



The Story of Meditation

Over thousands of years, human beings have used meditation to heal and cleanse their mindful wellness. Meditation comes from the Latin word "meditatum" which means "to wonder". In a moment of meditation, the body stays still and focuses on breathing in and out, improving the form of awareness in the body creating benefits for a healthy lifestyle. Throughout history, meditation has been used for religious purposes, mainly adapted by Buddhism and Hinduism. Although nowadays people around the globe are now meditating for the benefits provided for the wellness of the human mind and body.

It is unclear on what year or what region meditation was first practiced, but based on experts' research they believe meditation was practiced before early civilization by Neanderthals and Hunter Gathers. Some of the earliest records of meditation were recorded through ancient painted caves in India as well as storytelling passed on through generations. In 1,500 BC in India, the early Hindu people practiced Dhyana which is considered the training of the mind. On the other hand, records of meditation also recorded by an ancient philosopher named Laozi, Laozi lived in China during the Han Dynasty and recorded the early practices of mediation in the 6th century BC. Laozi wrote about meditation techniques such as the Bao-Yi meaning "embracing the one" and Bao-Pu meaning "embracing simplicity".

From 130 BC to 1453 CE, an ancient network nowadays known as the Silk Road transported unique goods from Europe to the Middle East, Asia, and northern regions of Africa. Some of the goods transported include fruits, domestic and exotic animals, spices, and others more. Besides the goods that were transported, during the same time meditation was also spread which led to many regions around the world practicing meditation, providing different methods and reasoning to practice meditation. Buddhism adopted mediation into their religion and plays an important role in Buddhist practices. Throughout centuries Buddhist monks practice meditation to reach enlightenment from the causes of suffering and happiness. As Buddhism spread to different regions of Asia many monks developed their form of meditation techniques based on their lands' cultures and characteristics. For example, during the 7th century, a Japanese monk named Dosha traveled to China to learn Buddhism from Master Hsuan Tsang. When Dosha traveled back to Japan, he introduced The Zazen meditation technique which required the meditator to be seated with their legs and hands folded and a straight spine position.

Besides Buddhism, other religions incorporate meditation into their religious practices to connect with God, faith, and spirituality. For instance, Christianity uses meditation in prayers to get closer to divinity and to reflect on the love of God. On the other hand, Islam followers meditate to reflect on the universe and awaken their hearts and intelligence, while at the same time activate awareness, creativity, and healing.

Nowadays people are practicing meditation for the scientific benefits it provides to the human body. Throughout the state of meditation, the body stays relaxed, usually, the eyes are closed and the mediator only focuses on breathing in and out ultimately improving self-consciousness and awareness. According to a Harvard Medical School Professor, studies show that individuals who meditate use 17% less oxygen, have lower heart rates, and show signs of improved sleeping habits all daily. Studies have also shown how more meditation has benefits towards physical and mental conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia, psoriasis, and post-traumatic stress disorder. When a meditator meditates daily the brain builds the muscle of attention and mindfulness creating side effects such as decreasing depression, anxiety, headache, and stress. On the other hand, some positive side effects include, improving immunity, self-awareness, mindedness, concentration.

It is unclear when meditation was first practiced but throughout time people have practiced meditation for the wellness of the human body, mind, and spirituality. From the first meditators, hunter-gathers, and neanderthals to Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims incorporating meditation into their religious beliefs meditation has expanded to many regions of the world today for the benefits of human health. Today many businesses are now encouraging people to meditate through yoga studios and apps such as Headspace and The Mindful App for people to connect and heal themselves. Through the practices of meditation on an everyday

basis, meditation has proven to give human beings a healthier lifestyle in their body, mind, and spirituality, it has been proven over centuries and can still be proven today.

Citation

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