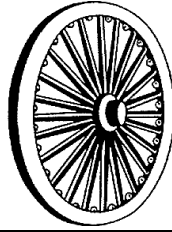


Vipassana



Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as

taught by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Attanā codayattānaṃ, paṭimamsetha attanā,
So attagutto satimā, sukhaṃ bhikkhu vihāhisi.*

*One who motivates oneself, examines oneself, and in
this way self protected and attentive, one will live
happily.*

— Dhammapada - 379, Bhikkhuvaggo

The Simple Teaching of the Buddha

The simple and pure teaching of the Buddha, meant for the welfare of the many, started spreading in the towns and villages of North India. The Buddha explained that because of blind beliefs and blind dogmas, one is unable to understand the reality of Dhamma. Consequently, one is unable to practice true Dhamma and reap the benefits which accrue by following true Dhamma. The instructions given by the Buddha to the inhabitants of Kesamutti – the Kālāmās, when he visited their village, were accepted by many; because there was no chance of beguilement in these instructions.

The Buddha said in clear words - Come, Kālāmās! Do not accept anything merely because –

- (1) It has been heard repeatedly;
- (2) It is traditional, and it is accepted through legends;
- (3) It is in accordance with our scripture;
- (4) It is in accordance with the logic;
- (5) It is based on reasoning;
- (6) Its presentation is pleasant and attractive;
- (7) It is according to our notion and belief;
- (8) The speaker's personality is very attractive (This reference is especially indicated towards His own personality);
- (9) The speaker is venerated by us (This reference also is especially indicated towards His own personality).

Therefore, do not accept anything said by someone or any heresy based on blind belief or blind faith.

The truth which you know by your own experience, that these qualities are skillful, blameless, and our welfare and happiness lies in practicing these qualities, you should accept only this much.

When you have known the truth by your own experience and realized that these qualities are skillful, then do not stop after merely knowing but practice them. When you practice them, then only they lead to your welfare.

The Buddha's instructions were not only accepted by those Kālāmās, but it also encouraged many people to walk on the path leading to the truth.

It is my own experience. I was born and brought up in a staunch Hindu family. I was a leader of the Indians in Burma and particularly of the Hindus. I considered the Buddha as highly venerable. I visited their temple and bowed to him also. This was done only because the Buddha was also an incarnation of the Vishnu, thereby meaning that he was an incarnation of the God. But, besides this, there was a strong belief prevalent in society that the instructions given by him as this incarnation were only meant for the wicked people and that by practicing these precepts (preachings) they fall down to hell. Hence, we should never walk on the path shown by him.

When owing to some special reason, I had to join a course at the Vipassana Centre of Venerable Sayagyi U Ba Khin; I did so with above doubts. At the centre, while waiting for some time, I happened to see a book on Kālāma Sutta. I picked up the book and read it. After going through it, I was convinced that there was no place for Gurudom here in the name of Dhamma. I realized that this person does not give importance merely to acceptance and consequently is not spreading blind belief. On the other hand, he gives importance to understanding the truth by one's own experience. I did not find any beguilement of Gurudom in his instructions. So, with this assurance, I decided to sit in the course.

In this way, we can understand that many people carrying various kinds of doubts and prejudices, after perceiving the truth of the Buddha's teaching, became his followers.

Considering such a great expansion of land of North India with its vast population, where many rites and rituals based on many kinds of blind folded beliefs and dogmas were prevalent, the Buddha's instructions still brought about changes in some of these wrong beliefs. For example, the removal of the doubts in the mind of Sigāla, son of a rich man, in respect of bowing to six directions was explained in a previous issue dated 30 September 2012.

When food is offered to some deity, a question arises that if this food could reach a deity of far off region and whose existence is even doubtful then why should people going away from their homes on journey carry food with them? The food may be offered to them at home itself. When the truth of this became clear, the people came out of this dogma also.

Similarly, so many people living in the vast regions of North India were entangled in blind beliefs. Out of them, some have got rid of these blind beliefs, while some could not free themselves even till today and are still entrapped in these blind beliefs.

Blind beliefs destroy the ability to think

When a person drowns himself in blind beliefs, then he does not even make use of his common sense. If he uses it then the selfish priest authenticates these blind beliefs with justifications drawn from the scriptures and threatens him that his sophistry will lead him to hell. All the logic which dismantles the blind belief is termed as sophistry. A frightened human being is unable to even understand such a small truth that if the sins were all washed away by taking a bath in a river, then it could be decisively taken that the welfare of all the aquatic living beings like fish, frogs, tortoises, crocodiles, etc after their present life is ensured. In case the thieves, dacoits, murderers, wicked and licentious persons wash away their sins in the river, then certainly they should be considered as eligible to take birth

in heaven. When such wrong beliefs become prevalent then misdeeds are encouraged instead of good deeds. A human being spoils both his present as also his future. In comparison, when the Dhamma is established in its pristine purity, then a person improves both his present life as also his future life.

*Dhamme ca ye ariyappavedite ratā,
Anuttarā te vacasā manasā kammunā ca.
Te santisoraccasamādhisaṅghitā,
Vajanti lokam dubhayaṃ tathāvidhā.*

-- Those who practice the dhamma path shown by the noble ones, they perform wholesome mental, vocal and bodily actions, they get established in calmness, gentleness and concentration. As a result of it after their death, their going forth in the two abodes is assured i.e. either as a god or as a human being.

Bathing in the river in hot climate

In a country where the climate is hot, it is understandable that one takes bath once, twice or thrice in the nearby river or pond, because the body perspires a lot and bathing is helpful in keeping the body healthy and clean. But linking this activity with the Dhamma, and turning it into a ritual, and getting it established as a wrong belief that this bathing will wash away the sins, leads only to polluting the pure Dhamma based on the principle of Kamma i.e. action and its appropriate result.

A weak person is affected by this inferiority complex that he cannot eradicate the defilements accumulated due to his past misdeed with the strength of his meditation. His inferiority complex is further strengthened by priests who have made Dhamma a source of their livelihood. Such priests give false assurances to their host that by taking bath here, so and so female deity of this river or so and so male deity of this pond will become happy and will release one from all sinful misdeeds. This assurance seems very pleasant and attractive to a weak person with agitated mind and the person accepts this ritual as pure Dhamma. This blind belief spreads easily in society and after passing through many generations takes strong roots. An Enlightened person grown in perfect wisdom gives deliverance to society from this blind belief and encourages people to practice pure Dhamma based on wholesome actions.

Come, Students! Let us also come out of the net of such blind beliefs and blind dogmas and adopt the healthy tradition of Dhamma as a part of our life and work for our welfare and happiness!

Kalyānamitra,
S. N. Goenka

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May Dhamma spread!

(The following text is based on a public talk given by Goenkaji on December 22, 2012, during a visit to Yangon, Myanmar. It has been shortened and edited for publication.)

For me, the spread of Vipassana is the main purpose of life. And it is spreading. Already there are over 160 centers around the world and over a thousand teachers.

I am often asked how it is that Vipassana is spreading so rapidly, attracting a large number of people.

One reason is that we don't teach any religion. The Buddha never taught any religion. He taught Dhamma and we also teach Dhamma. People find that it is universal, good for everyone. That is why leaders and followers of every religion have joined courses and found Vipassana so useful.

Another reason is that the teaching is free. We never charge anything for teaching the Dhamma. The Buddha never

charged anything for teaching the Dhamma. The tradition never charged anything for teaching the Dhamma. The students who come to us receive the teaching of Vipassana as well as board and lodging, all free of charge. But once they benefit from the teaching, naturally they wish to offer support so that others can benefit in future. And this is how Vipassana is spreading.

Another reason is that we do not seek to convert people from one religion to another. You may call yourself by any name, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim or anything else; it makes no difference. If you practice Vipassana, you are practicing the Dhamma, which is free of all religious rites, blind beliefs, dogmas or cults.

That encourages people to join a course. And when they practice, they benefit here and now. They experience the results.

The whole technique is result-oriented, non-commercial. The whole technique is universal. Anybody and everybody can take advantage of it. And that is how it is spreading around the world.

I am so glad that I was born in the country of Myanmar, the land of Dhamma. Whatever passport I may hold is unimportant to me. Most important is that I am a son of this country. And here I had a second birth with Sayagyi U Ba Khin. That was a real birth, which made me a different person altogether.

Here I attained the Dhamma, a great gift. It had originated in India and was lost there, but Myanmar maintained it in its pristine purity. So this is a gift from Myanmar to the world. I tell my students always to be grateful to Myanmar for keeping the pure Dhamma through the millennia. I tell them always to be grateful to Sayagyi U Ba Khin, who sent Vipassana out of Myanmar so that people everywhere could learn it.

What is Vipassana? Vipassana is living a moral life. Which religion will oppose this? And to live a moral life, you must have a strong mind. Which religion will contradict this? And then you must have a pure mind. So *śīla, samādhi, paññā*—morality, concentration, purifying insight—nobody has any objection to that. Everyone can accept it.

I often tell how after one course I stopped suffering from migraine headaches and no longer needed morphine. But that was not the greatest benefit I experienced. Instead, my mind became clearer; my life became more peaceful and harmonious. The cure of my disease was just a by-product. Treatment of physical disease is not the main purpose of Vipassana.

Vipassana will make you a healthy person at the mental level. Your mind will be more calm and quiet. You will live a prosperous, harmonious life, enjoying good relations with members of your family and others. Vipassana is a way of life. It teaches how to live peacefully and harmoniously.

May Dhamma spread! May the people of my country, Myanmar, enjoy the best fruits of Dhamma! May the people of the world enjoy the best fruits of Dhamma!

May more and more people benefit from Vipassana to live a happy and harmonious life, good for them and good for others!

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Questions and Answers

(Following are questions and answers at the end of the public talk given by Goenkaji in Yangon, Myanmar, on December 22, 2012.)

Q: *In daily life, to gain merits, to gain intellectual achievements, to gain material wealth, how should I practice?*

SNG: Certainly when you are practicing you get the benefit of Vipassana. But when you start helping others, then the merits you get are innumerable and help you in your life.

Q: *While practicing Vipassana, are there people who have become sotāpanna [i.e. who reached the goal of nibbāna] without realizing it? Are there changes in those who have managed to reach the sankhāra-upekkhā level [a stage leading to the experience of nibbāna]?*

SNG: Certainly people keep on progressing on the path to reach the goal of *sotāpanna* and many do reach it. But we don't give it much importance because then people will forget the immediate benefits of Vipassana. So I would say better to give importance to the benefits you are getting here and now, and rest assured that other benefits are bound to come at a later stage.

Q: *I am always aware of the subtle sensations on the body with the understanding of anicca [impermanence] and anattā [no self]. However, I have not yet reached the desired goal. I feel that I am lacking in something. What else should I be doing?*

SNG: If you keep looking for the goal, you won't practice properly. Your job is to keep on practicing. The goal will come automatically. Don't crave for the goal.

Q: *In practicing Vipassana, I am able to overcome the dukkha-vedanā [unpleasant sensations]. I am also able to observe the subtle sensations with awareness of anicca. I also see lights. What level have I reached in terms of practice?*

SNG: It is perfectly all right if you keep on observing sensations with the understanding of *anicca, anattā, dukkha*. This is certainly making you progress toward the final goal. But if you look for the final goal, you won't work properly. Work properly and leave the result to Dhamma.

Q: *How would you like your students to carry on your legacy after you? What is your unfinished business that you wish to accomplish? Is there anything that we can do for you?*

SNG: Dhamma will take care. I need not worry about that. I keep on teaching Dhamma, and those who are developing on the path will carry on. Even now, many of them have started carrying on and helping me. Perhaps in my absence also, the same thing will continue.

Q: *Now there are many different Vipassana centers around the world but misery, struggles, wars, et cetera are increasing. Is there something wrong in Vipassana? Can't Vipassana make the world peaceful? If we cannot stop wars, the future surely will be in ruins. What more can we do for the sake of world peace?*

SNG: If there is peace within each person, there is bound to be peace in the world. Unless there is peace within, you can't expect peace in the world. Vipassana is teaching peace within the individual so that it spreads as peace in the world.

Without confusing your mind with all such questions, carry on meditating and see that you get the benefit yourself. If you get the benefit, others will also benefit. And this is how there will be peace. If more and more people practice Vipassana, there is greater chance of world peace. There can't be world peace unless there is peace within individual human beings.

If more and more people practice Vipassana, if more and more individuals live a peaceful life, we are approaching closer to world peace.

The best thing is that those who have taken courses should continue to progress on the path. And those who have not should take a 10-day course and see the result. The result is

always obvious. The result is always good. Keep on practicing yourself, and keep on helping others to develop on the path!

Instead of involving yourself in all kinds of questions, practice! Practice for your good. Practice for the good of others. Practice for the good of the whole country. Practice for the good of the whole world. Practice, practice, practice!

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ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY Teachers

1. Mr. D.B. Dhande,
To spread of Dhamma, MAH (Non Center Courses).

Senior Assistant Teachers

- 1-2. Mr. Gautam & Mrs. Pragna Goswami
To assist Centre Teachers in serving Dhamma
Sindhu, Kutch
3. Mr. Sachin Natu, To assist Centre Teachers in serving Dhammānanda, Pune

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Shrikant Patil
To assist Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma
Anākulā, Akola

NEW RESPONSIBILITY Senior Assistant Teachers

1. 3. Mr. Dnyandeo Bansode,
Alibaug

2. Mr. Robert Wagester,
Canada

3. Ms. Marsha Dewar, Canada

NEW APPOINTMENTS Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Suresh Babu K.,
Banglore
2. Mr. Bhavanrao Thorat,
Sangamner
3. Mr. Gangadhar Jagdale,
Pune
4. Mr. Chandrashekhar Datye,
Pune
5. Mr. Jagan Agrawal, USA
6. Mrs. Vijaya Nagesh, USA
7. Mr. Steven Christopher
Armstrong, Canada
8. Mr. Jason Nicholson, UK
9. Mr. Richard Starkey, UK
10. U Tin Maung, Myanmar
11. Daw Kay Thi, Myanmar
12. Daw Khin Aye Kyaing,
Myanmar

Call for Participation in a Research Project

National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS – Deemed University), Bangaluru, has undertaken another major research project on Vipassana Meditation (2012-15) that has been approved by Gurujī.

They have invited participation of the following in their study; (1) Assistant Vipassana Teachers – ATs, SATs & Ts; (2) Senior Vipassana Meditators – completed one 30-days course; (3) Novice-Old students – completed 2 to 3 ten-day courses.

Those interested have to visit Bangalore for 2 to 3 days. Travel Expenses (train/bus) and Local Hospitality like lodging, boarding, etc. will be borne by NIMHANS.

For further details, please contact the following:

1. Prof. Dr. Bindu M. Kuty, H.O.D. Neuro-Physiology, NIMHANS, Bangaluru-560029; bindu.nimhans@gmail.com; (O) 080-26995170; (R) 080-26565075; (M) 09449789375;


2. Dr. Ravindra: ravindrapinna@gmail.com; 09448934488;

3. Ms. Nirmala: nimmims@gmail.com; (M) 09980162315; 080-26995169;

4. Dr. Jyothi Kakumanu: jyothikakumanu@yahoo.com, (M) 09490742619; 080-26995169;

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Peaceful Demise

Smt. A.K. Satyabhama did her first course in 1991 and thereafter maintained regular daily practice. With her husband Shri P. Balakrishnan and their three daughters, she came for long stay service at Dhammagiri. Facing chronic headache for 18 years with utmost patience and equanimity, she made her great contribution by helping with translation of the course material into Malayalam. On 29-12-12, she passed away peacefully in Dhammagiri, with full consciousness, meditating in her last moments. Her husband also passed away peacefully in Dhammagiri in February 2011. Both of them truly depicted the art of living and dying, in practice. 

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
3-2	Dombivili	10-16	1 & 2-2-2013
3-2	Ulhasnagar	10-16	1 & 2-2-2013
3-2	Matunga	10-16	1 & 2-2-2013
10-2	Amboli	10-16*	8 & 9-2-2013*
10-2	Sanpada	10-16*	8 & 9-2-2013*
17-2	Goregaon	10-16	13 & 14-2
17-2	Ghatkopar	10-16*	15 & 16-2-2013*
24-2	Airoli*	10-16*	22 & 23-2-2013*
3-3	Dombivili	10-16	1 & 2-3-2013
3-3	Ulhasnagar	10-16	1 & 2-3-2013
3-3	Matunga	10-16	1 & 2-3-2013
10-3	Amboli	10-16*	8 & 9-3-2013*
10-3	Sanpada	10-16*	8 & 9-3-2013*
17-3	Goregaon	10-16	13 & 14-3
17-3	Ghatkopar	10-16*	15 & 16-3-2013*
24-3	Airoli*	10-16*	22 & 23-3-2013*

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration Timings:** 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location.

Course Venues: **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyt Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. **Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Tel: 2624-2025 & 98690-23884. **Airoli:** Saraswati School, Sector 5, Airoli, Mob. 9892329410. **Sanpada:** Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpada.

Tel: 7738649821. **Dombivili:** K B Vira HighSchool, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNTD College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Tel: 25101096, 25162505. **Ulhasnagar:** 703-A Block /1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, 8976225967. **Amboli:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Roadm Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Church Andeheri, Mob. 9821283038. 9820459449.

Ulhasnagar	Second Sundays	94225-50489
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Please call two days in advance for registration.

NB *Please bring 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 course with respected Guruji at the Global Pagoda on the auspicious occasion of the Buddha Purnima.

The course will be held in the dome of the Global Pagoda from 11 AM to 4 PM on May 25, 2013, Saturday, Please note that you must book yourself before coming here so that you may not feel any inconvenience. For booking **contact:** Mobile 09892855692, 09892855945. Phone no. 02228451170, 33747543, 33747544, (Phone booking from 11 AM to 5 PM everyday), E-mail registration: oneday@globalpagoda.org; Online registration: www.vridhamma.org

**DHAMMA DOHAS**

*Bāhar Bhūtar eka rasa, sarala svaccha vyavahāra;
Kathanī karanī ekasī, yahī dharma kā sāra.*

Externally and internally, dwell with same nature, keep simple and transparent conduct. As the speech is so is the deed, this is the essence of Dhamma.

Pañcaśīla pālana kareṃ, dāna deṃy dil khol;

Kareṃ sādhanā bhāvanā, yahī dharma anamol.

Follow the five precepts of morality and donate generously. Practice Vipassana meditation, this is the invaluable Dhamma.

*With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Puṇya karma sañcita kareṃ, kareṃ na pāpa lava leśa;
Mana nirmala karate raheṃ, yahī dharma sandeśa.*

Keep on accumulating meritorious deeds; never commit a trace of misdeed. Keep on purifying the mind; this is the message of Dhamma.

Dharma vahī jo met de, is jīvan ke śoka;

Binā loka sudhare bhalā, kab sudharā paraloka?

Only that is Dhamma, which can eradicate sorrows of the present life. Without improving the present life, how could one expect improvement in the next life?

With best compliments from

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

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