



WORDS OF DHAMMA

Anupubbena medhāvī,
thokaṃ thokaṃ khaṇe khaṇe;
Kammāro rajatasseva,
niddhame malamattano.

Gradually, little by little, moment by moment, a wise person should remove his own impurities, as a smith removes the impurity of silver.

— Dhammapada 239, Malavagga

Strengthening Our Daily Practice

(Dhamma Discourse for Old Students – Part 2)

Lakkhamsi Nappu Hall, Mumbai – July 20, 1986)

My dear Dhamma Daughters and Dhamma Sons,

..... We come to these 10-day camps to learn how to meditate at home morning and evening and how to adapt this practice in our daily lives, in our general interaction with the world. It's that simple! But if the *sādhana* we learn here is not maintained then how can we benefit?

A mother watches her son while feeding him milk and considers, 'Now I need to give solid food to my baby,' and teaches the child to eat. In a few days, the child learns to eat solid food. However, if the mother then foolishly says, 'As he has already learnt to eat it is no longer necessary to give him food morning and evening,' then it will not be beneficial to the child.

This same foolishness assails meditators, 'Look, I have attended the course and can observe my breath, I can observe sensations, and I have also learned to remain equanimous towards these sensations, so why do I need to continue to repeat this practice daily?' But please understand that this daily practice is what strengthens Dhamma, strengthens your *paññā*, your wisdom. The profound transformation in life, the Dhamma that will arise in your life will only come with daily practice.

Someone advises another who is weak in body to exercise, to undertake yoga asanas etc. and teaches this exercise to him for ten days with much effort. And what does the one who has received these lessons do? He thinks, 'Now I know this exercise, so why do I need to continue repeating it daily?' Because merely learning it is not enough. We go to a camp for ten days to understand how to practice meditation daily and how to make Dhamma a part of our lives. We go to courses to learn this, and thereafter we have to work on it daily. If a person has a meal, or drinks water every day for ten days, and then asks, 'Why do I have to continue eating again and again?' Or, if he breathes for a few days and then says, 'Why do I need to continue breathing daily?' Then such a person has not understood the point and will be considered foolish.

True Dhamma is that which becomes a part of our lives. Otherwise, there are so many rituals, philosophies, and suffocating webs of sectarian beliefs that masquerade as Dhamma. Vipassana also risks falling into the same trap. "Oh, we are Vipassana meditators and tomorrow is Guru Purnima. Let us all get together for a *sādhana* session." Is it not just a

ritual then? How will this one day, one hour or two hours *sādhana* help? It is helpful, yes, but only if it inspires us to practice daily, and really start walking on the path.

Let us understand why our practice slips, or more accurately, why do we drop it?

Old Habits

From the very childhood, we have formed a habit pattern. Not merely in this life, but who knows over how many lifetimes we have formed a habit pattern which continues to bind us, becoming stronger and stronger. Now we have to change this and that is not easy; one has to work very hard.

If one permits the habit that has burrowed deep into the mind to move as per its tendency, it will flow very easily, just like water flowing down a slope, effortlessly. But if one has to carry water up the slope, then one needs a strong pump perhaps with high horsepower! Do you see the serious effort that is required?

Now if one permits his mind to move as per its spoiled, unwholesome pattern, it too will flow easily towards degeneration. And hence one has to work very hard to change the habit pattern of the mind which has become deeply rooted in blind reaction since who knows when, through how many lifetimes. And often one does not want to work, wishing and praying that some Guru or Master, God or Goddess or Allah will have mercy on us and bail us out.

Why should he particularly choose one of you for his munificence? Why would he not show the same mercy to all? Just think! He who is merciful surely has no shortage of mercy. Then why would he remain tight-fisted? Let his mercy flow over all, creating happiness and bliss, purifying each person's heart. If his blessing alone could do this job, then all hearts and minds would be purified. But alas, it does not happen like this. We must understand the truth – no one's mercy can purify us, it is our own hard work that purifies our minds.

If some Samma Deva, Brahma, a Saint, or a Satguru prays for us, wishing for our highest welfare, even then this will not bear fruit. The only way it can bear fruit is if each one of us begins walking, step by step, on the path. If we take but one step forward, we will see that the blessings of such a one will come to us tenfold. If we take ten steps, it will come to us a hundred fold. This will happen automatically. But if we do not take even one step and hope that someone's good wishes will do all the work for us, then there is no bigger misunderstanding than that in the world.

The Compassionate One, indeed showers his munificence, pouring his nectar of metta and compassion over us, but if our hands are not folded in humility, it will cause this precious

nectar to flow off. If we do nothing, and just wish that someone else will undertake the work we need to do, then we will not benefit. It has never happened, ever. The stories of priests and pujaris telling us otherwise, need to remain what they are – mere stories.

For one who has started taking steps on the path of Dhamma, the benefits of all the blessings certainly start giving results. For this one step forward we ask you not to stop with just having taken a ten-day course. The course is but an expression that it is your time to grow, an invaluable *pāramī* manifesting itself in your life. Having learnt how to take proper steps and walk the right path, is in itself a significant happening. Otherwise, a person may spend his entire life working hard thinking that he is walking the path of Dhamma, while the truth may be that he is not taking a single step in that direction.

You may have seen a bull with its master, the oil extracting operator. (*In India, a bull is yoked to a wooden oil press and it goes around and around with blinkers on its eyes to keep it endlessly moving in a circle*). The master is single-minded in his purpose as he puts the blinkers on the bull, who then walks mistakenly thinking it is covering endless miles. But upon having its blinkers removed, it realises it has gone nowhere. It has not taken a single step beyond this circle as it was walking blindly. If you too walk with the false understanding of the oil extractor's bull, then you too may walk the entire life and yet not take a step forward. But in the ten-day camp the blinkers come off revealing the path; and as you walk the path with right understanding, taking one step after another, you will eventually reach your destination.

This is not to be taken lightly. It is an event of huge proportions, a blessed understanding that one has seen the path. Now you have to start walking. That is when you will experience your true welfare. One step at a time, keeping pace, moving on. The extent to which the path is traversed, to that extent the person has benefitted; to that extent Dhamma grows strong within one, and *paññā* gets firmly established within. Certainly, it is difficult. This is the reason we ask you to practice *adhiṭṭhāna* at the very start of Vipassana, knowing fully well that it is not easy. For an ordinary person, to sit without moving his legs or hands or opening his eyes for an hour is difficult, but he has to do it. If he does not do it, then how can he develop mental strength, how can he grow in Dhamma?

So when we ask you to take an *adhiṭṭhāna* of sitting daily for one year, we know very well that it will be difficult. To change the nature of the mind which has become conditioned to flowing towards impurity; to change its direction making it move upwards on an evolutionary spiral is very difficult, we know. But what can be done? If it was easy, a little effort would have sufficed, but an undertaking of this scale demands gigantic efforts.

The Nature of the Mind

Let us understand what this nature of the mind is, how this nature must be changed, and what we need to do when we sit morning and evening. This is precisely what is explained in the courses, but let us understand it once again.

This is a habit pattern built over many lifetimes. Perhaps someone may not believe in many lives – that is ok, but you do believe that this habit has been built in this lifetime, don't you? Since the time we opened our eyes, they were always outward looking. And what did the mind do? Whatever the eyes saw, they evaluated whether the object was good or bad, whether it was liked or disliked. And if it was likeable, then desire arose; if it was not likeable, then aversion arose. And similarly with

the stimuli of the ears, nose, tongue, and touch of the body and whether it is liked or disliked. If it is liked then craving is generated and if it is disliked then aversion is generated. These are the five sense doors of the body with which we connect with the world. When the senses are not stimulated, then the sixth door of the mind opens.

At some point in time the eyes had seen something, and now the mind begins thinking about it. Similarly, the ears had heard something, the nose had smelt something, the body had felt something and the mind starts to reflect...this happened, that happened. Or it considers... I hope such and such happens, or, I hope such and such does not happen.

We have just these six sense-doors, we do not have a seventh one. Every happening in the world – good, bad, happy, unhappy – has meaning for us only when it comes in contact with us through one of these six sense-doors. Following this, the mind takes over with its well-entrenched habit pattern of giving an evaluation. Whichever sense-door is stimulated – eyes, nose, ears, tongue, body – the mind evaluates it. This is good, no, this is bad. If it likes it, it will react with desire; how can I keep it for myself? What can I do so that it will not get lost, will not leave me? And if it is a negative experience, then effort is made to push it far away. This has become the nature, the habit pattern of the mind. As long as this blind, reactive nature exists of generating tension in the mind, losing one's balance and equanimity and becoming miserable in the process, then *dukkha*, misery will remain.

How can one come out of this whirlpool of repeatedly either pushing things away or drawing them towards oneself? As long as one continues to generate craving or aversion, and getting stressed as a result, one will continue to strengthen the reactive nature of the mind which alternates between liking and disliking. Despite getting exhausted by this, one makes no effort to come out of this misery, instead fortifying this attitude. How can one come out of it? This is what is taught in the ten days you spend with us.

A thick wall exists between what is called the conscious or the unconscious mind in today's western parlance. We make an effort to improve our conscious mind by hearing such Dhamma discourses, by reading books on religion or spirituality. By this repeated exercise, we begin to understand that one should not react by liking or disliking, one should not generate unwholesome *saṅkhārās* lest one harms oneself. The mind begins to improve itself. It is good that at least some process of improvement has started.

But Dhamma friends, just think how small this thinking part of the mind is compared to the totality of the mind. Very small indeed – just a layer at the surface level. Beyond that exists the mind which is totally blind, not ready to listen to the thinking part of the mind. At this level of understanding, it knows very well that one should not indulge in craving or aversion, should not get angry or fearful, should not indulge in unbridled sensuality or arrogance; certainly this is understood. But that part of the mind which we call the subconscious, the unconscious mind, goes on generating craving, aversion, arrogance, fear or sensuality as per its deep-rooted habit pattern. It is simply not ready to listen to logic. Therefore, what we teach this surface part of the mind by training it to behave itself is good, but not good enough.

There are endless waves on the surface of the ocean. And we try to calm one wave after another unceasingly, trying to still them in our effort to calm the ocean itself. If we do manage to still a wave momentarily, it will resume its unending agitation once again. Oh, this vast ocean is so agitated, so restless! It will become calm only when it is calmed at its very

depths. We therefore don't have to calm the waves crashing against the shore; they calm down naturally as the sea turns calm. Similarly, if we succeed in calming our minds at the very depths, then we can calm our agitation. How can we do this? Vipassana provides an answer.

What is known as the subconscious mind in the western culture, has been recognised in our ancient traditions by our *rishis* and *munis* who said that the mind is very impassive in the sense that it is unconscious, it has no awareness. This is not true as it is in fact very aware. Just as the surface layer of the mind remains ever involved in the external world of shape, colour, light, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought, the subconscious layers of the mind, which we also call the sleeping mind as it seems to move automatically, is actually very sharp, very aware.

While the conscious part of the mind is aware only in its waking moments, as no external stimuli of sound, vision or smell will register while it is in deep sleep, the subconscious mind remains ever aware, night and day, throughout all twenty-four hours. But what is this continuous awareness focused on? On the sensations that arise in the body every moment.

'Who' has gone into deep sleep? It is the conscious mind that has gone to sleep since the subconscious mind does not sleep even for a moment. For instance, if a mosquito bites a person, he will immediately sense that some unpleasant sensation has arisen on the body and will make the judgement, 'I don't like it' while still in sleep. Continuing his sleep uninterrupted, he will raise his hand and swat the mosquito, or rub the spot which was bitten to rid it of unpleasant sensations.

Another person is resting comfortably in deep sleep and a part of the body grows heavy or uncomfortable. The conscious mind remains unaware, but the subconscious mind, always linked to ever arising sensations on the body, comes to know that some part of the body has grown heavy. It evaluates that this is uncomfortable, reacts and turns to the other side. How often do you change sides at night? Another person is in deep sleep at night, and early in the morning the temperature falls and it turns cold. The body shivers, and unknown to his conscious mind, he pulls the blanket up and covers himself. Upon waking in the morning he may wonder who covered him with a blanket during the night? There is simply no awareness as to who carries out these tasks? Whatever theories or claims are propounded by the various philosophers, the fact remains that the subconscious mind is ever alert to the sensations arising on the body every moment.

While the conscious mind is occupied with talking, hearing, looking etc., the subconscious mind is ever immersed in the sensations of the body.

Night or day, from the time we are born until the moment of our death, our unconscious mind is constantly in connection with the sensations, generating craving if it likes them and generating aversion if it does not. This has been its habit pattern over many lifetimes. Even if someone does not believe in many births, still, he will believe that it has been its habit pattern since he was born. No matter how much we try to improve the mind at the surface level, the real improvement, the real calming, happens only when we improve it in its depth.

When we join a Vipassana camp, we begin our work by observing the breath and then progress to observing the bodily sensations. A mind that is trained to be equanimous to sensations, such a mind gets trained at its deepest levels and not merely at the surface level. This practice of training our subconscious mind will transform our nature, our habit pattern. This practice has to be undertaken on a daily basis.

Behaviour against Dhamma will continue to flourish if the old habit pattern that was created over a long period of time

continues unchecked, and if the mind continues to react because we make no effort to transform its nature by exercising it, even for brief periods. How can we then get established in Dhamma? How can we get established in *paññā*? How indeed?

So we say to every meditator – *sādhikā* or a *sādhaka* – work ceaselessly, not to oblige anyone else, but for one's own welfare. This is a task to be done daily. Making an effort for ten-days is not sufficient to lift us out of the morass, though it does open the pathway. Now we must walk on this path, step by step. The sooner one understands this, the faster one will progress, certainly there will be progress.

May all grow on the path of Dhamma! May all experience their highest welfare! May all be happy!

Kalyāṇ Mitta,

(To be continued ... 3)

Satyanarayan Goenka



Additional Responsibilities Teacher

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Residential Accommodation at Global Pagoda for Dhamma Servers and Meditators

One Day Mega-Courses are held in Global Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai every year. People at times come from far off places to participate but are inconvenienced as there are no residential quarters for an overnight stay. Hence a 3-4 storey free residential accommodation building is being planned where servers who are staying on premises and the meditators arriving from afar may stay in rooms/dormitories which will either be on sharing or single occupancy basis. This will help meditators rest well and begin their 1-day course meditation the next morning on a fresh note. Anyone wanting to participate in this noble project may **Contact:** 1. Mr. Derik Pegado: 9921227057. or 2: Shri Bipin Mehta: 9920052156, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org



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 the 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:** as above- Mr. Derik & Mr. Bipin Mehta ...



Individual/Group Meditation Room in Mumbai

A dedicated meditation room has been created in South Mumbai near Grant Road for those who would like to sit in a group sitting or do individual sitting at any desired time between 6am to 9pm. A comfortable, air-conditioned room is available with drinking water & washroom facilities which can seat 8 people: 4 male, 4 female students. Detailed instructions are on display for using the facility: from gurus' chantings & discourses, how to open, use & close the place etc. May all seekers of serious sadhana benefit. Daily Group Sittings will be held: 8 – 9 am, / 2:30 – 3:30 pm, / 6 – 7 pm. besides other timings as desired. For further details Contact: Heena – 98192 19087; Raksha – 98690 59287; Nitin – 98200 03057; Jatin – 98190 36360. May all grow in Dhamma!

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai**Date:**

18-6, 20-8, 17-9, 15-10, 19-11, 17-12

Place:

Goregaon

(Age 10 to 16 Only) Registration before Course Thursday and Friday

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Wadala	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Khar	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Dombivili	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Andheri	10-16	2 days before Course
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar	10-16	2 days before Course
Fourth Sunday	Airoli	10-16	2 days before Course
Fourth Sunday	Kalyan	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"

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. **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, **Dombivili:** Tilak School, Tilak Nagar, Dombivili, Mob. 9029423540. **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865, 9967813478. **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. Airoli: Dnyandeep School, Sector 2, Airoli, Mobile: 9969267720, 9969950901. Kalyan: Krishanrao Dhulup KDM school No. 4, Ram Baug Lane no 5, Near old Vani Vidyalay. Mob. 9987425633.

Please call two days in advance for registration.

NB *Please bring a 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.

One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2017

Sunday 9th July, Ashadha-Purnima (Dhammachakka Pravartan day); Sunday 1st Oct. in Gratitude of Respected S.N. Goenka (29th Sept.) & Sharad Purnima. One-day mega course at GVP onwards till 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:** 022-62427544, 022-28451170 Extn: 9 Mob. 8291894644 (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). **Online registration:** www.oneday.globalpagoda.org.

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Pratikṣaṇa samatā puṣṭa ho, pratikṣaṇa rahe nisaṅga,
Rahe alipta anitya se, pakeṃ bodhi ke aṅga.*

May equanimity strengthen each moment, may we remain detached each moment. May we remain untouched by change, may the factors of bodhi continue to ripen.

*Pakeṃ sāta bodhyaṅga jaba, prakāṣe pada nirvāṇa,
Sāre bhava-bandhana kaṭeṃ, hoya parama kalyāṇa.*

When all seven factors of bodhi ripen, nibbāna will be attained. All bondages of becoming will be cut, such a state will be our highest welfare.

*Śraddhā umaḍī balavatī, śraddhābhājana Buddha,
Milī prerāṇā, bala milā, karūṃ citta nija suddha.*

Faith & devotion spring forth forcefully, the focal point of devotion is the Buddha, Having been inspired & strengthened by him, I become immersed in purifying my mind.

*Suddha-dharma kā śāntipatha, sampradāya se dūra,
Suddha-dharma kī sādhanā, maṅgala se bharapūra.*

The peaceful path of pure Dhamma is far from sectarianism. The sādhana of pure Dhamma is replete with our highest welfare.

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