure 2

⁴¹ Goldin, Philippe R, and James J Gross. "Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on emotion regulation in social anxiety disorder." *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)* 10,1 <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018441>

MBSR has also been studied in association with chronic pain, as it was initially used for at the Stress Reduction Clinic by Kabat Zinn. In a 2016 randomized clinical trial, the effects of MBSR on chronic low back pain was evaluated for young to middle-aged adults. While the objective of the study was to determine the differences, if any, among MBSR, CBT, and usual care in its usefulness on treating chronic pain, the study still showed the results from baseline to post MBSR, which can be looked at individually without comparison to the other treatments for the purpose of this paper. The findings showed that treatment with MBSR and CBT resulted in greater improvements in back pain and functional limitations at 26 weeks post treatment than usual care. In conclusion, the study suggests that MBSR may be effective in treatment for chronic low back pain.⁴²

The combination of these three studies show the effectiveness of MBSR as a clinical treatment in relation to the improvement of mental health disorders and in relations to pain reduction. Several studies and systematic reviews have also pointed to the conclusion that MBSR is an effective treatment for both physical and mental illnesses. It is important to understand the effectiveness of MBSR in relation to different conditions because counselors see a variety of clients with different concerns. The goals of MBSR are different than those seen earlier in Buddhism. While there is still the goal of release from suffering, it is a very different type of suffering than discussed in Buddhism. The suffering that MBSR could possibly alleviate is in relation to the physical body and specific illnesses, not becoming immune to any and all suffering in the world that comes from detachment. The end results of MBSR are also quite

⁴² Cherkin, D. C., Sherman, K. J., Balderson, B. H., Cook, A. J., Anderson, M. L., Hawkes, R. J., Hansen, K. E., & Turner, J. A. "Effect of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction vs Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or Usual Care on Back Pain and Functional Limitations in Adults With Chronic Low Back Pain: A Randomized Clinical Trial," *JAMA*, 315(12), 1240–1249. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2016.2323>

different. The results are evaluated scientifically, in relation to pain and brain activity, while Buddhist results are measured in the attainment of Nirvana.

Meditation in the Bible

In the same way that it is necessary to understand the key concepts in Buddhism and to identify the goals and motivations behind Buddhists, one must look at major concepts in Christianity and the goals and motivations of those following Christ. Of course the individual follower of both of these religions may not agree with mainstream concepts in the religion and may have very different personal reasons for following the religion. Buddhism is a means to an end- Nirvana, but Christianity is not a means to an end, for Jesus is the means and the end. In Christianity, there are very clear concepts, goals, and expectations of followers of Christ, even if a large portion of Christians do not practice these. One of the main concepts in Christianity is that humans cannot save themselves. If people cannot change themselves out of their own power and goodness, how then can Christians overcome habits of sin, habits of stress, fear, anger, and insecurity, and grow into a steadfast believer? Meditation can be a method for change in these areas. Christian meditation differs from the previous definitions given for meditation. One description by Foster states that “Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word... It involves no hidden mysteries, no secret mantras, no mental gymnastics, no esoteric flights into the cosmic consciousness.”⁴³ This definition is quite simple, and there are other more specific descriptions that can be added as one looks at different verses,

⁴³ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1988), 17.

but the overall message in his definition rings true: that Christian meditation is not the same meditation that is seen in Buddhism.

Some of the ignorances in Buddhism that claim to cause suffering are actually considered truths in Christianity. For example, as described earlier, the contemplation of the body is purposed with correcting the meditator's wrong idea that the body is beautiful. This contradicts the Christian doctrine of *Imago Dei*, that humans are made in the image of God. God also called his creation “good” not ugly. For Christians, the body is a temple. It should be cared for and used for God’s glory. The Christian also believes in the permanence of the soul. Christian meditation is focused on God and allowing Him to minister to our mind and body. It is not dependent on the strength of the human self, nor is it focused solely on the ending of suffering.

If one looks for a direct translation of mindfulness in the Bible, the search will probably end in vain. However, the word for meditation is found in the original biblical text several times. There are two Hebrew words, *hâgâh* and *śîah*, that are used approximately fifty-eight times in the Bible.⁴⁴ These words have various meanings: listening to God’s word, reflecting on God’s works, rehearsing God’s deeds, ruminating on God’s law, and more.⁴⁵ Christian meditation is actually a long tradition that is unknown to many current believers. Meditation is among the list of traditionally accepted spiritual disciplines along with fasting, prayer, solitude, and many others. Richard Foster places meditation as the first inward discipline in his renowned book, Celebration of Discipline. Mindfulness as previously described, is a type of meditation that focuses on the present moment while also being non evaluative. Like other meditation, Christian

⁴⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

meditation also has a purpose and an end result which can be found when looking at different scriptures and passages where meditation is found.

A general purpose of disciplines including meditation, fasting, solitude, etc. is “liberation from the stifling slavery to self-interest and fear.”⁴⁶ This immediately contrasts with the meditation found in Buddhism and in many secular practices, where “the self” is the primary focus, and “the self” is the agent through which change to the body and mind can occur. Foster also notes that for many modern Christians, meditation is seen as a “psychological manipulation” instead of “an encounter between a person and God.”⁴⁷ This again takes the focus away from the self, and places the focus on God. He is the true agent through which change can occur. To clarify this point ever further, Heini Arnold writes that, “we cannot free and purify our own heart by exerting our own ‘will’”.⁴⁸ Will and willpower are important subjects to consider when practicing any type of spiritual discipline. Secular development and growth is focused on what *I* can do for *me*, while Christian development and growth is focused on what *God* can do *in me for Him*. Nowhere in the Bible is there found a scripture or passage that discusses how great human effort is in the journey to becoming Christlike or overcoming sin or adversity. In fact, there are several verses that state quite the opposite including Ephesians 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” This verse also shows that the purification of humans is possible only through the gift of God which is the atonement made by Jesus Christ. This directly conflicts with the belief that mindfulness has the power to bring purification, which is stated in the beginning of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. In the second section of the passage, it also claims that

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.

mindfulness will overcome covetousness and grief. While covetousness is also condemned in the Bible, specifically in Exodus 20:17 and Romans 7:7, it is considered a sin, and must be overcome in the ways that sin is overcome, not by one's own might. Grief is actually common in the Bible, but it is not something that should be overcome by the self. In fact, John 16:33 states that it is Jesus who has overcome the world, not people. He says that trouble will come, but it is His peace that comforts, not peace gained from mindfulness. Previously in 14:27, the peace is described as peace that is not found in the world. In the Bible, people are not told to overcome their own grief, instead it is Jesus who overcame and Jesus who comforts.

One aspect of mindfulness meditation that is commonly focused on is its non-evaluative quality, or not controlling one's thoughts, but allowing them to pass freely. This may not sound dangerous on the surface, but the Bible warns against this in 2 Corinthians 10:5.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

This verse is preceded by a description of the type of weapons with which Christians fight. This concept is also brought up in Ephesians 6 when Paul discusses how Christians should be prepared for spiritual warfare. In 10:4, the weapons spoken of are said to "have divine power to demolish strongholds." The verbs used in 2 Corinthians 10:5 are not active verbs; they do not reflect the type of thinking that is often used in mindfulness, instead they require action. The word demolish is translated from the Greek *kathaireō*, which is an active verb in the present, meaning "to take down, bring down, or destroy."⁴⁹ This is an action that must be done by all believers, as Paul uses "we" as the subject to include not only himself, but also those who follow Christ. The next verb that "we" as believers are to do is *aichmalōtizō*, or "take captive" and "get

⁴⁹ James A. Swanson, "*kathaireō*," in *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 4048; Swanson, "*kathaireō*," 2747.

control of.”⁵⁰ The object of this control is “every thought.” The word “every” is translated from *pas* which indicates not certain thoughts, but all thoughts of every kind.⁵¹ The word *noēma* encompasses all reasoning and thinking, including opinions, schemes, plans, and perceptions.⁵² In the phrase “make it obedient,” the “it” refers to the thoughts that have been taken captive, and the sense of the greek word *hypakoē*, is the state of submissive conformity to the law, custom, or practice of an authority.⁵³ The authority under which the thoughts should be submissive is Jesus, and they should conform to his will. Christians can conclude from this verse that they should not idly allow thoughts to come and go as they please, nor should they simply pay attention to them “non-judgmentally” as Kabat suggests. On the contrary, Christians should pay attention to their thoughts and judge them according to their alignment with the knowledge of God, and take action of making the thought obedient to Christ if it is not already so.

An additional passage from which more understanding of the meaning of meditation can be obtained is found in Psalm 119. This psalm is considered a wisdom psalm and the particular strophe containing verses 97-104 is a “medita[tion] on the Torah as the true source of wisdom.”

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

The psalmist begins verse 97 with an exclamation to God, showing his affection for the commandments He has given to him. It is widely accepted that the law in this passage is referring to the Torah. This is the subject of the psalmist’s meditation. The word meditation is the English translation of the Hebrew *śî·ḥā(h)*. This Hebrew word is defined as “devotional

⁵⁰ Swanson, *Greek*. “*aichmalōtizō*,” 170.

⁵¹ Swanson, *Greek*. “*pas*,” 4246.

⁵² Swanson, *Greek*. “*noēma*,” 3784.

⁵³ Swanson, *Greek*. “*hypakoē*,” 5633.

thought”⁵⁴ and carries the connotation of “thoughtful contemplation.” This word is used in a different passage in the Old Testament, in Job 15 when discussing the actions of a wise person. The following verse reveals the results of this meditation- wisdom. In this verse, wisdom is the translation from *hā·kām* which carries the meaning of having a special kind of understanding and to be marked by an exercise of good judgment.⁵⁵ It is important to note that the wisdom is a direct product of meditation on God’s Word; wisdom is not found within the self. God is the one who is the teacher and imparts wisdom through his Torah. Another result of the psalmist’s meditation is insight. In verse 99, he claims that he has more insight (*śā·kāl*) than even his teachers.⁵⁶ The use of *śā·kāl* in this verse is most likely referring to the ability to understand, to be wise, skilled and prudent. It is implied that this is the state of a person who has been properly taught.⁵⁷

From these verses, one can conclude meditation with a subject, a scripture, concept, or command of God, is one method of Biblical meditation. This type of meditation is motivated by the affection one feels toward God and his laws, and the end result is a positive change in one’s cognition. One who is foolish or ignorant may become wise and full of understanding if they give devotion and thought to the Word of God and put it into practice (v. 100). To support this passage with New Testament scripture, one can look to Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” This verse reveals the

⁵⁴ James A. Swanson, “*śihā*,” in *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997. 8491.

⁵⁵ Swanson, *Hebrew*. “*hā·kām*,” 2681.

⁵⁶ Swanson, *Hebrew*. “*śā·kāl*,” 8505.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

nature of the Word of God, which can be useful in understanding why it is the subject of meditation, and why it results in such powerful changes in the mind.

Another passage that gives Christians an example of meditation is Romans 12:1-2.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

In the words of Douglas Moo, these verses are “the heart of the matter: total transformation.”⁵⁸

N.T. Wright stresses the importance of this passage stating that “Paul’s whole written work, in fact, could be seen as an extended application of Romans 12:1-2.” Paul begins 12:1 with *oun*, translated from Greek to English as “therefore,” to signal that the following exhortations are a result of the theology that has preceded them in chapters 1-11. Verse 1 reveals the connection between God’s mercy and the response of his people. However, in light of the word *parakaleo*, or the English “to exhort,” one must see these responses as commands, not options. The first response is to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.” The second response is a command to “be transformed by the renewal of your mind” instead of becoming “conformed to this world.” It is the way in which Christians can be presented as holy and acceptable sacrifices in verse 1. The first imperative is *metamorphoō*, which is translated into English as “be transformed.”⁵⁹ This transformation is not just a superficial change in behavior, but instead is a true change of one’s “essential nature.”⁶⁰ The verb is used in the present tense which signifies that this transformation is a continuous process.

⁵⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans* Second ed. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018).

⁵⁹ Swanson, *Greek*. “*metamorphoō*,” 3565.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

The question then rests on *how* one is to transform. By the renewal of the mind. The word translated to “renew” simply means to be made new and to be improved.⁶¹ This concept is reflected in Ephesians 4:20 when Paul discusses the new self. Renewal is the means or the process of the goal of becoming holy and acceptable to God. The process can be seen as a method of meditation. Paul uses the word *nous* to explain that it is one’s *mind* that needs to be considered before one’s nature will change. Here, the word for mind is defined as “psychological facility of understanding, reasoning and deciding.”⁶² Combined with the verb renew, the command implies that the Christian’s old way of thinking, their entire cognitive processes, need to be made new, to be made more like “the way God wants us to think.”⁶³ The purpose of this meditative process, which must be continuous throughout one’s life, is to gain the ability “to discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” The verb Paul uses that is translated as “discern” carries the meaning of judging and examining to determine worthiness.⁶⁴ This reflects a state of wisdom, of good mental and moral judgement. Again, the end goal of this method of Christian meditation is to change one’s mind from unwise to wise.

Paul gives Christians a further look into meditation in his letter to the Philippians.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

At the very end of his letter, he concludes with, in the words of Gordon Fee, “a call to “wisdom.” The words in verse 8 are similar to values common to Greco-Roman moralism, but

⁶¹ Johannes P. Louw, and Eugene Albert Nida, 58.72 in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.

⁶² Swanson, *Greek*. “*nous*,” 3808.

⁶³ Moo. 775.

⁶⁴ Swanson, *Greek*. “*dokimazō*,” 1507.

even more interestingly, the vers is most closely paralleled to James 3:17, which actually contrasts heavenly wisdom with earthly wisdom.⁶⁵ The command in this exhortation is the imperative verb *logizomai*, translated from Greek to English as “think.”⁶⁶ However, this English word does not convey the intended meaning. It would be more appropriate to say to think about something in a detailed and logical manner, ponder, or reflect.⁶⁷ It is used in this same manner in 1 Corinthians 13:11, when Paul says “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I *reasoned* like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.” It implies an entire manner of thinking, not just a single thought. Philippians 4:9 follows this first part with an addition. Not only must Christians meditate on such worthy things, but they should also put all worthy things into practice. The end result of these two activities, meditation and action, is the reception of God’s peace. Pastor Craig Groeschel connects the pattern in these three sentences to the process of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT is a type of psychotherapy in which negative patterns of *thought* about the self and the world are challenged in order to alter unwanted *behavior* patterns or *treat mood disorders* such as depression. In this definition there is a pattern of thought, which affects behavior (action) which then affects experience (improvement in mood disorders etc.). Paul moves from thought (“think about such things”) to action (“put it into practice”) to experience (“the God of peace will be with you”).” Groeschel points out that both modern psychology and the Bible agree “that our lives are moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts,” which reflects the commonly held belief from Augustine that all truth is God’s truth. As mentioned earlier, Fee states that these verses are a “call to wisdom.” In the previous studies of meditation in scripture, the conclusion has repeated the theme of wisdom as

⁶⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁶⁶ Swanson, *Greek*. “*logizomai*,” 3357.

⁶⁷ Louw, Nida. 30.9.

the end goal. Here one can see what wisdom might look like in words. The words used in verse 8 are reflections of virtues that are seen in Proverbs.

Implications for Christian Counselors

As a practice becomes accepted in secular culture, those who follow the Christian faith are presented with the challenge of examining whether the practice, in this case mindfulness meditation, is able to be integrated into their religious life. Mindfulness meditation also has found its way into the field of counseling, and the same question applies: “Can meditation be used in counseling without introducing eastern religions?” There exists a unique space in Christian counseling in which practices must not only be evidence based and widely accepted in the field, but also must be Biblically sound. This particular situation brings many controversies over which methods should be used by a Christian counselor. Put simply, meditation is an effective addition to treatment for almost all Christians who are seeking Christian counseling. Meditation is not limited to those seeking counsel for mental health issues, marital problems, addiction, etc. Meditation is vital to Christianity, and as a Christian counselor, the ability to explain and help guide clients to incorporating meditation into their daily lives can be quite life-changing. However, both the counselor and the client must be aware of their own worldview with which they approach meditation. Furthermore, there must be adequate attention given to the motivation and purposes of each part of the meditative process. There are several paths that meditation can take, especially when synthesized with eastern religious ideas. Even simple meditative processes must be evaluated before attempting to ensure the client is not led down the wrong path. As seen in the Buddhist meditation section of this paper, the practice may have underlying motivations such as detachment from the world. Other false assumptions in

meditative practices imply that healing can come from the self or that the self is the ultimate guide to happiness. As a Christian, one must rely on the Holy Spirit to do the internal changes, not one's own will. Other considerations must also be taken into account when practicing meditation. As a Christian, one must be aware of the incoming thoughts and tendencies and be on guard for negative or ungodly thoughts. These must be corrected with the truth of God. With these guidelines and aspects carefully thought out, meditation can be a very helpful treatment.

It is important for Christians to be up to date on scientific findings in treatments for physical and mental health. According to the results of studies using MBSR, the practices may be effective in treating multiple issues for which clients may come to counseling such as depression and anxiety. Although there is still more research needed to be done, scholars agree that MBSR is beneficial in treating various mental health conditions including depression and anxiety. Christian Counselors can feel confident in considering MBSR as treatment for their clients because of the research done and continuing to be done. When looking at the methods used in the studies, MBSR was followed using the standard 8 week program that includes "body scans (a meditative exercise), sitting meditation, yoga and other forms of gentle mindful movement, and loving kindness meditation" in addition to meditation retreats. As previously mentioned, the creator of the program emphasizes that MBSR is not the same as Buddhist mindfulness. This is important for clients to understand due to the differences in motivations and end goals. Counselors must be aware that clients who pursue mindfulness on their own have the potential to follow practices influenced by Buddhism. It is the Christian counselors' responsibility to guide clients away from Buddhist-based meditation and toward secular and Biblically sound meditative therapies. Secular therapies such as MBSR are appropriate for Christian counselors to use as a treatment in their practice if thorough discussion covers that

mindfulness in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction is not the same as mindfulness in Buddhism, and that the client should be aware of any language used in the trainings that refer to purification, non-permanence, illusions, suffering and other key phrases that may signify an underlying Buddhist concept.

Biblical meditation can be helpful in addition to all treatments, including MBSR. As seen in section V, The Bible holds truths that are central to one's humanity, and these truths are intended to be known and understood so that they affect the Christian's cognitive processes and subconscious actions. Continuous repetition of truths during renewal of the mind allows the Holy Spirit to correct pathways that lead to destruction and unrest, and instead allow new pathways to peace and rest. The results of Biblical meditation are wisdom, insight, and peace. These qualities are necessary and helpful in the life of a Christian and work in harmony with the benefits of MBSR.

Appendix

The Discourse on the Arousing of Mindfulness (The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikaya* No. 10 and *Digha Nikaya* No. 22) translated from Pāli to English by Soma Thera.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DISCOURSE ON THE ONLY WAY

Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus as follows: "This is the only way, O bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbana, namely, the Four Arousings of Mindfulness."

THE FOUR AROUSINGS OF MINDFULNESS

"What are the four? "Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending (it) and mindful (of it), having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating the feelings in the feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending (them) and mindful (of them), having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness, ardent, clearly comprehending (it) and mindful (of it), having overcome in this world covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects, ardent, clearly comprehending (them) and mindful (of them), having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief."

1. THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY

Mindfulness of Breathing

"And how, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating the body in the body?"

"Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu, gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty place, sits down, bends in his legs crosswise on his lap, keeps his body erect, and arouses mindfulness in the object of meditation, namely, the breath which is in front of him.

"Mindful, he breathes in, and mindful, he breathes out. He, thinking, 'I breathe in long,' he understands when he is breathing in long; or thinking, 'I breathe out long,' he understands when he is breathing out long; or thinking, 'I breathe in short,' he understands when he is breathing in short; or thinking, 'I breathe out short,' he understands when he is breathing out short.

"'Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe in,' thinking thus, he trains himself. 'Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe out,' thinking thus, he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the body, I shall breathe in,' thinking thus, he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the body, I shall breathe out,' thinking thus, he trains himself.

"Just as a clever turner or a turner's apprentice, turning long, understands: 'I turn long;' or turning short, understands: 'I turn short'; just so, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu, when he breathes in

long, understands: 'I breathe in long'; or, when he breathes out long, understands: 'I breathe out long'; or, when he breathes in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or when he breathes out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short.' He trains himself with the thought: 'Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe in.' He trains himself with the thought: 'Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe out.' He trains himself with the thought: 'Calming the activity of the body I shall breathe in.' He trains himself with the thought: 'Calming the activity of the body I shall breathe out.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body. Or indeed his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'The body exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent and clings to naught in the world. Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

The Reflection on the Repulsiveness of the Body

"And further, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reflects on just this body hemmed by the skin and full of manifold impurity from the soles up, and from the top of the hair down, thinking thus: 'There are in this body hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, fibrous threads (veins, nerves, sinews, tendons), bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, contents of stomach, intestines, mesentery, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, tars, fat dissolved, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.'

"Just as if, O bhikkhus, there were a bag having two openings, full of grain differing in kind, namely, hill-paddy, paddy, green-gram, cow-pea, sesamum, rice; and a man with seeing eyes, having loosened it, should reflect thinking thus: 'This is hill paddy; this is paddy, this is green-gram; this is cow-pea; this is sesamum; this is rice.' In the same way, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reflects on just this body hemmed in by the skin and full of manifold impurity from the soles up, and from the top of the hair down, thinking thus: 'There are in this body: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, fibrous threads (veins, nerves, sinews, tendons), bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, contents of the stomach, intestines, mesentery, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, tears, fat dissolved, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body, internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

The Reflection on the Modes of Materiality (Elements, *Dhatu*)

"And further, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reflects on just this body according as it is placed or disposed, by way of the modes of materiality, thinking thus: 'There are in this body the mode of solidity, the mode of cohesion, the mode of calorificity, and the mode of oscillation.'

"O bhikkhus, in whatever manner, a clever cow-butcher or a cow-butcher's apprentice, having slaughtered a cow and divided it by way of portions, should be sitting at the junction of a four-cross-road; in the same manner, a bhikkhu reflects on just this body, according as it is placed or disposed, by way of the modes of materiality, thinking thus: 'There are in this body the mode of solidity, the mode of cohesion, the mode of caloricity, and the mode of oscillation.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 1

"And further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body dead, one, two, or three days: swollen, blue and festering, thrown into the charnel ground, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine too is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 2

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees, whilst it is being eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals or by different kinds of worms, a body that had been thrown into the charnel ground, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in the body or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body. Or indeed his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'The body exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent, and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 3

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body, thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to a skeleton together with (some) flesh and blood held in by the tendons, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally.

"He lives contemplating origination-things in the body or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body. Or indeed, his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'The body exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent, and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 4

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to a blood-besmeared skeleton without flesh but held in by the tendons, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 5

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to a skeleton held in by the tendons but without flesh and not besmeared with blood, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

Cemetery Contemplation 6

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to bones gone loose, scattered in all directions — a bone of the hand, a bone of the foot, a shin bone, a thigh bone, the pelvis, spine and skull, each in a different place — he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

Cemetery Contemplation 7

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to bones, white in color like a conch, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This

body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, going to be like that body and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body;'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 8

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to bones more than a year old, heaped together, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

Cemetery Contemplation 9

"And, further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to bones gone rotten and become dust, he thinks of his own body thus: 'This body of mine too, is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.'

"Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'The body exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

2. THE CONTEMPLATION OF FEELING

"And how, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating feeling in feelings?"

"Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu when experiencing a pleasant feeling, understands: 'I experience a pleasant feeling'; when experiencing a painful feeling, he understands: 'I experience a painful feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling, he understands: 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling'; when experiencing a pleasant worldly feeling, he understands: 'I experience a pleasant worldly feeling'; when experiencing a pleasant spiritual feeling, he understands: 'I experience a pleasant spiritual feeling'; when experiencing a painful worldly feeling, he understands: 'I experience a painful worldly feeling'; when experiencing a

painful spiritual feeling, he understands: 'I experience a painful spiritual feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful worldly feeling, he understands: 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful worldly feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful spiritual feeling, he understands: 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful spiritual feeling.'

"Thus he lives contemplating feelings in feelings internally, or he lives contemplating feeling in feelings externally, or he lives contemplating feeling in feelings internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in feelings, or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in feelings, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in feelings. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'Feeling exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance and he lives independent and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating feeling in feelings."

3. THE CONTEMPLATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

"And how, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating consciousness in consciousness?"

"Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu understands the consciousness with lust, as with lust; the consciousness without lust, as without lust; the consciousness with hate, as with hate; the consciousness without hate, as without hate; the consciousness with ignorance, as with ignorance; the consciousness without ignorance, as without ignorance; the shrunken state of consciousness, as the shrunken state; the distracted state of consciousness, as the distracted state; the state of consciousness become great, as the state become great; the state of consciousness not become great, as the state not become great; the state of consciousness with some other mental state superior to it, as the state with something mentally higher; the state of consciousness with no other mental state superior to it, as the state with nothing mentally higher; the quieted state of consciousness, as the quieted state; the state of consciousness not quieted, as the state not quieted; the freed state of consciousness as freed; and the unfreed state of consciousness, as unfreed.

"Thus he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness internally, or he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness externally, or he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in consciousness, or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in consciousness, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in consciousness. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'Consciousness exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness."

4. THE CONTEMPLATION ON MENTAL OBJECTS

1. The Five Hindrances

"And how, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating mental objects in mental objects?"

"Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances. "How, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances?"

"Here, O bhikkhus, when sensuality is present, a bhikkhu knows with understanding: 'I have sensuality,' or when sensuality is not present, he knows with understanding: 'I have no sensuality.' He understands how the arising of the non-arisen sensuality comes to be; he understands how the abandoning of the arisen sensuality comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sensuality comes to be. When anger is present, he knows with understanding: 'I have anger,' or when anger is not present, he knows with understanding: 'I have no anger.' He understands how the arising of the non-arisen anger comes to be; he understands how the abandoning of the arisen anger comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned anger comes to be. When sloth and torpor are present, he knows with understanding: 'I have sloth and torpor,' or when sloth and torpor are not present, he knows with understanding: 'I have no sloth and torpor.' He understands how the arising of non-arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; he understands how the abandoning of the arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sloth and torpor comes to be. When agitation and worry are present, he knows with understanding: 'I have agitation and worry,' or when agitation and worry are not present, he knows with understanding: 'I have no agitation and worry.' He understands how the arising of non-arisen agitation and worry comes to be; and he understands how the abandoning of the arisen agitation and worry comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned agitation and worry comes to be. When doubt is present, he knows with understanding: 'I have doubt,' or when doubt is not present, he knows with understanding: 'I have no doubt.' He understands how the arising of non-arisen doubt comes to be; he understands how the abandoning of the arisen doubt comes to be; and he understands how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned doubt comes to be.

"Thus he lives contemplating mental object in mental objects, internally, or he lives contemplating mental object in mental objects, externally, or he lives contemplating mental object in mental objects, internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in mental objects, or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in mental objects, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in mental objects. Or his mind is established with the thought: 'Mental objects exist,' to the extent necessary for just knowledge and remembrance and he lives independent and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating mental object in the mental objects of the five hindrances."

2. The Five Aggregates of Clinging

"And, further, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating mental object in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging.

"How, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging?"

"Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu thinks: 'Thus is material form; thus is the arising of material form; and thus is the disappearance of material form. Thus is feeling; thus is the arising of feeling; and thus is the disappearance of feeling. Thus is perception; thus is the arising of perception; and thus is the disappearance of perception. Thus are the formations; thus is the arising of the formations; and thus is the disappearance of the formations. Thus is consciousness; thus is the arising of consciousness; and thus is the disappearance of consciousness.'

Thus he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects, internally... and clings to naught in the world.

"Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating mental object in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging."

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