

The Helpfulness and Usefulness of Meditation in our Daily Life

NGUYEN THI TOT¹

¹Research Scholar (Ph.D.) Swami Vivekanand Subharti University Meerut, U.P., India.

thichnulientruc90@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

Meditation has long been recognized as a powerful tool for enhancing mental, emotional, and physical well-being. In today's fast-paced world, where stress, anxiety, and distractions are prevalent, meditation serves as an effective practice to cultivate mindfulness, inner peace, and self-awareness. This article explores the helpfulness and usefulness of meditation in daily life, focusing on its benefits across psychological, physiological, and social dimensions. Regular meditation practice has been shown to reduce stress, improve concentration, and promote emotional stability. By fostering a state of mindfulness, it enables individuals to respond to challenges with clarity and resilience rather than impulsive reactions. Physiologically, meditation contributes to lower blood pressure, improved immune function, and better sleep quality, making it a holistic approach to overall health. Beyond personal benefits, meditation enhances interpersonal relationships by encouraging empathy, patience, and emotional intelligence. It strengthens self-awareness, allowing individuals to better understand their thoughts and emotions, leading to healthier interactions with others. Moreover, in professional settings, meditation has been linked to improved focus, productivity, and decision-making, making it a valuable practice for workplace well-being. The article further highlights how different meditation techniques such as mindfulness meditation, transcendental meditation, and loving-kindness meditation can be incorporated into daily routines, regardless of lifestyle or background. By embracing meditation as a consistent practice, individuals can cultivate a balanced and fulfilling life, transforming their approach to stress, relationships, and personal growth. The study concludes that meditation is not only a helpful tool but a necessary practice for overall well-being in contemporary life.

INTRODUCTION:

Suffering is the lot of all human beings. The main concern of religion is the removal of suffering, and the Buddha tried to root out this central problem. One truth he taught was the existence and the end of sorrow. Suffering is pervasive anywhere in the universe. Unless one knows the right way of living, one's life will be an unending stream of suffering, relieved by brief intervals of pleasure, which also inevitably end in suffering and boredom. He said, "It is painful to be born, to grow old, to die, to be associated with the unpleasant, to be

separated from the pleasurable, and not to be able to get what one desires. In brief, suffering is the factor of the fivefold clinging to existence.¹

Most of us are unhappy because we do not know the true art of living. Undoubtedly, some persons are happier than others. They probably have picked up some of the elements of right living, so their lives have greater significance and joy than with other people. Most of us have become immunized by frequent exposure to unhappy experiences, so we take our daily sorrows and sufferings. Many of us bear our sorrow in the hope that tomorrow will bring us the complete satisfaction of our heart's desire. So, we go on without realizing that humanity can live at a higher level of existence than they are generally accustomed to. We desire in various ways to forget the time of our sorrows, boredom, and dissatisfaction. The Buddha's teachings aim to remove the suffering (*dukkha*), which means destroying craving (*tanhā*) and the desire for the world imbuings us.² This destruction is achieved in the way of cognition, namely, the cognition that each possible object to which this desire might be directed, in the end, has affected suffering, nothing but suffering.

Our misery relates to what we typically think of as mental anxiety, bodily pain, illness, and suffering. What we usually recognize as happiness is characterized as the misery of change. Dreamy happiness is not perfect but rather the absence of grosser suffering. Since this happiness does not last but is brought to an end by unpleasantness, it is characterized as the misery of change.³ Pervasive misery refers to sentient beings' group of physical and mental components, referred to as the tainted aggregates, that are caused by unresolved emotions and past karma and serve as an agent to generate further karma and disturbing emotions. There may be occasions when we are disturbed by neither the misery of suffering nor the misery of change. But as long as we are not separated from our contaminated mental and physical aggregates, they will continue to provide the basis for various kinds of misery. And when they come into contact with the appropriate factors and conditions, suffering is bound to arise.

The doctrine of suffering (*dukkha*), taught by the Buddha, is also the true nature of life and is based on the universal fact^{286, 4}. It is essential to understand that the *dukkha* (suffering) refers to painful experiences and the unsatisfactory nature of all conditioned phenomena. Thus, we may say that pleasurable experiences are also *dukkha* because they contain the seeds of dissatisfaction within them. This truth does not mean there is no possibility of happiness in life; it is only that circumstances in the mundane sphere cannot be relied upon. A gardener can enjoy the garden immensely, but only if he accepts that the seasonal conditions will vary. It is important to note that the teaching on suffering would be incomplete without the Noble Eightfold Path, which shows how we may eliminate suffering.

¹ MN. I. 48.

² M. I. 7.

³ The Dalai Lama, Stages of Meditation, New York USA: Snow Lion Publications, 2001: 61.

⁴ D.C. Ahir, Vipassanā: A Universal Buddhist Technique of Meditation, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999: 141.

On the other hand, it can be said that the origin of suffering is also past karma. The real karma, the real cause of suffering, is the mind's reaction. One fleeting reaction of liking or disliking may not be very strong and may not give much result, but it can have a cumulative effect. The action is repeated moment after moment, intensifying with each repetition and developing into craving or aversion. This is what, in his first sermon, the Buddha called *taṇhā*, literally thirst⁵298; the mental habit of an insatiable longing for what is not, which implies an equal and irremediable dissatisfaction with what is. The stronger longing and dissatisfaction become, the deeper their influence is on our thinking, speech, and actions, and the more suffering they will cause.

Throughout each day of our lives, the mind keeps generating reactions, but if we try to remember them at the end of the day, we shall be able to recall only one or two that made a deep impression that day. Again, if we try to remember all our reactions at the end of a month, we shall be able to recall only one or two that made the deepest impression that month. Again, at the end of a year, we shall be able to recall only the one or two reactions that left the deepest impression during that year. Such deep reactions as these are very dangerous and lead to immense suffering.

The method towards removing such suffering is to accept its reality, not as a philosophical concept or an article of faith, but as a fact of existence that affects each of us in our lives. With this acceptance and an understanding of what suffering is and why we suffer, we can stop being driven and start to drive. By learning to realize directly our own nature, we can set ourselves on the path leading out of suffering.

Keywords: Sufering, Meditation, Human being, Noble eightfolt path

The Threefold Practice Of Sīla Samādhi Pañña

The foundations of meditation, particularly of the Insight system of meditation, are considered to be Sīla (morality), Samādhi (concentration), and Pañña (wisdom). By developing these ground-based ingredients through meditation, the meditator can remove all the attachments and the fetters for deliverance from the cycle of birth, decay, death, and rebirth. The method to be used for eliminating clinging is founded on three helpful steps: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and insight (*paññā*)—known collectively as the threefold training.⁶

Sīla, Samādhi, and Pañña are the names given to the different aspects of the practice. When we practice Sīla, Samādhi, and Pañña, It implies that we work on ourselves. It is true that Sīla and Samādhi are present here.

⁵ William Hart, Op. Cit: 38.

⁶ D.C. Ahir, Op. Cit: 31.

Since this is where our body is. Right here, we have legs and hands. This is where we practice Sīla. It's simple to recite the books' list of inappropriate behaviors, but it's crucial to realize that we can all engage in them. Right now, our speech and body are with us. We practice moral restraint, which means taking care to avoid the unskillful actions of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. For instance, in the past, we might have murdered insects or animals by slamming them with a fist or an axe, or we might not have been cautious with how we spoke. Coarse speech refers to persistently being nasty or insulting to others; false speech refers to lying or exaggerating the truth; and so forth. Frivolous speech is meaningless babbling that lacks content or purpose. We have indulged in it all. No restraint. In short, keeping Sīla means watching over ourselves and our actions and speech.

The Practice of Sīla

The Pāli word Sīla originally meant conduct. But in the context of spiritual training, it signifies a particular kind of conduct: good conduct, the type of character for which such conduct stands; good character! Hence, Sīla means Moral virtue is the internal attribute of consistently adhering to moral ideals, while moral conduct is a collection of behaviors guided by ethical principles. Produces.

Sīla (morality) is a suitable behavior that conforms to generally accepted standards and causes no distress to others or oneself. It is codified as five, eight, ten, or 227 moral precepts, or in other ways. It is conducted through body and speech aimed at peace and freedom from undesirable effects. It yields a very special benefit. Every religion has moral regulations. They typically consist of lists of things to refrain from doing, suggesting that anything that isn't prohibited is OK. An excellent illustration is provided by the five Sīlas (of Buddhism), expressly to refrain from taking the life of sentient beings, from obtaining anything that has not been given to you by your owner, from engaging in sexual misconduct, from lying or using derogatory language, and from consuming intoxicating beverages, which are a major contributor to negligence.

In the system of the disciplines (sīla), the five Sīlas are the basic principles of Buddhism best known to the majority of individuals. They are typically given during practically all religious occasions, and people in attendance normally formally declare their intention to comply with them. Practices regarded as correct and others considered wrong may contradict the Sīlas, as shown by the preceding instances. All of this indicates that one increasingly fails to understand the Sīlas, to recognize their importance, and to appreciate their meaning for one's existence in this world.

The Practice of Samādhi

The second aspect of the threefold training is concentration (samādhi). It constrains the mind to remain in the condition most conducive to success in whatever one wishes to achieve. No doubt most people have understood concentration as implying a completely tranquil mind, as steady and unmoving as a log of wood. However, the two characteristics of being peaceful and steady are not the real meaning of concentration. The

Buddha described the concentrated mind as "fit for work," suitable for doing one's job. Being fit for work is the best way to describe an adequately concentrated mind. Samādhi, the state of calm attained by meditation practice, has many levels depending on the degree of absorption of the Citta with the object of meditation. The word "citta" means the mind, heart, or consciousness; it is the basis of a person, which is central, whereas everything else, including the five khandas, is peripheral. Practically everyone has to develop the practice of Samādhi to attain wisdom and a state of happiness beyond what is ordinarily possible in this world. Having attained Samādhi, the way is clear for the development of wisdom. Hence, the Lord said,"

When he (who has developed ecstatic concentration) directs his mind to the practical realization of things so that he wishes to realize by higher knowledge, he is apt and fit because there is the proper condition in him(305).

Developing Samādhi can be put like this. Usually, the heart is hungry; it wants something and is always searching around. The only way it knows how to search is through the senses and the world because this is what it has learned. It wants this, searches for that, looks for this, wants to hear that and so on, all the time. It goes out continually, but what it gets from the world and what it gets by doing this never satisfies the hunger. It tends to increase it if anything. The heart is still hungry after all the searching one has done. Usually, the heart is covered with all sorts of garbage as though it's wrapped up and nothing can get through, but when samādhi is developed, the heart can be reached quite easily. It is pretty open, and whatever wisdom is created goes right in. That wisdom is then practical in giving results. It can be effective in extraordinary ways and even quickly reverse long-standing habits in people.

As to the details of what we should do, we already know what meditation practice means, and we should try to maintain whichever technique we find works best. As far as wisdom is concerned, it is good to use wisdom in thinking about things and seeing how things work in the world and one's life. Steadily, this does have an effect, although it is slow and takes a long time to penetrate deeply. In other words, thinking about the right kind of things in the ordinary way of thinking can develop wisdom, but only very slowly, for it takes a long time to penetrate internally in depth. Generally speaking, there is little alternative to the development of Samādhi.

The Practice of Pañña

Paññā (Pāli) or Prajñā (Sanskrit) has been translated as wisdom, right understanding, discernment, cognitive acuity, or know-how.⁷ In some sects of Buddhism, it mainly refers to the wisdom based on the direct realization of the Noble Truths, impermanence, interdependent origination, non-self, emptiness, etc. Pañña is the wisdom that can extinguish afflictions and bring about enlightenment. Training in pañña (insight or wisdom) has the benefit of producing the entire extent of accurate knowledge and comprehension of the actual nature of

⁷ William Hart, Op. Cit: 162.

everything via practice and drill. Usually, we are unable to understand anything in its actual context. We either follow the consensus or adhere to our beliefs, which means our observation is inaccurate. Because of this, insight training is a part of Buddhist practice, which aims to produce a complete comprehension of the actual essence of things.

In the Pāli Canon, pañña is defined in various overlapping ways, frequently centering on concentrated insight into the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, no-self) of all things and the Four Noble Truths.⁸ In the religious context, understanding or knowledge and insight or wisdom differ. To a certain degree, comprehension relies on applying reasoning or logical thinking. That is only one aspect of insight. An object with understanding has been absorbed, punctured, and confronted directly. The intellect's complete immersion in study and inquiry has resulted in a complete lack of emotional attachment and a nonrational but genuine and heartfelt disdain for that item. Therefore, Buddhist insight training does not refer to the type of intellectual understanding employed in present-day academic circles, where everyone is free to have their unique version of reality. Academic circles, where everyone is free to have their unique version of reality. The Buddhist insight must be intuitive insight, clear and immediate, the result of having penetrated the true nature of an object by one means or another, thereby making an indelible impression on the mind. For this reason, the objects of scrutiny in insight training must be things with which one comes into contact in everyday living; only through continual application is the mind able to become genuinely detached from things as transient, unsatisfactory, and not self. To review this with the words of the Lord Buddha: There is no jhāna without wisdom;

*There is no wisdom without jhāna;
But for one with both jhāna and wisdom,
They are in the presence of nibbāna.⁹*

When we practice with the mind this way, the mind becomes considerably more refined than when developing Samādhi alone. We see happiness and let it go. We see suffering and let it go. Wherever we see them, we let them go right there. All mind objects lose their value and can no longer sway us. When these characteristics arise within the practitioner's mind, it is appropriate to change the practice's name clearly, knowing following the truth, to vipassanā. That's all there is to it. About knowledge of the reality of how things are. This is peace at the highest level, the peace of vipassanā.

In the training of the mind, there is the need to develop wisdom (pañña). Unfortunately, this cannot be done directly; it is just by wanting wisdom. Some people may have innate wisdom, but Without sufficient attention to support and regulate it, they won't be able to bring it out and use it appropriately. Wisdom is entirely different

⁸ H.S. Sobti (Ed.), *Vipassanā – The Buddhist Way*, Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2003: 87.

⁹ Dhp. 372.

and can only come from an interior source; it is not just intellectual thought. Calm state. Thus, the primary requirement for mental training is to achieve a quiet state.

Benefits of Health through Meditation

How can man secure sound health through a knowledge of the mental faculties? Let us first inquire what sound health is. Does it mean muscular strength or never having had a day's illness? Suppose a person is endowed with overflowing vitality, never having had occasion to rub some soothing balm for a headache, but is tense, irritable, cruel, inconsiderate to subordinates, or lacks initiative and cultural interests. In that case, they can be placed in the prime health category.

The Westerners concentrated all their attention on externals. They placed enormous emphasis on the claims of the physical body. They sought emotional stimuli such as speed, noise, and glare. They looked outside for interest and amusement. Gradually, they began to pay heed to inner forces, the manifestation of the mind, and many new cults sprung up. Several health conditions may benefit from meditation and its positive effects. For example, we can practice meditation to improve our lives through such things as eliminating drug addiction, prolonging our life expectancy, and improving the condition of several illnesses. Numerous research have demonstrated the health advantages of meditation. Many of these advantages are linked to meditation's ability to reduce stress. For instance, the risk of heart disease dramatically decreases with less stress and worry.

Being mentally occupied makes it simple to become sidetracked by minor annoyances. For instance, we might find it unbearable to be kept in line or become agitated about someone else's tiny infraction. Avoiding these minor issues is not the answer since, despite our best efforts, they will continue to arise. Developing separation and maintaining perspective is the only workable method. The ability to disengage from these trivial yet bothersome thoughts is a potent advantage of meditation. This distance is not a sign of apathy; instead, it is the ability to remain composed in the face of life's unavoidable upheaval.

Meditation can help us achieve heightened mental awareness, which enables us to slow down our body processes and achieve a positive state of relaxation. Longevity is believed to be one of the effects of the slowdown in body processes. It dramatically impacts one's mind, and mental health is thereby relaxed. The root of all diseases is the equanimous mind, which is cured by meditation. People suffering from any disease may slowly practice meditation, which will help them have a speedy recovery. This meditation can solve health problems. Many meditators have cured their diseases, such as hypertension, pain, and gland subsiding. Many cardiologists advise meditation to lower the cardio-respiratory rate and for elevated blood pressure patients. It is proved that meditation is of far greater importance than medication.¹⁰

Stress reduction is among meditation's more apparent advantages. Picture yourself racing to the hospital to visit a friend who was recently involved in a vehicle accident and suffered brain trauma. The radio knob breaks,

¹⁰ D.C. Ahir, Vipassanā: A Universal Buddhist Technique of Meditation, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999: 103.

leaving a half-tuned station blaring in our ears; the roads are snowy, one of our headlights burns out, and the traffic is insane. Then, we remember that we were attempting to determine what kind of business to start and when to leave our jobs.

Good decision-making (or good living) isn't facilitated by stress, yet occasionally, we overlook this fact and try to solve difficulties despite our overburdened minds. The situation described above isn't inherently more severe than what occurs in our hectic minds when nothing so evident is happening outside us. While having breakfast, our monkey brains could lead us on a crazy, cacophonous trip on snowy roads with only one flashlight. The ability of meditation to calm those monkeys and reduce tension is one of its advantages. Better life and decision-making result from reduced stress.

Happiness and Peaceful of Mind

Is there anyone who doesn't look for happiness somehow? We can reach our inner peace of mind through meditation, the wellspring of joy. No matter how successful we are on the outside, pleasure will always elude us if we lack mental tranquility and are plagued by pessimistic thoughts. Perhaps it is difficult to think that happiness might come from just existing. Nonetheless, we will find an unanticipated source of joy if we meditate while maintaining mental clarity. Meditation teaches us that our inner attitude, rather than external circumstances, determines our level of happiness.

On the emotional level, the active functioning of the reasoning mind controls reactions to environmental conditions, situations, and behavior of others; harmonizing the function of the neurological and endocrine systems leads to the management and eventual elimination of fear, hatred, jealousy, anger, lust, and sexual perversion.¹¹ On a spiritual level, the firm control of the reasoning mind, regulation, and transformation of blood chemistry through properly blending the neuro-endocrinal secretions and production of dispassionate internal vibrations leads to infinite compassion, equanimity, bliss, and happiness. Some powerful forces in the universe are invisible, intangible, and silent. These may be productive and beneficial or destructive and harmful. This is common knowledge regarding mechanical forces, steam, electricity, magnetism, etc. Still, few have yet learned to apply this knowledge to the domain of the mind, where thought forces are continually being generated as magnetic thought waves for good or ill.

Science has proved that every living organic cell is a generator and receiver of electromagnetic vibrations, each kind of cell having its proper period of oscillation and being consequently in tune with the reception of vibration of a definite frequency and wavelength. The significance of electromagnetic vibrations in the form of thought transference is known to many. Phenomena such as telepathy, hypnotism, and clairvoyance have been regarded as almost commonplace in the East for ages, whereas in the West, they are still new.

¹¹ D.C. Ahir, *Vipassanā: A Universal Buddhist Technique of Meditation*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999: 104.

The contribution of Meditation to the current Problems

The founder of Buddhism was an ordinary person. Deeply concerned about life, death, and suffering, he discovered a solution to these most profound human problems. His insight was universal and radical. It addressed suffering as such, not just this or that sort of suffering. Neither the cause nor the cure of suffering was revealed to Him. The Buddha discovered them, as others could have before or since. He was a doctor for the ills of humankind.

Buddhist liberation, nibbāna, requires neither the mastery of an arcane doctrine nor an elaborate regimen of asceticism. The Buddha condemned extreme austerity and intellectual learning that did not directly address the urgent questions of life and death.

The Buddha's original teaching remains a common fund for all branches of Buddhism, and it is expressed in the Four Noble Truths: Suffering; the Cause of Suffering, namely desire or craving; the Cessation of Suffering; and the Way to the Cessation of Suffering, namely the Eightfold Path¹². It is not enough merely to attain an intellectual understanding of these propositions. One has to practice them to make them part of life. Having medicine in a bottle does no good: medicine must be swallowed to enter the bloodstream.

The early Buddhists enumerated many kinds of suffering.

We cannot avoid contact with suffering. To be a Buddhist, we must be willing to share the suffering of others. The Buddha taught that gain and loss, dignity and obscurity, praise and blame, happiness and pain are all worldly conditions. Most people seek positive experiences and try to avoid the negative at all costs, but those who practice the Buddha's teachings take both positive and negative as they come. They do not grasp after one or the other, and in this way, they continuously test their inner spiritual strength amid the world.

To practice the teachings of the Buddha, one must practice mindfulness. One must look deeply into one's body, feelings, mind, and the objects of the mind. It may sound simple, but to sustain oneself in the practice, one needs a teacher and a community of fellow practitioners to remind and encourage one. The Buddhists can be an excellent resource for bringing openness, love, and selflessness to many people.

In South and Southeast Asia, the Buddhists have long been concerned with attaining personal liberation and maintaining proper social order. To suggest that Buddhism has been unconcerned with the organization of society is to ignore history. Traditionally, Buddhism has seen personal salvation and social justice as interlocking components. In Vietnam, the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh founded Van Hanh University and the School of Youth for Social Service. He has taught at Columbia University and the Sorbonne. He has offered his teachings and shared mindfulness practice in different parts of the world.¹³ Thich Nhat Hanh proposed that

¹² The Noble Eightfold Path consist of: Right Understanding, Right Mindfulness, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Attention, and Right Concentration.

¹³ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Transformation & Healing: Sutra on the four Establishments of Mindfulness*, New Delhi: A Full Cricle Book, 2005: 180.

clergy and laypeople who care for the social welfare of others retreat regularly to such centers. Social workers will struggle to endure the tumultuous world outside without renewing their inner strength. Buddhism is simply a way of mindfulness and peace. The presence of Buddhism does not mean having a lot of schools, hospitals, cultural institutions, and political parties run by Buddhists. Instead, the presence of Buddhism means that all these things are permeated and administered with humanism, love, tolerance, and enlightenment. These are characteristics that Buddhism attributes to opening up and developing the best aspects of human nature. This is the true spirit of Buddhism.

CONCLUSION:

In brief, nowadays, nations have reached the pitch of insanity, especially in the armament race of building up military hardware that endangers all forms of existence on the earth. If mankind does not start learning how to live peacefully with one another and use science and technology with responsibility, it is doubtful if human civilization, as we know it, can long exist. In every country today, people are trying to produce nuclear weapons for destructive purposes. It is a big competition. They also produce biological and chemical weapons for the destruction of human beings. It is like a pyramid; its different components within the levels must be strengthened. In the modern era, man is reaching out and seeking more and more sense stimulation. For there to be peace and happiness in the world, individuals who make up families, societies, and ultimately the world must be at peace with themselves. If we wish to reach that stage of mind, we must try to train the mind in meditation. We have become estranged from ourselves; we do not know our true nature or the true nature of the mind, to be more precise; we go about our business and social life wearing masks appropriate for each occasion; and we frequently do not show our true feelings of jealousy, greed, hatred, pride, or selfishness. The popularity of televisions and portable radios, with or without earphones, clearly indicates the trend of seeking more and more stimulation. We hide them in socially accepted ways of formalized verbal expressions such as congratulations, thank you, and deepest sympathies. But there are times when our negative emotions are so acute that they come into the open in the form of violence, stealing, quarreling, backbiting, and so forth. But generally, we try to inhibit these venomous snakes from negative emotions. When we can train the mind to attain peace and forgiveness through meditation, that means the contribution of meditation is to resolve the current problem of social life. We conceal them in socially acceptable forms of formalized verbal expressions like "congratulations," "thank you," and "deepest sympathies." However, there are instances in which our negative emotions are so strong that they manifest themselves in the form of violence, theft, arguments, backbiting, and other such behaviors. In general, however, we attempt to keep these poisonous snakes from expressing themselves. When we are able to train the mind to achieve peace and forgiveness through meditation, that indicates that meditation is helping to solve the current social life issue.

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