

Venerable Ashin Silanandabhivamsa (Agga Maha Pandita)

[[Biography of the Author](#)]

(from the courtesy of nibbana.com)

Vipassana meditation is an awareness meditation. It teaches you to be with the present moment ... to live in the present moment. It teaches to be aware of everything that comes to you and is happening to you. Only the present moment is important. And everything that comes to you at the present moment through the six sense doors eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind — is to be noted, to be watched, to be observed as the object of awareness.

When you practise Vipassana meditation, by making mental notes or just watching the various things that come to you, you will bring awareness to a high level so that you will be able to see things as they truly are. You will come to see the true nature of mind and body, of the mental and physical phenomena of which you are composed. "True nature" means the nature of impermanence, the nature of unsatisfactoriness and the nature of insubstantiality or the absence of an unchanging self or soul. It is important to see these three characteristics of nature so that you can have a correct view of things so that you may have less attachment to mind and body, and gradually be able to weaken the hold of mental defilements that prevent enlightenment.

When you practice Vipassana meditation, you choose an object on which to focus your mind. That object will be the "home" object of meditation. Traditionally, the breath is taken as the object. You keep your mind focused on the breath and make mental notes "in-out, in-out" along with the breaths. During the noting of the breath when your mind gets lost or distracted, you make notes of them too, such as "thinking" or "hearing" or "distractions" or "emotions", etc. And also you make notes of the feelings in your body. In this way, you keep yourself aware of everything that is happening in you or that comes to your mind.

By keeping your mind on the object of meditation, you are able to develop concentration or one-pointedness of mind which is necessary for the penetrative knowledge into the true nature of mind and body to arise. Without concentration, this cannot happen. So, what you need first is concentration. And in order to have concentration, you must first keep your mind focused on one object. If you can keep your mind focused on one and the same object for some time you

can get the necessary concentration. But you will find that in the beginning this is very difficult to do even for a short time. That is because you are dealing with the mind, which is very unruly and difficult to control.

You can keep a wild bull by tying it with ropes. But you cannot tie your mind with ropes, so you tie your mind to the object with awareness or mindfulness. In the beginning, mindfulness may not be strong enough to tie the mind down to one object and you may have many distractions to interfere with your meditation. But when distractions come to you, whether through the eyes, ears or nose, etc., do not get irritated or upset. Just turn them into the objects of meditation by making notes of them too.

The beauty of Vipassana meditation lies in the fact that all things are the objects for this meditation, The breath is only the "home" object. If you have no other objects to note, just keep noting your breaths, and if there are other objects, you just keep noting them too. Whether you are keeping your mind on the breath or on other distractions, you are doing good meditation if you are aware of them.

When you practise Vipassana meditation, you have to be patient and persevere. And do not get discouraged if you cannot get concentration at the beginning. Everybody has that experience. And leave all your expectations behind when you are meditating. Just be in the present moment. And if these thoughts come to you in spite of the instructions, just make them the object of meditation. In this way, you can deal with everything that comes to you effectively.

Questions answer about Vipassana

1. Where does the practice of Vipassana come from?

Vipassana meditation comes from Theravada Buddhism. There are two major divisions of Buddhism in the world today — Theravada and Mahayana.

Q 2. What does Vipassana mean?

The word

Vipassana

is composed of two parts

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which means

Q 3. What can Vipassana meditation do for me?

substantial, but actually they are not. When you practise Vipassana meditation, you will see for yourself the arising

Q 4. Who needs Vipassana Meditation?

mental defilements such as greed, hatred, delusion, etc. We have these Vipassana diseases with meditation most all the time. In

Q 5. When is Vipassana meditation needed?

ed time for the practice of Vipassana. Morning, during the day, before bedtime ... anytime is the time of Vipassana

Q 6. Do I have to be a Buddhist to practise Vipassana?

sthis scientific investigation and practice, Vipassana is for everyone. You must observe closely everything that comes to you a

Q 7. Is Vipassana meditation difficult to practise?

ost unruly meditation because it is personal and the practice is not done in a group. It is not like other practices where

Q 8. Are there pre-requisites for Vipassana meditation?

can not be good for you. Patience is also very important. When something irritates you, you have to be patient, you will gain

Q 9. What gadgets do I need for Vipassana meditation?

in order to practise meditation, you need some degree of comfort. But, while you don't need to inflict pain on yo

Q 10. In what posture can Vipassana be practised?

all postures - sitting, standing, walking and lying down. Whatever you do, you should be mindful.

Q 11. Is cross-legged posture essential in sitting meditation?

traditional to sit on the floor in a cross-legged position, it is not essential, but you can sit on a chair or a bench as long as it is comfortable and you are able to maintain a straight posture.

Q 12. Must my eyes be closed when meditating?

for you. But if you happen to look at anything, then you have to be aware of the "looking" and note it. The importa

Q 13. What should I do with my hands when meditating?

may put them anyway you like. The most usual position is on the lap, one over the other. Or you may put your hand

Q 14. How long must I practise at a time?

then you may sit half an hour or fifteen minutes and little by little extend the time, until you can sit longer. And if y

Q 15. Should I practise every day?

are rested and you are away from the worries of the previous day. It would also do you good to meditate in the ev

Q 16. Do I need a teacher to practise Vipassana?

progress at all. And sometimes, they are making progress but think they are not doing well. Only the teacher can

Q 17. Can Vipassana be applied to daily life?

meditation or during a retreat, but a more general awareness. And when you apply mindfulness to problems in yo

Q 18. What is meditation retreat?

ive environment with the guidance of an experienced teacher. Everything you do at a retreat becomes the object

Q19. What happens at a retreat?

ce is developed by bringing mindfulness to all other activities throughout the day as well. Noble Silence is observ

Q 20. Why should I go to a meditation retreat?

on is essential for penetrative wisdom to arise, a meditation retreat gives you the best possible opportunity to be a

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful!

Ven. Ashin Silanandabhivamsa,

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Introduction to Vipassana Meditation

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