

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Vipassana Research Institute
Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Asevanā ca bālānaṃ,
paṇḍitānaṃca sevanā;
pūjā ca pūjanīyānaṃ—
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ.*

Avoidance of fools,
The company of the wise;
Honour where honour is due—
This is the highest blessing.

—*Khuddaka pāṭha 5.12, Maṅgala Sutta*

GAIN MASTERY OVER THE MIND

S. N. Goenka

(The following questions were asked during the first course for adolescents at Dhamma Giri from 12 to 19 April, 2004. They have been translated and adapted for the Newsletter.)

Question: I get sensations on some parts but I don't get sensations on many parts of the body.

Goenkaji: If you cannot feel sensations in some parts, there is no need to worry or to feel disappointed. Wherever you don't get sensations, stop there for a minute, or at the most for two minutes. If there is still no sensation and if it is a covered part, feel the touch of the cloth; if it is an uncovered part, feel the touch of the air, the touch of the atmosphere. Just be aware of whatever you can feel at such parts.

As you continue to work in this way, you will start to feel the natural body sensations. There should be no disappointment; just accept the present reality as it is. If you cannot feel any sensation at this moment in this part, just accept, "There is no clear sensation here. This too is impermanent; this will also change." Then your mind will remain equanimous.

Question: You said that we should try to be aware of sensations all the time. What should we do after returning home? Besides the morning and evening sittings, when can we meditate?

Goenkaji: Once you go home, you need not meditate throughout the day. During the course, we learn to develop continuity of awareness to sharpen the mind. At home, you need to practise meditation only in the morning and evening.

While working, your entire attention should be on your work, so that you do it successfully.

However, if you have some free time, try to be aware of sensations or respiration with open eyes. In this way, you can make best use of your time.

Question: If some people don't benefit from Vipassana, what could be the reason? Should they do another Vipassana course?

Goenkaji: If someone doesn't benefit from Vipassana, there can be only two reasons.

The first reason is that one does not continue the meditation practice after going home. If you learn physical exercises or *pranayama* but don't practice it after returning home, how will these exercises or *pranayama* benefit you? Similarly, if one completes a course but does not practice in the morning and evening, one will not gain any benefit.

The second reason is that one practices morning and evening but does not practise properly. Out of ignorance, one starts playing the game of sensations. What does it mean to play the game of sensations? It means that one meditates with the aim to get rid of unpleasant sensations and to obtain pleasant ones. Whenever there are gross unpleasant sensations, one feels disappointed and one reacts with aversion to these sensations. Whenever one gets a flow of subtle sensations throughout the body, one is overjoyed and reacts with craving towards these sensations.

This is what we do in daily life: we become happy when we like something and become agitated when we don't like something. We are reinforcing the same pattern of craving and aversion, this time towards the sensations. This means that one has not understood Vipassana. One should understand Vipassana properly and then practice it to get the real benefit.

Question: Will all *sāṅkhāras* [mental reactions] give the same results?

Goenkaji: Oh no, not at all! How can they be the same? The result will be of the same kind and the same strength as that of the *sāṅkhāras*. Broadly, these *sāṅkhārās* are of three types.

The first is similar to drawing a line on water. As soon as the line is drawn, it disappears. We draw the line, it disappears; we draw another line and that also disappears. *Sāṅkhāras* of this type arise and pass away without causing much impact because they disappear almost immediately.

The second type of *sāṅkhāras* is similar to drawing a line on sand. If the line is drawn in the morning, it disappears by the evening due to the blowing of the wind or some other reason. However, it remains until the evening. Therefore, this type of *sāṅkhāra* can cause some trouble but it will end soon.

Finally, there are *sāṅkhāras* similar to drawing a line on a stone with a hammer and chisel, which are so deep that they don't disappear even after many years. The result of such deep *sāṅkhāras* will also be very powerful. These deep *sāṅkhāras* result in future rebirth and cause great trouble.

Question: You mentioned that we should choose a job or profession, which causes no harm to others. But the social system today is based on cheating and corruption. How is it possible to avoid corruption?

Goenkaji: It is unfortunate that there is so much corruption and dishonesty in this country. However, this does not mean that we too should become a part of it. We should follow the example of the lotus that grows in mud, in water, but rises above the water. Not a single drop of water can stick to it.

Similarly, we have to live a pure life in spite of living in a corrupt society. Whatever work we have to do, we will do it honestly. It will be difficult because the entire atmosphere is unfavourable. This is exactly what you are learning here.

No matter how unfavourable the situation, you are your own masters: the masters of your mind, the masters of your future. You can create a good future for yourself. You can create heaven for all instead of hell.

Therefore, however tough the situation, we will not commit any unwholesome deed, and automatically, Dhamma will start helping us. ☺

VIPASSANA IN TURKEY

Preparations for a Vipassana course in Turkey started in the spring of 2003. Eventually, the first ten-day course was conducted from 6 to 17 November, 2003. The course site was a very nice hotel in Sile on the Black Sea coast, about two hours drive from Istanbul. The first Vipassana course in Turkey had a truly international

flavour—34 students of many different nationalities completed the course. Many Dhamma servers, especially Russian and German, helped to organize this historic course.

The second course was conducted within a few months in May 2004 for 17 students. The third course will be conducted from 17 to 28 November this year.

A group of meditators in Turkey are organizing Vipassana activities here and plan to form the Turkish Vipassana Association by the end of this year. They plan to conduct two ten-day courses next year in June and November 2005 and to buy land for the first Vipassana centre in Turkey. Group sittings are held every Saturday in Istanbul.

All the three courses in Turkey so far have been conducted in English. A team of translators has started translation of the ten-day course material into Turkish to serve the long waiting list of Turkish students who are looking forward to attending courses in Turkish. They hope to complete this important project soon, which will enable more and more Turkish people to get a taste of Vipassana and the universal Dhamma.

For more details or to apply for courses, contact:

Melek Cilingir, Phone: + 90532-471-2828

Email: melekcingir@yahoo.com

Website: www.tr.dhamma.org

A participant of the first course in Turkey writes:

It took me 12 years to be ready to experience a Vipassana meditation. I first heard about it in Thailand when I met one or two people who had experienced ten days of deep meditation. Although I asked, these friends couldn't really explain to me what it was about. All I heard was that there must be no contact with others on the course and no smoking. All I heard was NO.

Over the years I met other friends who had practiced the ten-day meditation, they had valued their experience, but yet they could not share it with me.

Finally last summer, I was working quietly in my studio, living an idyllic peaceful life. Yet, it wasn't quiet enough. Through my work I was in tune with my inner voice and calm but I felt the urge to go deeper. What if I really didn't have any distractions, what then?

When I returned to Istanbul, I saw a notice for Vipassana meditation. With no hesitation I decided to participate. This time I saw it as a YES.

Yes, I did want to give myself ten days to explore myself in the present moment. Yes, I could live without cigarettes for ten days. Yes, I was ready for this adventure into myself.

I joined the group in Sile, Istanbul and began the journey inward. During that time, I came to have a deeper understanding of my place in the world, about my own reactions to situations. Every day I learned something new, from the teacher Goenka, from the assistant teachers, or from myself.

Something inside me grew stronger during those ten days, and I felt the immediate benefits for a long time after the completion of the course. If you are ready to say YES to yourself, then this course is for you.

FIRST PRISON COURSE IN SRI LANKA

Since the past few years, Vipassana meditators in Sri Lanka have been trying to organize a prison Vipassana course but without much success.

However, improvements in the Bogambara Prison, Kandy, Sri Lanka, under a new Superintendent led to renewed hope. A meditation hall was built and programmes for meditation and Dhamma discussions were conducted regularly for male and female prisoners. Flowering trees and shoots tended by prisoners transformed the drab atmosphere of the prison compound. A great sense of harmony and good will percolated from the top rung to all levels in the prison.

The management of *Dhamma Kuta* Vipassana centre requested the prison authorities to grant leave to prison officers to attend a ten-day Vipassana course. Seven officials including a female official attended a ten-day course at *Dhamma Kuta* and benefited tremendously. As a result, the prison authorities requested *Dhamma Kuta* to conduct a ten-day Vipassana course in the prison.

Bogambara prison was an all-male prison with female prisoners from a nearby location coming only on Uposatha days to meditate and listen to Dhamma. *Dhamma Kuta* requested that the Vipassana course should be for both male and female inmates with segregated residential and dining facilities. The request was granted. For the first time in the history of Sri Lankan prisons, sanction was obtained from the Commissioner of Prisons to house female prisoners for the ten-day course in an all-male prison. Strict conditions of segregation and security were provided, under the supervision of a female warden who had done a Vipassana course.

46 inmates (38 males and 8 females) completed the course successfully. All participated voluntarily. The inmates worked with unflagging effort and great sincerity from the start of the course. Of the 38 male participants, 33 voluntarily observed eight precepts.

There were special requests from participants to inform families from whom they had been separated since being sent to prison. Letters were sent to all. The response was good. After the *metta* session, the participants greeted fellow inmates and welcomed their family members. Lunch was served to all visitors. Many requested a follow up of one-day courses. A set of ten-day discourse tapes was donated to the prison, for use after group sittings.

Meditators were given the opportunity to talk of the impact of their experience to the gathering, which included a former Chief Justice of Sri Lanka and a former Commissioner of Prisons.

The success of the first prison course in Sri Lanka was mainly due to the dynamism and cooperation of the Superintendent and officials of Bogambara prison.

VIPASSANA COURSE AT SIKH HOSTEL

Gurudwara Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchnagar Sahib, Nanded and Nanded Vipassana Samiti organized a ten-day Vipassana Meditation Course at Sachkhand Sikh Hostel, Nanded in Maharashtra from 28 May to 8 June 2004. 27 people participated in this course out of which 22 belonged to the Sikh community. Most of the students were employees of Gurudwara Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchnagar Sahib and students of Sachkhand Sikh Hostel.

After the *metta* session on the tenth day of the course, four of the five Panch Pyaras (holy Sikh priests) visited the course site and listened to Goenkaji's discourse given to the Sikh community. The Chief Panch Pyara, Revered Sant Baba Kulwant Singh Ji Jathedar greeted all the students and Dhamma servers with *saropas* and urged them to arrange more Vipassana courses in future.

HOISTING OF PAGODA UMBRELLA CEREMONY

On 24 October 2004, the sacred umbrella was hoisted on the small pagoda on the northern side at the Global Pagoda in the presence of Sitagu Sayadaw Nānissara, venerable *bhikkhus*, Goenkaji, Myanmar Minister for Religious Affairs, and Vipassana meditators.

On 26 October 2004, they witnessed the crowning of the *Dhamma Tapovana* pagoda with the sacred umbrella. Earlier, the minister formally inaugurated the Myanmar Gate, which was built as a symbol of gratitude to Myanmar for preserving Vipassana for over two millennia. The Myanmar Gate is the magnificent new entrance for *Dhamma Giri*, *Dhamma Tapovana* and Sayagyi U Ba Khin Village.

The next day, Goenkaji gave a public talk in Hindi under the arch of the Myanmar Gate to about 3000 people from Igatpuri and neighbouring areas, which was followed by a question-answer session.

VIPASSANA FOR MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

Students from two management institutes in Pune, Sadhana Centre of Management and Leadership Development (SCMLD) and International Centre of Management and Human Resource Development (ICMHRD), attended a ten-day Vipassana course at *Dhamma Giri* from 31 October to 10 November 2004. About 320 students from these institutes as well as ten staff members completed the course.

VIPASSANA NEWSLETTER ON THE WEBSITE

Current and past issues of the Hindi Vipassana Patrika and English Newsletter can be downloaded from the VRI website:
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/index.html>
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/index.html>

GOENKAJI'S INTERVIEW ON ZEE TV

Zee TV is telecasting a program called *Urja* featuring Goenkaji every Friday at 12:30 pm. In this program, Goenkaji answers questions about different aspects of Dhamma (Dharma). Meditators may inform their family and friends about the opportunity to hear Goenkaji expound on the universal Dhamma.

ONE-DAY CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

Every second Sunday at **Ulhasnagar**: Tel: (0251) 252-2693
Every second Sunday at **Andheri** (Gaikwad Hall): Tel: 2633-6671
Every third Sunday at **Ghatkopar**: Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
2/01/05	Mulund	10-12 years	30th and 31st Dec
9/01/05	Ulhasnagar	13-16 years	6th and 7th Jan 05
13/02/05	Matunga	10-12 years	10th and 11th Feb 05
13/02/05	Ulhasnagar	13-16 years	10th and 11th Feb 05
13/03/05	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	10th and 11th Mar 05

Course Timing: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. **Registration Timings:** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Course Venues:** **Andheri:** Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows, Andheri (W), Tel: 2633-6671. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNDT College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Mulund:** Mulund College of Commerce, Sarojini Road, Near Mulund Court, Mulund (W). Tel: 5598-3338. [NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If you are unable to attend after registration, please inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.]

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Anil Mehta, *Jaipur*
2. Mrs T. Ramalakshmi, *Hyderabad*
3. Mr. Thakarshi Solia, *Bhavnagar*
4. Mr. Patrick Elder, *UK*
5. Mrs. Paula McVicker, *Australia*

Children Course Teachers:

1. Mr. Arvind Dave, *Jetpur (Kathi)*
2. Mrs. Chetnaben Mavadia, *Rajkot*
3. Mr. Dwarkadas Laladia, *Amreli*
4. Mr. Viral Jani, *Rajkot*
5. Ms. Sanguanwong Khaowisoot, *Thailand*

SPONSORSHIP OF DOHAS

The Vipassana Newsletter or Patrika is despatched free of charge to all Vipassana meditators in India for one year after their first course. Free copies are also sent to those meditators who wish to receive the Newsletter or Patrika but are unable to pay the subscription. VRI has decided to publish Goenkaji's *dohas* sponsored by meditators on page four of the English Newsletter and Hindi Patrika to help to cover the cost of publication and postage of these copies. Vipassana meditators are welcome to avail of this opportunity to subsidize these expenses by sponsoring these *dohas*.

The rate for each advertisement is Rs. 2000/- for two Hindi *dohas* with English translation in the English Newsletter (Rs. 20,000/- for 12 issues) and Rs. 3000/- for six Hindi or Rajasthani *dohas* in the Vipassana Patrika (Rs. 30,000/- for 12 issues).

Only the name of the firm with contact details can be published. These will also be included in the web versions of both the English Newsletter and Hindi Patrika in the VRI website.

VRI will issue receipts to the firms for these amounts as advertisement charges in the Newsletter or Patrika. For more details, contact: Dr. O. P. Pathak, VRI, *Dhamma Giri*, Igatpuri 422 403. Tel: (02553) 244076, 244086; Email: info@giri.dhamma.org

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Apanā bhī hove bhalā, bhalā sabhī kā hoyā;
Jisase jagā kā ho bhalā, shuddha Dharama hai soya.*

Good for oneself, good for everyone,
Good for the world—this is pure Dhamma.

*Dhanya hoyā mātā pitā, dhanya hoyā kula gotā;
Dharma puruṣa janame jāhā, liye gyāna kī jyota.*

Fortunate are the parents, fortunate the family and clan
To whom is born a virtuous person, bearing the torch of wisdom.

With warm regards and metta,

PARAMI

40 Saraswati Vilas Building, Kunte Chowk,
Laxmi Road, Pune 411 030, Maharashtra
Phone: (020) 2445 2532

*Yahī Dharama kī parakha hai, yahī Dharama kā māpa.
Jana jana kā maṅgala kare, dūra kare santāpa.*

This is the only test of Dhamma; this is its only measure:
It provides well-being and removes suffering for all.

*Kudarata kā kānūna hai, isase bacā na koyā.
Maile mana vyākula rabe, niramala sukhiyā hoyā.*

This is the law of nature, which no one can escape:
A defiled mind is agitated; a pure mind is happy.

With warm regards and metta,

VASTUNIRNAY

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