

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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Words of Dhamma

*Andhabhūto ayaṃ loko, tanukettha vipassati;
Sakuṇo jālamuttova, appo saggāya gacchati.*

– Dhammapadapāli 174, Lokavaggo.

This world is blind, few here have true insight. Like birds released from a net only a few go to a higher realm.

Excerpts from Letters Written to Babu Bhaiya

After Sayagyi U Ba Khin's passing, Goenkaji continued to write to his elder brother Shri Babulaji about the camps in India to relay the information to his other Dhamma brothers and sisters at the IMC in Rangoon (Yangon) and to keep a written record of the camps and their important details. His experiences at the time, and how he dealt with them patiently and with Dhamma wisdom, are evident in the letters he wrote 50 years ago. Dhamma triumphed, and seekers from India, Asia and the West reaped enormous benefit.

– Editor

A Four-fold Vipassana Laboratory

Mumbai,

13 June 1971

Babu Bhaiya, Pranam!

Our elder brother has just returned to Madras (Chennai) after his stay here for two days. I have had a chance to meditate more since the course.

Lord Buddha was called a Vibhajjavādi, as he broke apart everything into its tiniest components. Analysing was in his nature; this was his method. He called it Vipassana: Kayanupassana – observation of body; Vedananupassana – observation of sensations; Cittanupassana – observation of mind; and Dhammanupassana – observation of mental contents. In these four are included the internal, external, mundane, and supra-mundane. No object, person, event or situation is beyond its boundaries. Whenever any event or a situation was dissected and analysed within this four-fold Vipassana laboratory, the light of paññā (wisdom) was lit, the darkness of ignorance was dispelled, the mist lifted. They could not survive being seen with insight wisdom.

It will start to become clear as to how misleading our

relationships are. We have a distorted way of looking at and evaluating people. We simply cannot see them as they are. We always see them as they were. If someone is now slightly different from how they were before, and if that difference happens to be in accord with our wishes then we dance with joy; but if it is not then we become unhappy. I have created an imaginary image of you in my mind and so have you in yours. That image has been created based on our contact and association, on our mutual happy and unhappy experiences, and these do not leave us. Every present image is ever measured against that past imaginary image, and we continue to be influenced by it. If that image created by us is removed, then we can see others in the present as they really are.

A curtain, a solid wall, or even a coloured mirror that comes between the imaginary image of the past, between the observer and the observed, between the subject and the object, prevents us from seeing the present as it is, and it creates illusion, confusion. This means that it does not allow the truth to be seen in its own true nature.

We forget the truth that in this entire material world, no person can remain the same for even two moments. Every moment, change is taking place in the body and mind, and this change can either be for good or bad or both. We forget this unchangeable reality of nature because we have satisfied ourselves with mere intellectual knowledge of it. However, with the constant practice of Vipassana, our insight-wisdom comes alive towards this reality and then, based on our own direct experience, we see every situation, event, object, or person in its true nature as an ever changing reality. We know that this is just a river that is constantly flowing; the old water flows on while the new water takes its place. It does not cease, not even for

a moment. Yet, in our folly and ignorance, we continue to believe that this is the same river over and over again.

In spring time, fresh and clean water flows, but in the rainy season the river's water turns turbid, and if we begin to cry, remembering its former purity, or if we start dancing joyously when the purity returns with seasonal change, then who will be more foolish than us? But till we develop our equanimity, such waves of wavering ignorance will prevail. This flow of life itself is filled with such mental impurity, and most of the time we have our heads submerged in it, unaware of where we are going. When our heads do emerge from below the water, then occasionally, for brief moments, we become aware of this flow, but only for brief moments. But then again, the currents drag us in and we again have our heads below the water. But when our heads emerge from the water, even for brief moments with our wisdom developing, then this is a harbinger of our well-being. Through this practice, at some point, we will be able to remain in experiential wisdom, paññā every moment. Then these waves of joy and misery will not confound us due to our equanimity.

An Event during the third Camp in Bodh Gaya

I recall an event that occurred during the Bodh Gaya camps. Since she began walking this royal path, the Russian wife Bashka of an American named Bill has undergone many positive changes. Her awareness of seeing reality as it is has grown deeper with practice. But, of course, practice is just that: practice. This incident occurred in the third camp in Bodh Gaya. She and her husband had completed three courses in Dalhousie, Delhi, and Bombay, followed by two camps in Bodh Gaya. When I was scheduled to conduct a camp at Samanvaya Ashram, it was decided that meditators staying at the Burmese Buddhist Vihar could take a self-course if they so desired, and I would visit them on a regular basis.

At the start of the course, Bashka met me and said that she would not attend the course, and instead she would take care of other meditators staying at the Burmese Vihar. The meditators there knew that she was an expert cook, so I gave her permission to take charge of the kitchen for the ten days, and Bhante Sumangala was relieved of his kitchen duties, though he would still bring materials from the market.

The camp commenced. On the third day, at around 5.30 p.m., she came to me at Samanvaya Ashram with her husband Bill. Her eyes were filled with tears. After a few minutes, she calmed down and said that another student had admonished her in front of many others, saying, "Who are you to order us around? We will not take instructions from anyone other than Goenkaji." I asked Bashka what order she gave, to which she said, "I was only passing on your instructions but the student became angry."

The fact was that, for the first time, such a large number of young western travellers attended a course in Bodh Gaya. As a result, there was widespread indiscipline. Hence, we had to make a code of conduct, and Bashka, being a good writer, wrote it down. Though her duty was only in the kitchen, she took it upon herself to coax people towards discipline. She would wake up everyone by 4 a.m. and if she saw anyone whiling away time, she would encourage them to meditate. But not all took these actions well. Words of admonishment coming from me would not irk these western students, but the same words coming from one amongst them was not be tolerated at all. If a person familiar to us tries to pose as our teacher, it would be unbearable.

I could understand this woman's mental condition and felt it was pointless to discuss, explain, soothe, or assure her by saying that I would make it all alright. I told her that she had herself seen how this being, consisting of the mind and body, is changing every moment. That which was then is now no more, and what remains now will not be there in the next moment. Why should we connect it with the past and the future? Let us then see that which is here in the present, as it is. Why compare it to the past or link it to the dreams of the future? This is indeed the cause of our misery.

The coming together of varied causes gives rise to ever changing mind and matter, which will arise and dissolve. It is wise if we see the one who has come in front of us as he or she is and smile. If someone is excited, frenzied, or overwrought, then we understand that at this point, such and such causes have come together in their mental make-up, making them excited and overwrought. This current state for them too is so painful. Seeing this, there will be no anger, but rather compassion and love will arise.

Freedom from False Images

It is to our welfare to rid ourselves of attachment to the images and impressions that we have created in our minds about others. To remove these coloured glasses that prevent us from seeing things as they really are.

By observing things as they are, aware of how constantly they are changing, we learn to remain unaffected, unattached, and unblemished by realising this truth.

For example, someone has said or done something that was contrary to my self interests, and I have created a very negative image of him which has become fixed. With my coloured glasses on, every action, every word he says will now appear objectionable to me. Whatever action is taken, my perception of it is now influenced by my imagined image. Every time I see him, that image appears in front of me. This colored vision prevents me from seeing things as they truly are.

If we understand this truth, then we will refrain from creating a mental image of an individual. And if we do create it, then at least we will not impose a false permanence

on it. As soon as we see it as impermanent, we will not get attached. How can we be attached to something that is anicca—impermanent? The past shape and form has ended, and the new image that has formed has come only to dissolve. So which shape do we attach ourselves to? When we view it through Vipassana as being as substanceless as bubbles of water, then where is the attachment? Where is the dislike? This very wisdom of constant change is the right vision, which leads us to detachment.

More dangerous than the unbreakable image that we have created of a person or an object in our minds is the image that we have created of ourselves, and moreover, our false vision and attachment towards this self-image is deeper. We never want it to end. How can I be free of deep clinging towards this "I"? So long as I cling to this image of myself as permanent, even if I glimpse its changing nature, I pray that nature's law of anicca remains applicable only to the surface layers, and the essence that dwells within, the "I", remains imperishable, everlasting, and unchanging. This permanent image is but the outcome of the ego's deep attachment to itself, and it is very difficult to come out of it.

To illustrate this ever-changing reality, imagine someone taking a few dips in the Ganges, thinking he is in the same river, whereas in reality, the river in which he took the first dip has vanished and the next dip is in a completely new river. This changing nature of the river is perhaps comprehensible, but how can one understand that the person who took a dip in it has also vanished like the river? The second dip is also taken by a new person who has come only to go; there is no permanence.

As I have built up the image of “me” within, that same “me” builds the stable, imperishable image of others and material objects for me. The day this constructed image breaks of “myself”, that day the images constructed of others too will break. This freedom from false images is true happiness.

We are trapped in our misery because we do not understand and apply the fundamental truths of anicca (impermanence), dukkha (suffering), and anatta (egolessness) in our lives, which are the basic characteristics of Vipassana.

Yours,

Satya Narayan Goenka

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Dhammic Death

1. Prem Chandra Pal, an AT from Jhansi, passed away on September 9, 2022, at the age of 63 due to a heart attack. He dedicated himself to Vipassana in 1992 after attending his first course. Thereafter, he regularly attended a number of courses, and in 2012, Guruji appointed him an AT after noting his enthusiasm and dedication. He has since served the Dhamma through conducting courses. In July 2022, he successfully completed a course at the Dhammachakka

centre in Sarnath. The Dhamma family shares its merits for his Dhamma progress.

2. Shri Govind Agarwal passed away on 15th September 2022 at Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital due to colon cancer. He remained awake and in full senses until the end, saying he was fine and that we are protected by Dhamma; he was very calm, practicing anicca awareness. One day before he passed away, he said that Guruji and Mataji were calling him. He handled the disease very bravely and he passed away peacefully.

He served as secretary of the Sayagi U Ba Khin trust at Igatpuri. Later, he served as secretary of the Global Vipassana foundation and worked tirelessly as per Guruji instructions. During his tenure as an assistant teacher for more than 12 years, he sat and served many courses. The Dhamma family shares its merits for his Dhamma progress.

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Future Course Schedule and Applications

Information on future Courses is available on the internet. All types of bookings are currently available online only as per the Government’s new rules due to Covid-19. Applications will not be accepted on paper. Therefore, you are requested to check the following link and apply online directly for your appropriate course or for dhamma service at Dhammagiri:

<https://www.dhamma.org/en/schedules/schgiri>

Please apply similarly as per the schedule of other centres. Here is the link for all Indian centres:

<https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/locations/directory#IN>

New VRI website for applying for courses: <https://schedule.vridhamma.org/> and for worldwide courses: www.dhamma.org

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Very Important Notices

1. **Central IVR** (Interactive Voice Response) number-022-50505051. Applicants can call this number from their registered mobile number (the number mentioned in the form), to check their status, cancel, transfer or re-confirm their application. They can also contact the centre through this system. This is a central number for all Vipassana centers in India.

2. If you are sending non-centre Dhamma programs to be published in Newsletters, please send through the CAT (Coordinator Area Teacher) and if it’s for a centre, it should come through the Centre Teacher.

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Vipassana Activities in Greater Mumbai Area

There are several Vipassana Centres & Meditation Facilities in Greater Mumbai area:- *Please View the link:*

<https://mumbai.vridhamma.org/>

1-day Courses and Group Sitting Information in India: *Please view the link below:*

<https://www.vridhamma.org/1-day-Courses-Information-in-India>

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New Responsibility**SAT**

1. Shri. A. Z. Patil, Dhule

New Appointments**Assistant Teachers**

1. Ms. Surekha Bhalerao, Mumbai
2. Shri Kavindra Jha, Raipur
3. Mr. Sovann Ros, Cambodia

Children Course Teachers

1. Mr. Vijay Vishwanath Alhat Aurangabad
2. Mr. Pravin Gangadhar Avhale Aurangabad
3. Mrs. Jyoti Rajesh Chourasia Aurangabad
4. Mr. Vilas Jagadeorao Gawai Aurangabad
5. Mrs. Vaishali Manav Pagare Aurangabad
6. Mrs. Sunanda Ramkrishna Patil Aurangabad
7. Mr. Rahul Kacharu Kale Aurangabad
8. Mr. Kishore Bhaginath Satdive, Aurangabad
9. Miss. Suman Dharmanarayan Rakshit
10. Mrs. Pradnya Jitendra Mulay Pune
11. Mr. Yogesh Rahul Kamble Pimpri
12. Mr. Sanjay Uttam Gaikwad Talegao
13. Mr. Manoj Chandrakant Sagari Chinchawad
14. Mr. Bhalchandra Namdev Ukarande, Solapur

One-Day Mega Courses at Global Vipassana Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai

(1) **Sunday**– 15th January, 2023, Mataji’s (5th Jan.) and Sayagi U Ba Khin’s (19th Jan.) *Death Anniversary*.

(2) **Sunday**– 07th May, 2023 Buddha Purnima,

(3) **Sunday**– 02nd July, 2023 Ashadha-Pūrṇimā (Dhammacakkappavattana day)

(4) **Sunday**– 1st October, 2023 Sharada-Pūrṇimā plus Puja Goenkaji’s Death Anniversary.

In addition there are **Daily One-Day Courses** being held in the Pagoda for Vipassana Students. Please follow the link to join and take advantage of the immense benefit of meditating in a large group. **Contact:** 022 50427500 (Board Lines) Mob. +91 8291894644 (from 11 am to 5 pm).

Online registration: <http://oneday.globalpagoda.org/register> Email: oneday@globalpagoda.org (Pl. bring a bottle so you can fill it with drinking water at GVP.)

Dhammalaya Stay during Mega Courses:—Meditators can stay at Dhammalaya during mega courses and avail maximum benefit. Please **contact:** 022 50427599 or email-info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org

For any other information for One day or Mega courses you may **contact:** info@globalpagoda.org or pr@globalpagoda.org

DHAMMA DOHA

*Saba ke saba cāheṅ yahī, saphala manoratha hoṅya;
Nahīṅ manoratha eka se, saphala kahāṅ se hoṅya?*

Everyone wishes for the fulfillment of one’s desire;
But as not everyone’s desires are the same, how indeed can they succeed?

*Apāne-apāne svapna meṅ, saba itane maśagūla;
Auroṅ kā anahita kareṅ, samajha na pāeṅ bhūla.*

Everyone is so immersed in their own individual dreams;
That they harm others without even realising it.

*Parama satya para bhrānti ke, parade paṛe aneka;
Jo cāhe parade haṛeṅ, vipaśyanā se dekha.*

Many curtains of illusion cover the ultimate truth;
If you want the curtains removed then observe them with Vipassana.

*Tapobhūmi meṅ tapa kare, citta samāhita hoyā;
Jīeṅ jīvana santa kā, saphala manoratha soya.*

In the sanctified land of meditation; the mind becomes concentrated while doing serious meditation. And living the life of a saintly one, the goal is realised.

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