MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

508(c)(1)(a) Free Church • Sole Tanakh Authority
A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam

DOCUMENT 358

And on His Torah He Meditates

A Covenant Deep Dive into *hagah (to meditate, to murmur)* and *siach (to muse, to talk over)* — What Yahweh Means by Meditating on His Word (Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:2; 119:97)

Is Covenant Meditation Like Eastern Meditation? Are We Supposed to Sit in a Room Breathing in Silence, with Incense and Gongs? What Did Yahweh Command, What Did He Forbid, and How Does the Covenant Believer Meditate Today? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

October 2026
Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder
miqdashbethel.ai • miqdashbethel@gmail.com

The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✡ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
The Mishnah records that the early pious men waited an hour before praying so that they might direct their hearts to their Father in heaven (Berakhot 5:1). Rabbi Nachman of Breslov taught an hour a day of private prayer in one's own words, and twentieth-century writers such as Aryeh Kaplan argued that the prophets used meditative techniques. This study tests those claims against the words the Tanakh itself uses.	Paul told Timothy, ***"meditate on these things"*** (1 Timothy 4:15), and told the Philippians to think on whatever is true and pure (Philippians 4:8). Since the 1970s, Centering Prayer and Christian mindfulness have brought Eastern-style methods into many churches. This study asks whether the meditation the Tanakh commands is the same thing.	The Qur'an calls its hearers to ponder its verses (Q. 38:29) and praises those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying on their sides while reflecting on creation (Q. 3:191). Sufi orders later added breath control and repeated chanting. This study sets both beside the Tanakh's hagah and siach.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh**'s own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh**'s covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written Tanakh to one question: what does **Yahweh** mean when He tells His people to meditate on His word (**Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:2**)? It sets the Tanakh's own words for meditation beside the practices commonly called meditation today — Hindu and Buddhist sitting meditation, Transcendental Meditation, Zen, mindfulness, and the incense, bells, and bowls that often go with them — and asks where they agree and where they part. **Yahweh** (**יהוה**) and **Elohim** (**אֱלֹהִים**) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with their English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold, and anything in quotation marks is bold italic. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. **Verse numbers follow the English version. In a few chapters the Hebrew Bible divides the chapter at a different point, so the same verse carries a different number in the Hebrew text. Where that happens, the Hebrew number is given in brackets on first citation, for example Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14].** Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Lexicons (BDB, HALOT,

Gesenius, TWOT, DCH) are used as witnesses, never as the authority; where a lexicon gives a meaning the Tanakh's own usage does not carry, or where lexicons disagree, the reader is told. For this document, HALOT and DCH were consulted directly for ***hagah***, ***siach***, and ***raphah***; the other word entries rest on the Tanakh's own usage and BDB, and each lexicon note names the lexicons actually consulted. One more rule governs this study: each Eastern practice is first described fairly, from its own sources, before it is tested. To describe a practice is not to endorse it, and to test it is not to mock the people who practice it. Rabbinic commentary, New Testament texts, the Qur'an, Eastern scriptures, and modern research appear only in the three-religion table, the Comparative Texts table, the descriptive sections, and the Three-Religion Audit, as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The teaching sections rest on the Tanakh alone. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

The lexicons cited in this document are:

BDB: Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906). The classic English-language dictionary of biblical Hebrew, built on the work of Gesenius.

HALOT: Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, revised by Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, translated by M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000), five volumes. The standard modern scholarly dictionary of biblical Hebrew and Aramaic.

Gesenius: Wilhelm Gesenius (1786–1842), *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, translated by Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (London: Bagster, 1857). The foundational Hebrew lexicon that later dictionaries, including BDB, were built on.

TWOT: R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), two volumes. A word-study reference written from a conservative Christian standpoint, so its theological comments are read with that in mind.

DCH: David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield, 1993–2011), eight volumes. It lists every Hebrew word with its uses in the Tanakh and also in Ben Sira, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and ancient inscriptions. Miqdash Bethel uses its Tanakh evidence as a witness and the rest as comparison only.

Each lexicon is a witness under Deuteronomy 19:15, never the authority.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The breath of life; Isaac in the field; the holy incense and who may offer it; the bells on the priest's robe; the words on the heart, spoken sitting, walking, lying down, and rising; the king who reads all his days; do not learn the ways of the nations
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Malachi	The book that does not depart from the mouth; the prophets of Baal and Elijah; the still small voice; Elisha's musician; the mediums who mutter; perfect peace for the mind stayed on **Yahweh**; incense to other gods; eating the scroll
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles	Meditating day and night; ***"Be still"*** in its setting; silence before **Yahweh**; remembering His works in the night; the Temple singers and cymbals; prayer set forth as incense; let your words be few; Uzziah's incense

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
New Testament	Matthew 6:7; Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 4:15	Meditation as thinking on true things; the warning against heaping up empty phrases
Qur'an	Q. 3:191; 38:29; 47:24	Remembrance and reflection; pondering the verses
Rabbinic and medieval	Mishnah Berakhot 5:1; Talmud Berakhot 32b; Genesis Rabbah 60:14; Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, and Nachmanides on Genesis 24:63; Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (hitbodedut); Aryeh Kaplan, *Meditation and the Bible* (1978)	Directing the heart before prayer; Isaac in the field; private spoken prayer; the modern claim that the prophets used meditative techniques

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Eastern and modern	Patanjali, Yoga Sutras 1.2; Bhagavad Gita 6:10–14; Zen zazen practice; Transcendental Meditation and *Malnak v. Yogi* (1977; 3rd Cir. 1979); Centering Prayer; Goyal et al., JAMA Internal Medicine (2014); Farias et al., Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica (2020)	What Eastern meditation teaches in its own words; how its practices entered Western life and churches; what research does and does not show

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — TWO PICTURES OF MEDITATION

I-A. The Question

Say the word *"meditation"* to most people today and a picture comes to mind: a quiet room, a cushion on the floor, legs crossed, eyes closed, slow breathing, a stick of incense curling smoke, perhaps a statue on a shelf, and a bell or gong to mark the beginning and the end. The goal, they are told, is to quiet the mind, to empty it of thoughts, and to rest in pure awareness.

Then the same person opens the Tanakh and reads that the blessed man is the one whose ***"delight is in the Torah of Yahweh, and on His Torah he meditates day and night"*** (**Psalms 1:2**), and that Joshua was commanded to meditate on the book of the Torah ***"day and night"*** (**Joshua 1:8**). The English word is the same. So the question is natural: ***is this the same practice?***

Did Yahweh command His people to sit in a room breathing in silence, with incense and gongs? If not, what did He command?

This study answers from the Hebrew words themselves, from the commands that use them, and from the people in the Tanakh who did what the commands describe. It then sets the Eastern practices beside them, honestly and in their own words, and tests both by the written covenant.

I-B. The Questions

First: what do the Hebrew words translated ***"meditate"*** actually mean, judged by how the Tanakh uses them?

Second: what did **Yahweh** command His people to do with His word, and for what purpose?

Third: what do Eastern meditation traditions teach, in their own sources?

Fourth: what does the Tanakh say about the particular things in the popular picture — silence, breath, posture, incense, bells and gongs, and repeated sounds?

Fifth: where do the two paths agree, where do they part, and why does the parting matter?

Sixth: how does the covenant believer meditate on **Yahweh**'s word today?

I-C. What This Study Builds On

The Library has touched this subject from several sides. The May 2026 ***Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism*** study (Section III-C) already showed that ***hagah (to meditate, to murmur)*** means the audible, repeated speaking of revealed words, not the emptying of the mind; this study builds that into a full word study. The May 2026 ***Buddhism*** study and the March 2026 ***Eastern and Indigenous Wisdom Traditions*** study described Eastern systems; Section XI below corrects two points in them. **Doc 229** (***Master Key or Master's Voice?***) tested the mind-power claims of New Thought; **Doc 232** set out the forbidden practices of **Deuteronomy 18:10–11**; **Doc 236** tested ***"frequency"*** claims about the spoken word; **Doc 237** studied prayer and intercession; **Doc 303** studied **Isaiah 8:19**; and **Doc 351** answered the Advaita Vedanta teaching of Acharya Prashant. Each is used here where it bears on meditation, and none is repeated.

II. THE WORDS — WHAT "MEDITATE" MEANS IN HEBREW

II-A. The Word Family

Following the Hebrew Word-Meaning Rule, each word below is defined first by its use in the Tanakh, with the lexicons as second witnesses.

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATION	STRONG'S	MEANING FROM USAGE	TANAKH WITNESSES
הָגָה	***hagah (to murmur, to meditate)***	H1897	A low sound from the throat: a lion's growl, a dove's moan; speaking or uttering in an undertone; turning a matter over, for good or for evil	**Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:2; 2:1; 35:28; 37:30; 63:6; 115:7; Proverbs 8:7; 15:28; Isaiah 8:19; 31:4; 38:14; 59:11**
הֶגֶה	***hegeh (rumble, moan)***	H1899	A sound that goes out: a sigh, a moan, the rumble of thunder	**Psalms 90:9; Job 37:2; Ezekiel 2:10**
הִגָּיוֹן	***higgayon (murmured thought, resounding music)***	H1902	The meditation of the heart beside the words of the mouth; also a musical sound on the lyre	**Psalms 19:14 [Hebrew 19:15]; 92:3 [Hebrew 92:4]; 9:16 [Hebrew 9:17]; Lamentations 3:62**

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATION	STRON G'S	MEANING FROM USAGE	TANAKH WITNESSES
הֲגוּת	***hagut (meditation)***	H1900	What the heart turns over, set beside what the mouth speaks	**Psalms 49:3 [Hebrew 49:4]**
שִׂיחַ	***siach (to muse, to talk over, to complain)***	H7878	To talk a matter over — with oneself, with **Yahweh**, or with others; to pour out a complaint; to sing of His works	**Psalms 77:3, 6, 12 [Hebrew 77:4, 7, 13]; 105:2; 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148; 143:5; 145:5; 55:17 [Hebrew 55:18]; Job 7:11**
שִׂיחָה	***sichah (meditation, musing)***	H7881	The thing a man talks over all day	**Psalms 119:97, 99; Job 15:4**
זָכַר	***zakar (to remember)***	H2142	To call to mind what **Yahweh** has done and said	**Psalms 63:6 [Hebrew 63:7]; 77:11 [Hebrew 77:12]; 143:5; Deuteronomy 8:2**

II-B. Hagah — The Sound of a Mouth

Hagah (to murmur, to meditate), Strong's H1897, occurs twenty-five times in the Tanakh. Its plainest uses are sounds. A lion ***yehgeh (growls)*** over its prey and will not be frightened off (**Isaiah 31:4**).

Hezekiah in his sickness says, ***"like a dove I moan (ehgeh)"*** (**Isaiah 38:14**), and the people in their misery ***"moan and moan like doves"*** (**Isaiah 59:11**).

The idols of the nations have throats, but ***"they make no sound (lo yehgu) in their throat"*** (**Psalms 115:7**). The living man can do what the idol cannot: he can ***hagah*** (meditate).

From sound the word moves to speech.

"My tongue shall utter (tehgeh) Your righteousness, Your praise all the day" (**Psalms 35:28**).

"The mouth of the righteous utters (yehgeh) wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice" (**Psalms 37:30**).

Wisdom says, ***"My mouth shall utter (yehgeh) truth"*** (**Proverbs 8:7**).

Job swore, ***"my tongue shall not utter (yehgeh) deceit"*** (**Job 27:4**). In each of these the organ of ***hagah*** is the mouth or the tongue.

And from speech the word moves inward, to the turning over of a matter in the heart. ***"The heart of the righteous ponders (yehgeh) how to answer"*** (**Proverbs 15:28**).

The same verb serves the wicked: the nations ***"plot (yehgu) a vain thing"*** (**Psalms 2:1**), and the evil man's ***"heart devises (yehgeh) violence"*** (**Proverbs 24:2**). Even here the heart is not empty. It is busy with content: an answer, a plot, a scheme.

That is the background of the command to Joshua. Notice where the meditation is located:

לֹא־יָמ֗וּשׁ סֵ֚פֶר הַתּוֹרָ֣ה הַזֶּ֔ה מִפִּ֖יךָ וְהָגִ֣יתָ בּ֑וֹ יוֹמָ֥ם וָלָ֛יְלָה

"This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate (ve-hagita) on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosper, and then you will act wisely." (Joshua 1:8)

The book is not to depart ***"from your mouth."*** **The meditation is the mouth keeping the book:** reading it, saying it, murmuring it over, so that it stays in the man until he does it. The ancient world read aloud; to ***hagah*** the Torah was to sound its words in an undertone, again and again.

Lexicon note (BDB, HALOT, and DCH consulted directly): BDB describes ***hagah*** as a sound-word, with the senses ***"moan, growl, utter, speak, muse,"*** and limits it to poetry. HALOT gives the qal as ***"to mutter,"*** with animals ***"to coo"*** and ***"to growl,"*** and with people ***"to utter a sound," "to moan," "to read in an undertone"*** (where it places **Psalms 1:2** and **Joshua 1:8**), ***"to mutter while meditating"*** (**Isaiah 33:18; Psalms 63:6; 77:12; 143:5**), ***"to plot,"*** and ***"to speak, proclaim."***

DCH gives five senses: growl or moan (of animals); moan or groan in mourning; utter or speak; ***"meditate (on)"*** (where it places **Joshua 1:8** and **Psalms 1:2**, and notes that **Psalms 77:12** and **143:5** set ***hagah*** in parallel with ***siach***); and imagine or plot. The lexicons differ on one point the reader should know: HALOT files **Joshua 1:8** and **Psalms 1:2** under reading aloud in an undertone, while DCH files them under meditating. They agree, with the Tanakh's usage, that the root picture is a low sound and that every use has a content. None of the three gives ***hagah*** the sense of emptying the mind, and no Tanakh use carries it.

Finding — hagah is the murmuring, speaking, and turning-over of a definite content, never the emptying of the mind: Corroborated (Isaiah 31:4; 38:14; Psalms 115:7; 35:28; 37:30; Proverbs 8:7; 15:28; Joshua 1:8).

II-C. The Same Verb in the Mouth of the Mediums

One use of ***hagah*** stands as a warning beside all the others. Isaiah told Israel what would be said to them in a dark time:

"And when they say to you, 'Seek the mediums and the spiritists who chirp and who mutter (ha-mahgim),' should not a people seek their Elohim? On behalf of the living, to the dead? To

the Torah and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." (Isaiah 8:19–20)

The mediums ***mahgim (mutter)*** — the same root, ***hagah***, here in the hiphil participle (so HALOT, ***"to mutter"***), where Psalms 1:2 has the qal. Under the Word-Meaning Rule the stem does not change the meaning here: HALOT gives both as muttering. Their murmuring was a technique; it was the sound made in the practice of calling up the dead. So the Tanakh itself shows that murmuring as such is not holy.

The righteous man murmurs the Torah of **Yahweh** (**Psalms 1:2**); the medium murmurs to the dead (**Isaiah 8:19**). The sound is the same; the object, the source, and the purpose are opposite.

Isaiah gives the test in the next breath: ***"To the Torah and to the testimony!"*** **(Isaiah 8:20). This is the key that unlocks the whole question of this study. What makes meditation covenant meditation is not the posture, the sound, or the quiet. It is *what* is meditated on, *whom* it is directed to, and *what it produces.***

Finding — the same outward act (murmuring) is holy or forbidden according to its object and source: Corroborated (Psalms 1:2; Isaiah 8:19–20; Joshua 1:8).

II-D. Siach — Talking It Over

The second great word is ***siach (to muse, to talk over, to complain)***, Strong's H7878, about twenty occurrences. Its center is talk.

Deborah's song calls on those who ride and those who walk the road: ***"talk of it (sichu)"*** **(Judges 5:10)**.

Israel is told, ***"Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; talk of (sichu) all His wondrous works"*** **(Psalms 105:2)**.

David says, ***"Evening and morning and at noon I will complain (asichah) and moan, and He will hear my voice"*** **(Psalms 55:17 [Hebrew 55:18])**.

Job says, ***"I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain (asichah) in the bitterness of my soul"*** **(Job 7:11)**.

This is the word that fills **Psalms 119**. ***"I will meditate (asichah) on Your precepts and look to Your ways"*** **(Psalms 119:15)**. Princes sat and spoke against the psalmist, ***"but Your servant meditates (yasiach) on Your statutes"*** **(Psalms 119:23)** — the princes talk, and he talks too, but of something else. ***"Make me understand the way of Your precepts, and I will meditate (asichah)***

on Your wonders" **(Psalms 119:27)**. ***"My eyes are awake before the night watches, that I may meditate (lasiach) on Your word"*** **(Psalms 119:148)**. And the noun:

מָה־אָהַבְתִּי תוֹרָתֶךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם הִיא שִׂיחָתִי

"Oh how I love Your Torah! It is my meditation (sichati) all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation (sichah li)." **(Psalms 119:97–99)**

Sichah is the thing a man keeps talking over. The psalmist's talk all day long is the Torah, and its fruit is wisdom and understanding — **the mind not emptied but filled, and filled so well that it outruns his teachers**.

Lexicon note (HALOT consulted directly): HALOT's entry for ***siach*** (its root II) is frank that the lexicons disagree on the root meaning. It reports Lisowsky's three senses (to ponder or reflect; to talk or discourse; to complain or lament) and says that ***"it is difficult to identify a basic meaning from them all."*** It then notes several scholars: one takes ***siach*** as to remember or take to heart; Franken holds that it does not refer first to an audible lament but to the inner movement from which praise or lament comes; Seybold takes the basic meaning as ***"to whisper"***; and Müller sees an audible intensity in the word. HALOT follows Müller: first, loud, emotionally charged speech — praising (**Judges 5:10; Psalms 105:2; 145:5**), lamenting (**Psalms 55:17; 77:3; Job 7:11**), taunting (**Psalms 69:12**), instructing (**Proverbs 6:22**); second, ***"to meditate with thanks and praise"*** (**Psalms 77:12; 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148**); and in the polel, the same as ***hagah*** (**Psalms 143:5**). So the reader is told: whether ***siach*** is always audible is disputed. What no lexicon disputes, and the Tanakh shows in every use, is that ***siach*** has a content — praise, complaint, instruction, or **Yahweh**'s word and works.

Finding — siach is talking a matter over, aloud or within, before Yahweh and with others, and its object in meditation is Yahweh's word and works: Corroborated (Judges 5:10; Psalms 105:2; 55:17; 119:15, 23, 27, 97–99, 148; 145:5; Job 7:11).

II-E. Isaac in the Field — An Uncertain Word

Genesis 24:63 says that Isaac went out ***lasuach (to meditate?)*** in the field toward evening, and lifted his eyes and saw the camels coming with Rebekah. Many teachers point to this verse as the first meditation in Scripture. The word is uncertain. The ancient and medieval readers did not agree on it: Genesis Rabbah (60:14) and Rashi read it as prayer, linking it to ***siach***; Ibn Ezra read it as going out for a walk; Rashbam linked it to ***siach (shrub)*** of **Genesis 2:5** and saw Isaac tending the plants; Nachmanides read it as Isaac talking with companions. Modern translations divide between ***"meditate"*** and ***"walk,"*** and several footnote the word as uncertain.

Under the Word-Meaning Rule, a form found only here, read four different ways by careful readers, is graded **Single witness**, and no teaching may rest on it alone. If it means prayer, it agrees with ***siach*** elsewhere: a man talking to **Elohim** in a field. It cannot be made into evidence for silent technique, because none of the four readings is that.

Finding — Genesis 24:63 shows Isaac practicing a meditative technique: Not in the text (the word is uncertain, and every early reading of it — prayer, walking, tending plants, or conversation — is an outward act, not a technique).

II-F. Higgayon — The Mouth and the Heart Together

The noun ***higgayon (murmured thought, resounding music)***, from ***hagah***, appears in one of the best-known verses of the Psalms:

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation (hegyon) of my heart be acceptable before You, O Yahweh, my Rock and my Redeemer." (**Psalms 19:14 [Hebrew 19:15]**)

The words of the mouth and the meditation of the heart stand side by side, and both are offered to **Yahweh** by name. In **Psalms 92:1–3 [Hebrew 92:2–4]** the same noun names music: it is good to give thanks to **Yahweh** ***"on the ten-stringed instrument and on the harp, with higgayon on the lyre."***

In **Lamentations 3:62** it names the whispering of enemies plotting against the prophet. In **Psalms 9:16 [Hebrew 9:17]** it stands beside ***"Selah"*** as a word in the margin of the song, whose exact sense is uncertain. Every use is sound or speech with content; none is silence for its own sake.

II-G. Zakar — Meditation as Remembering

The Psalms tie meditation again and again to ***zakar (to remember)***. ***"When I remember (zekhartikha) You upon my bed, I meditate (ehgeh) on You in the night watches"*** (**Psalms 63:6 [Hebrew 63:7]**).

"I will remember the deeds of Yah; yes, I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate (hagiti) on all Your work, and talk over (asichah) Your deeds" (**Psalms 77:11–12 [Hebrew 77:12–13]**).

"I remember the days of old; I meditate (hagiti) on all Your doings; I muse (asoheach) on the work of Your hands" (**Psalms 143:5**).

These three verses use all three words together — ***zakar***, ***hagah***, and ***siach*** — and their object is the same each time: what **Yahweh** has done. Covenant meditation looks backward at His acts, looks at His creation, and looks into His word. It is remembering with the mouth and the heart.

Finding — in every Tanakh word for meditation the heart is filled with a named content — Yahweh's Torah, His works, His deeds, His wonders, or Yahweh Himself — and no word means to empty the mind: Corroborated (Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:2; 19:14; 63:6; 77:11–12; 119:15, 97; 143:5; 145:5).

III. FIVE WITNESSES — WHAT YAHWEH COMMANDED

Witness One — Joshua 1:8: The Book in the Mouth. The first command to meditate in the Tanakh is given to a man about to lead a nation across the Jordan.

1. It names the object (***"this book of the Torah"***),
2. the place (***"your mouth"***),
3. the time (***"day and night"***),
4. and the purpose (***"so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it"***).

The promised result is not a state of consciousness but a prosperous way and wise action. Meditation here is preparation for obedience.

Witness Two — Psalms 1:1–3: The Tree by the Streams. The first psalm sets the meditating man between two companies.

He does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers (**Psalms 1:1**). Instead, ***"his delight is in the Torah of Yahweh, and on His Torah he meditates day and night"*** (**Psalms 1:2**).

The result is a picture of growth and fruit: ***"He shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season"*** (**Psalms 1:3**). The tree is not still for the sake of stillness. It drinks, and it bears fruit.

כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חֶפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יֶהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה

Witness Three — Deuteronomy 6:6–9: Sitting, Walking, Lying Down, Rising. Here **Yahweh** explains what ***"day and night"*** looks like in a household:

"And these words which I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall speak of them (ve-dibbarta bam) when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (**Deuteronomy 6:6–9**)

This is the fullest description of covenant meditation in the Torah. The words are ***"on your heart."*** They are spoken — ***ve-dibbarta bam (and you shall speak of them)*** — and spoken to children.

They are spoken in four postures that cover the whole day: **sitting, walking, lying down, rising.** No one posture is chosen; every posture is used. **Deuteronomy 11:18–20** repeats the command almost word for word, so it stands on two witnesses within the Torah itself.

Covenant meditation is not a session in a special room. It is the word carried through the house, the road, the bed, and the morning.

Lexicon note: ***ve-shinnantam (and you shall teach them diligently)*** (**Deuteronomy 6:7**) is placed by BDB under ***shanan (to sharpen)***, Strong's H8150, as in a sharpened arrow (**Psalms 45:5 [Hebrew 45:6]**). Later rabbinic teaching often links it instead to ***shanah (to repeat)***, the root of ***Mishnah***. The lexicons and the rabbinic reading disagree; the Tanakh's own usage of ***shanan*** supports ***"sharpen."*** Either way the point stands: the words are to be pressed into the children until they are sharp and clear.

Witness Four — Deuteronomy 17:18–20: The King Who Reads. Even the king was given this discipline.

He was to write a copy of the Torah in a book, ***"and it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Yahweh his Elohim, to keep all the words of this Torah ... that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers"*** (**Deuteronomy 17:19–20**).

The king's meditation is reading, and its fruit is fear of **Yahweh**, obedience, and humility.

Witness Five — Psalms 119: The Night Watches and the Wise Heart. The longest psalm returns to meditation again and again, and always with the same object and the same fruit. ***"***

Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (**Psalms 119:11**).

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Torah" (**Psalms 119:18**).

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies; I made haste and did not delay to keep Your commandments" (**Psalms 119:59–60**).

The word is hidden in the heart; **Yahweh** is asked to open the eyes; the result is a changed walk.

Finding — Yahweh's command to meditate is a command to read, speak, remember, and talk over His words and works, through the whole day and night, in order to do them:

Corroborated (Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1–3; Deuteronomy 6:6–9; 11:18–20; 17:18–20; Psalms 119:11, 18, 59–60, 97–99).

IV. WHAT EASTERN MEDITATION TEACHES — IN ITS OWN WORDS

Before the two paths can be compared, the Eastern path must be described as its own teachers describe it. What follows is description, not endorsement.

IV-A. Hindu Yoga and Dhyana

The classical definition comes from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Its second verse defines yoga itself as the stilling or cessation of the fluctuations of the mind (***yogas chitta vritti nirodhah***). Patanjali's eight limbs lead from moral restraints through bodily posture (***asana***), breath control (***pranayama***), withdrawal of the senses, concentration, and meditation (***dhyana***), to absorption (***samadhi***). The Bhagavad Gita (6:10–14) gives the setting: the practitioner sits alone in a clean place on a firm seat of grass, deerskin, and cloth, holds body, head, and neck erect and still, and fixes his gaze toward the tip of the nose without looking around. The sacred syllable ***Om*** is chanted as the primal sound. In Advaita Vedanta the goal is to realize that the individual self (***atman***) is one with the absolute (***Brahman***) — a teaching the Library answered at length in **Doc 351**.

IV-B. Buddhist Meditation and Zen

Buddhist meditation centers on mindfulness, beginning with attention to the breath, and on calm and insight meditation, aimed at seeing all things as impermanent and without a permanent self, and at the extinguishing of craving. Zen practice, ***zazen (seated meditation)***, is done on a cushion facing a wall or the room. In the Soto school the purest form is ***shikantaza (just sitting)***. Zen guides describe the setting closely: an altar with a statue of the Buddha, candles, and an incense bowl; the teacher offers incense and rings a bell three times to begin the sitting; a single stick of incense traditionally measures one period of about forty minutes; the bell is struck again for walking meditation and to end. This is where the popular picture of incense and gongs comes from.

IV-C. Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental Meditation (TM), taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, gives each student a mantra to repeat silently for twenty minutes twice a day, and it was marketed in the West as a science rather than a religion. In *Malnak v. Yogi* the federal district court in New Jersey (1977), affirmed by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals (1979), held that the TM course taught in New Jersey public schools was religious in nature. The court looked especially at the ***puja***, the initiation ceremony at which the

student receives his secret mantra, which includes chanting and offerings before an image of the Maharishi's teacher, Guru Dev.

IV-D. Mindfulness

In 1979 Jon Kabat-Zinn founded Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), an eight-week program that brought Buddhist mindfulness techniques into hospitals and clinics in secular form. He himself has described it, in effect, as Buddhist meditation with the Buddhism removed. Mindfulness is now taught in schools, workplaces, and many churches.

IV-E. Gongs and Singing Bowls

Struck bells and bowls have long been used in Buddhist temples to mark the start and end of sitting and chanting. The so-called ***"Tibetan singing bowl,"*** played by rubbing its rim, is another matter. Scholars of the subject find no record of it in Tibetan music or ritual, and trace its popular use to the West from the early 1970s, beginning with the 1972 album *Tibetan Bells*. Tibetans themselves have said the bowls are not Tibetan. The claim that singing bowls are an ancient Tibetan meditation tool is therefore **Not corroborated** by the historical record.

Finding — Eastern meditation, in its own sources, aims to still or empty the mind, master the breath, and reach union with the absolute or the end of the self, using posture, mantra, and ritual objects: Corroborated as a description of these traditions (Yoga Sutras 1.2; Bhagavad Gita 6:10–14; Zen practice manuals; *Malnak v. Yogi*).

V. SIDE BY SIDE — TWO KINDS OF MEDITATION

ELEMENT	EASTERN MEDITATION	COVENANT MEDITATION	TANAKH WITNESS
Object	The breath, a mantra, a syllable, the present moment, or nothing at all	The Torah, the works, the deeds, and the wonders of **Yahweh**, and **Yahweh** Himself	**Psalms 1:2; 63:6; 77:12; 119:97**
The mind	Stilled or emptied of thoughts	Filled; the word hidden in the heart	**Deuteronomy 6:6; Psalms 119:11**
The mouth	Silent, or repeating a sound whose meaning does not matter	Murmuring, speaking, singing words that are understood	**Joshua 1:8; Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalms 37:30**
Breath	Watched or controlled as a method	Received from **Yahweh** and used to praise Him	**Genesis 2:7; Psalms 150:6**

ELEMENT	EASTERN MEDITATION	COVENANT MEDITATION	TANAKH WITNESS
Posture	Prescribed: seated, erect, still, gaze fixed	None prescribed: sitting, walking, lying down, rising	**Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalms 63:6**
Incense and bells	Mark and set the mood of the sitting; offered at an altar to the Buddha or a guru	Incense only by the priest at **Yahweh**'s altar, by His formula; bells on the priest's robe	**Exodus 30:7–9, 34–38; 28:33–35**
Who acts first	The practitioner, by technique	**Yahweh**, who has already spoken; man receives and responds	**Deuteronomy 30:11–14; Psalms 119:18**
Goal	Calm, insight, union with the absolute, the end of the self	Wisdom, fear of **Yahweh**, obedience, and fruit	**Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:3; Deuteronomy 17:19**
The test	The experience itself	The Torah and the testimony	**Isaiah 8:20**

The table shows that the two practices share an English name and little else. Covenant meditation is not a Hebrew form of Eastern meditation, and Eastern meditation is not a lost Hebrew practice. They move in opposite directions: one empties the vessel; the other fills it.

VI. THE PARTICULAR QUESTIONS — SILENCE, BREATH, POSTURE, INCENSE, AND GONGS

VI-A. Silence — and "Be Still"

The verse most often quoted for silent meditation is **Psalms 46:10 [Hebrew 46:11]**, ***"Be still, and know that I am Elohim."*** Read it in its place:

"Come, behold the works of Yahweh, who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. Let go (harpu), and know that I am Elohim; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalms 46:8–10 [Hebrew 46:9–11])

הַרְפּוּ וּדְעוּ כִּי־אָנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים

The verb is ***harpu (let go, desist)***, from ***raphah (to sink, to let drop, to relax)***, Strong's H7503, a command in the plural. It is spoken in a battle scene, after **Yahweh** breaks the bow and burns the chariots, and its subject is the nations: drop your weapons, stop fighting, and know who is **Elohim**. The same verb describes hands that ***"drop"*** in weakness (**Isaiah 13:7; Jeremiah 6:24**). The verse is a

command to stop striving against **Yahweh** — a word of comfort to His people because their enemies must stop — not an instruction in sitting meditation. BDB glosses the hiphil ***"let go, refrain, desist."*** HALOT, consulted directly, lists **Psalms 46:11** [English 46:10] under the hiphil used absolutely, ***"to leave off, cease, stop,"*** beside **1 Samuel 15:16** (Samuel to Saul: ***"Stop!"***) and **Proverbs 4:13**. The two lexicons agree.

Finding — Psalms 46:10 commands meditative stillness: Not in the text (the verb means let go or desist, and is spoken to warring nations, **Psalms 46:9–10**).

The Tanakh does have silence, and it is worth seeing what kind. ***"Be silent (dom) before Yahweh, and wait patiently for Him"*** (**Psalms 37:7**). ***"Truly my soul waits in silence (dumiyah) for Elohim; from Him comes my salvation"*** (**Psalms 62:1 [Hebrew 62:2]**). ***"It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of Yahweh ... let him sit alone and keep silent"*** (**Lamentations 3:26, 28**). ***"Yahweh is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him"*** (**Habakkuk 2:20**). ***"Draw near to hear ... let your words be few"*** (**Ecclesiastes 5:1–2 [Hebrew 4:17–5:1]**). Even the verse that tells a man to be silent on his bed first tells him to speak: ***"Speak in your heart upon your bed, and be silent (domu)"*** (**Psalms 4:4 [Hebrew 4:5]**).

In every case the silence is *before* ***Yahweh***, *waiting for* ***Yahweh***, *listening to* ***Yahweh***, or *trusting* ***Yahweh***. It is the silence of a servant waiting for his master to speak, not the silence of a mind emptied to reach a state. And when Elijah heard ***kol demamah daqqah (a sound of thin silence)*** at Horeb, it was **Yahweh** who came to him, unbidden, and then spoke words to him that he could obey (**1 Kings 19:11–15**). Elijah did not produce the silence by technique; he was a fugitive in a cave.

Finding — the Tanakh's silence is waiting on and listening to Yahweh in trust, never a technique for emptying the mind: Corroborated (**Psalms 37:7; 62:1; 4:4; Lamentations 3:26–28; Habakkuk 2:20; Ecclesiastes 5:1–2; 1 Kings 19:11–15**).

VI-B. Breath

The Tanakh honors the breath as **Yahweh**'s gift. ***"Yahweh Elohim formed the man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (nishmat chayyim), and the man became a living soul"*** (**Genesis 2:7**). ***"The Spirit of El has made me, and the breath of Shaddai gives me life"*** (**Job 33:4**). And it tells man what the breath is for: ***"Let everything that has breath (neshamah) praise Yah"*** (**Psalms 150:6**). It warns against trusting in it: ***"Stop regarding man, whose breath is in his nostrils"*** (**Isaiah 2:22**).

Nowhere does the Tanakh command, describe, or praise the watching, counting, holding, or controlling of the breath as a spiritual practice. Breath is received from **Yahweh** and spent in praise of **Yahweh**.

Finding — breath control or breath-watching as a covenant practice: Not in the text (the breath is **Yahweh**'s gift, given to praise Him, **Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalms 150:6**).

VI-C. Posture

The Tanakh shows **Yahweh**'s servants before Him in every posture. David ***"went in and sat before Yahweh, and said"*** (**2 Samuel 7:18**). Solomon stood before the altar with hands spread out (**1 Kings 8:22**), and then rose from kneeling (**1 Kings 8:54**). Daniel knelt three times a day toward Jerusalem (**Daniel 6:10 [Hebrew 6:11]**). Moses bowed to the ground (**Exodus 34:8**). The people bowed with their faces to the ground when Ezra blessed **Yahweh** (**Nehemiah 8:6**). The psalmist meditated lying on his bed (**Psalms 63:6**), and the Torah tells the father to speak the words walking by the way (**Deuteronomy 6:7**).

Finding — a required posture for meditation: Not in the text (sitting, standing, kneeling, bowing, lying down, and walking all appear, **2 Samuel 7:18; 1 Kings 8:22, 54; Daniel 6:10; Psalms 63:6; Deuteronomy 6:7**).

VI-D. Incense

Incense, ***qetoret (incense)***, Strong's H7004, has a definite place in the Torah, and the place is narrow. **Yahweh** commanded a golden altar before the veil, on which Aaron alone was to burn sweet incense morning and evening (**Exodus 30:1–8**). He forbade ***"strange incense"*** on it (**Exodus 30:9**). He gave the formula — stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense — and then said:

"And the incense which you shall make, you shall not make for yourselves according to its composition; it shall be to you holy to Yahweh. Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, shall be cut off from his people." (**Exodus 30:37–38**)

The Tanakh then records what happened when men offered incense outside these bounds. Nadab and Abihu offered ***"strange fire which He had not commanded them,"*** and fire went out from **Yahweh** and consumed them (**Leviticus 10:1–2**). After Korah's rebellion the censers became a memorial ***"that no stranger, who is not of the seed of Aaron, should come near to burn incense before Yahweh"*** (**Numbers 16:40 [Hebrew 17:5]**). King Uzziah went into the temple to burn incense, was told ***"It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests,"*** and was struck with leprosy until the day of his death (**2 Chronicles 26:16–21**).

Incense offered to other powers is condemned throughout: Solomon's wives burned incense to their gods (**1 Kings 11:8**); Josiah removed the priests who burned incense to Baal, the sun, the moon, and the constellations (**2 Kings 23:5**); Judah burned incense to the queen of heaven (**Jeremiah 44:17–19**); seventy elders stood in a dark chamber with censers before carved images (**Ezekiel 8:11**).

The incense at a Zen altar is offered before a statue of the Buddha; the TM ***puja*** offers before an image of a guru. That is the category the Tanakh names.

What the covenant believer has instead is in the Psalms: ***"Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering"*** (**Psalms 141:2**). The prayer is compared to incense; the prayer itself is what rises. And **Malachi 1:11**, sometimes quoted to justify incense, is a prophecy that **Yahweh**'s name will be great among the nations and that a pure offering will be brought to it, spoken against priests who were despising His altar (**Malachi 1:6–10**). It is not a command to burn incense at home to set a mood.

Finding — incense belonged to the priest at Yahweh's altar, by Yahweh's formula; private incense to set the mood of prayer or meditation is nowhere commanded: Corroborated (Exodus 30:1–9, 34–38; Leviticus 10:1–2; Numbers 16:40; 2 Chronicles 26:16–21).

Finding — incense offered before images or to other powers is forbidden: Corroborated (1 Kings 11:8; 2 Kings 23:5; Jeremiah 44:17–19; Ezekiel 8:11).

VI-E. Gongs, Bells, Cymbals, and Music

The Torah has bells. Golden bells, ***pa'amonim (bells)***, hung between pomegranates on the hem of the high priest's robe, ***"and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before Yahweh"*** (**Exodus 28:33–35**). Their sound announced the priest; it did not induce a state. The Temple had cymbals, ***metziltayim (cymbals)***, and loud ones: David appointed Levites ***"to sound aloud with cymbals of bronze"*** (**1 Chronicles 15:16, 19**). But listen to what went with them. When the ark came into Solomon's temple, the singers with cymbals, harps, and trumpets ***"lifted up their voice ... praising Yahweh: 'For He is good, for His covenant love endures forever'"*** (**2 Chronicles 5:12–13**). The instruments carried words of praise to **Yahweh**, sung aloud by a whole congregation (**1 Chronicles 16:4–6, 42; 25:1, 6; Psalms 150:5**).

Two narratives are sometimes used to argue that music induces revelation, and they should be read honestly. Elisha, asked for a word from **Yahweh**, said, ***"Bring me a musician,"*** and ***"when the musician played, the hand of Yahweh came upon him"*** (**2 Kings 3:15**). And Samuel told Saul he would meet a band of prophets with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre, and that ***"the Spirit of Yahweh will rush upon you"*** (**1 Samuel 10:5–6**). In both, the men were already called by **Yahweh**, the coming of His hand or Spirit is His act, and the result was a word that could be tested: Elisha's word about the water came true the next morning (**2 Kings 3:16–20**), and Saul's sign was foretold by a prophet. Neither passage gives a method for anyone to use, and neither is repeated as a command. They are **Single witness** narratives for this question, and no practice rests on them.

The Tanakh does show one group using sound and repetition as a technique to reach a deity — and it is the strongest witness in this whole study. On Mount Carmel the prophets of Baal ***"called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no voice, and no one answered."*** They leaped about the altar, cut themselves, and ***vayyitnabbe'u (raved)*** until the time of the evening offering, ***"but there was no voice, no one answered, no one paying attention"*** (**1 Kings 18:26–29**). Then Elijah stepped forward and prayed a prayer of about sixty Hebrew words, plain speech in Israel's language, naming **Yahweh**, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and asking that the people might know (**1 Kings 18:36–37**). And the fire fell (**1 Kings 18:38**).

Finding — repetition, sound, and frenzy as techniques to reach the divine are the practice of Baal's prophets; Yahweh answered plain covenant speech: Corroborated (1 Kings 18:26–29, 36–38; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Isaiah 1:13–15).

VI-F. Mantra and Repetition

Does the Tanakh forbid repetition? No. **Psalms 136** repeats one line twenty-six times: ***"for His covenant love endures forever."*** But look at what is repeated and how. It is a sentence in the people's own language with a clear meaning, and each time it answers a different act of **Yahweh**: He made the heavens, He struck Egypt, He divided the sea, He led His people through the wilderness, He remembered us in our low estate. Repetition in the Tanakh drives home a meaning. A mantra, by contrast, is chosen for its sound; in TM it is secret, and its meaning is held to be unimportant to the practice. One fills the mind with a truth about **Yahweh**; the other uses a sound to quiet the mind.

VII. WHERE THE TWO PATHS PART — THE COVENANT TEST

VII-A. The Command Not to Borrow

A believer may ask: what if I take the method of Eastern meditation — the cushion, the breath, the bell, the incense — and simply point it at **Yahweh**? The Torah answers that exact question:

"Take heed to yourself that you are not snared by following them ... and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not do so to Yahweh your Elohim." (Deuteronomy 12:30–31)

Yahweh did not only forbid serving other gods. He forbade learning the method by which the nations served their gods and using it for Him. The same warning stands in **Deuteronomy 18:9** (***"you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations"***), in **Leviticus 18:3** (***"you shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt ... nor as they do in the land of Canaan"***), and in

Jeremiah 10:2 (***"Do not learn the way of the nations"***). A method designed to empty the mind into the ***Brahman***, or to extinguish the self, does not become covenant worship by changing the name spoken over it.

Finding — borrowing the worship methods of the nations and directing them to Yahweh is forbidden: Corroborated (Deuteronomy 12:30–31; 18:9; Leviticus 18:3; Jeremiah 10:2).

VII-B. The Emptied Mind and the Filled Heart

Eastern meditation seeks to still the movements of the mind. The Torah seeks to fill the heart with **Yahweh**'s words: ***"these words ... shall be on your heart"*** (**Deuteronomy 6:6**); ***"Your word I have hidden in my heart"*** (**Psalms 119:11**); ***"My son, give attention to my words ... keep them in the midst of your heart"*** (**Proverbs 4:20–21**). Jeremiah says, ***"Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart"*** (**Jeremiah 15:16**), and Ezekiel was made to eat the scroll and fill his belly with it (**Ezekiel 3:1–3**). The heart is not left empty; it is guarded and furnished, ***"for out of it are the issues of life"*** (**Proverbs 4:23**).

VII-C. The Inward Search and the Word from Outside

Eastern meditation looks inward for truth. The Tanakh says the inward man, by himself, is not a reliable guide: ***"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can know it?"*** (**Jeremiah 17:9**). Its answer is not a deeper look inward but **Yahweh**'s word coming from outside: ***"For My thoughts are not your thoughts ... so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth"*** (**Isaiah 55:8–11**). The psalmist does not search himself; he asks **Yahweh** to search him (**Psalms 139:23–24**). And the word is not hidden at the bottom of the mind, to be reached by technique; it has already been given: ***"the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it"*** (**Deuteronomy 30:11–14**; see **Doc 333**).

VII-D. The Self Dissolved and the Person Before Yahweh

In Advaita Vedanta the self is finally one with the absolute; in Buddhism there is no lasting self. In the Tanakh a man is a living soul formed by **Yahweh** (**Genesis 2:7**), who speaks with **Yahweh** as a man speaks with his friend (**Exodus 33:11**), and who never becomes Him: ***"I am Yahweh, and there is no other; besides Me there is no Elohim"*** (**Isaiah 45:5**); ***"El is not a man"*** (**Numbers 23:19**). Covenant meditation keeps two persons in view — **Yahweh** who speaks and the servant who listens and answers.

VII-E. What the Tanakh Does Not Forbid

Honesty requires saying what the text does *not* say. The Tanakh does not forbid sitting quietly, being alone, slowing down, resting the body, or breathing deeply when tired. A believer who sits in a quiet

room and reads a psalm aloud, or sits silent before **Yahweh** waiting for Him, or walks alone in a field talking to Him, is not doing Eastern meditation. Nor is calm itself a sin; **Yahweh** gives it. What the Tanakh speaks against is the *method borrowed from the worship of other gods* (**Deuteronomy 12:30**), the *goal* of emptying the mind or merging with the absolute, and the *objects* of that worship — the image on the altar, the incense offered before it, and the mantra given at a ceremony to a guru.

Finding — quiet, solitude, and rest as such are forbidden: Not in the text (the Tanakh commends them before **Yahweh**, **Psalms 37:7; 62:1; Lamentations 3:28; Isaiah 30:15**).

VIII. WHAT MODERN RESEARCH SAYS — WITHOUT THE HYPE

Many people come to meditation for their health, so the research should be stated fairly. The largest careful review, by Madhav Goyal and colleagues at Johns Hopkins (JAMA Internal Medicine, 2014), examined 47 randomized trials with 3,515 participants. It found moderate evidence that mindfulness programs improve anxiety, depression, and pain, low evidence for stress and quality of life, little or no evidence for other outcomes, and no evidence that meditation did better than active treatments such as medicine or exercise. A later systematic review led by Miguel Farias (Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 2020), covering 83 studies and 6,703 participants, found that adverse effects — most often anxiety, depression, and unusual mental experiences — were reported in about 8 percent of participants overall, and sometimes in people with no prior mental illness.

So the research shows a modest real benefit for some people and a real risk for others. It does not show that the spiritual claims of Eastern meditation are true, and it does not show that the benefit requires the Eastern method. The Tanakh promises a peace with a different anchor: ***"You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You"*** (**Isaiah 26:3**), and ***"In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength"*** (**Isaiah 30:15**). The mind is stayed *on* ***Yahweh***, not on nothing. This section is not medical advice; anyone suffering anxiety or depression should seek proper care.

IX. HOW THE COVENANT BELIEVER MEDITATES TODAY

No cushion, incense, bell, bowl, mantra, or breathing method is needed. Everything **Yahweh** asked for is already in the text:

1. Read it aloud, in an undertone. Take a passage — a psalm, a chapter of Deuteronomy, a portion of the prophets — and murmur it, as ***hagah (to murmur, to meditate)*** means (**Joshua 1:8; Deuteronomy 17:19**).

2. Say it again through the day. Carry a verse with you and speak it sitting, walking, lying down, and rising (**Deuteronomy 6:7**).

3. Talk it over. Do ***siach (to talk over)***: with yourself, with your household at the table, and with fellow believers. ***"Then those who feared Yahweh spoke one with another, and Yahweh listened and heard"*** (**Malachi 3:16**; **Psalms 105:2**).

4. Remember His works. Recall what **Yahweh** has done — in the Exodus, in the wilderness, in your own life (**Psalms 77:11–12; 143:5; Deuteronomy 8:2**).

5. Use the night. On your bed, before sleep or in the night watches, go back over the word (**Psalms 63:6; 4:4; 119:148**).

6. Pray it back to Him. Ask **Yahweh** to open your eyes to what you are reading, and offer the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart to Him (**Psalms 119:18; 19:14**).

7. Be silent before Him, and wait. Stop, be quiet, and wait for **Yahweh** — trusting, not emptying (**Psalms 37:7; 62:1**).

8. Hide it in your heart. Learn verses by heart, so that the word is with you when the book is not (**Psalms 119:11**).

9. Sing it. Sing the psalms and the praises of **Yahweh**, with instruments if you have them (**Psalms 92:1–3; 105:2**).

10. Do it. Ask of every passage, ***"What does this call me to do today?"*** — and then do it (**Joshua 1:8; Psalms 119:59–60**).

An example: in the morning, read **Psalms 1** aloud. Choose verse 2 to carry. Say it to yourself on the way to work. At the evening meal, talk over with your family what it means to delight in **Yahweh**'s Torah and what the scoffer's seat looks like today. On your bed, remember one thing **Yahweh** did for you that day. Before you sleep, ask Him to make you the tree of verse 3. That is meditating on His word day and night.

X. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION MEDITATES

ELEMENT	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
Primary text	Mishnah Berakhot 5:1: the early pious men waited an hour before prayer to direct their	1 Timothy 4:15 (***"meditate on these things"***); Philippians 4:8 (think on whatever is true,	Q. 38:29 (a blessed Book, that they may ponder its verses); Q. 47:24 (do they not ponder the

ELEMENT	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
	hearts to their Father in heaven (expanded in Talmud Berakhot 32b). Genesis Rabbah 60:14 reads Isaac's ***lasuach*** as prayer. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov taught ***hitbodedut***: an hour a day of private, spoken prayer in one's own words, often in a field. Aryeh Kaplan (1978) argued that the prophets used meditative techniques.	noble, just, and pure); Matthew 6:7 (do not heap up empty phrases as the nations do). In the 1970s Thomas Keating, William Meninger, and Basil Pennington developed Centering Prayer, partly in answer to young Christians drawn to Eastern meditation; a Zen teacher and a former TM teacher taught at their abbey.	Qur'an?); Q. 3:191 (those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on creation). Sufi orders developed ***dhikr*** with repeated chanting, breath control, and movement, aimed at states of absorption.
Covenant strength	Directing the heart before prayer, and Rabbi Nachman's spoken prayer in one's own words, stand close to the Tanakh's ***siach***: a man talking things over before his Maker.	Matthew 6:7 agrees with **Ecclesiastes 5:2** and with Carmel (**1 Kings 18:26–29**): many words and repeated phrases do not move **Yahweh**. Philippians 4:8 fills the mind rather than emptying it.	Q. 3:191 lists the same postures as **Deuteronomy 6:7** — standing, sitting, lying down — and joins remembrance to reflection on what God has made, as **Psalms 143:5** does.
Covenant departure	Kaplan's claim that biblical words describe meditative techniques for altered states is not supported by their usage (Section II); the Tanakh gives no technique. Kabbalistic letter-combination and visualization of the Names belong to the category tested in the Kabbalah study.	Centering Prayer's instruction to let go of every thought, even devout ones, and modern Christian mindfulness move toward the emptied mind of Eastern practice. That is the borrowing **Deuteronomy 12:30–31** forbids, however sincerely done.	Breath control and rhythmic chanting to reach absorption follow the method of **1 Kings 18:26–29**, not the plain speech of **1 Kings 18:36–37**.
Covenant witness	**Psalms 119:97**: the Torah talked over all day.	**Joshua 1:8**: the book in the mouth, in order to do it.	**Deuteronomy 6:6–7**: the words on the heart, spoken in every posture.

XI. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

Under the standing Corrections Rule (October 2, 2026), the following points in earlier Library material were found while preparing this study. Each correction marked ***"made"*** has also been entered in the affected Google Doc so that the website copy can be replaced.

Correction 1 — Buddhism Covenant Study (May 2026), Part Three V-D, point 3 (made). The study said that ***"Tehillim 46:10 ('Be still and know that I am Elohim') calls for precisely the quality of present-moment awareness that Buddhist mindfulness cultivates."*** That reading

does not stand (Section VI-A). The sentence now reads that **Psalms 46:10 [Hebrew 46:11]** does not belong there: its ***harpu (let go, desist)*** is spoken to the warring nations whose bows **Yahweh** breaks, and the Tanakh's own stillness is silent waiting on **Yahweh** in trust (**Psalms 37:7; 62:1**), with meditation that fills the heart with His words.

Correction 2 — Buddhism Covenant Study, V-D, point 6 (made). The phrase ***"the Torah's call to lex ordi (disciplined practice)"*** used Latin that is not a recognizable term and has no Hebrew behind it. It now reads ***"musar (discipline, instruction) (Mishlei 1:2–3)."***

Correction 3 — Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism Covenant Study (May 2026), II-F (made). The study described ***hitbodedut*** as ***"sensory deprivation and repetitive chanting of scripture phrases."*** The word means ***"self-seclusion"*** and names two different practices: in Abraham Abulafia's medieval prophetic Kabbalah, letter-combination with controlled breathing aimed at prophetic states; in Breslov Hasidism, an hour a day of private, spoken prayer in one's own words. The paragraph now says so and distinguishes them.

Correction 4 — Kabbalah study, III-B (made). The study quoted BDB as defining ***qesem (divination)*** as ***"practice of divination, seeking hidden knowledge by supernatural means."*** That wording is not BDB's, which glosses the word simply as divination. The sentence now gives BDB's gloss and lets the Tanakh's own uses (**Numbers 22:7; 1 Samuel 28:8; Ezekiel 21:21 [Hebrew 21:26]**) show what the practice was.

Correction 5 — Kabbalah study, V-B (made). The study said that ***"the BDB lexicon notes"*** that ***"gematria"*** derives from Greek. BDB is a lexicon of biblical Hebrew and does not contain the word, which is a later rabbinic term. The sentence now attributes the Greek derivation correctly.

Left for Kepha's decision — Buddhism and Kabbalah studies, "technique-based" wording. Both studies say that **Deuteronomy 18:9–14** ***"prohibits technique-based access to altered spiritual states."*** The passage forbids named practices of the nations (divination, soothsaying, sorcery, mediums, inquiring of the dead); the ***"technique"*** category is an inference. This study rests the same conclusion on **Deuteronomy 12:30–31**, which forbids borrowing the nations' methods of worship, and on **1 Kings 18:26–29**. A narrower wording is recommended. Nothing was changed.

Left for Kepha's decision — Eastern and Indigenous Wisdom Traditions (March 2026). This study is in the oldest format (***"Covenant Assembly,"*** Pearl River, Hebrew-form book names). It cites **Psalms 19:1–3** without the bracket [Hebrew 19:2–4]; it calls ***dabar (word)*** a ***"creative vibrational frequency,"*** which **Doc 236** found unsupported; and it closes with **Malachi 1:11** (incense among the nations), which Section VI-D shows is a prophecy, not a warrant for incense. A rebuild in the Doc 250 format is recommended. Nothing was changed.

Left for Kepha's decision — Buddhism and Kabbalah studies, format. Both carry the old contact block (Pearl River, Tuscola, Clyde; the 985 number; miqdashbethel.org) and Hebrew-form book names. A rebuild in the Doc 250 format is recommended when convenient.

XII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON MEDITATION

Under the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	To meditate on **Yahweh**'s word is to murmur it, speak it, read it, and talk it over — the word in the mouth and on the heart.	**Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:2; 119:97; Deuteronomy 6:6–7**
II	Covenant meditation fills the heart with **Yahweh**'s Torah, works, and wonders; it never empties the mind.	**Psalms 119:11; 143:5; Proverbs 4:20–23; Jeremiah 15:16**
III	The purpose of meditation is to do what is written; its fruit is wisdom, fear of **Yahweh**, and obedience.	**Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:3; Deuteronomy 17:19–20; Psalms 119:59–60**
IV	No posture, breath method, sound, or object is required; the word is spoken sitting, walking, lying down, and rising.	**Deuteronomy 6:7; 2 Samuel 7:18; Psalms 63:6; 150:6**
V	The Tanakh's silence is silence before **Yahweh**, waiting and trusting; ***"Be still"*** in Psalms 46:10 means let go and desist.	**Psalms 37:7; 62:1; 46:9–10; Habakkuk 2:20**
VI	Incense belongs to **Yahweh**'s altar by His formula and to no other; prayer itself is the incense of the covenant believer.	**Exodus 30:9, 37–38; 2 Chronicles 26:16–21; Psalms 141:2**
VII	The methods by which the nations served their gods may not be borrowed for **Yahweh**, and sound and repetition do not move Him; plain covenant speech does.	**Deuteronomy 12:30–31; Jeremiah 10:2; 1 Kings 18:26–29, 36–38**

XIII. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Behind a question about meditation there are usually three kinds of people. One is tired, anxious, and looking for peace, and has been told the answer is on a cushion. One already sits with incense and a bell, and believes he is drawing near to Yahweh by it. And one teaches

others, and has brought these methods into a church or an assembly. The written covenant speaks to each.

To the one who is looking for peace. Your hunger is real, and **Yahweh** made you able to rest. But the rest He gives does not come from emptying your mind; it comes from setting it on Him. ***"You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You"*** (**Isaiah 26:3**). Open the Psalms, read one aloud tonight, and lie down with it. You need no equipment and no teacher's permission. The word is very near you (**Deuteronomy 30:14**).

To the one who already sits with incense and a bell. If you have been sincere, **Yahweh** sees it. But sincerity does not turn a borrowed method into covenant worship (**Deuteronomy 12:30–31**). Put away the incense, which belongs to His altar alone (**Exodus 30:37–38**), and any image or object from another people's altar. Keep the quiet, if it helps you — but fill it with His words. Where you once counted breaths, speak a psalm; where you once waited for nothing, wait for **Yahweh** (**Psalms 37:7**).

To the teacher who has brought these methods in. You will give account for what you have taught the flock (**Ezekiel 34:10**; see **Doc 335**). **Yahweh**'s people do not need to learn the way of the nations (**Jeremiah 10:2**); they need to be given the book that does not depart from the mouth (**Joshua 1:8**). Teach them to read aloud, to talk the word over at their tables, to remember His works, and to do what is written.

And to all. Covenant meditation is not a practice for monks or experts. It is a father talking to his son on the road, a king reading his scroll, a psalmist awake in the night, a household that speaks of **Yahweh**'s word from morning until bed. It costs nothing but attention, and its fruit is a life that bears fruit in its season. Delight in His Torah, and on His Torah meditate, day and night.

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Genesis 2:7	The breath of life breathed by **Yahweh**	VI-B; VII-D
Genesis 24:63	Isaac ***lasuach*** in the field — an uncertain word	II-E
Exodus 28:33–35	Bells on the high priest's robe	V; VI-E
Exodus 30:1–9, 34–38	The holy incense and its formula; none like it for yourselves	V; VI-D; XII; XIII
Exodus 33:11; 34:8	Face to face as a friend; Moses bows	VI-C; VII-D

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Leviticus 10:1–2	Nadab and Abihu's strange fire	VI-D
Leviticus 18:3	Do not do as Egypt and Canaan do	VII-A
Numbers 16:40 [Hebrew 17:5]	No stranger may burn incense	VI-D
Numbers 23:19	El is not a man	VII-D
Deuteronomy 6:6–9; 11:18–20	The words on the heart, spoken in every posture	III; V; VI-C; VII-B; IX; XII
Deuteronomy 8:2	Remember the way **Yahweh** led you	II-A; IX
Deuteronomy 12:30–31	Do not inquire how the nations served their gods	VII-A; VII-E; X; XII; XIII
Deuteronomy 17:18–20	The king reads all the days of his life	III; V; IX; XII
Deuteronomy 18:9	Do not learn the abominations of the nations	VII-A; XI
Deuteronomy 30:11–14	The word is very near you	V; VII-C; XIII
Joshua 1:8	The book shall not depart from your mouth	I-A; II-B; III; V; IX; XII; XIII
Judges 5:10	***Siach*** — talk of it	II-D
1 Samuel 10:5–6	The band of prophets with instruments	VI-E
2 Samuel 7:18	David sat before **Yahweh** and spoke	VI-C; XII
1 Kings 8:22, 54	Solomon stands and kneels	VI-C
1 Kings 11:8	Incense to the gods of Solomon's wives	VI-D
1 Kings 18:26–29, 36–38	The prophets of Baal and the prayer of Elijah	VI-E; X; XII
1 Kings 19:11–15	The sound of thin silence	VI-A
2 Kings 3:15–20	Elisha's musician	VI-E
2 Kings 23:5	Josiah removes the incense-burners of Baal	VI-D
Isaiah 2:22	Man, whose breath is in his nostrils	VI-B

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Isaiah 8:19–20	The mediums who mutter; to the Torah and the testimony	II-C; V
Isaiah 26:3; 30:15	Perfect peace; in quietness and trust	VII-E; VIII; XIII
Isaiah 31:4; 38:14; 59:11	***Hagah*** as growl and moan	II-B
Isaiah 45:5; 55:8–11	There is no other; My word goes out from My mouth	VII-C; VII-D
Jeremiah 10:2	Do not learn the way of the nations	VII-A; XII; XIII
Jeremiah 15:16; 17:9	Your words were found and I ate them; the deceitful heart	VII-B; VII-C
Jeremiah 44:17–19	Incense to the queen of heaven	VI-D
Ezekiel 3:1–3; 8:11	Eating the scroll; elders with censers	VI-D; VII-B
Habakkuk 2:20	Let all the earth be silent before Him	VI-A; XII
Malachi 1:6–11; 3:16	A pure offering among the nations; those who feared **Yahweh** spoke together	VI-D; IX; XI
Psalms 1:1–3	On His Torah he meditates day and night	I-A; II-C; III; V; IX; XII
Psalms 2:1; 115:7	The nations plot; the idols make no sound	II-B
Psalms 4:4 [Hebrew 4:5]	Speak in your heart upon your bed, and be silent	VI-A; IX
Psalms 19:14 [Hebrew 19:15]	The words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart	II-F; IX; Closing
Psalms 35:28; 37:30	The tongue utters righteousness and wisdom	II-B
Psalms 37:7; 62:1 [Hebrew 62:2]	Be silent before **Yahweh** and wait	VI-A; IX; XII; XIII
Psalms 46:8–10 [Hebrew 46:9–11]	***Harpu*** — let go, and know	VI-A; XI; XII
Psalms 55:17 [Hebrew 55:18]	Evening, morning, and noon I will complain	II-D
Psalms 63:6 [Hebrew 63:7]	I meditate on You in the night watches	II-G; VI-C; IX
Psalms 77:11–12 [Hebrew 77:12–13]	I will remember and meditate on Your works	II-G; IX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Psalms 92:1–3 [Hebrew 92:2–4]	***Higgayon*** on the lyre	II-F; IX
Psalms 105:2	Talk of all His wondrous works	II-D; IX
Psalms 119:11, 15, 18, 23, 27, 59–60, 97–99, 148	The Torah hidden in the heart and talked over all day	II-D; III; IX; XII
Psalms 136	Repetition with meaning	VI-F
Psalms 139:23–24	Search me, O El	VII-C
Psalms 141:2	My prayer set forth as incense	VI-D; XII
Psalms 143:5; 145:5	I remember, meditate, and muse	II-G; IX
Psalms 150:5–6	Cymbals; let everything that has breath praise Yah	VI-B; VI-E
Proverbs 4:20–23; 8:7; 15:28; 24:2	Keep my words in your heart; the heart ponders and devises	II-B; VII-B
Job 7:11; 27:4; 33:4	Complaint; no deceit on the tongue; the breath of Shaddai	II-B; II-D; VI-B
Lamentations 3:26–28, 62	Wait quietly; sit alone and keep silent	II-F; VI-A
Ecclesiastes 5:1–2 [Hebrew 4:17–5:1]	Let your words be few	VI-A; VI-E
Daniel 6:10 [Hebrew 6:11]	Daniel kneels three times a day	VI-C
Nehemiah 8:6	The people bow to the ground	VI-C
1 Chronicles 15:16, 19; 16:4–6, 42; 25:1, 6	The Levites with cymbals and song	VI-E
2 Chronicles 5:12–13; 26:16–21	Praise at the temple; Uzziah's incense	VI-D; VI-E; XII

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, O Yahweh, my Rock and my Redeemer."

Psalms 19:14 [Hebrew 19:15] — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

Document 358 • And on His Torah He Meditates • October 2026

miqdashbethel.AI • miqdashbethel@gmail.com •

The Message is Sent to the World

508(c)(1)(a) Free Church • Sole Tanakh Authority • Reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam