



WORDS OF DHAMMA

**Ko nu hāso kimānando, niccaṃ pajjalite sati;
Andhakārena onaddhā, padipaṃ na gavesatha.**

Why this laughter, why this jubilation, when the world is ever
burning?
Shrouded by darkness, would you not seek a light?

— *Dhammapada 146, Jarāvago*

The Significance of Deepawali

A Discourse given to old students on 5th November 2002 on the occasion of Deepawali (the Hindu festival of lights) at Jannabai School in Mumbai.

Dear students!

When Dhamma arises, darkness is dispelled and light spreads everywhere. However, if we do not understand what Dhamma is, what darkness is and indeed what light is, then what we are left with is lighting a string of oil lamps as a symbol of dispelling darkness on the moonless night of Deepawali.

Lighting oil lamps is certainly a relevant symbol but let us now understand what Dhamma truly means. True Dhamma is all encompassing, applicable to all, all pervasive and present at all times. When Dhamma becomes limited to a particular community of people it is no longer universal, it does not remain true Dhamma. Similarly, if Dhamma becomes limited to the people of a certain region, then again it is not true Dhamma. In addition, if Dhamma does not remain true for all time, but changes with time, then again it is not true Dhamma.

Dhamma is the law of nature, the universal law applicable to all, at all times and in all places. One of the laws of nature is that when the sun rises, light spreads and warmth is generated. This is the dhamma of the sun and it always remains constant. The dhamma of fire is that it burns and whatever comes in its way burns as well. This is its nature, its dhamma. If this is not so, then it is not fire. The nature, the dhamma of ice is to be cold and to make whatever comes in its way cold. This was true millions of years ago, is true today and will remain true in the future. This is its dhamma.

Dhamma of the Mind

Similarly, as soon as any defilement arises in our mind, we lose our mental balance, our equanimity, as well as our peace and happiness. This is the nature of mental defilement, its dhamma being applicable to everyone. When the mind becomes free of defilements and becomes purified then automatically feelings of loving-kindness, compassion, and empathy arises. One feels calm, peaceful, and very happy within as a result. These are the attributes of a wholesome mind.

An unwholesome mind makes us agitated and unhappy, while a wholesome mind makes us peaceful and happy. This was true millions of years ago, it is true today and will remain true in the future. No matter what name a person may call himself, no matter where he may have been born or how he may dress, it does not matter. Whether he practices this rite or that ritual, and whatever philosophy he may believe in, it does not matter. If he has generated defilement within, then

punishment will follow instantly. According to popular belief, one may think that punishment will only come after death. That too will happen but what about now? The punishment will arrive instantly as one becomes agitated. This is inevitable. This is the law of nature.

Just as the dhamma of fire is to burn, it does not discriminate against anyone because of how he is dressed, which caste or class he is born in to or what his beliefs are. If a person places his hand in fire it will burn him without concern for who he is. Knowing this truth, we stay away from fire. Similarly, the dhamma of mental defilements is to make a person agitated. If we do not like to become agitated then we must ensure that we do not generate defilements, as agitation is inevitable if one generates them. True Dhamma therefore is all pervasive, and ever present.

The day humanity begins to understand that Dhamma is the law of nature and that we will be rewarded or punished according to the state of our mental purity or impurity is the day, the time when true Dhamma will arise. Before a person carries out an unwholesome action of body or speech, he first muddies his mind. If a person deludes himself by thinking that he can continue to perform unwholesome actions but somehow he will be saved and released from the cycle of birth and death by someone who will lift him up and bless him, then please understand he suffers from a huge delusion. People simply refuse to see the truth and this phenomenon continues to repeat itself. Indeed when words of Dhamma and sectarianism come to mean the same thing then how can we understand what true Dhamma is?

If we look at any religious tradition, we will find the essence of Dhamma at its root; all religious streams of thought speak of the same thing – live a wholesome life. No one will say that living a wholesome life is not necessary in order to be Dhammic.

What is an unwholesome life? Whenever one indulges in any vocal action or physical action which harms others and destroys their peace and harmony, it is an unwholesome action. These actions are first generated as unwholesome thoughts in the mind. Alternately, when one refrains from performing unwholesome actions, then one has made an effort to control the mind. People come here from different traditions and while discussing their scriptures they all say the same thing – discipline the mind. How else will you direct it rightly?

Even when one has disciplined his or her mind one sees that at the root of the mind a vast collection of impurities abound and continue to multiply as the negativities keep on arising from deep within. It is good if we have disciplined our minds even though it may be only at the surface level of the

mind. However, this habit pattern of multiplying the defilements deep within the mind may erupt someday like a volcano and then all the peace gathered assiduously on the surface level of the mind will evaporate. The mind thus has to be purified fully, on the surface and at the depth. Who can oppose this? Which tradition can challenge this? This is the Dhamma that is universal.

The essence of Dhamma is the same for everyone though external appearances may differ. One tradition may have certain rites and rituals, customs, fasts, festivals and philosophies; another may have different rituals, customs, festivals and philosophies. These differences give rise to varied sects and communities. Nevertheless, common amongst everyone is true Dhamma that belongs to all. It is universal, applicable to all, at all times; then alone it is Dhamma. However, when we begin to believe that the external sectarian cover is the essence and then develop deep attachment towards it, along with the belief that my Dhamma alone is true and will lead me to final liberation, then there is a problem. Having the belief that attending festivals and performing rites, rituals and fasts will lead us to liberation is very misleading. To think that the philosophy that we believe in will lead us to liberation is also misleading. Such philosophies have become religions and bear no resemblance to Dhamma whatsoever.

Then someone wise comes along and expounds the true Dhamma with love and compassion explaining that indeed you may enjoy your rituals, your festivals and fasts; there is no argument with following social customs and norms, but you should not confuse them with Dhamma. Dhamma is to live a wholesome life, developing a disciplined and purified mind.

Most often, what happens is that a competitive attitude develops. One person may say, "This is my belief; if you too believe in it, then the one sitting up above the clouds will give you direct entry into the heavens." Another may say, "No, no. If you follow my belief then my god with special powers will give you entry into the heavens more quickly." My god, your god – the fight goes on. What have we created! Just think, if there is truly a god then won't this god belong to all? Please understand that we have lived in darkness for far too long. Everyone is free to think as he or she likes, but we need to know Dhamma in its true form and what's more we need to live it.

Resurgence of Dhamma

Dhamma takes birth in our country again and again and is destroyed again and again. When it arises, the ability to experience it within is awakened. For a person receiving true knowledge and wisdom it is *cakkhum udapādi* – one's inner eyes have opened. However, some people are confused by these words. When someone says the eyes have opened, someone may expect some special kind of eyes to open in place of the physical eyes, which will then enable them to see everything. On the other hand, others may think that their eyes have not opened at all and they cannot be liberated; they become distressed.

What are inner eyes? When the capacity to experience the subtle reality within awakens, it is called seeing with inner eyes. There are two ways to see. The regular worldly way of seeing with the eyes – to see external colours, sights, lights, shapes. In the spiritual realm, 'to see' does not mean literally seeing with our eyes, but to feel, to experience, to know.

In the ancient language of India, to experience meant to see, to feel. Now however a mere echo of these words of wisdom remain. For instance, we say, "Oh, listen to this

music, see how sweet it is!" 'See', meaning sense it. "Touch this satin fabric and see how soft it is" or "See how sweet this dish is" and so on. To 'see' meant to experience words that you hear, visions that you see, fragrances that you smell, flavours that you taste, touches that you sense, thoughts that arise in mind; to see them meant to experience them. Moreover, an experience can be had only within the boundaries of the body. Whatever happens outside this realm becomes a reality for us only when it touches any one of our sense organs, not otherwise.

So experiential wisdom, knowledge was called *paññā*, *paññā udapādi* – the arising of wisdom. One's own wisdom, not someone else's which at best can guide us along the path of liberation. We too will be liberated once we decide to walk on the path freeing ourselves from defilements, misery and bondage. Only knowledge that becomes ours with experience can liberate us.

When we get established in this knowledge then as soon as words make contact with our ears, we will become aware that a vibration has arisen. Vibration has struck against vibration generating a new wave of vibration, "Oh, it is impermanent, *anicca, anicca*." We will understand this and will not react. Whether a vibration arises at the nose sense door, the tongue sense door, the body sense door or at the mind sense door as a thought, we will experience it as a wavelet and know that it is impermanent. We will remain aware in *paññā*

There was a time in the past when I used to recite – *Indriyāṇi indriyārthebhyaha tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā* – he who knows that the sense faculties are there to do the work of the sense faculties has become established in *paññā*. How? Everyone knows that the senses will do the task of sense faculties alone. The eyes will only see, nose will only smell, skin will only feel the touch, and the mind will only think, everyone knows this. Then is everyone established in *paññā*?

I have spoken here of *paññā* as understood in ancient times. There are four parts to the mind – the first one only does the task of knowing. As soon as a sense object touches a sense organ, the first part of the mind raises its head and knows something has happened. Then the second part raises its head and recognizes what has happened. The third part then feels the resulting sensation and then the fourth part reacts and ties the knots. *Indriyani indriyarthebhyaha* – let the senses do the work of the senses. The ears hear a word, the eyes see a vision, that is all; we will not take it further to the other three levels. We must reach that stage though it is not easy. It needs serious and deep work. Now as things stand, whenever a sense object touches its sense organ, the fourth part of the mind raises its head instantly and reacts generating craving and aversion, tying knots, *gunanvitan, gunanvitan*, multiplying mental defilements.

How indeed can one understand this without first knowing the truth at the experiential level? He whose wisdom has awakened says *vijjā udapādi* – knowledge has arisen, and ignorance is dispelled. To consider that which is impermanent to be permanent and absolute, is to remain in ignorance. The realm of the senses is certainly *anicca*, the entire realm of mind and matter is *anicca*, impermanent. If one truly knows this, then it is *paññā*, wisdom.

The wise ones of the past have said, *āloko udapādi* – light arises. It is fine that we light oil lamps – at least the darkness outside will be dispelled. Nevertheless, we actually have to remove the darkness within ourselves. Only when the light shines within can we realise that what we are doing is tying knots and growing agitated. Otherwise, there is sheer

blindness, and we have no realization that we are harming ourselves and yes, we may be harming others too.

Whenever one indulges in an unwholesome action like theft, murder, sexual misconduct, cheating or lying, one first generates negativity within oneself, such as anger, aversion or greed. Some impurity will arise within first, before it manifests as a spoken or physical action. It is the law of nature that as soon as any defilement arises, punishment follows immediately. Because they arise together, they are called sahadaya. When defilement arises, misery and agitation appear and peace is lost.

What steps can be taken once you decide you do not wish to harm yourself? We all are wise enough not to put our hands into fire for fear of being burned. We may be burned once or twice but we quickly gain the wisdom to stay away from fire. But how do we stay away from the fire of the negativities within?

By being aware of all that happens within the framework of the body at the experiential level. Just as we know that fire burns, we can also develop the knowledge that as soon as some defilement arises in the mind, agitation and punishment follows. Knowing this is knowing Dhamma. With this knowledge, a person becomes a *kayastha*, one who dwells in awareness, in *kaya*, body. It is only in ignorance that one does not realise that fire burns brightly underneath the top layers of ash, just as the surface level of the mind thinks it is happy without being aware of the agitation that is bubbling underneath in its subconscious levels. Otherwise, who in his right mind would make himself miserable but think he is happy? No one.

When this awareness arises then *aloko udapadi* – light arises. Word meanings of ancient India have been lost. Now as you go within, perhaps these words will come alive once again – what is ignorance and what is knowledge, what is wisdom? What is darkness and what indeed is light?

Know this by your own experience; do not accept it because your guru or your traditions and scriptures say so. The day you are able to say that you speak from your own experience is the day the light within you will begin to arise. Of course, it has to be developed with true practice, sadhana. Just taking rounds through the body mechanically is not enough. No one is sitting above the clouds keeping count of how many rounds you have made. If so many rounds have been completed at the time of death, then this door will open, and if that many rounds have been completed then that door will open. No, no one is keeping any such record.

Also, understand that the gods above do not generate negativities within us; we ourselves give rise to the defilements within making ourselves unhappy. Indeed no outsider is able to do such a thing. Why indeed would anyone awaken negativities in everyone, get everyone agitated and then say, “Pray to me and I will take you across the ocean of misery”? What kind of a being would that be? This is but the creation of our own imagination.

Attā hi attano nātho, attā hi attano gati. – You are your own master, you make your own future.

Self-reliance is one of the benchmarks of true Dhamma. Religion makes a person dependent on others. The so-called leaders of religions thrive on the fears and weaknesses of people and encourage them to take refuge in them, stating they will liberate them with their special powers. Then of course, there are hefty fees to be paid for this ‘special liberation’. This is certainly not true Dhamma.

Nevertheless, we need not fall prey to this. We should be ever vigilant and work towards self-reliance. We alone are responsible for our every action. Good actions will beget

good results. It is nature’s law. Knowing this we plant good seeds and avoid negative actions, *kamma* so that we are saved from their unhappy results.

This is a simple point of Dhamma, but unfortunately, we have conditioned ourselves into believing we are weak and helpless. It is our constant refrain that someone else will take us across the ocean of misery to the far shore of liberation.

This awareness must arise in you, “I am my own master and I create my own destiny. Whether I create a joyous destiny, an unhappy one or a destiny beyond all this and move into total freedom. I alone am responsible.”

When Dhamma arises, every person begins to understand his or her responsibility and becomes self-reliant. Help, of course, may be taken from others, but only to the extent that a person may be guided on the path, shown how to walk the path. After that, every step has to be taken by oneself. If this awareness arises then this festival of lights will have truly brought a new year for us, a new life, a new future, a future filled with immense welfare.

Dispel the darkness of ignorance with the light of wisdom; understand the true essence of Dhamma and progress on the path of total liberation step by step until you reach the final goal.

May you be happy! May you be peaceful!

Kalyanmitra,

Satya Narayan Goenka

Importance of Lighting a Pagoda

Respected Goenkaji always said that it is of special importance that any Pagoda where relics are kept be well lit throughout the night. This helps maintain the Dhamma atmosphere. Anyone wishing to donate for lighting of the Global Pagoda in the name of their near and dear ones may do so. The cost per night is Rs. 5000/-. For further information Contact: Mr. Derik Pegado- 022 33747512. Email: audits@globalpagoda.org. or, Mr. R.K. Agarwal- 7506251844. Email: rkagarwal.vri@globalpagoda.org



Sangha Dana on Occasion of Respected Mataji’s First Death Anniversary

On 22nd January 2017 at 10 am a mega Sangha Dana will be held on the occasion of respected Mataji’s first Death Anniversary (5th Jan.) as well as respected Sayagyi U Ba Khin’s Death Anniversary (19th Jan.) followed by a one day mega course at the Global Pagoda in Mumbai. Taking benefit of this meritorious opportunity anyone wishing to contribute may **Contact:** Mr. Derik Pegado 022-33747512, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org or Mr. R.K. Agarwal: Mob: 7506251844, Email: rkagarwal.vri@globalpagoda.org



ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Shri Indravadan Kothadia, to assist the Coordinator Area Teacher in serving the GCC countries, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.
2. Shri V. Santhanagopalan to assist the Center Teacher of Dhamma Arunachala

NEWLY APPOINTED ASSISTANT TEACHERS

1. Dr. Rajendra Gaikwad, Nashik

2. Mr. Ponnuswamy Venkatesh, Bangalore
3. Shri. Rajendra Chandak, Daryapur (Amravati)
4. Smt. Mangala Chandak, Daryapur
5. U Aung Kyaw Nyan Wai, Myanmar
6. Daw Win Win Khaing, Myanmar

Childrens Course Teachers

1. Mrs. Claudia Arakaki Australia
2. Mrs. Trish Nunezb Australia

One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda

Sunday 22nd Jan. 2017 in Gratitude of Sayagyi U Ba Khin (19th Jan) and Mataji (5th Jan), One-day mega courses will be held at **GVP** Time: 11 am to 4 pm. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho**: Avail of the immense benefit of meditating in large group. For registration **Contact**: 022-28451170 // 022-337475-01 / 43 / 44 – Extn.: 9. (Tel booking: **11 am to 5 pm** daily). **Online registration**: www.oneday.globalpagoda.org.

V.R.I. Academic Schedule - 2017, Global Pagoda Campus, Mumbai.

1. **Basic Pāli** – Hindi six weeks Residential course (15th Jan to 24th Feb'2017). 2. **Advance Pāli** – Hindi two weeks Residential course (27th Feb to 10 Mar'2017). 3. **Abhidhamma in practical life** – V.R.I. Mumbai in collaboration with Mumbai University, once a week. 3 hours session tow times, From 10th December 2016 to 25th Feb 2017. Eligibility: 12th class passed. Contact for the Eligibility and programmes - <http://www.vridhamma.org/Theory-And-Practice-Courses> or you can Contact: 1) VRI office-022-33747560,(9:30 AM to 5:30 PM only) 2) Mrs. Baljit Lamba: 9833518979, 3) Miss Rajshree: 9004698648, 4) Mrs. Alka Vengurlekar: 9820583440, 5) Mrs. Archana Deshpande: 9869007040. E-mail: mumbai@vridhamma.org;

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date: 20-11, 18-12. **Place:** Goregaon
(Age 10 to 16 Only) Registration before Course Thursday and Friday

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
First Sunday	Dombivili	10-16	2 days before Course

First Sunday	Ulhasnagar	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Wadala	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Sanpada	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Andheri	10-16	2 days before Course
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar	10-16	2 days before Course

“Please call or send a text sms message with the name & age of the child two days in advance for registration”

2 Day Residential Anapana Course for Children: (age 12 to 16 Only for Boys) 25 to 26-12-2016, (age 12 to 16 Only for Girls) 27 to 28-12-2016, **Bhiwandi:** Naik Foundation Padaga village (Bhiwandi) Mumbai Nasik Highway (N.H.3) After Padaga Toll Naka, Near Pallavi Hotel, For Registration call 022-25008868, 25162505, 25011096. (Registration After 5th December Only)

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration Timing:** 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location. **Course Venues:** **Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling and Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Mob. 98924-15803, Tel: 2624-2025. **Dombivili:** K B Vira HighSchool, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **Ulhasnagar:** A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Wadala:** “BMC School – Sewri Wadala Estate Road No: 7A Behind Lijjat Papad Building **Contact:** Mobile: 98922-18186, 98201-50336, **Khar:** Mahabodhi Buddha Vihar, Baudha Smashan Bhumi, Carter Rd. Danda, Khar West, Mumbai-52, Mob. 9930962652, 9869281410, **Sanpada:** Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpada. Tel: 7738649821, 9699862322, **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865. **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505.

Please call two days in advance for registration.

NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration, please inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.



DHAMMA DOHAS

*Bāhara-bāhara saja uṭhe, jagamaga-jagamaga dīpa,
Para mana andhiyārā rahā, jagā na prajñā dīpa.*
Well decorated oil lamps sparkle and burn bright outside,
But there is darkness within as the lamp of wisdom is not lit.
*Bāhara dīpa jalāya kara, khusiyām rahe manāya,
Antardīpa pradīpta ho, to maṅgala chā jāya.*
Lighting lamps outside one celebrates and enjoys,
But if the lamp within is lit then true welfare pervades everywhere.

*Mahāpuruṣa kī vijaya para, mithyā thothā garva,
Jiteṃ apāne āpako, tabhī manāṃ parva.*
Empty and vacuous is the pride of victory by a valorous warrior,
However, a true celebration ensues when one is victorious over one's self.
*Antarmana meṃ dharma kā, jāge vimala prakāśa,
Haṭe andherā moha kā, kaṭeṃ karma ke pāśa.*
May the pure light of Dharma arise in one's heart, May the darkness of delusion and the bondages of kamma dissolve.

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