

Conceptualizing the Efficacy of Mindfulness of Bodily Sensations in the Mindfulness-based Interventions

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Abstract

One of the most significant developments in psychotherapy over the past several years is the advent of the Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBIs). Essentially the introduction of Pali Buddhist mindfulness practices into cognitive therapy, the MBIs appear to be significantly more effective than cognitive therapy alone. Consequently, theorists in the MBI field have been attempting to conceptualize the mechanisms through which ancient mindfulness practices are psychotherapeutic.

Published conceptualizations seem to conflate two main categories of Pali Buddhist mindfulness practice, the mindful observation of sensations and the mindful observation of thinking, essentially giving thinking priority over bodily sensations. In other words conceptualizations of the effectiveness of mindfulness betray a cognitive bias: the mindfulness of sensations in the body is reduced to a cognitive event. It is the thesis of this article that this bias is representative of neither the instructions nor the conceptualizations of the mindful observation of feelings in the body as seen in the Pali texts. Neither is it consistent with how the principal Buddhist teacher of the mindful observation of feelings in the body, S. N. Goenka, understands the efficacy of the practice. The article suggests a conceptual framework through which Buddhist psychological constructs may be reframed in Western psychological terms, and through which mindfulness may be more fruitfully conceptualized.

The framework employs E. T. Gendlin's feeling-based theory of meaning articulated in *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* and applied in his Focusing psychotherapy. Central to the suggested framework is the sensation-latent habitual tendencies (*vedanā-anusaya*) complex as

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understood in the Pāli Buddhist *suttas* which is here correlated with Gendlin's concept of the Inexplicated Felt Meaning.

Key Words: Felt Meaning, Mindfulness, E.T. Gendlin, Bodily Sensations, Focusing, Creation of New Meaning

Part 1

The Problem: the Conflation of Mindfulness Meditation Techniques in the Effort to Conceptualize the Efficacy of Mindfulness Meditation in the Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapeutic Interventions

It is undeniable that much of Pāli Buddhist² doctrine is similar to many Western Psychological schools in a concern with understanding the structure of the mind and of the personality. Pāli Buddhist meditation and Western therapy, in turn, have the apparently similar goal of alleviating mental/emotional suffering.

A growing number of Western psychologists are interested in Buddhist doctrine and meditation for their possible contributions to the goal of achieving a stable, functioning ego (Tori, 2006). Pickering (2003), in turn, discusses ways in which the post-modernist movement in the West has facilitated a growing discourse between Western psychology and Buddhist scholarship. An early example is Brown and Engler's (1980) delineation of levels of mindfulness achieved in mindfulness meditation. Perhaps the most significant recent developments are in applied psychological research. Mindfulness-based psychotherapeutic interventions (MBI) are now actively and systematically integrating Pāli Buddhist mindfulness meditation (together with some aspects of Pāli psychological principles) into cognitive therapy (cf., Gilpin, 2006). It is in this field where the integration of Pāli Buddhist mindfulness practices into psychological theory (cf., Kabat-Zinn, 2003) is undoubtedly the most advanced. Clinical trials on the effectiveness of Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) have shown it to be significantly more effective than treatment lacking the mindfulness component (Teasdale, 2006).

However, the experimental literature on the MBIs evinces a certain lack of rigor in their conceptualizations of the underpinnings of the efficacy of mindfulness meditation. In particular, there appears to be

² The phrase "Pāli Buddhist" distinguishes this tradition of Buddhism, which can also be termed "Early Buddhism" or "Mainstream Buddhism," from the Mahāyāna and Tantric traditions which were later developments. The term, "Pāli" refers to the language of the canonical texts of this early tradition. The root language of the later traditions is Sanskrit.

either a neglect of the role of bodily sensations, or a conflation of, or a reduction of bodily sensations with/to cognition. Teasdale for example, maintains that in mindfully observing thoughts and sensations the client begins to see them as “passing events in the mind that were not necessarily valid reflections of reality nor central aspects of the self” (Ibid). In other words, both bodily sensations and thoughts are modeled as cognitive events. That Teasdale’s approach is cognition-centered, is further indicated by the fact that he identifies as an important aspect of the therapeutic efficacy of mindfulness of thoughts and bodily sensations as the outcome of a discursive understanding that negative thoughts and bodily sensations are not undeviating, are not inevitable realities (Teasdale, 2002).³ Teasdale’s perspective bears out Pickering’s (2003) observation, “the conceptual vocabulary of Cognitivism has become ... the *lingua franca* of mainstream psychology.” The example of Teasdale’s cognitive-centric approach is repeated in many other articles in the literature, for example Hayes and Feldman, 2004 who say that mindfulness “involves sustained attention ... and non-elaborative awareness of thoughts, feelings, and sensations.” Bishop et al., 2004 states that, “mindfulness [is] ... a kind ... awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is.” Lastly, Chadwick et al., 2005 goes so far as to state that “mindfulness and cognitive therapy share a common premise – that distress and suffering result from the mind rather than directly from sensations or events.” Although it would be correct to say that the mindful observation of sensations in the body “involves sustained attention and non-elaborative awareness of thoughts ... and sensations,” Pāli Buddhist principles go further.

In fact, Pāli *Nikāyan*⁴ psychology is sensation-centric in a significant way. Affectively charged sensations, not thoughts, are said to lead to further psychological states (MN.1.111-112). Cognition is important as well, but indeed the main canonical discourse on the establishment of mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta) the observation of sensations and the

³ This is not to meant to herein critique Teasdale’s Interactive Cognitive Subsystems (ICS) theoretical framework (Teasdale et al., 1995) in which they theorize the efficacy of mindfulness practices. The point here is that apart from their articulation of the ICS framework, he still tends to give brief, cognitive-centric conceptualizations of the efficacy of the mindful observation of sensations in the body. Nevertheless, as concerns his ICT theory, the framework presented in this article as per the mindful observation of sensations in the body, will be of a contrary perspective.

⁴ The term “*Nikāyan*” refers to the first section of the Pāli canon, the five collections of discourses (*suttas*), in which the Buddha is portrayed as engaging with various people and groups. The *Nikāyas* are juxtaposed with the Abhidhamma, the third section of the Pāli canon and set out a highly technical psychology that is judged by Western specialists in Pāli Buddhist Studies to be a late, scholastic addition (Hamilton, 1996: xx).

observation of thinking constitute different categories of meditation practice. The *sutta* sees sensations as falling into three affective categories of pleasant (*sukha vedanā*), unpleasant (*dukkha vedanā*) and neutral feelings (*adukkhamasukham vedanā*). Bodily sensations as experienced in the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of the mindful observation of sensations (*vedanānupassanā*)⁵ have been described by one of the leading Buddhist proponents of *vedanānupassanā* as

Whatever you experience at the physical level. Whatever you feel at the bodily level is a sensation. Say you feel heat—heat is a sensation. You feel perspiration—perspiration is a sensation. You feel throbbing, you feel pulsation, vibration, tingling, heaviness, numbness (Goenka, 2000a: Day Four of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation).

Sensations are concretely felt or sensed by the individual. They are bodily felt events both wherein phenomena contacts the external surface of the body and those that arise within the body. Both are observed. Consequently the apparent conflation of the mindful observation of the thinking with the mindful observation of the sensations in the body appears as a reduction of sensations to a phenomenon of cognition. To just what extent will this thwart the efforts of the MBI theorists to understand the efficacy of mindfulness practice as a whole, this by removing bodily sensations from the field as a distinct object of research in its own right? It seems that the conflation of these two, or the neglect of sensations as a distinct object of investigation, for example, may conceal the possibility that important aspects of mindfulness of thoughts and mindfulness of bodily sensations are working on different levels.

The neglect of bodily sensations, of course, is not universal in Western psychology. In relevant findings, neuro-psychologist Damasio (1994: 158) notes that scientific descriptions of cognition have tended to neglect the role of bodily sensations and their related emotions. He maintains that sensations are fundamental to cognition.

Because of their [sensations] inextricable ties to the body, they come first in development and retain a primacy that subtly pervades our mental life ... [constituting] a frame of reference for what comes after, feelings have a say on how the

⁵ The second category of mindfulness practice in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna* Suttas.

rest of the brain and cognition go about their business. (Ibid: 159-60).

Damasio's findings on the primacy of sensations over cognition and emotion have an apparent close correspondence to *Nikāyan* psychology. It seems clear from a purely Western psychological perspective that theoretically integrating bodily sensations into cognitive-based therapies might enhance their efficacy. At the same time it is felt that conceptualizing the key components in *Nikāyan* psychology, sensations included, in a Western psychological framework, is essential. This is so because the *Nikāyan* psychological principles explaining the arising of destructive emotions and their dissolution through *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, have much of import to say. This is evident from the above assertion that *Nikāyan* psychology is "sensation-centric in a significant way." Consequently reframing certain essential *Nikāyan* psychological components in Western psychological concepts is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the overall *Nikāyan* psychological structure: an increasingly better understanding of these key components would be expected to emerge as they are integrated into both MBI theory and therapy.

It is for these reasons that this article attempts to explicate key elements of *Nikāyan* psychology in a Western psychological framework. However, it is also beyond my present scope to propose specific ways of integrating Buddhist theories of sensations into psychotherapy, but rather to produce an initial theoretical reframing of the efficacy of the mindful observation of sensations (*vedanā*) on and in the body, in Western psychological terms, that will be suitable for further explication.

Part 2

The Basis for An Adequate Western Conceptualization of the Efficacy of Mindfulness of Bodily Sensations

S.N. Goenka's mindful observation of sensations on and in the body and Jon Kabat-Zinn's body scan

S.N. Goenka

It is felt that the Vipassanā⁶ meditation technique taught by S.N. Goenka, the main lineage holder of the U Ba Khin tradition of Burma, would be the best suited Pāli Buddhist mindfulness meditation upon which to model a sensation-centric conceptualization of the efficacy of the mindfulness of bodily sensations.⁷ At the same time, it would be fully relevant to the MBI literature in their attempts to conceptualize the efficacy of mindfulness meditation. So we postulate that the therapeutic efficacy of practicing the mindful observation of sensations in Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction therapy (MBSR) would, for the same reasons, be efficacious when practicing the Goenka technique of mindfully observing sensations in the body.

Interestingly and importantly Goenka's technique also seems quite similar to Jon Kabat-Zinn's body scan technique utilized in his MBSR (cf., Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 2003). In consideration of this point, Goenka also identifies the technique that he teaches as the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of the observation of bodily sensations, the second category of mindfulness taught in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (cf., Kabat-Zinn's comments on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta in Kabat-Zinn, 2003).⁸

The technique that Goenka teaches is one of continuously and systematically observing feelings on/in the body. It has been shown to be efficacious in dissolving destructive emotional behaviour (Marlatt et al., 2004). Although other Asian meditation teachers likewise use the

⁶ The Pāli term, "*vipassanā*" is a canonical synonym for mindfulness meditation.

⁷ For simplicity and clarity, I will generally refer to the technique that Goenka teaches as "Goenka's technique, even though it is actually that of the U Ba Khin lineage.

⁸ Using the term, "*satipaṭṭhāna*" is a direct reference to the teachings in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (the Discourse of the Establishment of Mindfulness. *Sati* = mindfulness, *paṭṭhāna* = establishment). The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is found in the Majjhima Nikāya, while the almost identical Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta is found in the Dīgha Nikāya. The *Satipaṭṭhāna* Sutta distinguishes four categories of mindfulness practice, the mindful observation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), the sensations (*vedānānupassanā*), the mind (*cittānupassanā*) and the contents of the mind (*dharmānupassanā*). The last category basically instructs one to observe the phenomena in the mind through the lenses of the various doctrinal models taught in the *suttas*, for example the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*).

observation of bodily feelings, it is but one component of their over all meditation technique, which typically includes a large cognitive component. An example of this would be the tradition of Mahasi Sayadaw who guides his students to observe and verbally note which ever physical or cognitive phenomena is predominating.⁹ Nevertheless it is likewise postulated, as above, that the efficacy of observing bodily sensations in the Mahasi technique would be attributable to the same reasons why the Goenka technique is efficacious. The Goenka technique however, is exclusively based on mindfulness of feeling and thus provides a “pure” case for the description of the Nikāyan *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of the mindful observation of sensations in the body.¹⁰ And unlike the Mahasi technique, the Goenka technique does not name or label the quality of any given bodily sensation (Goenka, 2000a: Day Two of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation).

In teaching Vipassanā, Goenka directs his students to move their awareness up and down the body observing the sensations. Goenka states that this results in “layers after layers” of negative latent, habitual tendencies dissolving (Goenka, 2000a: Day Six of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation). He guides these students to continuously move up and down the body systematically, “part-by-part, piece-by-piece,” not preferring one type of feeling over another, mindfully observing whatever sensations are there.

In the daily meditation instructions, which are not available to the public, he guides the retreatants to first observe the body in small “patches” of approximately two to four inches in diameter. In these instructions, one is guided to move one’s awareness part-by-part, up and down the body and wait for a few minutes at each patch until one can feel it and then move on. This is because the practitioner is “blind” to many places on the body. Often when one focuses on such a small patch for minute or so, feelings can be experienced. Once feelings are experienced on most parts of the body, one is then guided to switch back and forth between observing part-by-part and practicing a systematic “sweeping” over the body with long strokes of the awareness going up or down the

⁹ <http://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebmed022.htm>. Accessed September 2006.

¹⁰ Goenka teaches both the observation of in-and-out breathing and the observation of bodily feelings. However, when he teaches the observation of breath, he couples it with the observation of the feeling of the touch of the air on or around the nostrils. As the student develops in this the focus is gradually shifted to fully observing the feelings on the patch of skin below the nostrils and above the upper lip. Only when one loses track of this is the student guided to return to observing the touch of the breath in and around the nostrils (Goenka, 2000a: Day One to Day Three of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation).

various parts of the body.¹¹ Therefore, an unsystematic approach to the observation of bodily feelings, whether they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, is to be avoided. The following is a partial explanation of the process of systematically observing bodily feelings:

If you don't move [in order], then when you feel a very strong intense sensation somewhere, your attention will go there. Suddenly something else will start somewhere else, and your attention will go there. You will be moving [unsystematically] from part to part (Goenka 2000a: Day Four of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation).

Jon Kabat-Zinn's body scan

As for the influences of Asian Buddhist meditation techniques in MBSR, Kabat-Zinn, 1988 states that he uses three major techniques: the body scan, sitting meditation, and Hatha Yoga. On the other hand, Kabat-Zinn, 2003 states that the practice of mindfulness is, overall, a Buddhist phenomenon and highlights the fact that the principles of mindfulness meditation are articulated in the Pāli language Discourse on the Observation of In-and-Out Breathing (*Ānāpānasati Sutta*) and on the Discourse on the Establishment of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*). From the academic perspective of Pāli Buddhist Studies, the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*¹² is more important both practically and doctrinally, then the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (cf., Anālayo, 2004). A perusal of the MBI literature indicates that the category of *vedanānupassanā* would succinctly cover Kabat-Zinn's body scan.¹³ For example, Kabat-Zinn, 1982 says that the body scan (at that time termed, "body sweeping") is "a gradual sweeping through the body from feet to head with the attentional faculty." This is further elucidated in Baer 2003, wherein she explains that in the MBSR body scan the client directs his or her attention "sequentially to numerous areas of the body" wherein the

¹¹ Therefore it is said that the part-by-part practice is digging up stored, latent emotion (termed, "*anusaya*" in *Nikāyan* psychology), while the sweeping is for sweeping away that which is brought up in the part-by-part practice. Goenka instructs that for every two or three bodily sweepings that one should examine the body part-by-part (Goenka 2000c, 2:30 p.m. daily instructions).

¹² The main *satipaṭṭhāna* (the establishment of mindfulness. *Sati* = mindfulness, *paṭṭhāna* = establishment) instructions are found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

¹³ Gilpin 2006: 38 (his unpublished MA thesis), states that in his email correspondences with Kabat-Zinn, he has explained the body scan as being a "combination of the U Ba Khin 'sweeping' practice with a Hatha Yoga meditation carried out in a prone position." To my knowledge there is no other mentioning in the scientific literature as to Kabat-Zinn's sources of mindfulness techniques in his MBSR.

bodily sensations are “carefully observed.” Based on this and other studies (cf., Shapiro et al., 1998) it is reasonable to assume that the field of the body scan is the second category of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, *vedanānupassanā*, and not, as might possibly be assumed, the mindful observation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*). Moreover it would appear similar to Goenka’s technique. Therefore, it is here argued that when the client is doing the body scan, he or she is basically doing the same thing, as when mindfully observing various bodily sensations in the other MBSR meditation practices. That *vedanānupassanā* refers to the observation of bodily sensations, sensations (*vedanā*) on or in the body, is ascertained in the *sutta* at SN.4.219 wherein it is stated that *vedanā* arises in the body:

Suppose there is a guest house. People come from the east, west, north and south and lodge there; *khattiyas*, *brahmins*, *vessas* and *suddas* come and lodge there. So too, monks, various sensations arise in this body: pleasant ... unpleasant ... and neutral sensations arise (Translation adapted from Bodhi 2000: 1273).

Part 3

Conceptualizing S.N. Goenka’s Technique and Key Pāli *Nikāyan* Psychological Components in Western Psychological Concepts

The philosophical views of ET Gendlin their relation to his Experiential Focusing psychotherapeutic intervention

In the effort to conceptualize, in Western psychological terms, the efficacy of the *Nikāyan satipaṭṭhāna* practice of mindfulness of bodily sensations and hence the Goenka technique, I have chosen the influential philosophical work of Eugene Gendlin (Gendlin, 1962/1997), as my primary guide to conceptualizing the function of bodily feelings in cognition. Gendlin, who is a philosopher-psychologist and also an important figure in Humanistic psychology,¹⁴ developed this phenomenological philosophy (titled *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*), which defines meaning in terms of bodily feelings, this as opposed to linguistic meaning. In line with this, one of the defining characteristics of Humanistic psychology is its interest in

¹⁴ Cain and Seeman (2002: 39) noted that, “Eugene Gendlin made a major contribution to humanistic therapies by developing the process of experiential focusing.”

and therapeutic reference to bodily feelings/sensations (cf., Rogers, 1975). Consequently, Gendlin's philosophy underpins his psychotherapeutic technique of Experiential Focusing (Gendlin, 1982), while the notable influence within Humanistic psychology of his Focusing technique (Cain and Seeman, 2002: 39), reflects an intriguing level of validation of his philosophical views.¹⁵

Experiencing and the creation of meaning: Gendlin's philosophy

Gendlin begins articulating his philosophical views on the function of bodily feelings in cognition by noting that meaning is first and foremost experienced at the physical, bodily level as feeling. At a very basic level it is an omnipresent but unformed "concrete feeling datum" (Gendlin, 1962/1997: 14). This datum then takes shape when we turn our attention inward towards this global mass of feeling (p. 12); meaning then is moving towards the conceptual.

The turning of one's attention inwards is a symbolization of the primary qualities of the meaning that structures the current moment. For example: One is absent mindedly walking in a gallery; not focusing on any single art work. A particular painting then catches the eye: there is a (perhaps un-noticed) turning of one's attention inward wherein the meaning of the painting is apprehended at the feeling level, though still preconceptual. Gendlin calls this a "felt meaning" (p. 13) and it so charges the discursive symbolizations of language with meaning as one explains to a companion what the painting means (p. 14).

Gendlin's concept of felt meaning is central in defining the nature of meaning. He then divides the felt meaning into the inexplicated and the explicated (p. 65-6). In the example of the painting, turning the attention inward is a symbolization of meaning, it demarcates an area that is charged with affective feeling. This is an inexplicated felt meaning (IFM) (p. 5). In explaining what the painting means to us, the IFM is then verbally symbolized and so becomes an explicated felt meaning (p. 66).

¹⁵ Thus whenever I refer in the following pages to meaning, it is with reference to Gendlin's definitions of the same.

Gendlin's Focusing technique vis-à-vis inexplicated and explicated felt meaning

Gendlin's articulation of the felt meaning reflects a particular functional relationship between symbols and bodily feeling and this is the operational aspect of his Focusing psychotherapeutic method. This is done by guiding the client to directly refer to the a distinct feelings in the body (an IFM) when experiencing a strong emotion. This initiates the "creation" of a new, much more relevant "meaning" or understanding of the emotion.

The first operational factor in creating new meaning takes place when the awareness is turned away from the (habitual) processing of the unwholesome incident at the thinking/conceptual level (Gendlin, 1982: 44). One rather locates and then focuses attention on the predominant feeling, perhaps in the throat or chest area; this establishes an IFM. The second operational factor is to explicate the IFM by verbally symbolizing or naming the quality, this from an intuitive (Ibid: 55) perspective, of the feeling (IFM). This then is termed an explicated felt meaning.¹⁶ Gendlin terms this verbal symbolization as the "giving of a handle" (Ibid).¹⁷

Of critical importance here is that this direct, non-verbal referencing to the feeling has the effect of drawing one away from the reactive, linguistic assessments of the emotionally charged event. The potency of the assessments and sense of urgency begin to dissolve; this is the initial aspects of creating a new meaning. The second operational factor of choosing a handle that reflects the characteristics of the experienced IFM. This thereby explicates it and so further replaces the original train of reactive thoughts that arose with the incident.

An example would be when someone was pointedly ignored giving rise to thoughts of anger. Gendlin would tend to see this experience of anger as "a limiting experience not mistaken or wrong, but an over-simple characterization of the experiencing (Purton, December 2006)."¹⁸ Based on

¹⁶ I am here using the terminology from Gendlin 1962/1997 to articulate his Focusing methodology.

¹⁷In reflection on my discussion of the congruency between feelings and thoughts it can be seen that specialists in the Focusing method would rather say that the finding of a "handle word" isn't a matter of accurate matching but rather of carrying the experiencing forward (this in email discussion with Dr. Campbell Purton in December, 2006). Nevertheless, it seems to me that this amounts to almost the same thing as a client would be intuitively searching for a handle to reflect the physical characteristics of the IFM; this appears to be an exercise in congruency. Moreover Gendlin, 1962/1997 postulates that any explicated felt meaning is "surrounded" by IFMs (to be discussed below). Due to these points, I wish to see the choosing of a handle as an "intuitive-mechanistic" process that would or could involve aspects of congruency between bodily feelings and thoughts.

¹⁸ Dr. Campbell Purton is a specialist in Focusing. See his *Person-Centred Therapy: The Focusing-Oriented Approach*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

this it would seem possible to term the initial felt experience of the anger, as a superficial level of IFM. Then once realizing that a destructive emotion had arisen, awareness is turned within, (perhaps to the throat, chest or abdominal areas), to locate a predominant feeling. The focusing on this feeling marks off this area creating an IFM; initially there is an experience of a feeling associated with anger but as one examines it in order to give it a handle, it then begins to lose its potency (Gendlin (1964: 12) has noted that when an IFM is directly observed that the intensity of the feeling, in this case an unpleasant feeling, begins to dissolve). Next, upon further examining this demarcated area of feeling, a quality of sadness, rather than of anger or hate, is now discerned. Thus an IFM of sadness has now, at a deeper level or wider circumference, has been uncovered and receives the handle of “sadness;” this explicates the feeling and results in the further dissolution of whatever original feelings and thoughts of anger remain.

It is at this point that the individual then checks back and forth between the handle of sadness and the (now explicated) felt meaning to see what can be further uncovered or sensed. One may then find that the feeling has more of a characteristic of loneliness than sadness thus an IFM of loneliness has now, at an even deeper or wider level,¹⁹ has been uncovered and so one explicates it with the handle of “loneliness.”

From this point one might ask of the felt meaning “what is it about this whole situation that makes this “loneliness”?” (p. 45).” This again deepens or widens the explicit felt meaning, further encroaching on, (as Gendlin conceptualizes below), the “surrounding” area of IFMs. Through this method of continually checking back and forth the individual both processes these affective feelings and develops a much clearer picture of the internal structure of the affective reaction to the incident. First there is the original anger-based feelings and thoughts, what we might term an old meaning, what is really an overly narrow meaning. Then comes the gradual uncovering of related, and deeper IFM complexes; these show a different picture thereby allowing a new, therapeutic meaning, an experientially-based therapeutic understanding of the episode.²⁰

¹⁹ My use of the term deeper is not so much to physically delineate the location of the new IFM as to indicate a further deepening of the therapeutic process.

²⁰ The concept of the “creation of new meaning” is widely used in Experiential Psychotherapy. For example, see how McGuire (1991: 233) discusses Gendlin’s concept of direct referencing in the creation of new meaning. L.S. Greenberg, the Experiential Psychologist, explains that meaning in one’s life, in one’s day to day experience, is created from the interaction between one’s thinking capacity and

The widening of the explicated felt meaning

Gendlin has noted that however close a verbal symbolization is to reflecting the quality of the felt meaning, the IFM is always wider than a verbal symbol can represent: “we can put only a few aspects of it into words” (Gendlin, 1962/1997: 11). Thus a handle only illuminates a specific aspect of the felt meaning. The narrowness of the explicated felt meaning, and hence the wideness of the IFM, can be conceptualized. First, the explicated felt meaning can be seen as an area of conscious feeling that is in harmony with the conceptualized handle; it is in the midst of the area of inexplicated felt meaning. Gendlin notes that the explicated felt meaning “can always be further differentiated and further aspects of it can be specified” (p. 13); in other words, the area of the explicated felt meaning can always be widened. In fact, Gendlin refers to this as a “fringe and focus” paradigm, in which the fringe is the IFM area and is that which, at least in part, defines the focus of the area of the explicated felt meaning:

If we focus on the meaning of some term *x*, then the meanings of the defining terms, *a*, *b*, *c* certainly are within our center of attention, inasmuch as these meanings *constitute* the meaning of the term *x*. Their meaning is implicit, yet just these meanings make up the explication of the term *x* (p. 65-6).

In this way then, the act of checking back and forth on the precision with which the handle reflects the quality of the explicated felt meaning, has the effect of bringing more of the IFM area into the explicit. Gendlin holds that there is an overwhelming amount of information in the IFM area surrounding an explicated felt meaning. Thus the more area that one is able to explicate the deeper the technique is efficacious in its therapeutic efficacy. This is so because one is explicating the IFMs that structure the explicated felt meaning that otherwise would not come to the surface. This thereby widens the new meaning.

one’s emotional capacity. Therefore it is at this point of the interaction that Experiential Psychotherapy works at creating new meaning for the for the client: “Therapy thus needs to facilitate the meaning construction [i.e. the creation of new meaning] by facilitating both the process of attending to inner experience [one’s felt meaning (an IFM)] and its symbolization [the conceptual mapping on the felt meaning]” (Greenberg et al., 1993: 61).

Part 4

Conceptualizing the Efficacy of Goenka's Technique of Mindfulness of Sensations On and In the Body

The confluence of the underlying tendencies in *Nikāyan* psychology and Gendlin's inexplicated felt meaning

In explaining the key components of *Nikāyan* psychology, as represented by the Goenka technique, in Western psychological concepts, a sensation-centric conceptualization of the use of mindfulness of sensations in the Mindfulness-based Interventions will be facilitated. Part and parcel of this facilitation will be the broadening of the *suttas*' overly concise definitions and explanations of the psychological components that compose its psychology as they are overly technical and thus of limited use in the scientific need to conceptualize the efficacy of mindfulness meditation (Gethin, 1986 and Hamilton, 1996: xxix).²¹

This article will examine two of these key components which the *suttas* show to be, most likely, the two most important in the arising and dissolution of destructive emotions: sensations (*vedanā*) and latent habitual tendencies (*anusaya*). The *anusaya* is always latent. However the *suttas* give but seven aspects of them, thereby leaving the reader to infer in which way these seven are related to the multi-valenced meanings that structure complex varieties of habitual behavior as understood in Western psychology.

What is equally obscure is the relation of the three categories of sensation, pleasant, unpleasant and neutral, to the latent tendencies. This is mentioned because the *suttas* assert that when one absorbs into the currently arising feeling[s] it conditions the manifestation of the *anusaya[s]*: "When one is touched by a pleasant feeling, if one delights in it, welcomes it, and remains holding to it, then the underlying tendency to lust (*raga anusayo*) lies within one" (MN.3.285. Translation by Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995). It is implied in the *suttas* that the seven latent habitual tendencies actually encompass all forms of behaviour, while these three categories are implied to cover all forms of affective bodily feelings.

²¹ Although Gethin and Hamilton refer mainly to the Five Aggregates, this is also true of most of the *Nikāyan* psychological terms.

The seven latent tendencies are (MN.3.285; MN.1.303):

1. underlying tendency to lust (*rāga anusayo*).
2. the underlying tendency to aversion (*paṭigha anusayo*).
3. the underlying tendency to views (*diṭṭhi anusayo*).
4. the underlying tendency to doubt (*vicikicchā anusayo*).
5. the underlying tendency towards the personality view, “I am” (*māna anusayo*).
6. the underlying tendency to desire for being (*bhavarāga anusayo*).
7. the underlying tendency to ignorance (*avijja anusayo*).

That the reader of the *suttas* is expected to draw out a further variety of latent habits from these seven is evident in the following *sutta* passage:

Though mind is multiple, varied, and of different aspects, there is mind affected by lust, by hate, and by delusion [i.e., a reflection of the three categories of feeling: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral]. Unwholesome habits originate from this (MN.2.26. Translation by Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1995).

The *anusayas* and *vedanā*: drawing out the implications in their functional relationship

In conceptualizing Goenka’s technique, this article is focused on Gendlin’s conceptualization of feeling and meaning into inexplicated and explicated felt meaning, this vis-à-vis the *Nikāyan* psychological components of sensation and latent habitual tendencies, *vedanā* and *anusaya*. Likewise, it is evident that the *anusayas* are one of the key operative factors in the arising and ceasing of unwholesome behaviour in Goenka’s understanding of *Nikāyan* psychology. (Goenka 2000a: Day Six of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation and Goenka, 2000b: Day Five of the 8-day *Satipaṭṭhāna* Discourse presentation). In examining the various passages in the *suttas* we see that the *anusayas* are the essential counterpart of the bodily sensations (*vedanā*).

The *suttas* likewise state that a person cannot be considered as awakened until all the *anusayas* are eradicated (MN.3.285). They also state that even a baby has *anusayas* in her/his mind (MN.1.432-3). This last statement emphasizes the “historical” nature of latent habitual tendencies

vis-à-vis behavior.²² Obviously if the *anusayas* inhibit awakening, they are never seen, in Buddhist psychology, as being of a wholesome nature. Therefore, MN.1.432-3 (as implied by *Nikāyan* psychology in general) indicates, that any arisen *anusaya* represents the whole history of reactive behaviour towards the bodily sensations that are in themselves associated with the objects of any given category of sense contact (*phassa*).

On the other hand, as mentioned above, the *suttas* (MN.1.303, cf., MN.3.285) explain that bodily sensations acts as a conduit for the arising of the *anusaya* of attachment (*raga anusayo*), aversion (*paṭigha anusayo*) and ignorance (*avijja anusayo*). The fact that the *suttas* ascribe but three affective qualities to bodily sensations, that of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, shows that they blend to achieve the various emotional distinctions as per the list of seven *anusaya* mentioned above. Moreover, it seems obvious that from the perspective of Western psychology, there must be a substantial further blending of the *anusayas* in order to achieve the level of differentiation of latencies as understood therein.

Based on *sutta* statements such as just discussed, Waldron (2003: 34) notes that the underlying tendencies bridge or link the arisen *vedanā* and craving (*taṇhā*) (*taṇhā* is close to *raga* in meaning) and grasping (*upādāna*). *Vedanā*, *taṇhā* and *upādāna* constitute factors 7, 8, and 9 in the all-important *Nikāyan* model of consciousness, Dependent Origination (*paṭicca samuppāda*).²³ Oddly enough, *anusaya* is not mentioned in Dependent Origination. Be this as it may, in further drawing out the details of the functional relationship between *vedanā* and the *anusaya* it might be likewise arguable that craving itself is a feeling-structured phenomenon. In conclusion then, when *vedanā* is unrestrained, then it and its naturally occurring partner the *anusaya* cause new layers of habitual craving and grasping towards both the particular sensation and the sense object (of any given category) that sparked their (*vedanā* and *anusaya*) manifestation; thus the respective *anusaya* grows in strength.

Of critical importance, the *suttas* instruct that when one mindfully observes sensations, the underlying *anusayas* begin to dissolve (SN.4.214). The reference to the observation of sensation is to the second category of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, *vedanānupassanā*.

²² Although this implies the Buddhist principle of rebirth based on one's *anusayas*; the issue here is the historicity of the *anusayas* in this present life.

²³ Dependent Origination's twelve factors are as follows, 1. Ignorance (*avijjā*), 2. Volitional Formations (*saṅkhārā*), 3. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*), 4. Mind-Body (*nāma-rūpa*), 5. The six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*), 6. Contact (*phassa*), 7. Feeling (*vedanā*), 8. Craving (*taṇhā*), 9. Grasping, Clinging (*upādāna*), 10. Becoming, Existence (*bhava*), 11. Birth (*jāti*), 12. Old age and death (*jaramaraṇa*).

The inexplicated felt meaning and the *vedanā-anusaya* complex

In returning to Goenka's systematic observing of sensations on and in the body, some discussion of Focusing was necessary in order to understand Gendlin's philosophical distinctions from a psychological perspective of meaning, most notably how the Focusing technique requires, in times of destructive emotions, the individual to look within, find the predominant feeling (IFM) and give it a handle, thereby explicating the meaning of the IFM and so creating new meaning.

In reflecting on Goenka's technique, it appears that the observation of the sensations occurs, as per Gendlin, at the level of the IFM; this is because Goenka instructs his students against naming or labeling any sensation, whether gross or subtle, while focusing attention within, and moving systematically throughout the body (Goenka, 2000a: Day Two of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation). Thus when practicing in this way, the *sutta* view appears to support the assertion that the *anusayas* are being dissolved. Consequently it seems reasonable as well as meaningful to suggest that Gendlin's IFM and the Pāli *vedanā-anusaya* "complex" are at least rough equivalents.

It is here important to keep in mind is that with each sensory contact (*phassa*),²⁴ there is a corresponding bodily feeling that arises (AN.4.339). Moreover, *Nikāyan* psychology states that, "no other thing so quickly changes as the mind and it is no easy thing to illustrate how quick to change it is" (AN.1.10). The Pāli Abhidhammatha Sangaha makes this explicit wherein it sees numerous sense contacts (*phassa*) per second (Narada 1993: 154-7). In drawing this out, the *suttas* see the human condition as psychologically based on an attachment to a stream of bodily sensations and hence the manifestation of numerous categories of *anusaya*. These categories of *anusaya* keep one habitually affected by various levels and categories of craving and aversion, even when amidst a predominantly strong emotion. Thus it is arguable that the *suttas* actually conceptualized an ongoing flow of micro-emotions based on a very rapid sensory contact-sensation-latent habitual tendencies-craving (*phassa-vedanā-anusaya-taṇhā*) stream of the arising and falling of consciousness.²⁵ In this way it can be asserted that as per the Pāli discourses, a very significant number of sense contact-conditioned sensations are of an affective nature.

²⁴ This is to say the contact between any of the six sense organs, their respective sense objects, and category of sense consciousness. For example, the eye, an external form and eye consciousness.

²⁵ *Nikāyan* psychology sees consciousness as arising only as and when it comes in contact with an external sense object, including a thought.

In a partial examination of this construct we first look at a strong emotion: one is ignored and then beset with anger. This is comparable to what I have termed above, as per Gendlin's Focusing method, as a secondary meaning. From a *Nikāyan* perspective the emotion begins at sense contact (*phassa*) and the arising of an unpleasant feeling (*dukkha vedanā*). The common person then usually absorbs into this feeling which conditions the manifestation of the *anusaya* of aversion (*paṭigha anusayo*): anger has arisen. However in mindfully observing the sensations as per Goenka, the *anusaya* does not (fully?) arise and is partially dissolved by starving it of sensation. Of course at the time of a strong emotion as per Gendlin, other periphery *vedanās* and *anusayas*, as IFMs, will be arising at the preconceptual level (it will be recalled that I have defined the peripheral IFMs as being of primary meaning). Both these and the original unpleasant *vedanā-anusaya* anger complex will be so starved.

As the mindful observation of sensations is done without regards to the thoughts that arise, it seems that neither old nor new meaning has much import: as and when the individual is aware of being engulfed by thoughts, he or she will let them go and return to the observation of the sensations.

As per Gendlin, the efficacy of Goenka's technique can be seen as its ability to simultaneously and systematically dissolve *both* the old and the new meanings. No doubt that in the case of a strong emotion, both Gendlin's and Goenka's techniques achieve, to some important degree, similar success. Also one of the revealing signs that these two techniques are operating similar internal structures is that both techniques, when observing a feeling, result in the intensity of the feeling, whether pleasant or unpleasant, dissolving. So, once a focusing step has taken place, i.e., an IFM has been focused on and a handle given, we again return to the IFM "to sense what can come next (Purton, December 2006)." As shown above, the experience of anger can give way to that of sadness and sadness to the experience of loneliness. In this way the client appears to "mine" an affective vein of supportive-related categories of IFMs, this to deeper levels or to wider circumferences. It is more the following of a trail than a random process. With Goenka's technique it appears to systematically and simultaneously dissolve both categories of meaning without the need to explicate them.

Next, when observing the sensations in a situation of stable emotion as per Goenka's technique, it is then obvious, when reflecting on the speed and frequency of sense contact (*phassa*), that it would be directly referring to and (as per *Nikāyan* psychological principles) dissolving a wide range of

IFMs. Recall here that the IFMs appear roughly equivalent to the *Nikāyan vedanā-anusaya* and that in the *Nikāyas* all *anusayas* are considered as pathological (on the other hand, Gendlin would never say that all the IFMs are pathological: the bringing into consciousness of the IFMs are seen as that which facilitate emotional healing. The *Nikāyan* view would be that all categories of *anusayas* lead to suffering/stress (*dukkha*), even such ones related to what are seen as normal or healthy functions of the mind: to entertain intellectual views, to engage in doubting aspects of one's experience, to believe in the inherent existence of one's personality and to engage in the desire to "be." Such is the *Nikāyan* psychological analysis of the origin of suffering/stress (*dukkha*)).

In further drawing out the implications of the speed of sense contact, we hold that such experience would primarily be at the preconceptual level. Therefore, at any given time of mindfully observing the bodily sensations when the emotions are stable, one is both defusing the affective characteristics of the sensations and starving various categories of *anusayas*/IFMs that would normally give rise to similar categories of micro-emotions, (that is to say emotion as defined by craving (*taṇhā*) as the eighth factor of Dependent Origination) all of this depending on the various categories of objects that the senses come in contact with. In following this train of logic it seems evident that the *anusayas* effected when working within a state of stable emotion, would be of a wide range of *unidentifiable* latent habitual behaviors. They would thus undergo gradual dissolution while the range of multi-valenced bodily sensations were being defused.²⁶

What does this all mean for conceptualizing Goenka's technique in a Western framework? This question returns us to Gendlin's IFM. There is the IFM and the explicated felt meaning. In the Focusing technique one first looks within to find the strong feeling, the IFM. It appears that this would actually be, from a *Nikāyan* view, a latent meaning until it is explicated. Then one examines the feeling intuitively to name the characteristic of that feeling. Thus the mechanics of this naming actually

²⁶ Practitioners of the Goenka technique have informed me that in the case of a strong destructive emotion, when one mindfully observes it, the intensity of the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the feeling is gradually dissolved, thereby relieving the individual of the physically uncomfortable sensation; One would also expect that in the Focusing method, when one locates the strong feeling and observes it in order to give it a handle, that the intensity would likewise begin dissolving. Gendlin 1964 has actually mentioned that this does happen. He notes that "A very important and surprising fact about direct reference to felt meanings is that if the matter under consideration is anxiety producing or highly uncomfortable, this felt discomfort *decreases* as the individual directly refers to the felt meaning. One would have expected the opposite."

draws out the primary/latent meaning of the emotion from within the feeling (it then becomes new meaning), thus the term, explicating. This purposeful drawing out then allows for the reasonable and coherent assertion that the feeling and meaning in the IFM can be differentiated and that this intuitive identification of the feeling (giving it a handle), brings or draws out this differentiation. Seen in this way, the IFM is even more reflective of the Pāli *vedanā-anusaya* complex, as the sensation and the *anusaya* are likewise modeled as different psychological components.

Another interesting and important point is Gendlin's "ever present feeling mass" (Gendlin, 1962/1997: 13) that points at the bodily state that exists prior to looking within (thereby creating an IFM). This would seem to have a rough equivalency with the *Nikāyan* state of ignorance, the first factor of Dependent Origination. Goenka likewise says that if one is not purposely looking at the feelings one won't know that they are there (Goenka, 2000b: Day Three of the 8-day Satipaṭṭhāna Discourse presentation). We can see now that Gendlin's use of the term "symbolization" appears to be similar to my use of the term "differentiation." Thus first looking inside and creating an IFM is actually a process of differentiation between the "dumb" ever present feeling mass and the process of creating new meaning. In this way we can see that Goenka's part-by-part examination of the sensations might be considered as being the endeavor to "uncover" from the shroud of ignorance, the mass of "stored" *anusayas*/IFMs thereby dissolving them with the power of awareness. What is it then in awareness that causes the both secondary and primary meaning to dissolve?

Conclusion

The benefits accrued from framing the *Nikāyan* sensation/feeling-latent habitual tendency (*vedanā-anusaya*) complex as an IFM, extends beyond allowing us to differentiate (the roots of) emotional phenomena into far more than the above seven categories of *anusayas*. Of course this framing appears to be able to facilitate the conceptualization of the efficacy of the mindful observation of bodily sensations from a bodily, sensation-centric perspective. Another important advantage is that it also allows us to see the *anusayas* in an objective light. The *suttas* portray these key psychological components as unwholesome (*akusala*) or as impurities and defilements (*kilesa*) while Gendlin's IFM construct allows for seeing these phenomena simply as feeling-based meaning.

As I have asserted above, *Nikāyan* psychology appears to be largely sensation-centric and so the equating of the *Nikāyan anusaya* with Gendlin's concept of (felt) meaning permits a process of conceptualizing *Nikāyan* psychology through the constructs of an established Western psychological tradition that is itself largely sensation-centric.

Stating that *Nikāyan* psychology is sensation-centric can be supported by the fact that factors seven *vedanā*, eight, craving (*taṇhā*) and probably nine, grasping (*upādāna*) of Dependent Origination, are most likely all sensation based (or structured) phenomena. Then there is the case of the *anusayas* which likewise seems so structured. This is along the lines that I have previously argued (Drummond, 2006); various *sutta* passages show that thinking begins at the eighth factor of Dependent Origination and we get the sense that the thinking is therein "blended" with the sensations thereby forming a full-blown emotion.

Next it is necessary to mention that by differentiating Gendlin's IFM into feeling and meaning it is not to suggest that one is affective and the other cognitive. Although this is arguable, it seems to me that meaning as Gendlin understands it, and how the *suttas* understand the *anusayas*, strongly points to them being stored or accessed as a physical feeling code. This of course is said from a phenomenological perspective, therefore the issue is not relevant at this point as what is observable is that the therapeutic transformations happen on, in or through the medium of the body. It also seems that the separation of these two components, both in Gendlin's feeling-meaning complex and the *Nikāyan vedanā-anusaya* complex, is in practice probably not possible; thus it would be a conceptual analytical tool. But equating Gendlin's (felt) meaning with the *Nikāyan anusayas* shows the similarities of the internal structures of each system. This can allow for further conceptualizations of *Nikāyan* psychological components in terms consonant with Western psychology's Humanistic tradition.

Meaning as reflected in the *suttas* vis-à-vis Gendlin

Meaning is about how the phenomena of experience relate to the individual. In Humanistic psychology, as per the earlier example of the experience of anger when being ignored, it appears that Focusing works by creating new meaning: commencing with the experience of anger at being ignored (a secondary, conscious meaning), to the felt experience of feeling sad or lonely at being ignored (a primary, preconscious (or latent) meaning). The anger then could be seen as the initial reaction to the

primary meaning that a situation holds in which the individual perceives that he or she is being wrongly treated. Consequently as per the *suttas*, the experience of secondary or primary meaning emanates from a sense of a permanent self, a “self-centric” meaning.²⁷ This is often explained as the attachment to the five aggregates (*pañca kkhanda*)²⁸ and as *vedanā* is one of the five, we know that *anusaya* is there as well as its unmentioned counterpart.

In Gendlin’s Focusing method, once noticing that anger has manifested, the individual looks within, finds the predominant feeling (the IFM) and gives it a handle. As seen from the *Nikāyan* perspective, although Focusing results in a new meaning of the emotion, it is still based on attachment to the five aggregates: it is seen as adding reinforcement to the illusion of an unchanging self; a further attachment to self-centric meaning.

Using the mindful observation of sensations on the other hand, begins to simultaneously dissolve both the conscious anger and the preconscious, latent IFMs/*anusayas*; conscious and latent meaning.²⁹ The *suttas* see this as eventually leading to a state free from ill will and sensual desire³⁰ and hence a major increase in the experience of the non-permanent nature of the self (*anatta*). This of course is a reduction of self-centric meaning and might be termed as trans-self or trans-personal meaning. This process is reflected in the following *sutta* passage:

How, monks, does a monk practice the way proper to the recluse? Any monk who ... had a mind of ill will [and] has abandoned ill will, who was angry [and] has abandoned

²⁷ Carl Rogers as explained in Gendlin 1964: 3, terms the ego as “self-concept.” I am herein adapting that to the above discussion as “self-centric,” instead of the Freudian, “ego-centric.”

²⁸ The five are, body (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), habitual tendencies (*saṅkhārā*) and consciousness (*viññāna*).

²⁹ We would here also argue that the other *anusayas* that follow after anger/ill will (*paṭigha anusayo*), particularly the *anusaya* of conceit (*māna anusayo*), which is the “I am” concept, would likewise be undergoing gradual dissolution. An examination of various *sutta* passages points to a similarity between the *anusaya* of conceit and primary meaning, as well as between the *anusayas* of ill will and lust/desire and secondary meaning (cf., MN.1.432-3 and Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1995, wherein the introduction discusses the 10 fetters and their relation to attaining the four levels of awakening. Also see the following footnote).

³⁰ They are categorized in a way that makes us feel that they are irrevocably linked and dissolve together in the sense that as one begins dissolving her or his tendency towards desire, the tendency towards ill-will likewise undergoes dissolution. This is discussed in the various criteria that explains the four levels of awakening (Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1995: Introduction), wherein the second and third levels are defined as the respective attenuation and then the full dissolution of these two *anusayas*.

anger ... practices the way proper to the recluse (MN.1.283.
Translation by Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1995).

Implied here is the practice of *vedanānupassanā* to the complete eradication of the *anusaya* of aversion (*paṭigha anusayo*), as it is said that only the observation of sensations can fully dissolve the *anusayas*. Any future difficult situation will no longer be meaningful in an anger-centric way. When considering the issue of the state of awakening we can then assert that it is a state free from a self-centric meaning structure, as per Gendlin, which must then be the equivalent of non-interrupted experience of life wherein no experience has the power to create or establish any meaning in consciousness that is related to the self-concept. In this state, the Buddhist context of the meaning of any difficult situation would simply be understood from within the context of the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths are, that there is suffering (*dukkha*), defined as attachment to the Five Aggregates (DN.2.304), the arising of suffering, defined as the arising of Dependent Origination (AN.1.176. This of course is the process wherein one gets attached to the Five Aggregates, hence factors 5 through 9 of Dependent Origination are directly indicated), the cessation of suffering, defined as the cessation of Dependent Origination (AN.1.177. This implies the non-attachment to sensations and thoughts) and lastly, the way leading to the cessation of suffering, although defined as the Noble Eightfold Path, the operative factor of this model is right mindfulness, which is defined as the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation (DN.2.313).

The body as the locus of emotional phenomena

There is also the similarity of views between Goenka, the *Nikāyas*, and Gendlin as to the body being the locus of these phenomena. Goenka talks of layers upon layers of *anusaya* being stripped off as one goes up and down the body mindfully observing the sensations. He likewise explains that there is a common experience of individuals who finish retreats practicing only this technique of *vedanānupassanā*, that they feel lighter at the end of the retreat (Goenka, 2000a: Day Eight of the 10-day *Dhamma* Discourse presentation). His evening discourses leave no doubt that he attributes this to the layer by layer dissolution of the *anusayas*. In support of this, the *Nikāyas* state that “this body ... is old *kamma*, to be seen as generated and fashioned by volitional forces, as something to be felt” (SN.2.64-5. Translation by Bodhi 2000).

Therefore, conceptualizing the Pāli *vedanā-anusaya* complex, with reference to Goenka's technique, as being roughly the same as Gendlin's IFM gives further clarity to *Nikāyan* psychological principles. It then suggests that drawing out the implications will result in a more dissected, micro understanding of the mindful observation of sensations in the body in the Mindfulness-based Interventions. This supports the assertion that the conceptualization of mindfulness is much more usefully conceived by keeping separate the two broad categories of mindfulness, the observation of the sensations and the observation of the thinking while commencing the investigation of the efficacy of the mindful observation of sensations with the assumption that the efficacious nature of this practice is a bodily, sensation-centric phenomenon.

Textual Abbreviations

DN = Dīgha Nikāya

MN = Majjhima Nikāya

SN = Saṃyutta Nikāya

AN = Aṅguttara Nikāya

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