



## **Experiential Wisdom, by S. N. Goenka**

"What is wisdom? Wisdom means right understanding. Knowledge of superficial, apparent truth is not true wisdom. In order to understand the ultimate truth, we must penetrate apparent reality to its depths. A child sees precious jewels as attractive, colored pieces of stone. But an experienced jeweler evaluates the virtues and defects of each gem with expert vision, in order to accurately estimate its value. In the same way, the wise do not conduct a mere superficial examination. Rather, they go to the depths with penetrating wisdom and accurately perceive the underlying subtle truth in every situation. This ability, to understand the complete truth properly in every situation, is wisdom.

There are three kinds of wisdom. The first is the wisdom gained by hearing or reading the words of others. The second is intellectual wisdom: to test with one's reasoning and analyzing faculty whether the received wisdom is rational and logical. It cannot be said that these two types of wisdom are useless. However, because they are borrowed wisdom, usually the knowledge gained is merely intellectual, and no lasting benefit is derived from it.

The third kind of wisdom, is experiential wisdom. It is wisdom manifested within ourselves, based on our own experience and therefore is truly beneficial. To develop [this wisdom], it is essential to practice morality and to [heighten awareness]. Only the mind established in [this awareness] can understand and realize the truth as it is." - S. N. Goenka