



# Vipassana Meditation: A Journey of Self-Observation

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## Abstract

*Today's youth is craving for more than what is sufficient, due to which they are not able to encourage their lives, and are troubled with problems like anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, etc., whose solution they try to find in the external environment around them, but the happiness that they try to find in their material perspective is not outside but within them. They do not even try to know and understand them, due to which they do not get the knowledge of their inner powers and live a life full of despair. The only cure for keeping the mind healthy is meditation, through which positive thoughts are born in a person, mental peace is experienced and the brain works smoothly, there is a great lifestyle. Meditation has been explained by various great men in their own ways, out of which Gautam Buddha's Vipassana meditation is based on scientific method, which gives more emphasis on knowing the reality of a subject, object or person and accepting it without reaction.*

**Key-Words:** Vipassana, Meditation, Self-Observation, Yoga, Education

## Introduction

In today's modern world, every human being is living a life of struggle. In the life of every human being, success-failure, loss-gain, happiness-sorrow keep coming and going. Many people face it bravely, while many get scared and give up, because of which they suffer from more and more physical and mental stress. As can be seen at the time of examination, how students struggle with stress and various types of negative thoughts come to their mind. Suicidal thoughts can also be seen in emotionally weak people, students. Many people give up even in a small illness, while many people do not lose their control even in these difficult situations. Why does it happen that two people react differently in the same situation? According to science, this happens due to the immune system of humans. The immune system of emotionally weak people is weak, due to which such people get frightened easily in stress, illness, and adverse circumstances. The biggest treatment for such people is the ancient method of meditation. Meditation is an activity in which a person trains his mind or tries to bring the mind to a special state of consciousness. In today's fast-paced life, we all are running after happiness. A student is worried about passing with good marks, he passes, but is not happy, he thinks that he will be happy when he gets a job, he also gets a job, even then he thinks ahead, he will be happy when he gets a promotion, but he is worried about the future. He is always engaged in achieving future happiness and lets the happiness of the present go to waste. The soul residing inside the human body is a part of that God, so when God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, then why can't we. The powers can be known only by going into meditation. Followers of various religions have propagated and spread meditation, one of which is Vipassana meditation. Vipassana is one of the most ancient

meditation systems of India, which means to see and understand something exactly as it is. About 2500 years ago, Lord Gautam Buddha in India re-researched this extinct method and made it accessible to all as a public treatment for a public disease, i.e. the art of living. The objective of this public method of meditation is to completely eradicate the disorders and achieve the state of supreme liberation. The objective of this meditation is not only to remove physical diseases but to remove all the sufferings of mankind.

Vipassana is the practice of self-purification through self-introspection. The practice of purification of the mind by observing the changing events happening every moment in one's own body and mind with a neutral attitude helps a person to live a happy, peaceful life, and is helpful in experiencing peace and harmony within oneself.

Today, there is a need for a human being who is first in all professions like doctor, engineer, scientist, musician, cricketer etc. Due to their progress, people have reached the world of moon and stars, but they are forgetting the world of humans on our earth, which is based on humanity, life ideals and values. The country is badly trapped in the clutches of social evils, hatred towards cultural heritage, narrow feelings like provincialism, communalism, casteism etc. Mutual competition and selfishness have started appearing among the people of the community. Socio-economic inequality has dashed the hopes of the country for a happy future in the 21st century. Emotions dominate logic. The ungrateful present demonic tendency is feeling proud in polluting and destroying the values of the entire society. In the present society which is breaking down day by day, material wealth is continuously increasing but there is a shortage of ideal humans. In the present society, material changes are taking place at such a rapid pace that as a result, dignity, culture, and values are being lost. From childhood itself, a child has a feeling of development of all aspects of all-round development such as social, intellectual, mental values. This creates faith in values. This faith later helps in establishing coordination with the society. The great philosopher Plato has said- "Education is the first step towards achieving the goal of human development."

### **Historical Background**

Vipassana is one of the oldest meditation practices, originating in India around 2,500 years ago with Gotama the Buddha. It encapsulates the core of his teachings during his 45 years of guiding others. During the Buddha's lifetime, many people in India liberated themselves from suffering through the practice of Vipassana, achieving significant accomplishments in various aspects of life. Over the centuries, this technique spread to neighbouring regions such as Burma, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, where it similarly brought about beneficial changes. However, about five centuries after the Buddha, Vipassana faded from India and the integrity of its teachings diminished in other areas as well. Fortunately, in Burma, a dedicated lineage of teachers preserved it in its original and pure form for over two thousand years, passing it down from one generation to the next.

Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi has said that "I have felt that students learn more from the lives of teachers than from books and their interpretations. Shame on that teacher who says one thing and behaves differently in life. Acharyas and teachers cannot teach character from the pages of books, character-building is learnt from their lives."

### **Relevance of Vipassana Meditation**

The method of Vipassana meditation offers a straightforward and effective path to attaining true peace of mind and living a fulfilling, meaningful life. The term Vipassana translates to "seeing things as they truly are," and this technique involves a logical process of mental cleansing through self-reflection. Everyone experiences moments of agitation, frustration, and discord at times. When we endure suffering, it is common to spread our unhappiness to others, which certainly is not a healthy way to exist. We all desire inner peace and harmony with those around us since humans are inherently social beings who must coexist and interact. So, how can we cultivate a peaceful existence? How can we maintain our own harmony and promote peace in our surroundings? Vipassana teaches us to witness the reality within ourselves. By observing impartially, we gain insight into the roots of our unrest or discontent. Lacking awareness, we often react in harmful ways to ourselves and others. However, when insight emerges and we move away from these automatic responses, we can engage in genuine action—action that arises from a balanced and composed mind, one that perceives and comprehends the truth. In this manner, Vipassana

meditation aids in alleviating inner tensions and resolving internal conflicts, allowing us to lead a more positive, balanced, and joyful life filled with peace, harmony, and goodwill toward others.

Education should also be such that it develops both the aspects of a person's personality. Due to lack of values in education, students must face many problems-

- *Lack of inspirational thoughts*
- *Lack of religious and spiritual knowledge*
- *Lack of cooperation*
- *Primacy of money*
- *Predominance of ego, anger, hatred, violence, and negative thoughts*
- *Dominance of modernism and westernization*
- *Changing attitude towards cultural heritage*
- *Disappearance of Indian values*
- *Disrespect towards Indian languages*
- *Excess of stress and anxiety*
- *Increasing workload*
- *Lack of self-confidence*
- *Lack of morality in lifestyle*
- *Increasing desires of students*
- *Lack of powers like satisfaction, self-control*
- *Textbooks devoid of child psychology*
- *Emphasis on being commercial instead of humanity*

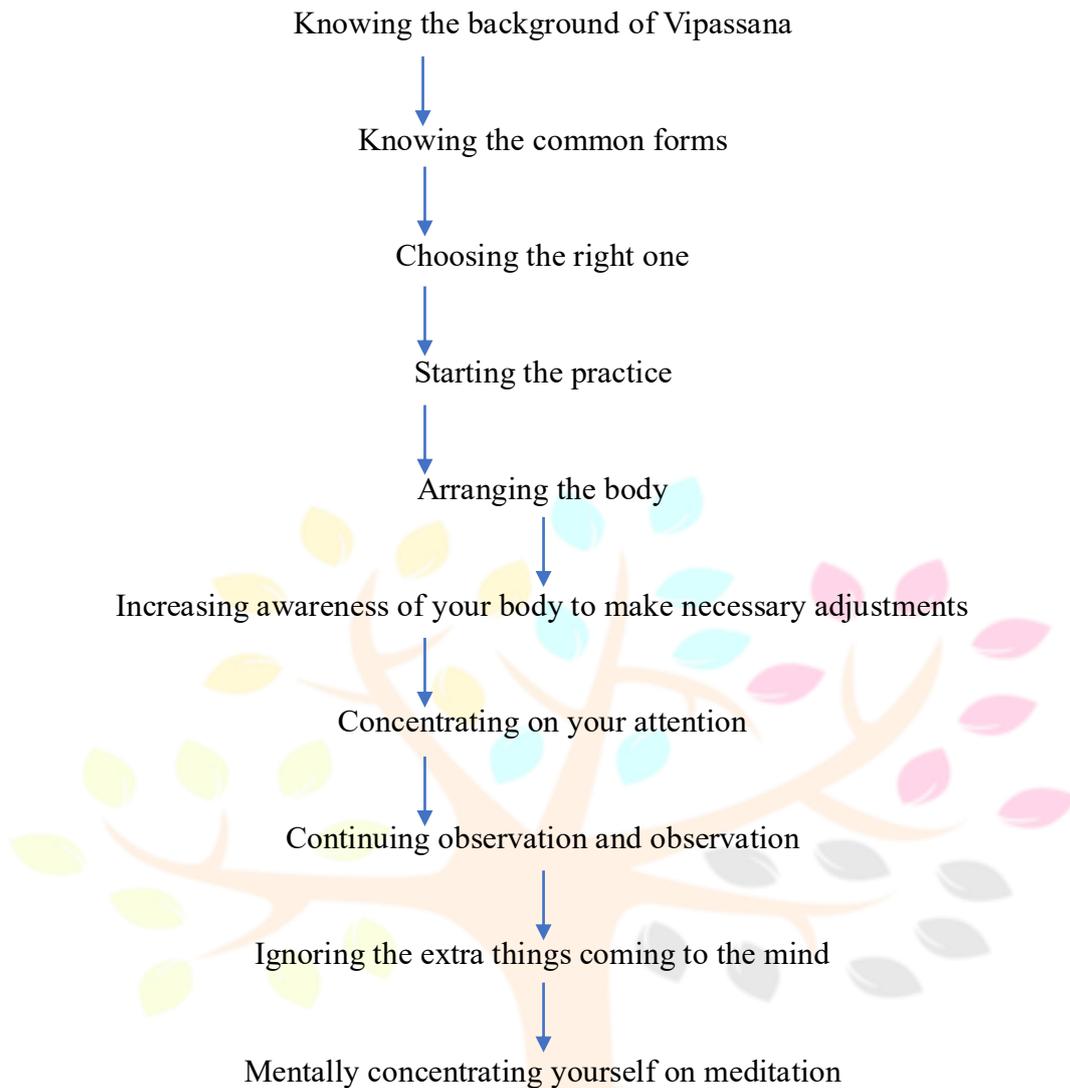


Vipassana meditation plays a special role in the above problems, through which the student gets mental peace and balance.

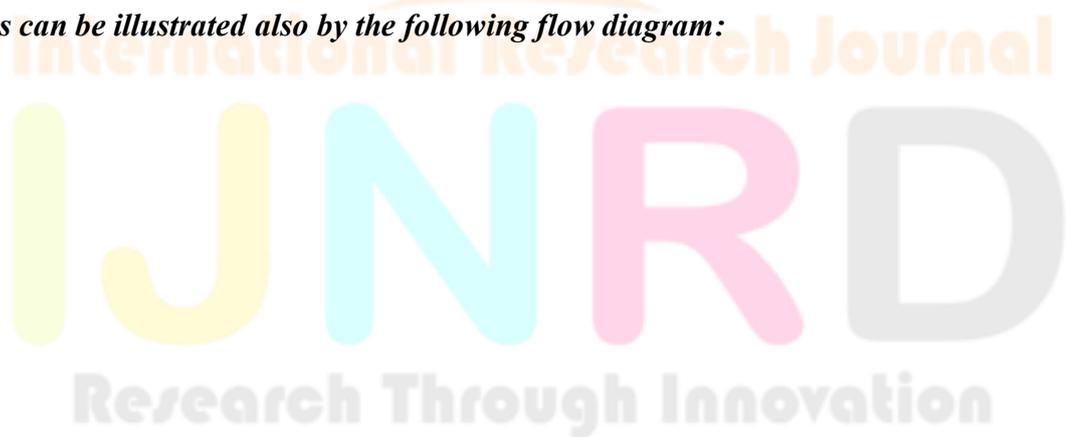
- *Decreased Stress*
- *Patience*
- *Concentration Mindfulness*
- *Reduced Anxiety*
- *Strength Happiness*
- *Positive thinking Humility*
- *Improves Self-esteem*
- *Improved Relations*
- *Increased Brain Plasticity*
- *Addiction Management*
- *Active goals*

## Process of the Vipassana

The process of Vipassana meditation is as follows-



*Vipassana process can be illustrated also by the following flow diagram:*





**Source:** <https://www.google.com/imgres?q=vipassana%20meditation%20method.image&imgurl>

### Vipassana Meditation Method:

- (i) Vipassana is a very simple and straightforward practice. In this, attention is paid to the incoming and outgoing breath.
- (ii) In the first practice, while getting up or sitting, sleeping, or waking up, talking or being silent, in any situation, only feel the movement of breath in the nostrils.
- (iii) For example, seeing the movement of breath naturally or feeling that this breath was exhaled and this breath was inhaled.
- (iv) Concentrating easily on the time between exhaling and inhaling. This work should not be done forcefully or under any pressure.
- (v) Vipassana meditation is to stop everything and concentrate on this.

Since the time of Lord Buddha, the tradition of devoted Acharyas has maintained this meditation method in its intact form generation after generation. The current Acharya of this tradition is Shri Satyanarayan Goenka. He is of Indian origin, but he was born in Myanmar (Burma) and the first forty-five years of his life were spent in Myanmar. There he learnt Vipassana from the renowned *Acharya Sayagyi U Ba Khin*, a senior government official. After 14 years of practicing Vipassana at the feet of his master, *Sayagyi U Ba Khin* authorized him to teach Vipassana to the public in 1969. He returned to India the same year and has trained thousands of people of different communities and castes in Vipassana in India and abroad in Eastern and Western countries. Seeing the growing demand for Vipassana courses, Mr. Goenka began appointing assistant teachers in 1982. Centres have been established all over the world for the specialized practice of Vipassana, giving people in today's growing population the opportunity to learn this art of living that brings lasting peace and happiness.

It can now be understood that Vipassana can fill an important gap in modern education - training of the mind, leading to a balanced, purposeful, and harmonious life. Vipassana meditation provides a way to view all the phenomena of this sensory world in an unbiased manner under a clear and intellectually penetrating gaze. Observation of mental contents is also a powerful tool of self-education, as it gives the meditator a very clear picture of his weak points and strong points without harming his self-esteem.

## Precautions during Vipassana Meditation

The following precautions should follow during the vipassana meditation:

- Eyes closed
- Back and neck straight
- Mouth closed
- Entire attention at the entrance of the nostrils
- Awareness of respiration
- Be aware of the touch of the breath

## Conclusion

Vipassana meditation is more important for overall healthy physical functioning, Vipassana meditation provides peace of mind and control over the body. Adrenal levels can be controlled through this. Generally, student life is stressful. Dealing with school, tuitions, games, and other activities is more stressful and tiring in which mental peace and concentration is improved by Vipassana meditation. To meditate, it is not necessary to remain absorbed in meditation posture for hours every day. It is necessary for a student to meditate twice a day for 10-15 minutes, which will help the students to discover the hidden qualities within themselves, develop concentration, get relief from stress, anxiety, fear, etc. Along with this, if Vipassana meditation is practiced regularly, then some progressive results can be achieved which can be beneficial for students in general. Some proven studies have shown that meditation essentially has a biochemical effect on the human body which is like the benefits of antidepressant and anti-anxiety drugs and thus can help more in relieving mental stress. Students get benefits like balanced blood pressure, better interpersonal relationships, boost in confidence level, deep sleep, relief from headache and other various problems, improvement, and sharp brain, etc. through Vipassana meditation. On the basis of the above description, it is concluded that in the present times, due to the high level of expectations of students, their lifestyle becomes busy, as a result of which mental diseases like stress, weakness, irritability etc. make their home in them, with which they always keep struggling and do not get the opportunity to think about themselves or understand/know themselves, due to which the person becomes incapable of improving his talents and faces failure in every field of life. Helpless due to his adverse circumstances, he even takes steps like suicide. Vipassana meditation is a very important activity for the downfall of all these negative thoughts. It is such a technique through which the human body gets a new energy and he can display his work creatively and gets acquainted with the biggest and most important power 'mental energy' and gets mental peace.

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