

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*“Yato ca bhikkhu ātāpī, sampajaññaṃ na riñcati;  
Tato so vedanā sabbā, pariñānāti paññito.*

*“So vedanā pariññāya, ditthe dhamme anāsavo;  
Kāyassa bheda dhammatṭho, sañkhaṃ nopeti vedagū”ti.*

— (SN 2.203 Vedanāsaṃyuttam, Pahānasuttam)

“When a meditator practising ardently does not neglect thorough understanding, then that wise person discerns all sensations in their entirety. Having fully understood sensations, he is freed of all impurities within this very life. At life’s end with the breakup of the body, such a one established in Dhamma with perfect understanding of sensations, attains the indescribable stage.”

## VEDANĀ SAMYUTTA DISCOURSE

DHAMMAGIRI, India

JANUARY 18, 1994

### Daṭṭhabba Sutta – Should Be Seen

All the words of the Buddha are full of ambrosia, giving proper guidance and inspiration to students of Vipassana. But this evening we shall take just one or two suttas pertaining to sensations (*vedanā*) which are directly related to our practice.

Realizing the reality of *vedanā* and the part it plays in our bondage and the part it plays in our liberation was the discovery of Buddha. No one before him had this realization. Of course, in the long past all Buddhas would have had the same realization. But there is a big gap in time between one Buddha and another. Before him, in the immediate past, this wisdom had been lost. No one understood it. And after him also, in most of the literature of India, we find such advice as: "Don't get entangled in the objects pertaining to your sense doors." But no one mentions anywhere the role of *vedanā*, the great discovery of this enlightened person.

Analysing the truth of mind and matter, not merely at the intellectual level but at the experiential level, enabled him to understand what an important role *vedanā* plays. Many others keep repeating: "These six sense doors and their objects; keep yourself away from them. Don't get entangled in them." Well, it is good if someone can do this, but it is only training the surface level of the mind. The depth of the mind is always in contact with bodily sensations. Constantly, there is *kāyasamphassajā vedanā* – the sensations which arise because of bodily contact. This may be due to atoms at the material level in the body getting in contact

with other atoms creating sensation, or contact may be due to the mind coming in contact with material atoms of the body creating sensation: either way there is sensation. And when there is a sensation, pleasant or unpleasant, there is a reaction of craving or aversion that is constantly going on at the deeper level of the mind. And so long as this is happening, you are not out of bondage. Just diverting one's attention does not solve the problem. You have to face your problem at the depth.

And that is why his teaching gives so much importance to *vedanā*. Because *taṇhā* – the craving, the aversion – arises only with the base of sensation: *vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*. It is not merely the six sense doors – *saḷāyatana-paccayā*, resulting in craving – *taṇhā*, but the six sense doors – *saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso*, coming in contact with an object, a related object, which results in sensations on the body – *phassa-paccayā vedanā*, and then *vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*, craving arising due to sensations on the body. This was the teaching of the Enlightened One, and this is what you practice when you practice Vipassana. *Vedanā* plays such an important role. Now let us examine his words regarding this *vedanā*.

*Tisso imā, bhikkave, vedanā.*

“Meditators, there are these three sensations.”

When he says bhikkhu, he means not merely the monks. Of course, monks were there, so many around him. But he also taught this technique to the householders. So everyone, whether one is a monk or a nun or a householder is meant here; those who are walking on the path are bhikkhus.

*Katamā tisso? Sukhā vedanā, dukkhā vedanā, adukkhamasukhā vedanā.*

"What three? Pleasant sensation, unpleasant sensation, and neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant sensation."

*Sukhā bhikkave vedanā dukkhato daṭṭhabbā.*

"Pleasant sensation, meditators, should be seen as suffering."

The Lord says *dukkha* – suffering, misery, is inherent in pleasant sensation because it is not permanent. So when you develop attachment to it and it then passes away, you become miserable. In addition, if you start playing this game of liking the pleasant sensation and disliking the unpleasant sensation, then all of your practice will keep you running after pleasant sensation, and then you can't come out of craving and attain the stage where you are fully liberated.

That is why, if you want to move further on the path of liberation, understand that whenever a pleasant sensation arises, take it as suffering. And then he says:

*Dukkhā vedanā sallato daṭṭhabbā.*

"Unpleasant sensation should be seen as an arrow."

This arrow is the arrow of your craving. This arrow is the arrow of your attachment to this cycle of birth and death, birth and death. For countless lives in the past you have been suffering because of this arrow. One doesn't know for how many lives in the future one will keep on rolling, rolling in this misery. Understand this is misery, this arrow of your attachment towards the bhava – the rotation of the wheel of becoming, of life, death, life, death – is the rotation of the wheel of suffering. So take this unpleasant sensation as a great misery. And then:

*Adukkhamasukhā vedanā aniccato daṭṭhabbā.*

"Neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant sensation should be seen as impermanent."

Whenever you experience a sensation neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant, the danger is one may feel that: "Well, look, it is not pleasant – so no craving is arising, and it is not unpleasant so no aversion is arising. Now, I am a liberated person. Neutral sensation!" But you can't be a liberated person unless you understand that even these neutral sensations have the same characteristic of arising, passing, arising, passing, arising, passing. So whenever you experience a neutral sensation you have to understand its nature of arising, passing, arising, passing. Your wisdom must arise. This is why he says: *aniccato daṭṭhabbā*. The word *daṭṭhā* or *passana* is used for experience at the level of sensation, not just seeing the shape or colour, etc. of the object.

*"Yato kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno sukhā vedanā dukkhato diṭṭhā hoti, dukkhā vedanā sallato diṭṭhā hoti, adukkhamasukhā vedanā aniccato diṭṭhā hoti — ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, 'bhikkhu sammaddaso acchecchi taṇhaṃ, vivattayi saṃyojanaṃ, sammā mānābhisamayā antamakāsi dukkhassā'ti."*

"When, meditators, a meditator has seen pleasant sensation as suffering, unpleasant sensation as an arrow, and neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant sensation as impermanent, he is called a meditator who sees rightly. He has cut off craving, severed the fetters, and by completely breaking through conceit, he has made an end to suffering."

A meditator who sees the pleasant sensation as suffering, who takes the unpleasant sensation as an arrow, and the neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant neutral sensation in its true characteristic of arising and passing away; such a person is observing the truth properly. Observing the truth properly he cuts the bondage of *taṇhā*, of craving. He observes the truth about this imaginary, false ego and comes out of it. And thus he comes out of all the miseries, all the miseries.

***"Yo sukhaṃ dukkhato adda,  
dukkhamaddakkhi sallato;  
Adukkhamasukhaṃ santam,  
addakkhi naṃ aniccato."***

"A meditator who sees pleasure as suffering, and pain as an arrow, And peaceful, neutral sensation as impermanent."

Often a meditator, even at the surface level of the mind, comes across a situation where he or she says neither is it pleasant nor is it unpleasant. Yes, true. But when Buddha talks about neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant he is talking about a very deep level of the mind. At a very deep level of the mind you are passing through these sensations, arising, passing. You pass through this stage of *bhaṅga* (dissolution). You experience a flow – very pleasant. And then you reach a stage where there is so much tranquility. It is calm, tranquil and you feel: "Well, here nothing is arising, nothing is passing away, so this is the final goal. I have reached the *nibbānic* stage."

Many students keep coming to me saying that they observed *nibbāna*. "I have experienced *nibbāna*." What did they experience? They talk about tranquility, deep tranquility which remained for some time. And I advise that whenever you come across this again, then examine if the sense organs are working or not. If they are working then no, you are still in the sensual field. You have not reached the stage which is beyond the sensual field. So this is a midway rest house. Anybody who gets stuck at a midway rest house can never reach the final goal. So whenever you reach this stage of deep tranquility, try to understand and try to experience the nature of arising, passing, arising, passing in the experience that you are having. And this will enable you to move further towards the goal. One who practises like this:

***"Sa ve sammaddaso bhikkhu,  
parijānāti vedanā;***

*So vedanā pariññāya,  
diṭṭhe dhamme anāsavo;  
Kāyassa bheda dhammaṭṭho,  
Saṅkhyam nopeti vedagū'ti. ”*

(SN 4.2.1.5 Vedanāsamyuttam, Daṭṭhabba Suttam)

“Sees rightly; completely understands sensations. At life's end, with the breakup of the body such a one, being established in Dhamma with perfect understanding of sensations, attains the indescribable stage.”

One must observe the truth of *vedanā* to its ultimate end – that means the entire field of *vedanā* – *parijānāti*. And how can one say that he has observed the entire field of *vedanā*? This is only possible when one transcends the field of *vedanā*. Then one can say: "I have gone beyond the boundary of *vedanā*." And when one has reached this stage of an *Arahant*, then *diṭṭhe dhamme anāsavo*, all the impurities have gone away. Such a person when he dies does not come to this world again, this world which can be described in words. He has reached a stage which is indescribable. The stage which is beyond the entire field of *lokas* (worlds). What is beyond these senses cannot be described in words. That means one won't take birth again as one is beyond the cycle of death and birth. And this is the aim of a meditator, to reach this stage.

And in a short discourse, a small sutta like this, the Lord has given the entire path, the entire technique of reaching the final goal.

*Bhavatu Sabba Maṅgalaṃ!!!*

### Facility for Students at Pagoda site

Meditators who want to meditate in the vicinity of the Buddha Relics and the Bodhi Tree can avail themselves of rooms at **Dhammalaya Guest House** next to the Global Vipassana Pagoda, Mumbai and make the most of their meditation sessions. The splendour of the Pagoda at night is also a marvel worth witnessing. Twin occupancy rooms and 2 suites (all a/c) with breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner included. For reservations and additional information please ... **Contact:** – Jagjiwan Meshram, 'DHAMMALAYA', Gloval Vipassana Pagoda, Essel World Jetty, Gorai Village, Borivali (W), Mumbai-400091; Phone: - +91-22-50427599 /598 (Dhammalaya Reception) Pagoda Office:-+91-22-50427500 Mobile: -9552006963/7977701576 +91-9920029786 Email: - info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org

### Importance of Lighting a Pagoda

Respected Goenkaji always said that it is of special importance that a 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 may do so. The cost per night is Rs. 5000/-. For further information please Contact to GVF : (details on next page)

### Connect to Vipassana Meditation at:

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#### Group Sittings for Vipassana Old Students:

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For all others, **Anapana Meditation** is an effective tool to deal with present situations. To learn and practice Anapana:

- i) Download the **Vipassana Meditation Mobile app** as above and play from the same.
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**INTRODUCTION TO VIPASSANA MEDITATION (2020)**

VRI in collaboration with Mumbai University Conducts the 3 months short course 'Introduction to Vipassana Meditation' every year. This short course which was going to be held from 8th July to 23rd September 2020 has been postponed indefinitely. In the wake of the Covid -19 pandemic the course for the current academic year (2020-21) will be conducted when The University of Mumbai issues the circular about it. As soon as VRI obtains information from the University, the fresh dates of the course will be announced in the newsletter. We regret the inconvenience.

**PALI-HINDI (45 DAYS) / PALI-ENGLISH (60 DAYS)**

Both **Pali-Hindi** and **Pali-English** Residential courses conducted by VRI for the year 2020 have been cancelled in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic.

VRI plans to start soon an **Online Pali-English** course. The dates and details of the course will be displayed on the VRI Website by the end of this month.

VRI has started an Online Pali-Hindi course on 6th April 2020. The recorded sessions of the course from the beginning are available on the VRI Website, [www.vridhamma.org](http://www.vridhamma.org). For further details contact on: [mumbai@vridhamma.org](mailto:mumbai@vridhamma.org). Tel.: +91 96192 34126 / +91 (22) 50427560 / +91 (22) 28451204 560 (9:30 AM to 5:30 PM only).

**Residential Accommodation at the Global Pagoda for Dhamma Servers and Meditators at Dhammalaya-2**

One Day Mega Courses are held at the 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 residential accommodation building is being planned where servers and 1-day course meditators can stay. 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](mailto:audits@globalpagoda.org) **Bank Details:** 'Global Vipassana Foundation', (GVF) Axis Bank Ltd., Sonimur Apartments, Timber Estate, Malad (W), Mumbai - 400064, Branch - Malad (W). Bank A/c No.- 911010032397802; IFSC No.- UTIB0000062; Swift code: AXISINBB062.

**Vipassana Research Institute (VRI)**

Vipassana Research Institute (VRI), a non-profit-making body, has the principal aim of conducting scientific research into the sources and applications of the Vipassana Meditation Technique.

**DHAMMA DOHA**

*Sukhada-dukhada saṃvedanā, viṣaya sparśa-saṃyoga;  
Dekha anitya svabhāva ko, dūra kiye bhavaroga.*

Pleasant and unpleasant sensations result from sense contact; Seeing their ephemeral nature, one dissolves the misery of becoming.

*Sukha-dukkhamaya saṃvedanā, samatā sthāpita hoyā;  
Antarmana kī granthiyān, sahaja vimocita honya.*

Equanimity is developed by means of pleasant or unpleasant sensations; And with that the knots lodged within dissolve naturally.

*Karma-granthi kī citta para, jaba udīraṇā hoyā;  
Tana para ho saṃvedanā, mūrakha samatā khoya.*

When mental karmic-knots surface; A foolish one will lose equanimity as those sensations arise on the body.

*Dekha-dekha saṃvedanā, prajñā jāgrata hoyā;  
Kṣaṇa-kṣaṇa samatā puṣṭa ho, kṣaṇa-kṣaṇa dukha-kṣaya hoyā.*

Wisdom arises as one continuously observes sensations, Equanimity is strengthened every moment as misery continues to dissolve.

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