

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Abhittharetha kalyāṇe,
pāpā cittaṃ nivāraye;
dandhaṃ hi karoto puññaṃ,
pāpasmiṃ ramatṃ mano.*

One should make haste in doing good;
One should restrain one's mind from evil;
for the mind of one who is slow in doing good
tends to take delight in doing evil.

—Dhammapada 116

TORCHBEARERS OF DHAMMA

by S. N. Goenka

The following talk was given by S. N. Goenka to old students at V.M.C., Dhamma Dharā, Massachusetts, in September 2000. It has been edited and adapted for the Newsletter.

My dear Dhamma sons and daughters:

Many of you have been serving me in Dhamma for two to three decades. I received an invaluable jewel from my Dhamma father, and now you have it as well. See that you preserve it. See that Dhamma is maintained in its pristine purity.

An old student, whether of a few courses or many years' practice, is a torchbearer of Dhamma. You are an example. People watch how you deal with situations, how you behave; they look to see whether significant change has come in your life. They will hear many good things about Vipassana but will become convinced of its value only when they see good results.

All old students have a dual responsibility. One responsibility is to establish yourself in Dhamma very strongly. This is in your own interest and also in the interest of so many others who need Dhamma. The other responsibility is to see that Dhamma spreads around the world, especially to your near and dear ones, your friends, your relatives, those who know you.

Never try to push Dhamma on them. If someone wants to know about Dhamma, very politely and humbly explain what Dhamma is and how it has helped you, and how it helps so many others around the world. And explain how the Buddha taught a good way of life, which is happy, healthy, harmonious and wholesome. He was not a founder of any religion.

A great misconception about the Buddha, which we must try to remove, is that he taught a religion. When one talks of religion today, one thinks of rites, rituals, ceremonies, dogmas, and beliefs. These things have nothing to do with the teaching of the Buddha. He taught Dhamma; and when he sent out the sixty *arahant* messengers of Dhamma, giving them the highest teaching, he exhorted them, "*Caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ*—Oh, *bhikkhus*, go forth. Go to serve suffering humanity. More and more people should know about Dhamma."

As the Buddha said, Dhamma is beneficial in the beginning, the middle and the end. It is beneficial to practise the beginning of Dhamma, *sīla* (morality), which helps in this and future lives. Proceeding further, one practises *sammā samādhi*, or concentration of mind with an object that is not imaginary—with the reality, the truth that one experiences. This too gives great benefit. The mind comes under control and is directed toward exploring the truth within, free from all imagination, blind beliefs, dogmas or cults. This is the truth pertaining to oneself, the truth pertaining to mind and matter and the interaction of the two. One understands the universal law of nature at the experiential level.

The highest step, *paññā*, is purification of mind, which is not just at the surface level. The Buddha said, "*Sacittapariyodapanaṃ*—You have to purify the totality of the mind." Unless the roots of impurity are eradicated, unless the mind is pure to the depth, in totality, one is not liberated from misery, one is not freed from the cycle of endless birth and death. It is *paññā* that leads to full liberation. *Sīla*, *sammā dhi*, *paññā*—that's all; there is nothing to be added or subtracted. The Dhamma is complete, *paripuṇṇa*, and it is ultra-pure, *parisuddha*.

Never condemn a person who is practising something else. That would be harmful. Never find fault with others. If a friend asks, you may explain, "This is enough—*sīla*, *sammā dhi*, *paññā*." Of course one also naturally develops love, compassion and goodwill, but nothing else is to be added. If we start finding fault with others, it will be an unwholesome action on our part. Every religion, every tradition has something in it that is good. Every religion of the world accepts a moral life, a disciplined mind, a pure mind full of love and compassion. Give importance to these good qualities in other religions and ignore the differences. People would come to the Buddha to argue with him, but he would never argue. "When you start arguing and debating," he said, "it is harmful, it is dangerous. Let us see not where we differ but rather where we agree, and let us give importance to those points. Let us leave aside our differences; there is no use in discussing them."

Everyone agrees on the value of living a life of *s²la*, cultivating *sam±dhi* and purifying the mind by *paññ±*; on these points there can be no disagreement. Buddha put his emphasis on these three only. The same thing applies to any old student: whenever you are discussing with others, don't indulge in any arguments. Don't try to find fault with others. Rather, encourage them: "You agree to *s²la*; we also practise *s²la*. You agree to concentration of mind; we also practise concentration of mind. You agree to purification of mind; we also practise purification of mind. If you want to know how we practise, come give this technique a try." Don't say, "Yours is bad and ours is good." Instead simply say, "Come and see—*ehi passiko*. If you find it really is good for you, for others, for everyone, then accept it and live this life."

Buddha's teaching takes you to the depths where you start realizing why you must live a life of *s²la*. Every tradition urges us to practise *s²la*; but then says that it is for the good of the society, for the good of others. But the Buddha said, "It is for *your* good, and *also* for the good of others. This is what a good Vipassana meditator starts realizing. Experiencing your sensations, you start understanding, "Whenever I break *s²la*, I have to generate some impurity or the other and I start suffering. If I don't generate impurity, I don't perform any unwholesome action. If my *s²la* is perfect, I save myself from all kinds of misery, and I help others because they don't suffer on account of me." One can understand this only by experience. It is not a subject of argument. When you start experiencing the truth of sensations and how you continue to suffer at the deeper levels of the mind, then you realize why you should live a life of *s²la*.

And why did Buddha teach us to develop *sam±dhi* by observing respiration? Partly because it is nonsectarian, anybody can practise it. But another reason is that this practice leads us to *paññ±* at a deeper level. Observing breath not only concentrates the mind; it enables us to investigate the truth about the interaction of mind and matter according to our own experience, not merely to develop *paññ±* intellectually. Many traditions agree that the entire universe is *anicca* (changing), that the cycle of birth and death is *dukkha* (suffering), and that the ego is a big obstacle that must be left behind. It is not something difficult for people to understand. But the Buddha taught the same thing experientially.

If you invite people to come and learn to meditate, they need not abandon their own beliefs. Rather, by practising, they start going deeper and they derive so much benefit by understanding the pure Dhamma of *s²la*, *sam±dhi* and *paññ±* at a more profound level. The real substance of Dhamma lies in *s²la*, *sam±dhi*, and *paññ±*. Let more and more people come and meditate and understand how it really works.

The volition should be to help people, not to try to prove that what we do is superior. It won't help to say, "You don't know the proper meaning of *s²la*, you don't know what is real *sam±dhi*, you don't know what is real *paññ±*." Give a good example to people. Whenever you talk with somebody who is not on the path, speak with compassion, not ego. Never think you are superior and others are ignorant. Our job is to help people as we were helped by this technique—to share our happiness with others.

The best way to encourage people to come to this path is to give them a good example. Let them see that here is somebody on the path of Vipassana, living so peacefully, with love, compassion and goodwill for others. Your example will be beneficial to you because you are progressing on the path by living such a life; at the same time, so many others will be attracted to the Dhamma. Have compassion, and remember your dual responsibility: "I must progress on the path and also encourage others to come to the path and progress on it."

You progress only when you maintain your practice morning and evening. If you take courses, whether of ten, twenty or even thirty days, but miss your daily meditation, you will not really benefit. A course ought to strengthen your practice, your understanding of Dhamma at the experiential and intellectual level. But only applied Dhamma will give real benefits. If you do not practise morning and evening every day, you will notice that real progress is missing. Morning and evening sittings are very important.

Also, throughout the day, from time to time examine how you deal with situations you encounter. Are you able to handle them better than before? The more you find you are progressing on the path, the more you will be encouraged to practise. If you find that there is no improvement, either you have stopped practising or you are not practising properly.

I repeatedly warn students that Vipassana is not intended for the enjoyment of pleasant sensations, but despite my advice some of them make that their aim. They think, "I must get a free flow of very pleasant vibrations. If I am not getting it, I am not progressing." They are completely wrong. The equanimity you have developed is the measure of your progress. The Buddha explained: "To dig out the stock of your *sa^okh±ras* of craving, make use of the pleasant sensations; to dig out the *sa^okh±ras* of aversion, make use of your unpleasant sensations." Both types of sensation are equally important as tools to help us eradicate the deep-rooted *sa^okh±ras* that we have accumulated. If you ignore this advice and instead feel depressed with gross sensations and elated with pleasant ones, you are simply repeating what you have been doing your whole life and for so many lives. In the name of Vipassana, you have started playing the same game. How can you progress?

Keep in mind that equanimity is most important for you. The type of sensation you feel does not matter. Whenever a deep-rooted *sa^okh±ra* comes to the surface, it will produce a particular type of sensation, but don't assume that every sensation you feel is because of a *sa^okh±ra*. When you are meditating, it is true that most of the sensations are because of *sa^okh±ras*, but there are many other causes for sensations to arise. Whatever the cause, if a sensation occurs and you don't generate a new *sa^okh±ra*, the purpose is served: naturally the old accumulated stock will start to come up to the surface of the mind and be eradicated.

Understand this and work intelligently, diligently. Keep progressing in Dhamma. See that the Dhamma continues from generation to generation. Dhamma should continue to serve people for centuries, and that is possible only if you, the torchbearers, are strong in Dhamma, established in Dhamma, good examples of Dhamma.

Maintain Vipassana's pristine purity. It does not matter if somebody else has started defiling it, polluting it. But those who are on the path and those who have understood the importance of this purity should maintain this pristine purity for their own good and also for the good of future generations. If *you* start polluting the technique, then there is no chance of it being maintained for a very long time. Others may do whatever they wish, but at least one stream, one flow of pure Dhamma, must continue. People will understand the difference between the two and this will help for generation after generation.

A big responsibility rests on you. Keep the purity of Dhamma. Keep the torch of Dhamma shining. Remain strong in Dhamma yourself. Be a good example to others. May all of you live a very happy, pure, Dhamma life. May all of you encourage many others to come on the path and live a pure Dhamma life.

May all be happy, be peaceful, be liberated. ☸

MY JOB IS TO SPREAD THE DHAMMA

Next spring Goenkaji will again visit North America. His last visit was in 2000; that year, what began as an opportunity to speak at the United Nations on the subject of spirituality became a tour of centers in the U.K. and the U.S. (See the November 2000 issue of the VNL for details.) The plan for the 2002 trip began with an invitation to address an international business conference, but it has expanded to include a motor tour of all the centers and many major noncenter course areas across North America.

Last year when students visited Goenkaji in India to ask him to attend the 2002 conference, he said with a smile, "My job is to spread the Dhamma."

Goenkaji Will Give Keynote Address at Conference

Goenkaji has been invited to be a keynote speaker, along with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at an international business conference on April 21–23, 2002, at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers in Manhattan.

The conference is to be called *Spirit in Business: Ethics, Mindfulness and the Bottom Line*. It will bring together business and interfaith leaders to speak to an audience of 800 senior business executives on the topic of integrating ethics and mindfulness into corporate leadership. Tibet House NY and Trusteeship Institute, Inc., of Massachusetts are co-sponsoring the conference.

Organizers would like to identify old students who are senior business leaders in Fortune 500 and mid-size companies from around the world who can help with the development of the conference. Already, planning for the conference is developing into a global event as leaders from many countries are attracted to its purpose and are getting involved. For more information on the conference, go to <www.spiritinbusiness.org>.

Ten-day Executive Vipassana Course with Goenkaji

Some people who attend the conference will wish to experience Vipassana for themselves. For this purpose Goenkaji has agreed to be present at a 10-day Vipassana course for executives in business, government and other fields whose leaders have the ability to reach and influence large numbers of people. It is known from experience in India, that when members of this section of society begin to practise Vipassana, they become highly successful in spreading Vipassana to many other areas of society.

This course will be held from April 24 to May 5 at the Eastover Resort in Lenox, Massachusetts. For more information on this course, please visit: <www.executive.dhamma.org> or contact: The Executive Course Registrar, C/o VMC, 386 Colrain-Shelburne Rd., Shelburne, MA 01370, U.S.A., Tel: [1] (413) 625 2160.

Goenkaji to Tour North America

Starting in early May of 2002, following his participation in the *Spirit in Business* conference and the special ten-day course in Lenox, Goenkaji will tour the U.S. and Canada. This tour will provide a unique opportunity for meditators to organize local events for Goenkaji to attend.

A large motor home will be provided for Goenkaji and his attendants, eliminating the expense and arduous travel of airline flights. The real benefit, though, will be the opportunity to stop at more out-of-the-way places to speak or to visit Dhamma groups.

Dates have not as yet been confirmed, but it is likely that the tour will begin in Massachusetts in early May and finish there in early July. Goenkaji would first travel south, then west to the coast, north to Canada, and back to the east coast through Canada and northern parts of the U.S. Of course, all these plans are subject to *anicca*.

The importance of Goenkaji's presence to the growth of Dhamma in North America cannot be overstated.

For years India has had the privilege of Goenkaji's vast energy, and the level of Vipassana activity there is widespread and intense. For instance, at *Dhamma Giri* over 1,000 applications come in for every course, of which only 700 or so can be accepted. There are currently over 35 centers in India, about half of all the centers worldwide. State governments have requested that Vipassana be offered in all prisons and they encourage state workers to join courses, with no loss in pay for time off. Vipassana is given as part of the training for police cadets. Courses are offered for university students in Bangalore, for street children in Mumbai, for people with leprosy, for the blind and the deaf. One can even view Goenkaji's discourses on local television stations.

After Goenkaji's visit to North America last year the number of students requesting courses jumped noticeably. Another course will soon be held in a California prison. One state is interested in Vipassana for its juvenile detention system.

An ad hoc organizational structure has been set up to prepare for the tour. An e-mail announcement service will provide updates and guidelines. To subscribe to this service, send a blank e-mail to <tour-announce-subscribe@na.region.dhamma.org>, or visit the website at <www.dhara.dhamma.org/os/na-tour>; username: oldstudent, password: behappy.

Meditators have an opportunity to help organize events for the tour. Those who feel that they can organize a suitable event in their area such as public talks or gatherings of groups from different countries and backgrounds may contact <tour-itinerary@na.region.dhamma.org>. Meditators in India can inform their family and friends in North America about Goenkaji's tour. Unlike course and center donations, contributions to the Media Support Fund can be accepted from old students and nonstudents alike. Those wishing to support this project may send donations payable to the Vipassana Newsletter (Media Support Fund), 386 Colrain-Shelburne Road, Shelburne, MA 01370, USA. ♪

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question: Do you have a vision of how Vipassana can continue to spread in its purity in the future, even after you are not here?

Goenkaji: Well, the people who are responsible for the spread of Dhamma must understand that the purity of the technique is the most important part of its efficacy. India lost this wonderful technique within 500 years of the Buddha. This was due to a number of reasons, but the main reason was the mixing of the technique with different rites, rituals, philosophical beliefs, etc. After some time those rituals and beliefs became more predominant than Vipassana itself, and as a result, it slowly lost its efficacy. So we have to be very careful that this should not happen again. We already lost it 2000 years ago and now that it has come again in its pure form, we should maintain the purity so that it gives good results for as long as possible. The moment people start making it impure they will begin to lose the good results. People come from different traditions, from different walks of life. They should not try to impose their beliefs or their traditions on this technique. If people realize this important point then whether I am here or not, this technique will continue to help people for a long time. ♪

(21 January 1995, Annual Meeting: *Dhamma Giri*)

CHILDREN COURSES IN MUMBAI

Anapana courses for children have been arranged in Mumabi during the *Diwali* vacation as follows:

Residential 2-day course: from 17 November (4 p.m.) to 18 November (7 p.m.) at Domic Savio High School, Sher-e-Punjab Society, Mahakali Caves Road, Opp. Tolani College, Andheri (East) for children from Std. VIIth to Xth. For registration, contact Tel: (022) 8324820 or 8071335 on 11, 12 or 13 November.

One-day courses: from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Course date	Location	Eligibility	Registration
4-11	Matunga	Vth to VIIth	31-10 to 2-11
25-11	Mulund	Vth to VIIth	21 to 23-11
2-12	Matunga	VIIIth to Xth	29 and 30-11
23-12	Mulund	VIIIth to Xth	20 and 21-12

Course Venues:

Matunga: Amulak Amichand High School, rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Near SNDT College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Mumbai 19. **Mulund:** Seth Moti Pachan Rashtriya School, Near Lion's Club and Vaze School, Vithalbhair Patel Road, Mulund (West), Mumbai 80.

For registration, contact Tel: (022) 8324820, 8071335 or 2812416.

NB. Please do not come for the courses without registration. Please bring your own cushion.

AUDIO CDs OF MORNING CHANTINGS

The chanting of the Pali suttas by Goenkaji every morning during the ten-day Vipassana course is very inspiring for Vipassana meditators. So far, these were available in audio cassettes. Now VRI has prepared audio CDs containing these chantings with far superior sound quality. These are available as a set of five CDs, each containing two suttas.

Those who wish to acquire these CDs may send donation by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri in favour of Vipassana Research Institute.

One set (containing five CDs): Rs 400.00.

Four sets (of five CDs each): Rs 1500.00.

Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

For India and Nepal (Registered Parcel):

One set: Rs 35.00. Four sets: Rs 50.00.

Outside India (Registered Parcel Airmail Postage):

One set: Rs 650.00. Four sets: Rs 720.00.

SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 20/- (U.S. \$10/- OUTSIDE INDIA); LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 250/- (U.S. \$100/- OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF VRI.

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e-mail: dhamma@vsnl.com

Website: www.vri.dhamma.org

NEW VRI PUBLICATIONS

VRI has published four new books in Hindi for the benefit of Vipassana meditators:

Sutta-s±ra I (D²ghanik±ya and Majjhimanik±ya)

Sutta-s±ra II (Sa½yuttanik±ya)

Sutta-s±ra III (A²guttaranik±ya and Khuddakanik±ya)

(set of 3 books for Rs 135/-)

Dhammapada (Pali *g±thas* in *Devan±gar²* script with Hindi translation) Rs 25/-

Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

For India and Nepal (Registered Printed Matter Postage):

All four books: Rs 30.00. **Outside India (Registered Printed Matter Airmail Postage):** All four books: Rs 300.00.

VRI has also published two additional books:

1. *Mah±satipath±na Sutta* with Gujarati translation (price: Rs 18.00). This book contains the Pali text in *Devan±gar²* script and the Gujarati translation on the facing page.

2. *Was the Buddha a Pessimist* (price: Rs 35.00), which is the English translation of the Hindi book, *Ky± Buddha Dukkhav±d² The?* by Goenkaji.

Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

For India and Nepal (Registered Printed Matter):

One book: Rs 20.00. Both books: Rs 21.00.

Outside India (Registered Printed Matter Airmail Postage): One book: Rs 90.00. Both books: Rs 165.00.

Payment must be made only by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri in favour of Vipassana Research Institute.

FIRST TEN-DAY COURSE IN KOREA

The first ten-day Vipassana course in Korea was conducted from 15 to 26 August 2001 in the Choong Cheong Book Do area. Forty-nine students (19 male and 30 female students and including seven old students) benefitted from the course.

GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

Goenkaji's discourses in Hindi are being broadcast on Aastha TV channel daily at 5:00 p.m.

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES:

Bhikkhu ¼c±rya: Ven. Bhikkhu Shing Shr, *Taiwan*

NEW TELEPHONE AND FAX NUMBERS OF DHAMMA GIRI:

The telephone and fax numbers of *Dhamma Giri* have changed. The new numbers are:

Tel: [91] (02553) 44076, 44086; Fax: (02553) 44176