

BE STILL AND MEDITATE ON HIS WORD By: Earl Walters

While most believers pray, few take the time for meditation.

This is because they do not understand its place, or its power.

The New Illustrated Bible Dictionary comments that meditation today is a "lost art for many Believers."

Some of our popular translations even substitute other words when they translate "meditate" or "meditation" in the scriptures.

Today the Assembly has virtually surrendered meditation to the New Age Movement and to eastern religions.

Many people wonder if meditation is even Scriptural; but the Patriarchs made time for meditation.

We are shown in the Torah that Isaac was an humble man that did not move until he had contacted Yahweh.

Because of his closeness to Yahweh, he never had to leave the land, even in times of famine.

Isaiah tells us what type attitude Isaac had.

Isaiah 24: ⁶³ And Isaac went out to **meditate** in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming.

This sounds like something that Isaac did on a regular basis.

Was this something that men came up with or is it a direction from Yahweh?

Look at David's cry:

Psalm 4: ¹ Hear me when I call, O Elohim of my righteousness! You have relieved me in *my* distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

² How long, O you sons of men, *Will you turn* my glory to shame? *How long will you love worthlessness* And seek falsehood? Selah

³ But know that Yahweh has set apart for Himself him who is godly; Yahweh will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin. **Meditate within your heart** on your bed, and **be still**. Selah

Throughout the Scriptures we are encouraged to meditate upon the Word.

What does it mean to “meditate”?

Word Study: Meditation

In Hebrew, the word for meditation is Suwach (סוּחַ), with the vowel point on the Shin to the left, so that the Shin sounds like an ‘s’:

***Strongs’ OT:7742 suwach (soo'-akh); a primitive root; to muse pensively:
KJV - meditate.***

When one vowel-points the Shin (שׁ) to the right, the Shin gives a “sh” sound; and the resultant Hebrew word, ‘shuwach,’ is related:

***Strongs’ OT:7743 shuwach (shoo'-akh); a primitive root; to sink, literally or figuratively:
KJV - bow down, incline, humble.***

Realizing that Suwach and Shuwach are related, we can infer that In Hebrew, **to meditate is to sink figuratively in our own eyes, and to bow ourselves down in our own sight.**

As we humble ourselves in our own sight, we become all the less important to ourselves, so that we might esteem Him all the more:

[Yochanan (John) 3:29-30]“Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30 He must increase; but I must decrease.”YBR

Another of the Hebrew words used for "meditation" is the word ha-gah, which means to "mutter."

This is almost like talking out loud to oneself, however, the muttering or mumbling reaches the ears of Yahweh.

To meditate is a little like a cow chewing her cud.

We first eat the word, then we bring it up and "chew" on it some more.

When we do, we get extra nourishment and understanding.

Biblical things begin to fit together much better and mysteries begin to be revealed.

Psalm 46: ¹⁰ **Be still**, and know that I *am* Elohim; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

¹¹ Yahweh Tz'vaot *is* with us; The Elohim of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

David says **STOP. Enjoy the presence of Yahweh.**

Like the cow or sheep with its food, stop and just chew on Yahweh's Word.

Since it appears that the devil has almost stolen away meditation from the Assembly, we need to quickly recover it.

We will find that when we do our lives will become much richer.

After the death of Moshe, Joshua faced the daunting task of leading our ancestors into the promised land.

I can see him looking out over that great crowd of people and thinking **“Lordy, Lordy, what have I gotten myself into!”**

Yahweh came to him and said:

Joshua 1: ⁵ "No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

⁶ "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

⁷ "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

⁸ "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Did Joshua think, -- "How am I going to meditate day and night? Leading these people is going to keep me busy day and night. When does Yahweh think I will have time to meditate?"

No, I think Joshua knew just what Yahweh was instructing him to do.

He had studied under Moshe for many years.

He knew what was expected of a leader of the people.

Just how important is it for us to take time to meditate upon the Word of Yahweh?

David knew how important it was to meditate on the Torah.

NKJ **Psalm 1:1** Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
² But his delight *is* in the Torah of Yahweh, And in His Torah he **meditates** day and night.
³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.
⁴ The ungodly *are* not so, But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
⁶ For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

David is telling us that we can only be successful in life if we are spending time with the Torah and applying it to all our decisions and actions.

David understood what it was like to have tough times.

He spent many years running from Saul.

Living in the wilderness.

Fighting both his enemies and the enemies of Israel.

Many of his countrymen knew that King Saul wanted David dead.

So, in order to please the king, they were hunting David to kill him.

But, even in the midst of all these troubles, David sat down and wrote Psalm 63.

NKJ **Psalm 63:1** A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O Yahweh, You *are* my Elohim; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.
² So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.
³ Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life, My lips shall praise You.
⁴ Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.
⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.
⁶ When I remember You on my bed, I **meditate** on You in the *night* watches.
⁷ Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.
⁸ My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.

David knew that he needed this type relationship with Yahweh.

Now, how do we go about meditating?

There are many different kinds of meditation, and meditation can be many things.

However, whichever kind of meditation one practices, meditation generally helps to calm and soothe the mind.

The reason that one wants to have a calm and a still mind is that a still mind has a much easier time of beholding, and hearing, Yahweh.

Psalm 77: ¹² I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds.
¹³ Your way, O Yahweh, *is* in the sanctuary; Who *is* so great an Elohim as *our* Yahweh?
¹⁴ You *are* the Elohim who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples.

Psalm 119: ¹⁵ I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.
¹⁶ I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

Psalm 119: ²³ Princes also sit *and* speak against me, *But* Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
²⁴ Your testimonies also *are* my delight *And* my counselors.

Psalm 119: ¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake through the *night* watches, That I may meditate on Your word.
¹⁴⁹ Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O Yahweh, revive me according to Your justice.

Sha'ul advised Timothy to meditate.

1 Timothy 4: ¹² Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
¹³ Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.
¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.
¹⁵ **Meditate on these things**; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.
¹⁶ Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Sha'ul is telling Timothy that meditation assists one's spiritual practice.

It appears that Sha'ul is advising Timothy to meditate often.

When Yahweh does speak to us in our spirits we need to be diligent to follow up with a thorough study of that subject in scripture.

For this, we will probably need a concordance and perhaps a Bible dictionary.

We will find that when Yahweh teaches us on a subject we will be ready and qualified to share with others in that area.

In the scripture we see how Yahshua often expounded all things in private with his disciples (Mark 4:34), after he had taught the crowds.

Yahshua wanted them to really get the picture.

He also desires to expound to us as well.

In Isaiah 54:13, the prophet gives us this assurance:

"All your sons will be taught by Yahweh, and great will be your children's peace."

As a wonderful and ever-present aid to meditation we believers have the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) living within us.

The Bible gives us this word about him:

"But the Counselor, the Ruach HaKodesh, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (Jn. 14:26).

Yahweh gave us only one mouth, but two ears.

It is sometimes said that this is because He intends for us to listen twice as much as we speak.

If prayer is when we speak to Yahweh, meditation is when we listen.

Yet since we have two ears (but only one mouth), should we then not also listen for the sound of His Voice twice as much as we pray (speak) to Him?

Is it not true that Yahweh wants us to listen to Him, more than we speak?

Or does He not sometimes answer our prayers and we do not even know it, simply because we have not been focusing, and paying attention?

Understand: Meditation has nothing to do with castigating ourselves, or tearing ourselves down.

Meditation is the process by which we learn not to esteem ourselves, or to spend a whole lot of time thinking about ourselves.

But if meditation is a practice by which we might learn not to be concerned with our own worldly cares, then how do we go about it?

Guided and Open Meditation:

There are many different forms of meditation, but all of these forms boil down to just two basic styles:

1. Guided (or focused) meditation; and
2. Open (or 'empty') meditation.

There are times and purposes for each of the two.

Guided Meditation:

Guided meditation is oftentimes thought of as a more advanced type of meditation.

This is not always the case, but the reason people usually say this is because it typically takes more concentration and focus, to maintain it for any extended length of time.

Remember how Joshua commanded us to practice a type of guided meditation, in which we are to maintain a constant focus on the Torah:

[Yehoshua (Joshua) 1:8]

8 This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.

King David commanded us to practice a guided meditation, in which we learn to let go of anger, and forgive:

[Tehillim (Psalms) 4:4]

4 Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah

The other type of meditation is open (or 'empty') meditation.

We will talk more about open (or 'empty') meditation, in a moment. Most of us are only familiar with "new age" meditation.

Like most positive things of the Scripture, Satan has corrupted the act of meditating.

You must also be aware that during this time of quiet meditation, Satan will attempt to influence your thoughts.

How to Meditate (Stylistic Factors):

In addition to the two basic classifications of meditation (guided and empty), there are also some stylistic questions.

The more advanced stylistic questions are for later study; but there are two issues we will deal with here.

For beginners, the first basic stylistic question deals with whether the practitioner will meditate in stillness, or in motion.

The second basic stylistic question for beginners is whether the practitioner chooses to meditate sitting, standing, lying down, or in whatever other position.

Stillness and Repose

Meditation in motion is a much more useful technique than meditation while in stillness (and it is therefore often thought to be somewhat more advanced), for one cannot sit still in a chair (or on a cushion) all day.

However, even after one becomes fairly advanced in meditative techniques, there are still times when one desires just to sit still, and do nothing but meditate.

But if one wants to learn how to meditate, then how should the beginner begin?

On Beginning Meditation:

Beginners are usually well advised to try what is called an open (or 'empty') meditation.

While the technique is fundamental, it is also foundational; and therefore, all the more powerful.

Even the most advanced of practitioners practice it.

To practice an open (or 'empty') meditation, set aside a short period of time for oneself, perhaps fifteen minutes, or a half an hour, and then sit down comfortably.

One can sit on a chair, on a pad on the floor, in a field, or what-have-you.

Many people get hung up on the position, but the position is not important.

One can even lie down, if it helps one to focus.

The main thing is be comfortable.

Once comfortable, one good technique for beginners is just to begin by focusing on one's breath:

[Breisheet (Genesis) 2:7]

7 And YHWH Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. NKJV

The importance of breath is drastically under-appreciated in Western society.

Westerners tend to 'get ahead of their breath' just as they 'get ahead of themselves;' and they get caught up in the snares of material desire.

Just Focus on the Breath

In this most basic of all meditations, the goal is simply to sit still, and to notice the breath of life.

Feel it come in, and feel it go out.

Notice how good the breath of life feels.

Keep the mind clear, and just feel it.

When thoughts come, simply take notice what your thoughts are.

Do not allow yourself to indulge these thoughts.

Do not follow after them.

Simply take note of them.

Remember my earlier warning about Satan's attempt to influence.

When the thoughts come, gently notice what category your thoughts fit into.

Are they thoughts of sex, and/or physical pleasure?

Are they thoughts of money, or the things that money can buy?

Are they desires for power?

What material fixations do you have that are preventing you from moving forward in your spiritual walk?

Earthly Cares and Anxieties

In an open or 'empty' meditation, simply notice what thoughts come.

Are you worried and anxious?

Over what are you worried, or anxious?

What problems do you have, that affect your spiritual salvation?

Simply take note of what your worries and anxieties are, and then gently return your thoughts to the gift of your breath.

Do you seek after something?

After what do you seek?

Of what eternal value is the thing you are seeking?

What Not To Do:

It is also important to begin any meditation with prayer.

Ask the Ruach HaKodesh to guide what you are doing.

Sometimes beginners make the mistake of listening to their thoughts, rather than the Ruach HaKodesh; but they believe they are hearing the Ruach.

Unfortunately, this is what often results in the so-called “**Word from the Lord**” that we hear in the assembly that contradicts Torah.

We can know that this is not from Yahweh if it contradicts His Word.

This is a very common pitfall.

If you find you are 'hearing a voice' that urges you to go contrary to the Torah or the Good News, or if your life begins to go downhill after you begin your meditative practice, then you may want to temporarily stop your meditation, and seek out assistance.

If you are hearing the Ruach, rather than your own voice, you will never go contrary to Scripture, since the Ruach is the author of all Scripture:

Isaiah 8:20

20 To the Torah and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. NKJV

It is essential to test any inner voice you may hear against the written Word.

There is nothing wrong with seeking help.

Closing Your Meditation:

After you feel you are done, then it can be helpful to end your meditation with a closing prayer.

One good closing prayer is the Master's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread,
12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amein.**

One advanced meditation is simply to recite this prayer slowly, over and over, and to focus on this prayer, and to reflect on its relevance to one's day-to-day spiritual walk.

Another great meditation is to take one of the Psalms and spend time meditating on it.

You can also end with the She'ma.

Simply write out the entire She'ma, not just the abbreviated one we recite in assembly, but the whole thing.

Read and meditate on it word by word.

What spiritual wonders await us when we begin to meditate on the instructions of Yahweh.

Today when we pray for the sick and receive a miracle we are often powerless to bring about another one.

When we have a wonderful meeting and Yahweh is present it often seems nearly impossible for us to duplicate it.

What is the problem?

Could it be that we do not yet understand the laws of Yahweh's kingdom?

There are spiritual laws relating to his presence, his holiness, his power, etc.

David once found this out when he tried to move the Ark or the Covenant in a cart like the Philistines had done.

Remember how we talked about David doing this a couple weeks ago.

After a good man died in the process David went home and studied up on the instructions for carrying the Ark.

The next time he went for it, he had it carried on the shoulders of the Levites as the Torah prescribed.

Their rejoicing that day was not interrupted by disaster.

We often hear laments today that the Assembly is almost irrelevant to our modern culture.

We wait breathlessly for the world to make new discoveries or for the latest computer program to be released.

Do we have it all backwards?

If we will meditate day and night on Yahweh and on his Word, it will be us who are bringing the latest revelation to the world.

The people in the world will be the ones waiting breathlessly.

Sources used:

Yosef ben Ruach – One Beginning Meditation
Jim Gerrish – The Lost Art of Biblical Meditation