

Vipassanā- Ekāyano ayaṃ, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā

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Abstract: In Buddhism the universe and the life therein are governed by the natural law of Cause and Conditions and conditionally originated phenomena, creating a self –sustaining mechanism. “The principle of Dependent Origination.” In this paper, we present the content of Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta in context of principle of Dependent Origination and the way how to meditate as defined in this sutta. The utmost efforts are being made to justify the title as per the teachings of the Great Buddha. This paper covers under the subtitles- The Way of meditation leading for liberation, a brief of Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta and ultimately Conclusion, Bibliography.

Key Words: Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna, Kāyānupassanā, Vedanānupassanā, Cittānupassanā, Dhammānupassanā, Ānāpānappabbaṃ, Iriyāpathapabbaṃ, Nibbāna, satabojjhianga, pancanivraṇa, salayana, pancasankhda

Introduction

Man is mortal. He runs for immortality since the time immemorial. The life of human beings is full of sufferings. He takes births and dies. In the quest of suffering free life, he established authority as a supreme power, The Almighty God who create the world and manage the destiny of their life and the universe according to their Karma. The Karma process and the rebirth process, the circular pattern so known as “Wheel of life”.

The Buddha rejected the theory of an Almighty Creator God of the universe in his teachings and focusing instead on the individual’s path to Enlightenment through moral conduct, meditation and wisdom. He emphasized understanding the universe of suffering and of transient nature rather than reliance on an Almighty God or creator.

After Enlightenment The Buddha, an itinerant, travel and trudge for forty five years through the length and breadth of the country and propounded the people for their benevolence and suffering free life. He preached the people how they come out from sufferings and live a life of *Nibbāna*. He preached four noble truths as his principle teaching for cessation of miseries.

The Buddha Expressed as under in Uddeso (introduction) of Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta once he was staying among the Kuru people at Kammāsdhamma, in Kuru Pardesh.

“*Bhikkhuve, Ekāyano ayaṃ, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā, sokaparidevānaṃ, samatikkamāya, dukkhadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya, ñāyassa adhigamā, nibbānassa sacchikiriya, yadidaṃcattāro satipaṭṭhānā*”¹

There He preached the monks that there is “the one route for the purification of living beings, for coming out of sorrow and lamentation, for cessation of suffering and grief, for following the route of truth, the eightfold route and for the accomplishment of Nibbāna.” He dwells wholeheartedly

¹ Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna suta, Dīga Nikāya (22) and Majjhima Nikāya (10)

with awareness and thorough understanding of impermanence and removing craving and aversion towards the world. This is to say that the establishing of fourfold awareness- Kāyānupassanā, Vedanānupassanā, Cittānupassanā, Dhmmānupassanā,

The Way of meditation leading for liberation

The Buddha enthused the practice of the four-fold meditation of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the way of establishing consciousness described in the “*Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*”. To explore the truth about ourselves, we must investigate what we are; we are nothing but mind and matter (*Nāma and Rūpa*); that is no ‘I’, no “Me or Mine” (non- self). We must learn to examine these directly within ourselves.

Accordingly, we must keep three points in the mind:

1. The reality of the body may be actualized by *Vipassanā* meditation that is by experiencing directly through body sensations arising and passing away within the body.
2. The actual experience of the sensation of body and mind is attained by working with the contents of the mind along with body and not separately.
3. The mind and body are so closely interlinked with each other that the contents of mind always manifest themselves as sensation in and over the body.

Therefore, observation of sensations offers a way –indeed the only way - to examine the totality of our being as “mind and matter”.

A brief of Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta

(a) The Experiencing of Body within Body itself (Kāyānupassanā)

There are six ways of experiencing body within body itself:-

- (1) *Ānāpānāpabbhaṃ* (Experiencing of inhaling and exhaling of Natural Breath)
One experience inhaling and exhaling of Natural breaths as it is without any afflictions and aversion and having removed craving and clinging.
- (2) *Iriyāpathapabbhaṃ* (Experiencing poses of Body)
One experiencing body poses thoroughly- sitting, standing, walking and recumbent in true sense “as it is” without any afflictions and aversions and having removed craving and clinging.
- (3) *Samajānāpabbhaṃ* (Thorough Understanding of Transient Nature of Phenomena)
Experiencing every action of mind and matter properly and thoroughly with equanimity and understanding impermanent nature of phenomena.
- (4) *Paṭikulamansikāra pabbhaṃ* (Reflections on Repulsions)
Reflections on this body which is covered with skin and full of all kinds impurities inside as well as outside from hair of the head to sole of the feet. One experience body internally and externally without any affliction and aversions and having removed craving and clinging.
- (5) *Dhatūmansikārapabbhaṃ* (Reflections on the Bodily Elements)

One experiences thoroughly and properly corpus of the body without any afflictions and aversions and without craving and clinging. One reflects on this body however placed or disposed, considering it according to the characteristic of each element: in this body, there are earth, air, water and fire elements.

(6) *Navasivathikapabbam* (Nine Graveyards Experiences)

One experiences the corpus of the body in graveyards with equanimity. One dwells experiencing body within body itself internally and externally and the phenomena arising and passing away. All the time awareness is established with equanimity.

(b) The experiencing sensation within sensation itself (*Vedanānupassanā*)

The observation of sensation as it is with equanimity. Sensations are three kinds-Pleasant, unpleasant and neutral (neither pleasant nor unpleasant)

(c) The experiencing mind within mind itself (*Cittānupassanā*)

Thoroughly understanding and observing the nature of mind and matter phenomena with equanimity.

(d) The experiencing mental phenomena within mental phenomena itself (*Dhammānupassanā*)

One does experience all the mental phenomena within mental phenomena with equanimity as regards of the followings:-

(a) *Nivaraṇapabbam* (Five impediments)-

1. Sense-Desire, (*Kāmacanda*) –craving and clinging
2. Ill-will, (*Vyāpāda*)- aversion, malevolence
3. Sloth and Torpor, (*Sthānamiddha*)- Physical restlessness, tiredness, sleepiness
4. Anxiety, Remorse and restlessness (*Udocya Kukocya*) – mentally disturbed, despair, depression.
5. Doubt (*Vicikiccā*) –Confusion, wavering, not knowing the truth, disbelief, suspicion, misguide, qualm etc. in lit

(b) Five aggregates- *Nāme* and *Form*

1. Sensations (*Vedanā*), -feelings, afflictions
2. Consciousness (*Saññā*) – awareness, insightedness
3. Kamma or Phenomena (*Samkhara*) -volition
4. Perception (*Viñāna*) - sensitivity and observation
5. Form (material body), *Rūpa*- physical body

(c) Six senses fields- Eye, ear, Nose, Tongue, body and mind along with their respective objects and links between them.

(d) Seven factors of enlightenments (*satabojjhianga*)–

1. The systematic intersection / mindfulness (*Sati*)
2. Investigation of Dhamma (*Dhamma Vicaya*)

3. Cognitive strength/ energy (*Viriya*)
 4. Cognitive contentment /Happiness (*Pīti*)
 5. Physical Relaxation / Calmness (*Pasaddhī*)
 6. Mental Equilibrium / Consciousness (*Samādhi*)
 7. Equanimity (*Upekkhā*)
- (e) **Four Noble Truths,**
1. Suffering (*Dukkham*)
 2. Cause of suffering (*Dukkhasamudayaṃ*)
 3. Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkhanirodham*)
 4. The Path leading to cessation of suffering (*Dukkhanirodhhgāmini -Patipadā*).

Thus one develops one's awareness to such an extent that there is mere understanding along with mere awareness. In this way one dwells detached and without clinging towards anything in the world of mind and matter and experiencing all above (a) to (e) in true sense. One dwells observing the phenomena arising, passing away and arising-passing away.

These sentences reveal the essence of practice of satipaṭṭhāna. Unless these levels of impermanence are experienced, will not developing wisdom – the equanimity based on the experience of impermanence-which leads to detachment and liberation. Therefore, in order to practice any of the four fold satipaṭṭhāna one have to develop the constant and thorough understanding of impermanence and it has specific and technical significance. One must meditate on the impermanence of phenomena objectively observing mind and matter without reaction. The understanding of the nature of arising and passing away cannot be by contemplation, which merely a process of thinking or by imagination or even by believing; it must be performed with direct experience.

Conclusion

Vipassana practice is totally based on natural sensations those are arising and passing away; arising-passing away through mind and matter. Because all things are primarily controlled by the mind, ruled by mind, and are made up by mind. In totality mind is the chief and foremost of all *samkhāra*². The strong emphasis is on the sensations because they work as a direct avenue for the attainment of fruition by means of strong dependence condition for our liberation. This is based on the chain of the Dependent Origination (*paticcā samuppāda*)³. Dependent Origination means: “because this exists that exists; because this produces that is produced, that arises”. The Dependent Origination principle having twelve constituents in forward (*Anuloma*) sequence and twelve constituents in reverse (*Patiloma*) sequence those are necessarily and compulsorily followed and succeeded their counterparts. The principle initiated from (*avijjā*) ignorance and fruition at (*Arhathood-Nibbāna*) suffering free life as under:-

Ignorance conditions mental formations, mental (volitional) formations condition consciousness, consciousness condition mind and matter, mind and matter conditions six sense organs, six sense

² Dhammapada suta (1and2)

³ This suta is part and parcel of Dhammacakrapavattana suta, the first discourse delivered to Pancavaggiya Bhikkhus at Isipaṭṭhana migadaya, Sarnath near Varanasi after accomplishing Enlightenment at Bodhgaya. Saṃyukatta Nikāya -56.

organs conditions contact, contact conditions sensations, sensations conditions craving, craving conditions grasping, grasping conditions becoming, becoming conditions birth and birth conditions dotage, decay and death and grief, lamentation, suffering, depression and anxiety arise. Thus the great mass of suffering occurs. And when one reverses this sequence and root out ignorance forever he experience suffering free life; the *arhathood*, *nibbāna*. It describes a process of occurring over and over again very momentary within our consciousness.

This chain can be reversed by practising the process in reverse direction. After birth if one commit suicide and get free from suffering is not justified by any reason and no one practice this process at the stage of ignorance. All the links of this principle are occurred due to ignorance and ignorance is maligned all other links from volition to taking birth and after birth cessation is must without fail.

Then what one can do to come out of this cycle of birth and death, this is the big question. How can one meditate on and over this process to come out from suffering? In this chain “craving” *Tanhā* (seventh factor) is the root cause of all sufferings. If one manages to come out of craving, he can come out of sufferings. Craving is conditioned by sensations and condition to grasping. This is the chief link in this chain where one can strike.

*“Salāyatana paccayā phasso
Phassa paccayā vedanā
Vedanā paccayā tanhā.”*

Tanhā i.e. craving is ultimately arise by the contact of sensation of six sense spheres. The immediate cause of arising of (tanhā) craving and consequently of suffering is not something outside of us but the sensations that occur within us. One meditates *vipassanā* to remain neutral on the nature of sensation and he does not react over their effects such as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. One makes himself ineffective of the effects of sensations in each and every situation. When one cannot react over the effects of sensations then contact of six sense organs become ineffective and ultimately the effects of mind and matter, consciousness, volition and at last ignorance.

Vipassanā meditation is the meditation practiced upto the level of equanimity (*upekha* or *Samathā*) at every stage of mental phenomena. The four Brahma Vihāra- *Metta*, (loving Kindness) *Karuna* (compassion), *Mudita* (sympathic joy) and *Upekha* (equanimity); satabojjhianga (seven factors of enlightenments), ten perfections (*Ten Parmita*).

A meditator dwells ardently with awareness and constant thorough understanding of impermanence, the transient nature of mind and matter; experiencing body within body itself; sensations within sensations itself; mind within mind itself and mental phenomena within mental phenomena itself, having removed craving and aversion towards the material world. He dwells experiencing all the four fold of *satipatthanas* internally, externally and internally-externally with the observations of arising and passing away; arising- passing away simultaneously. Thus he dwells in such a way that he develops his awareness to the extent of that only understands along with only awareness. In this way he dwells detached, without craving and grasping towards anything in the material world.

Therefore, just as the understanding of sensation is absolutely essential to understand the interaction between mind and matter within ourselves, the same understanding of the sensation is essential to understand the interaction of the outside world with the individual.

The crux of The Buddha's teaching is necessity of understanding the truth

not merely at the intellectual level, but by direct experience. The practice of Satipaṭṭhāna, which is the practice of Vipassanā, is complete only when one directly experiences impermanence. Sensations provide the nexus where the entire mind and matter are tangibly revealed as impermanent phenomena, leading to liberation (nibbāna).

Therefore, the Buddha emphasises this as *ekāyano maggo*- "The one way for the purification for living beings."

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