

MINDFULNESS—MEDITATION—BUDDHISM

Mindfulness meditation has captured the interest of the world in the field of psychology and stress management the past few years. Interest in it has swept across America like a tidal wave and there seems to be no end in sight. We have been exposed and grown accustomed to Hindu type meditation and yoga over the past 50 or more years. But, what is this *mindfulness* you speak about? You say it has grown and spread everywhere, yet I have not heard of it and what's more I do not understand the word "mindfulness."

Courses of mindfulness meditation are offered in many businesses, universities, government agencies, counseling centers, schools, hospital, religious groups, law firms, prisons, military, and other organizations. The business world, has taken a strong interest in the technique evidenced by articles in the business press, in books on leadership, and on the Internet. A book with the title of, *Resonant Leadership Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion*, by Boyatzis and Mckee¹ along with many other books have added force to this popular subject.

The University of Massachusetts Medical School Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, as well as Carroll's book, *The Mindful Leader*,² published in 2007 amplifies the widespread utilization of this style of meditation. Many fortune 500 companies utilize "mindfulness" for training programs as well as the CEOs of some companies practice such.³ This University center has promoted the integration of mindfulness meditation in mainstream medicine and health care through patient care, research, academic medical and professional education. These activities have been directed by Saki f. Santorelli, EdD, MA, and with the founding of the center by Jon Dabat-Zinn, Ph.D. 18,000 people have completed an 8 week mindfulness-based stress reduction program offered by this center.⁴ Mindfulness meditation has and is making itself felt throughout the discipline of psychology.

What is mindfulness? How does it differ from other meditative techniques? What is the advantage? What is its origin? Is it spiritually safe? The term "mindfulness" is a translation of *Sati* of the Pali language into the Sanskrit word *smrti*, meaning "that which is remembered." David explains:

Sati is literally "memory" but is used with reference to the constantly repeated phrase "mindful and thoughtful"; and means that activity of mind and constant presence of mind which is one of the duties most frequently inculcated on the good Buddhist.⁵

Shambhala Publications Presents, "*A Guide to Buddhism*," and lists the basics of Buddhism:

Four Noble Truths; The Eightfold Path; 1. Karma; 2. Attachment; 3. The Three Marks of existence; 4. Koans: **Mindfulness**; 5. Bardo; 6. Heart Sutra; 7. Loving-Kindness; 8. Pure perception.⁶ (numbers added by author)

This article on the Internet on Buddhism continues in attempting to define *mindfulness*.

Mindfulness is the English translation of the Pali word *sati*. *Sati* is an activity. What exactly is that? There can be no precise answer, at least not in words. Words are devised by the symbolic levels of the mind, and they describe those realities with which symbolic thinking deals. Mindfulness is pre-symbolic. It is not shackled to logic. Nevertheless, mindfulness can be experienced—rather easily—and it can be described, as long as you keep in mind that the words are only fingers pointing at the moon. They are not the thing itself. The actual experience lies beyond the words and above the symbols. Mindfulness could be described in completely different terms than will be used here, and each description could still be correct.⁷

This meditation technique referred to as “mindfulness” was introduced by the Buddha about 25 centuries ago and is a set of mental activities aimed at experiencing a state of *uninterrupted mindfulness*. The article elaborates further with a comment that when this mindfulness meditation is prolonged, using proper techniques, that the experience is profound and *it changes ones entire view of the universe*. This article is spread over three pages with additional paragraphs attempting to describe what mindfulness is. I will share the first sentence in several different paragraphs describing mindfulness to illustrate the difficulty in understanding what is *mindfulness meditation*.

- 1) Mindfulness is a subtle process that you are using at this very moment.
- 2) Mindfulness is mirror-thought.
- 3) Mindfulness is non-judgmental observation.
- 4) Mindfulness is an impartial watchfulness.
- 5) Mindfulness is non-conceptual awareness.
- 6) Mindfulness is present-time awareness.
- 7) Mindfulness in non-egotistic alertness.⁸

I finally found a paragraph that had a sentence that made sense to me. “**Mindfulness is not thinking.**” Just reading this article and others like it in the attempt to explain this technique brings about feelings of mental confusion. Are you with me? Are you beginning to sense what “mindfulness” is? It is simply the Buddhist’s word for bringing the mind into the silence, passive mode, an altered state of consciousness—Eastern style meditation. Then this altered state of consciousness opens to the possibility for the mind to be influenced and/or controlled by satanic agencies.

In these days when skepticism and infidelity so often appear in a scientific grab, we need to be guarded on every hand. Through this means our great adversary is deceiving thousands, and leading them captive according to his will. The

advantage he takes of the sciences, sciences which pertain to the human mind, is tremendous. Here, serpent like, he imperceptibly creeps in to corrupt the work of God.

This entering in of Satan through the **sciences** is well devised. Through the channel of phrenology, psychology, and mesmerism, he comes more directly to the people of this generation, and works with that power which is to characterize his efforts near the close of probation. The minds of thousands have thus been poisoned, and led into infidelity. While it is believed that one human mind so wonderfully affects another, Satan, who is ready to press every advantage, insinuates himself, and works on the right hand and on the left. And while those who are devoted to these sciences laud them to the heavens because of the great and good works which they affirm are wrought by them, they little know what a power for evil they are cherishing; but it is a power which will yet work with all signs and lying wonders--with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. Mark the influence of these sciences, dear reader, for the conflict between Christ and Satan is not yet ended. . . .⁹ (emphasis added)

This 2500 year old Buddhist style meditation has been “secularized” for use in coping with stress, chronic pain control, immune disorders, anger, fear, greed, thoughts, feelings, attention, emotions, skills, addictions, performance, creativity, and changing the structure of our brains. It is proclaimed to change our relationship to life. It involves “inward investigation,” to promote well-being. It is partaking of an ancient Eastern practice to inform, affect, and compliment life. It is said to now be based in science but was once in the realm of mystics and philosophers.¹⁰

Ron Kurtz a psychologist, a Buddhist for more than 35 years, and author of the online text *Hakomi Method of Mindfulness Based Body Psychotherapy*. Hakomi is a name he gives to his psychotherapy which, in turn, utilizes mindfulness as a principle component of therapy. We connect to Ron Kurtz’s online book *Hakomi Method of Mindfulness Based Body Psychotherapy*.

1. Mindfulness is undefended consciousness. It has been defined as “the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception.”
2. It is a skill; it improves with practice. **It is a traditional form of meditation**, especially for beginners, It is a traditional method of self-study.
3. In mindfulness, there is no intention to control what happens next. It is a deliberate **relinquishing of control**. That is why the first focus in traditional practice is often on the breath. To pay attention to the breath and not control it is more difficult than one might imagine, especially when we think about how little attention we ordinarily pay to breath and how well it works outside of our conscious control. Mindfulness is a way of **surrendering**.
4. In mindfulness, one attempts to calm the mind, to **silence thoughts**.

5. One focuses inward on the flow of one's experience.
6. In Hakomi, we use it in small doses (30 seconds to a minute).¹¹ (emphasis added)

In literature espousing Hakomi style psychotherapy, there is claim made by its practitioners that unconscious *core beliefs* of an individual can be made conscious through use of the *mindfulness* technique and that, in turn, this offers the opportunity to alter and change those fundamental core beliefs. A person's world view—"where did we come from", "why are we here", and "where are we going", are as a result of being placed in "mindfulness" subject to change.¹² "Mindfulness practice is a spiritual discipline."¹³

Ron Kurtz in his book tells us that when a person has attained a state of mindfulness the person becomes very still and **the eyelids flutter up and down over closed eyes**. This movement of the eyelids is almost always an accurate sign that the client is in mindfulness. Kurtz states that he uses this sign "all of the time."¹⁴

Psychologist Kurtz elaborates further in his use of mindfulness in his practice. He tells of when a person makes a change in their state of consciousness that their voice may become childlike, and vocabulary and speech are as a child. Past emotions and emotional memories from childhood may present, the face may express past childhood emotions. When this happens Ron Kurtz says the psychologist needs to contact that *inner child* by directly speaking to it, such as "you are feeling your youth again," etc. He further comments:

When the child appears, you want to contact it....This childlike state is a very fruitful state to work with. The client is, in a sense, innocent and open, ready to be helped by an adult. I like to engage a client's adult self in the process of working with the child. I want the adult to help me understand what's going on with the child. I want to help the client self-engage with her child in a nourishing way, more nourishing than the child experienced in her formative relationships.¹⁵

This dialogue is wherein the patient communes with *another voice*, her or his *own youthful voice*. Is this a disguised spirit—demon contact?

In dealing with the science of mind cure (hypnosis), you have been eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God has forbidden you to touch.... Cut away from yourselves everything that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work.¹⁶ E. G. White, Letter 20, 1902 (2SM, p. 350).

There are varying stages of entering into hypnosis. The first stage is entered by focusing on something, anything such as a light, sound, flame, or breathing. This is done until fatigue occurs and the awareness of outside activities wanes. Relaxation follows next, etc. The Bynum Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility lists the following first five of 30 levels of hypnotism:

1. No Objective Change

2. Relaxation
3. **Fluttering of Eyelids** (emphasis added)
4. Closed Eyes
5. Complete physical relaxation.¹⁷

To summarize the issue of “**mindfulness**,” I believe it to be, Buddhist meditation with the possibility of progressing to higher levels of hypnotism and at times channeling of spirit entities— demons. Let us now reflect upon this quotation:

...The mind cure is one of the most dangerous deceptions which can be practiced upon any individual. Temporary relief may be felt, but the mind of the one thus controlled is never again so strong and reliable....¹⁸

A comment in the book *The Great Controversy* comes to mind at this time as I struggle to clear the confusion created in my mind in attempting to understand and describe the great variety of definitions and explanations for this word *mindfulness*:

Spiritualism teaches “that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the God-head.” . “The throne is within you.” ...Satan has substituted the sinful, erring nature of man himself as the only object of adoration, the only rule of judgment, or standard of character. This is progress, not upward, but downward.¹⁹

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