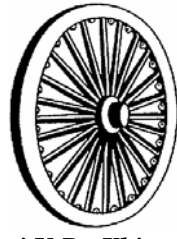


Vipassana



Newsletter

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

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Attanā codayattānaṃ, paṭimaṃsetha attanā ,
so attagutto satimā, sukhaṃ bhikkhu vihāhisi.*

— Dhammapada 379, Bhikkhuvagga.

By self do you exhort yourself. By self do you examine yourself. Self-guarded and mindful, O bhikkhu (meditator), you will dwell at ease.

What is True Dhamma?

Part two of the first discourse in a Three-day series of talks given by Principal Teacher S. N. Goenka in 1998 at Ramabai Amdedkar Girls' High School, Nasik, Maharashtra. Part one appeared in the December 25th 2015 newsletter.

No one ever wants to live a life of misery but ignorantly one generates negativities again and again and becomes agitated. Even when the mind wanders idly, some defilements are being generated, thereby adding fuel to the burning fire within. Why does this happen?

Listening to words of wisdom but not following them up with action is an exercise in futility. I too have performed rituals and spent years listening to discourses. These may help to awaken wisdom somewhat, but only briefly. For example, when someone near and dear has passed away and is being cremated there is always a moment of profound wisdom in us, "Oh, I too will one day end up like this on a burning pyre and nothing will accompany me, so of what use are these mindless worldly pursuits? Why be attached to this 'I' and this 'mine'; why develop pride?" This is what is called 'graveyard wisdom', which has nothing but a temporary impact on the surface of the mind. As soon as one steps out of the cremation ground, our world with all its attachment of 'me' and 'mine' takes over.

It has also been my experience, and that of thousands of others, that those who come here for mere intellectual analysis and understanding return empty handed. One may contemplate, "Oh, what is being said is so true! I should not defile my mind with negativities as it only makes me unhappy. Instead I should generate goodwill that contributes to my happiness and the happiness of others." This effect on the listener is lost since no action follows which will change the old behaviour pattern of the mind.

At times we may immerse ourselves in *bhajans* (religious songs), or *japas* (chants), or some other religious ritual, which all give some peace of mind making us feel good for a while. But this feeling too is short lived.

Levels of the Mind

In ancient times, the surface level of the mind was called *parita citta*, which means a small part of the mind. Whether this part of the mind generates positive or negative thoughts is of no relevance since the message that we give to our minds at this level barely penetrates the deeper mental level, if at all. It is in the inner part of the mind, the larger part of the mind, the subconscious mind, where the same old pattern of ignorance and darkness prevails. An unpleasant experience instantly

results in a reaction of aversion and negativity. And a pleasant experience instantly results in a reaction of craving and attachment. This has been its nature for innumerable lifetimes.

One may not believe in many lifetimes, yet he or she certainly believes in the existence of this lifetime and can see clearly that since early childhood one has been reactive. One also sees that whenever something undesirable takes place, or something desired does not take place, then aversion and agitation arise as an inevitable result. One has to come out of this.

Meeting Vinobaji

In 1972, three years after my return to India from Burma (Myanmar), a Vipassana camp was held at Mahatma Gandhi's Sevagram Ashram in Wardha. The people there encouraged me to meet the saintly person Vinoba Bhave who lived nearby in Pawnar Ashram. I was pleased to hear he was nearby, and so I went to meet him. I told him about Vipassana saying that it was an ancient meditation technique of India. Vinobaji said, "Yes it is certainly an ancient teaching of India. The Rig veda is filled with words of praise for Vipassana." Then he recited and later sent to me a written note with a couplet from the Rig veda on Vipassana which said:

Yo vishwabhi vipassati, bhuvana. Sam cha passati, sa naha parshadati dvishaha.

Yo vishwabhi vipassati – Having turned his face away (*abhimukh*) from the world, he then practices Vipassana. The word *vishwa* that is used here means the world in today's language. But thousands of years ago, *vishwa* meant that which keeps multiplying (*vishadikaran*) and growing. For instance, if a negativity is generated within, then it is not a momentary happening. Once it arises it keeps growing, burning within for hours – be it passion, anger, fear, arrogance or any other negativity. It keeps growing and multiplying.

If a wise person, through the practice of Vipassana, observes the fact that something has arisen within, then he becomes aware of it just as it is with no effort to change it. If anger has arisen, he just acknowledges that anger has arisen. He does not make an effort to push it away, because then it will only multiply. One will start remembering the reason for one's anger and begin justifying it and so on, and it will continue to multiply. It is important just to be aware, to know that at this moment anger has arisen, negativity has arisen and to observe it objectively with complete awareness and equanimity; this is Vipassana. Continuing this practice, one goes beyond all negativities – *sa naha parshadati dvishaha*. Negativity cannot remain in the mind of such a person

Ancient Knowledge

How unfortunate such a priceless, ancient practice of India remained alive merely in empty chatter, its practice totally lost. That is why when one of the Fully Enlightened Ones of this ancient land, Gotama the Buddha, rediscovered it 2600 years ago he said:

Pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi

Through this Dhamma which was never heard before by me my eyes of wisdom have opened. How was it possible that he had never heard of this? His father, King Shuddhodhana, had taught him all the scriptures of those times. While studying he must have come across the couplets of the Rig veda. Then why did he make such a statement? Certainly he was not lying! In regards to Vipassana in particular, he had said that over the centuries the meaning of the words describing the practice had changed since the practice had died out. Hence these words were not understood at the experiential level. Without practice, when the true meaning of these words changed, then the way to live the life of Dhamma was lost. Only *mantras* remained. People were just told to recite a particular *mantra* and then their agitation would dissolve. How this was possible was not explained. People were not taught the way to go within to observe whatever arises, as it is, with equanimity, without any judgement. They were also not told that as you observe what is happening in its true nature then the impurities slowly start dissolving, dissipating, and reality becomes clear.

This ancient, invaluable knowledge of India was totally lost. When it reappeared, it blessed this country for 500 years with its teachings. This state of Maharashtra in central India was particularly blessed as the practice continued here for another 200 years. So for 700 years Vipassana remained vibrant and alive in this region. The numerous caves around here, where people meditated, are witness to this fact. However, gradually rites and rituals took precedence and the Dhamma was again lost.

What indeed is Dhamma? Teachings on how to purify the mind are Dhamma. When the mind is purified then one can truly live the life of Dhamma. Whenever the mind is defiled, then any action, be it at the physical or vocal level, will be unsuitable. And when the mind is purified then one need not worry, as actions that are carried out by a wholesome, balanced mind result in peace and joy. This is not obtained by any magic or miracle, one has to be disciplined and really work at it to obtain results.

After sitting a 10 day Vipassana course, if a person believes that he has understood Dhamma so well that he will no longer experience anger or any other negativity, then he is only fooling himself, as he has just initiated the process. As one makes an effort to start living a wholesome Dhamma life, gradually a positive change will take place.

Dhamma in Prison

True Dhamma, as mentioned in this talk, is for all. Vipassana camps are conducted in prisons for prisoners who have broken the country's laws. As a consequence they are suffering punishment, kept away from their families and the comforts of home. They are already agitated and then they generate further agitation by an unwholesome flow of thoughts such as, "That fellow was a witness against me during my court trial resulting in my incarceration in prison, so the first thing I will do upon my release is to go and kill him. Then I will also take revenge against the judge who gave this judgement against me."

Have you ever witnessed what happens whenever such thoughts of anger and animosity flow within your mind? You can see this clearly when you practice Vipassana. When Vipassana is practiced in prisons the prisoners realize, "Oh, whenever I generate negative and hate filled thoughts I become so agitated! Already one avenue of agitation exists due to my imprisonment, and now I have created one more avenue of misery. What a folly! The court of the country has already given me a punishment. Now due to my unhappy reaction the nature too is punishing me. I am only multiplying my unwholesome thought processes, making myself more miserable."

Once there happened to be a Dhamma emperor in our country who would teach criminals and others the process of self observation, as he knew that this would bring about a change in them. As a result, changes indeed started taking place in the country's prisons. Today criminals say that they were lucky to come in touch with Vipassana and be encouraged by the prison authorities to attend a Vipassana course. Who knows if they would have taken this initiative if they were out in the world. To this we say, those who are out in the world are also actually imprisoned. Everyone is imprisoned by his or her own defilements and anxiety, imprisoned by their own behaviour. Indeed we are so imprisoned by our behaviour pattern of reaction, that even a minor event which occurs against our wishes gives rise to aversion, which further gives rise to anxiety and agitation.

Who is responsible for this state of affairs? Will prayers to this or that God help? If we keep creating difficult situations for ourselves and expect someone else to rescue us, it will not work. We must remember the exalted qualities of whichever God or Goddess, Brahma or Saint we have faith in and make an effort to start awakening them within. Developing their virtues is the hallmark of sincere faith.

Leading a life of true morality is the life of Dhamma and a life lived with unwholesome behaviour is a non-dhammic life. This understanding inspires a person to start living a pure life. It is for one's own welfare since one cannot generate negative actions at the physical level or vocal level without first generating unwholesome thoughts in one's mind.

A human being is a social being. If he or she lives a wholesome life then peace and joy will prevail in society. What are wholesome acts? To refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, speaking lies to cheat someone, speaking harshly or gossiping about someone, and indulging in alcohol and drugs. One also begins to understand why one should not perform violent acts after coming in contact with Vipassana.

Vipassana is a potent means to discipline the mind so that one can learn to live a wholesome life. Just as one needs to do some exercise or pranayama to keep the body healthy and full of energy, so also the practice of Vipassana helps in disciplining the mind in order to control it and turn it towards a Dhamma way of life. Vipassana is totally result oriented and its practice leads one towards a happy and peaceful life.

May all who have come to today's Dhamma gathering understand Dhamma deeply and make an effort to live the life according to its tenets. May you all be happy. May you all be liberated.

Questions and Answers

Q – If Dhamma has to be lived in one's personal life then how will happiness be achieved at the community level in society?

Goenkaji – These teachings will certainly prevail at the community level. In the first course a mere 14 people attended, but this was a great start for a country which had completely lost Vipassana. Those 14 turned into 24, then into 50 and then 100 and now there are many centres all over the world. The centre at Igatpuri which is the mother centre, Dhammagiri, now receives applications from 1000 – 2000 people per course while it can accommodate just 600 to 700 people. Vipassana is growing rapidly and a time will come, as it was in the past, where meditation centres will open in cities, towns and villages and the work will develop at the community level, just as gyms and *akhadas* are important in villages, towns and cities to keep the body fit and healthy.

Q – Is it appropriate that the Dhamma of the parents is automatically considered as the Dhamma of the child?

Goenkaji – We have forgotten what true Dhamma is. Parents believe a sectarianistic, ritualistic tradition like Jain dharma, Hindu dharma, Bauddha dharma etc. to be true Dharma which then gets accepted blindly by the child. The day we understand that Dharma is the law of nature, the law of cause and effect, then both the parents and their progeny will come on the path of the real understanding of Dharma.

Q – Is it necessary to follow the tenets of Dharma to live one's life?

Goenkaji – Yes, it is necessary to live a life of Dharma because by this our true self interest is served, and we are able to live a peaceful life and also be an example to others to lead a peaceful life.

Q – What are the similarities or differences between hypnotism and Vipassana?

Goenkaji – There is a major difference between the two. In fact they are total opposites. Any suggestion given to the mind – an auto suggestion or a suggestion given by others – generates an imaginary reality which may not be true and with repeated suggestion it starts becoming real for us, thus controlling us. Dhamma, on the other hand, teaches us to be our own master, teaches us to see the truth within as it is, taking us towards positive development and liberation.

Q – What is God? Where is he? Who is he? What is his form?

Goenkaji – What should I say? Ultimate truth is God I would say.

Q – What is the difference between Vipassana and meditation?

Goenkaji – Well, people have started saying that Vipassana is a type of meditation, but actually meditation means to concentrate the mind on one object. Here in Vipassana the object keeps on changing from moment to moment. The entire physical structure and the entire mental structure—the combination of the two—is constantly changing and you are just observing it. So it is a process of self observation, a process of truth observation, so you can be free from your mental defilements.

Q – What do you think about self improvement by mind programming, by self hypnotizing?

Goenkaji – Well, hypnotizing is hypnotizing. It may benefit you for a short time, but the habit pattern of the mind at the deepest level remains as it is. You have to change the depth of the mind, the root of the mind. The habit pattern of the mind should be changed totally and for that one has to work at the root level. Vipassana works at the root level.

Q – What is the difference between Vipassana and life?

Goenkaji – If Vipassana is developed within us it becomes an integral part of our lives. If it is only discussed intellectually and not practiced then it is of no use to us.

Q – Why did God give birth to human beings?

Goenkaji – Our own actions gave birth to us. Depending on the kind of actions we indulge in, during the moment of death those similar kinds of *saṅkhāras* raise their heads and become the cause of the next life. We alone are responsible. Why blame poor God? What kind of God would bother to give us birth again and again and put us through so much misery? Why blame him? We are responsible and want to put the blame on somebody else. Purify yourself and you will see that you become free from the cycle of birth and death.

Q – I would like to know what was the defining moment in your life? The point where and when you felt that you had fulfilled your life's purpose?

Goenkaji – The moment I received Vipassana. When I received Vipassana on the fourth day in the camp that I was attending, it felt as if the insight of wisdom had suddenly awakened. Until that time all the spiritual talks I had heard remained at the mere intellectual level and I had deluded myself into thinking that I was gradually becoming detached and equanimous. However, the practice of Vipassana revealed true wisdom to me. Wisdom or knowledge ⁽⁹⁾ by someone else belongs to that person. It could not be my wisdom as I had not experienced it. My wisdom was awakened when I found the pathway of how to get established in wisdom and experience it for myself. That was the golden opportunity for me.



Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date:

17-4, 15-5, 19-6,

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

Place:

Goregaon

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
First Sunday	Dombivili	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Sanpada	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

“Please call or send a text sms message with the name & age of the child two days in advance for registration”

2 Day Residential Anapana Course for Children: (age 12 to 16 Only for Boys) 4 to 5-6-2016, (age 12 to 16 Only for Girls) 6 to 7-6-2016, **Bhiwandi:** Naik Foundation Padaga village (Bhiwandi) Mumbai Nasik Highway (N.H.3) After Padaga Toll Naka, Near Pallavi Hotel, For Registration call 022-25162505, 25011096. (Registration After 20th May Only)

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. **Dombivili:** K B Vira HighSchool, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **Ulhasnagar:** A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Sanpada:** Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpada. Tel: 7738649821, 9699862322, 9223300575, **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise

Ghatkopar: SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. **Airoli:** Saraswati School, Sector 5, Airoli, Mob. 9892565765. Church Andheri, Mob. 99674-80865, 99306-78532.

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.



ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Mr. A. Subramaniam, To assist Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Madhura.
2. Mr. M. A. Subramanian, To serve as AT training co-ordinator for Tamil Nadu.
3. Mr. Vimalchand Surana, To serve as Co-ordinating area Teacher for Kerala
4. Mr. Vinay Dahat, To assist Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Sugati

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Surdas Wasnik, Chandrapur, MAH

NEW APPOINTMENT Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Vinod Kumar, Mandi, H.P.
2. Mr. Yadorao Mandlekar, Rajgarh, M.P.
3. Mr. Prahlad Khobragade, Pune, MAH
4. Mr. K. Bageerathan, Chennai, T.N.
5. Ms. Loza Bekele, Ethiopia
6. Ms. Mama Sila Kanyua, Kenya

Childrens Course Teachers

1. Mrs. Rekha Maheshwari, Indore
2. Mrs. Usha Popli, Indore
3. Mr. Sean Bradley, Australia
4. Ms. Maeve Dullaghan, Australia
5. Mrs. Bounmy Vannaxay, Thailand

First course held in Rwanda, Africa

Rwanda is located in the African Great Lakes region of central and east Africa. A 10-day course at a Catholic convent was organized near the capital, Kigali, in January 2016. The students were mostly from Rwanda and the nearby countries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. There were also participants from Europe and the USA. A second course has been scheduled for July this year. Translation of the course material into Kinyarwanda, the local language, has already begun. Meanwhile, steps are being taken to register the Rwanda Vipassana Meditation Association as a non-profit organization. A fund has been set up to accept donations for courses in Rwanda and other countries of sub-Saharan Africa.



One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2016

Sunday 22nd May, Buddha Purnima (21st May); Sunday 17th July, Guru-Purnima (19th); Sunday 2nd Oct. in Gratitude of Respected S.N. Goenka (29th Sept.) & Sharad Purnima.

One-day mega courses will be held at GVP Time: 11 am to 4 pm. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho:** Partake in the immense benefit of meditating in a large group. For registration **Contact:** 022 28451170 // 022 337475-01 / 43 / 44 – Extn.: 9. (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). **Online registration:** www.oneday.globalpagoda.org.

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Ho saṅṅa, nirṅa ho, saba kudarata ādhāna;
Isa kudarara ko samajha kar, kare dukhoṃ ko kṣāna.*
Whether with life or lifeless, everything is controlled by Nature. Let us now reduce the burden of our miseries by understanding this Nature.
*Bahirmukhī hī to rahe, jaba se pāyā janma;
Āo antarmukha banem, kareṃ dūra duṣkarma.*
Since birth, we have been focused outwardly; Come, now let us examine within, and rid ourselves of our negative acts.

*Samyak darśana jñāna se, kareṃ citta kā śodha;
Dharma-bodha taba-taba jage, jaba-jaba jāge krodha.*
By wisdom, let us purify our minds; May Dhamma awaken every time anger arises.
*Jīvana apanā dhāla le, dharma-niyati anukūl;
Maṅgala hī maṅgala sadhe, karma na hoṃ pratikūla.*
Let us mould our lives as per the laws of Dhamma; This will only result in welfare, the adverse karmas will not arise.

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