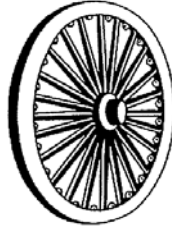


Vipassana



Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught

by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

**So karohi dipamattano, khippaṃ vāyama paṇḍito bhava;
Niddhantamalo anaṅgano, dibbaṃ ariyabhūmi upehisi.**

— *Dhammapada 236, Malavagga*

Make an island unto yourself. Strive quickly (by meditating), become wise. Purged of impurities and free from passion you will enter the celestial stage of the Ariyas.

Good wishes for a Happy New Year

*Discourse given on Oct 25, 1995 to old student meditators in the
Jamanabai High School, Mumbai*

My dear Dhamma sons and daughters,

On the occasion of Deepavali—New Year's day, let us firmly resolve once again to walk on the path of Dhamma. Let us not just discuss it, nor debate about it, but let us walk on the path of Dhamma step by step.

All of you have been practicing Vipassana; some of you may have done only one course, others may have done more than one. However many courses you have attended is not as important as whether you practice Vipassana for one hour in the morning and evening. If you don't, you have to make a strong resolve to do so. Just as two meals a day are necessary for the body to keep it strong and healthy, practicing Vipassana in the morning and evening is equally as necessary for the mind.

However, meditators who practice in the morning and evening have to be careful to see whether it has become a mere mechanical ritual for them. They should see whether they are practicing Vipassana in the way it should be practiced. If it is being practiced in the right way, changes in life are bound to come. Life will be happier than before. There will be more strength to face difficulties, miseries in life. But if meditators are not practicing in the right way, but instead have made it a subject of debate and discussion, putting forward one argument today and another tomorrow, giving high praise to their philosophy, and disparaging the philosophies of others', believing their philosophy to be right and others' wrong, then I am sorry to say they are not going to reap any reward.

If you develop craving in all the happy circumstances in life and aversion in all the unhappy ones, then you have not learned the A.B.C.'s of Vipassana. In fact, you have strayed from the right path, and you are deceiving yourself in the name of Vipassana. You are pretending that you are practicing it. You have to examine yourself, who else can do it? Nobody else can examine our minds. We may make a thousand false representations in front of others, we may pretend to be good meditators, pretend to be equanimous, pretend to be such and such, but what does one get by pretending? You have not made Vipassana a way of life, you have not developed equanimity and you have not

learned to face the ups and downs of life. So you have strayed from the right path, as you have not understood what Vipassana truly is.

Why does this happen? It happens because you have not understood the essence or real purpose of Vipassana through your experience. When you experience pleasant sensations you feel very happy, and start thinking that you are a great meditator now that you are feeling sensations all over your body. But when you feel unpleasant sensations you are disappointed and feel sad. 'Oh! What kind of meditation is this! I am feeling only unpleasant sensations.' That is why I say that you have not understood even the A.B.C.'s of Vipassana, and you hope to derive benefit from this, hope to be Dhammic in life, and hope to have peace and happiness in life! I say you have strayed from the path.

The most important thing about practicing Vipassana is not to let craving and aversion arise in the depths of your mind. And for this you should make constant effort. Your success is to be measured by the degree of equanimity you achieve. If you have not achieved this equanimity, how can you expect any benefit from Vipassana, how can you expect to get peace? How can you expect to achieve this when you have not worked for it? You dance with joy when you feel pleasant sensations and you feel sad when you feel unpleasant ones. This is not the way Vipassana should be practiced!

Be mindful. To walk on the path of Vipassana is to be in a precarious situation. It may seem easy to do, but really it is very difficult if one just understands it at the intellectual level, but does not put it into practice. If one does not practice Vipassana in the morning and evening, then what benefit can be derived from it? One will just remain confused.

Let us understand what Vipassana is. In our entire body different sensations are manifesting. We begin to experience them, but we often forget to take the next step. If we experience sensations but do not make use of them, do not derive any benefit from our experience, then what is the use of experiencing them? Why are we observing them at the experiential level? In order to see what reality is. Pleasant sensations arise but do not last long. They pass away. Every moment they are arising and passing away with great rapidity. Unpleasant sensations also arise to pass away. A time comes when unpleasant sensations pass away sooner rather than later. What do we observe here? 'Both

pleasant and unpleasant sensations are impermanent, so which should I regard as good or bad? Which should I be attached to? Which should I crave for? Which should I develop aversion to?' When you realize their impermanent nature, you have developed wisdom which is for your benefit. Otherwise, this practice is just a useless game. Our minds can play tricks; can begin to play some games in the name of religion. 'Now I'm able to observe sensations. I am so great I have even begun to experience a free flow!' But at other times when you don't feel a free flow you become sad. You feel sad when unpleasant sensations arise and happy when pleasant ones arise. What have you begun to do in the name of Vipassana? What you really need to do is to come out of this habit pattern, the pattern that binds you to craving and aversion. You have to come out of this prison. If you are not doing this then you are not practicing Vipassana. Therefore be alert and attentive.

There are yardsticks to measure whether you are making progress in your meditation or not. You should always evaluate yourself by applying these yardsticks.

The first is to see whether you are developing strength in equanimity to face every situation in life. If you are not developing it, then you are far away from Vipassana. If you are developing even a little equanimity, developing a little more than you had before, then you are truly practicing Vipassana. You are making proper effort; you are making progress. The first yardstick, therefore, is to see whether you are developing sufficient equanimity to remain unshaken in whatever situation you encounter in life.

The second very important yardstick is to see that one has not become a sectarian. One who walks on the path of true Dhamma does not go astray and become a sectarian. If one feels proud of belonging to a particular sect and looks down upon others belonging to another sect, then one has become really confused and is far away from Vipassana. One should evaluate oneself by applying this yardstick.

What difference does it make what one calls oneself, if one is not alert and attentive, if one has not developed wisdom, if one is multiplying craving and aversion and is miserable. Whether this name or that, it makes no difference. But if one is introspective, if one practices Vipassana and develops knowledge and wisdom, and learns to remain equanimous in all situations of life, then one is definitely coming out of misery.

One may be born in this caste or that caste, may call himself a Brahmin or a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya or a Śūdra, but if he multiplies his craving and aversion he is bound to become miserable. If he does not, he comes out of misery. He has begun to really understand what Dhamma is, and becomes truly Dhammic. But if he develops defilements, he has not understood Dhamma; he is far away from it. The sooner he understands this, the sooner he will ascertain whether he has developed a superiority complex or an inferiority complex because of the caste or sect he belongs to. If he finds he has developed one of these complexes then he is still not ripe in Dhamma;

Holding wrong views is a strong fetter. One holds a particular philosophical view which has been held for centuries, through countless generations. One is so strongly attached to it that he regards only this view as true and all

others as false. As long as one holds this view, one is not truly practicing Vipassana, and is far away from true Dhamma.

If one is becoming free from craving and aversion then one is walking on the right path. If somebody else is becoming free from defilements he or she is also walking on the right path.

The sooner one understands this, the sooner one will be free from wrong philosophical views. When one begins to think of one's own welfare and the welfare of others then one is on the right path. To be free from defilements is to be free from misery. This is Dhamma. What matters most is whether one is completely free from defilements or not, whether they have been completely uprooted or not. If one does not remove them totally, root and branch, one stops short of achieving purity of mind. One may well understand at the intellectual level that one should be free from craving and aversion, one should be equanimous, but one is still not completely free from them. Why? Because a large part of the mind is still engaged in creating craving and aversion because it has not heard the message one has sent at the intellectual level. Why? Because the wall between the conscious and unconscious mind is very thick. The unconscious mind reacts to sensations and keeps on generating craving and aversion day in and day out. One's intellect is unable to send its message to the unconscious mind. How will it be possible to send the message so that it can be heard? When one begins to feel sensations, observes them as impermanent and learns to remain equanimous in all circumstances, then the walls get demolished. In this way we learn how to eradicate our mental defilements which lie in the depths of our minds.

What happens when you hold a sectarian view?

There are a number of meditators who I feel sorry for, as they have not understood what Vipassana is. When they experience gross sensations, which they do not like, they accept them as impermanent because they want to be rid of them. But the moment they have free flow, and reach the stage of experiencing dissolution, they no longer have the realization that this also is impermanent, because they want it to continue. They do not want it to be impermanent. They enjoy the pleasant sensations and they want them to continue. They become confused. They recall that the tradition they belong to holds that there is one creator God who pervades the whole world and if they can somehow witness Him they will be released. And so they begin to regard those sensations as eternal God etc. What are they doing? They have begun to imagine that those sensations are permanent. The sensations arise and pass away but they take them as permanent, as God and Brahma. Well, it has one good effect in that the mind will be greatly concentrated. But they have strayed from the right path which is to eradicate craving and aversion from their deep unconscious and subconscious minds.

In another case one holds the view, 'There is a permanent, eternal, unchanging soul inside me and that is 'I'. I will exist forever. I am eternal, permanent and unchanging.' With this view, as soon as this person begins to experience pleasant sensations he takes them to be his soul. He does not see that they are just sensations created

by the interaction of mind and matter, and that they are not permanent. But he takes them to be permanent and wants to continue regarding them as his soul. But they are not permanent. How foolish it is to take them as permanent! They are mere vibrations arising and passing away. Is he not deceived? The real permanent state is beyond mind and matter, which transcends the field of senses. That is a state where no sense organ works; neither eyes, nor ears, nor nose, nor any other sense organ. Where all the six sense organs cease to work, that is a permanent state. Is it not foolish to attribute qualities of permanence to impermanent sensations which keep on arising and passing away every moment? Understand that you have not reached your goal. You have stopped at a midway station. You still have a long way to go. You have to come out of the field of the senses where whatever happens is fleeting. You have to experience the eternal at the experiential level, but by taking that which is impermanent as permanent, you have stopped walking on the path.

Why is that so? Because you are deeply attached to your philosophical view and seek to find it in everything. You think, 'If I go on experiencing only sensations my philosophical view will be neglected.' Try to understand why you are observing only mind and body. You are doing so because it is mind and body which create your fetters. How do they do so? When you experience pleasant sensations you develop craving, and when you experience unpleasant sensations you develop aversion. And they are fetters that bind you to the wheel of birth and death. Why are you asked to observe them? In order that you do not make the mistake of regarding them as permanent. Observing sensations is not the end; it is just a means to take you to the goal. If you make the mistake of taking the means as an end, taking bondage as freedom, then how can you reach the goal, how can you attain the state of liberation?

An impartial critic of Indian history will observe that when Dhamma arises and spreads in its pure form, it frees man's mind from defilements. But over time it begins to absorb foreign concepts of castes, sects and different philosophical views and gives them importance; Dhamma thereby loses its pure character. Then once again there will arise some great man who teaches and explains Dhamma, and teaches that to be free from craving and aversion is real Dhamma, and that all other considerations are of no significance. He then explains the way to eradicate them. He says whenever craving for anything arises, observe its impermanent nature at the experiential level and stop multiplying it. Similarly stop multiplying aversion. Dhamma in its pure form gives welfare to all.

When a sect is formed in India, or anywhere in the world, it is formed on the basis of some philosophical view. One holds a particular philosophical view very dear and forms a sect. Another holds another philosophical view very dear and forms another sect. And all those who are attached to their sect, speak so highly of it. Their sect owes its existence due to their attachment to it. Instead of freeing themselves from craving and aversion they clamor for their philosophical view, and thus squander their valuable wealth of pure Dhamma? What a pity!

A well known teacher has written to me that the meditation I teach drives out only craving and aversion, but the meditation that he teaches enables meditators to obtain a sight of their soul. I would like to ask him, 'What is important,

to obtain a sight of one's soul or to be free from craving and aversion?' Suppose one has obtained the sight of his soul, does it mean one is free from craving and aversion? Does it mean one is free from sensual desire? If one does not eliminate them, what has one attained? When sectarian conditioning is too strong in us, when philosophical view is too strong in us, then we stop thinking and Dhamma begins to decline. We fool ourselves by holding fast to philosophical beliefs. Like one pretends to be happy by distracting oneself from sorrow by consuming alcohol. But when one sobers up one realizes one's sorrow remains. You have not taken the bull by the horns. You have not rooted out the cause of your suffering.

That is why I say practice Vipassana and all things will take care of themselves. Root out the cause of suffering which lies in the unconscious part of our minds. It is not actually unconscious, but always aware of the sensations that arise on our bodies. It always produces craving when we feel pleasant sensations. It always produces aversion when we have unpleasant sensations. If we want to experience peace we have to change the habit pattern of our minds by appreciating impermanence. If we do this it does not matter which sect we belong to, which caste we are born in to, and what philosophical view we hold. They are, as a matter of fact, all secondary, ultimately all useless to our liberation. If you set them aside you will begin to understand what true Dhamma is. It will do you great good.

If we walk on the path of Dhamma, we are sure to derive benefit. Every step on it will take us closer to that state which is eternal, permanent and unchanging and where the senses cease to work. We can progress on this path only when we do not regard anything else as permanent.

May you all be happy!

Kalyanamitta,
Satyanarayan Goenka

Auspicious death

1. Sri T. Madhusudan Prasad, SAT of Hyderabad passed away on Oct 2, 2014. His wife Mrs Ramalaxmi is also an AT. He served many meditators very meritoriously. For his peace and liberation the Dhamma family pays homage to him and sends good wishes.
2. Sri Udaya Shekhar, AT of Bangalore passed away peacefully on Sept. 29, 2014. While serving at the Dhammapapulla centre with his wife Archana (AT) he helped many to attain their welfare. For his peace and liberation the Dhamma family pays homage to him and sends good wishes.

New Vipassana Centres

Dhamma Bhandāra Vipassana centre, Bhaṇḍārā, M.S.

Construction work on residences for 40 meditators has been completed at Dhamma Bhaṇḍārā Vipassana centre situated in Bhaṇḍārā city in Vidarbha. Many courses have been organized here during the last year. For more details please Contact: Dhamma Bhaṇḍārā Vipassana centre, Rahula Colony, Sahakara Nagar, Bhaṇḍārā (Maharashtra) **Phones** 1. Sri Saluja 9423673572 2. Sri Sunil Bagade 9422823886

Dhamma Arunācala Vipassana Centre, Tiruvannamālāi,

A new Vipassana centre has come up in Tiruvannamālāi in Tamil Nadu. This area has been a centre of spiritual wealth in South India for centuries. Lacs of pilgrims visit Arunachal Mountain every year. Initially the Centre will hold 3-day courses, with a plan to start 10-day courses within a year with the completion of facilities.

Contact: E-mail: arunachala.dhamma@gmail.com;

Dhamma Griha in Kanchipuram, Tamilnadu

A new Dhamma House called 'Dhamma Griha' has been built at Kanchipuram, Tamilnadu. Kanchipuram has been the main centre for practicing Dhamma for the last 1000 years. At present 2-day and 3-day courses will be held here.

Contact: email: kanchi.dhamma@gmail.com

One day course Buddha Smriti Park, Patna.

On Sept 28 --the death anniversary of respected Guruji a 1-day course was organized in which there were 91 meditators from Bihar and other states. One day courses will be held here on every second Sunday every month for example, 14-Dec, 11.Jan.15, 8-Feb, 8-Mar..

For booking please contact: RP Yadav- 07739135375

Mega course and Saṅghadāna at Global Pagoda

On the first death anniversary of respected Goenkaji a Mega course and Saṅgha-dāna were successfully organized. Thousands of meditators benefitted and people earned merit by giving Dāna to more than one hundred monks. These photographs were taken on the occasion:--



Top: Meditators (male & female) meditating in the Pagoda Hall.
Below to that: Bhikkhus (monks) taking meals (Sangha Dana).



Respected Mataji paying respect & being blessed by Bhikkhus.

Dhammālaya Guest house in the premises of Pagoda

For booking accommodation at the Guest House
New-Contact: Sri Vishvadeva Tripathi, Mobile- 9769048260, phone 022 33747599 or Pagoda contact- 022 33747501 E-mail: info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org

One day Mega Course on the death anniversary of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

A one day Mega course will be held in the presence of Mātāji on 18th January 2015 at the Global Vipassana Pagoda. Time: From 11a.m to 4 p.m. Those who are not meditators can also listen to the discourse at 3p.m. For booking kindly contact the phone numbers given below or direct online registration. Please do not come without booking your seat. Book your seat first and derive the benefit of meditating in a group. **Contact:** 022 28451170, 337475-01/43/44 Ext 9 (phone booking daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Online Reg. www.oneday.globalpagoda.org)



DHAMMA DOHAS

*Guruvara-maitrī se sadā, dharma uḷāgara hoyā;
Navala varṣa isa jagata hita, maṅgaladāyī hoyā.*

O great teacher may dhamma always spread by your metta,
And may the New Year bring welfare for the whole world.

*Navala varṣa men jagata men, jage dharama kī jyota;
Jana-jana ke mana men bhare, maṅgala otaprotā.*

May the light of dhamma arise in the whole world in the New
Year, May it benefit all, may all be happy and peaceful.

*Navala varṣa kī sādhanā, navala varṣa kā dhyāna;
Jana jana kā maṅgala kare, jana jana kā kalyāṇa.*

Let the practice of Vipassana in the New Year Provide

welfare for all and make everybody happy.

*Śuddha dharama phira se jage, dukhiyā rahe na koya;
Śuddha dharama ghara ghara jage, saba vidhi maṅgala
hoya;*

May pure dhamma arise again, let no one be miserable,
May pure dhamma be practiced in each home, so that all
feel happy in every way.

*Phira se jāge jagata men, śuddha dharama kī jyota;
Miṭhe andherā moha kā, mile mukti kā srota.*

May the light of pure dhamma arise again in the world. So
that the darkness of ignorance disappears and the fountain
of liberation is found.

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