



WORDS OF DHAMMA

*So karohi dīpamattano, khippaṃ vāyama paṇḍito bhava;
Niddhantamalo anaṅgaṇo, dibbaṃ ariyabhūmiṃ upehisi.*

Make an island for yourself, strive hard and become wise.
Rid of impurities and cleansed of stain, you will go to the
celestial abode of the Noble Ones.

— Dhammapada 236, Malavaggo

Why Live a Life of Dhamma?

Part one of the second discourse in a three-day series of talks given by Principal Teacher S.N. Goenka in 1998 at Ramabai Amedkar Girls' High School, Nasik, Maharashtra. Parts one and two of the first discourse appeared in the December 25th 2015, and March 23rd 2016 newsletters.

Greetings to the Dhamma loving citizens of the sacred land of Nasik!

In yesterday's Dhamma gathering we tried to understand what Dhamma truly is lest we get lost in a confusing labyrinth in the name of Dhamma. Let us understand the pristine and pure essence of Dhamma and also its outer layers, the chaff, which people confuse with real Dhamma. This is essential so that the essence of Dhamma can be appreciated and the external layers can be dropped.

The essence of Dhamma is actually very simple and clear, we only confuse it in our ignorance – the vibrations emanating from a purified mind is Dhamma while vibrations emanating from an impure mind are not Dhamma. When the mind gets purified, then all the actions at the speech and body level too become inevitably pure. Alternately, if the mind is filled with jealousy, hatred, passion, fear, arrogance and attachment to 'I' then it is certainly impure and any act carried out at the level of speech or physical actions will also be impure and harmful. Such a person not only harms himself but others as well.

One who keeps his mind pure will naturally, effortlessly start living a wholesome life. The purified mind has its own nature – it dwells in infinite metta, infinite compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. How can such a person filled with infinite compassion, utter words which may disturb the peace and happiness of others; how can he hurt and harm them? His words and deeds will only be filled with loving kindness, goodwill and sweetness. He will not be able to utter words or carry out bodily actions which harm and disrupt the peace and happiness of others. Such a person cannot kill anyone, steal, snatch, or forcefully take away someone else's belongings or indulge in sexual misconduct. He neither harms others, nor does he let himself be harmed. Indeed, with Dhamma in his life, he learns the art of living.

As and when you too learn the art of going within and seeing the truth, then it will become very clear that you harm yourself before you can harm anyone else. How can one harm another person with harsh, angry words or lies, or by injurious actions, unless one first kindles defilements within. And if defilements arise, then agitation too will arise. It is inevitable. This is the law of nature.

In the ancient language of India this was called Dhamma. As one starts to observe within, this law of nature, or call it Dhamma, starts manifesting at the experiential level. It does not

differentiate or favour anyone as it is applicable to all, is all pervasive, for all times and for all places. If it is broken, punishment will follow instantly. And if one lives according to the universal law, then peace and happiness too will inevitably follow. One needs to focus and work on what is happening here and now in order to be happy; not focus on reaching a happy rebirth after death, since if one is working on purifying oneself then whatever happens after death will only be good.

Every step taken on the path of pure Dhamma gives us peace and joy. If there is no peace and joy within and we continue to think that we are Dhammic then we are fooling ourselves. By fulfilling the demands of some rites and rituals, attending certain festivals or believing in some religious philosophy, we fool ourselves deeply into thinking that we are religious. We may even be devoid of Dhamma and may not have made any effort to purify our minds, and yet may feel that we are very religious persons.

It is easy to remove superficial layers of negativities from the mind, but defilements continue to arise from within its depths and negativities continue to grow, binding one in a tight web of habits. Even a small feeling of joy gives rise to craving, while any unpleasant feeling gives rise to aversion.

How to come out of such habit patterns? It is easy to change at the surface level. There are many ways to do this and it is good that at least the surface level of the mind improves. But what about its roots? For one's true welfare this is where the mind must change if one is to live the life of Dhamma. This ancient treasure of India, Vipassana, teaches us how to do this. It offers the way to go deep within and purify the mind at its root level.

Seeing Reality As It Is

Seeing reality within, *as it is*, is indeed an ancient technique of India. As one penetrates more deeply, the universal law starts becoming very clear. The great sages of India too, like scientists in search of truth, delved deeply within and unravelled the mystery of the universal law, the *rit*. They were hence called *rishis*. Remaining in silence or *maun*, they were also called *muni*. They researched to see what the *rit*, the Dhamma, the universal nature was.

We have forgotten this profound truth and have come to consider the superficial layers of Dhamma to be its essence. We have forgotten to go to the root level and purify the mind. But those who became true saints did not forget. They realised the truth regarding existence. A great saint of India Nanak had this to say:

“Walk according to His injunctions”

Walk according to 'His' injunctions? How? By understanding what 'He', who is called God, Allah or we can say Nature, wants and traverse the path accordingly. When one

observes within, one begins to understand what indeed 'He' wants!

There is but one injunction – do not defile your mind. Whoever defiles it will not be able to escape being punished. Notice how agitated you get when you get angry, feel aversion, fear or arrogance, or feel craving.

Where is this law of nature that Nanak spoke of? Not in any book. And it cannot be understood by listening to such discourses. Understanding comes only by exploring deeply inside like that saint did. Searching for the meaning of these words outside will not help as their meaning is engraved within.

To understand the law of the universe at the experiential level and to live according to this law is to become Dhammic. One may call oneself by any name, hold any belief, wear any dress; it does not matter. True Dhamma will never be bound by any sectarian belief. It will always be universal, applicable to all, at all places and for all time. What does matter is that one starts to work at purifying one's own mind.

When a person starts living a life of Dhamma he will see its benefits right away, not only after death as is the common belief. For who has returned after death to say that this is so? Of course after death too, Dhamma will continue to shower its benefits, but the benefits must first come here and now. The present must get better before the future gets better.

The Teachings

This then was the teaching of ancient India called Vipassana; or *Vidarśana* – seeing the truth or *ṛta darśana*. Though thousands of years old, it was lost and then once again rediscovered 2600 years ago by a giant amongst men, the Buddha. Having derived benefit from it, he started distributing it amongst the people with utmost compassion. Wherever he looked there was misery, but he realised that if people got this beneficent knowledge, they would be able to purify their minds and come out of pain and suffering.

This country accepted Vipassana with open arms. History now repeats itself and once again the country is accepting it. There is an interesting story of how Vipassana arrived in this part of central India for the first time. In the time of the Buddha, a successful trader named Puṇṇa (Pūrṇa) travelled to the kingdom of Kosala (Kaushal) on business as a trader buying and selling goods. The capital city of Kosala, Sāvattī was one of the most populated and prosperous cities of those days. It was time for Puṇṇa's *pāramīs* (good qualities that lead to liberation) to bear fruit. On hearing about the Buddha's teachings he was thrilled, "Oh, is there a way to purify the mind at the root level? What more could one ask for!" He went and learnt Vipassana from the Buddha, practiced sincerely and developed in Dhamma.

When one tastes the nectar of Dhamma and experiences profound bliss one cannot contain it within. The urge arises to share it with all – "May all experience such peace and bliss." With folded hands he requested Lord Buddha to grant him permission to teach such beneficent knowledge to his countrymen. The Lord smiled. Wanting to test Puṇṇa, he said, "Oh you know your country folks, don't you." "Yes Lord," Puṇṇa replied. "Having been born there, I know them very well." "Your country folks are very aggressive by nature. If you introduce a new knowledge and they don't like it, they will knock you down and make you miserable." "Yes Lord, I know this well. However, though they are aggressive, they are also very sensible. If they see the truth, they will instantly accept it. So please grant me permission to teach them."

But the Lord wanted to test him further so he asked, "If you tell them to put aside their rites and rituals, go deep within to see the truth, learn to purify the mind and remove defilements; then those who see these teachings as something new and strange may abuse you in anger. Then what will you do?" "Lord, then I will

tell them, 'You are such good people. You are only abusing me verbally. Anyone else in your place would have hit me with stones.' " "And what if they hit you with stones?" "Then with folded hands I will tell them, 'You are such good people, you are only hitting me with stones. Anyone else in your place would have hit me with sticks. You are very kind to not hit me with sticks.' " "And if they hit you with sticks?" "Then Lord, I will tell them, 'You are such good people that you are not chopping me up with swords. Anyone else in your place would have cut me up with swords.' " "And indeed what if they do try to chop you up with swords?" "Then Lord, I will tell them, 'You are truly very kind. You are only chopping up my limbs. Anyone else in your place would have killed me. At least you are not killing me. You are very kind.' " "And what indeed if they get ready to kill you," asked the Buddha finally. "Then Lord, I will tell them, 'There is so much misery in this world due to which people are committing suicide and generating sinful karma. You are now saving me from the horrible fate of suicide by killing me now. You are so kind.' "

The Buddha realised that Puṇṇa had developed sufficiently in Dhamma and he said, "Go forth and spread the Dhamma."

This event is a well documented fact. But we do not know what difficulties Puṇṇa had to face. However, people did start following him. Sacred groves of spiritual discipline (*tapas*) and Vipassana meditation sprang up in this entire region. People cut into these hard rocks like cutting into gems and turned them into caves for meditation – this too is well documented. Vipassana grew exponentially. People are sensible and will indeed accept something if a factual matter is put forth sensibly.

About 1000 years hence, a Chinese traveller also passed through this region and said that the people here were brave warriors but also very short tempered. However, they were wise and if a truth was explained to them properly, they would accept it whole heartedly. Common sense being their virtue, they could well understand Puṇṇa's words.

This land began to resonate with the vibrant sounds of Vipassana. From Paithan to Nasik and beyond up to the present day Nalla Sopara (a suburb of Mumbai), or Supparak Pattana as it was called in those days because it was a major international sea port, this land grew rapidly as a sacred land of *tapas*.

Dārucīriya

A meditator practiced deep meditation in this very Supparak Pattana region, but could not reach those heights where defilements are rooted out. He heard that in northern India a Buddha had appeared who had found a way to come out of all the mental defilements by going deep within himself. Having become a Buddha, he was now totally liberated and freed from the wheel of birth and death. This meditator thought, "Oh, isn't this why I left home and became a renunciate?"

That old meditator, Dārucīriya, eagerly went to meet the Buddha, walking tirelessly from Nalla Sopara all the way to Sāvattī. After receiving teachings from him, he became an Arahant, a fully liberated one. Unfortunately he could not return to Maharashtra in central India to teach Dhamma to his people, as he breathed his last while still in Sāvattī.

Bāvarī brāhmaṇa

When Bāvarī, the royal brahmin priest of King Mahākosala of Kosala, became old, he went to Paithan and occupied himself in Dhammic activities. For thousands of years people had thronged the banks of the Godavari River from all over the country for spiritual practice, *yagya* and *tapas*, and the region from here up to Paithan was called the land of *pratishthapan*. Bāvarī brahmin too came and immersed himself in *agnihotra yagya* (homage to fire) and some meditation. He had heard that in northern India there was someone who had rediscovered Vipassana. He knew that Vipassana was mentioned and highly

praised in the Vedas but had been lost. Bāvarī also heard that this man in northern India, the Buddha, had become fully liberated. This inspired him but as an old man of 100 years how could he travel?

Bāvarī had many disciples. So he sent sixteen of his chief disciples to Sāvatti to discover if what he had heard was valid. He wondered if this man was a true master or a mere charlatan as there was so much duplicity and falsehood in the name of Dhamma. He instructed them, "Check carefully, and if you find that his teaching is truly the ultimate path of liberation, then start walking on it yourselves, and then return to teach me too." These sixteen disciples went and learned Vipassana and after examining it in every possible way and finding it to be true and beneficial they returned.

These examples from history tell us how readily people accepted the teachings. Who does not want to purify his mind and lead a good life? No one wants to lead an unwholesome life. An alcoholic knows very well that drinking is harmful for him and dangerous for his family. It destroys his earnings, and his life.

A drunkard, or a gambler, or a man immersed in other unwholesome activities, knows very well that he should not indulge in such acts. But when the time comes to refrain from them, he succumbs. What can the poor man do?

There is an episode from the Mahabharata, the ancient Hindu epic, about Duryodhana. One may wonder why indeed his parents would call him Duryodhana, a name that denotes an unwholesome one, and not Suyodhana, meaning a wholesome one. In any case, Duryodhana said:

*Jānāmi Dharmam, na ca me pravṛtṭih;
Jānāmi adharmaṃ, na ca me nivṛtṭih.*

I know what Dhamma is, but I have no inclination towards it, what can I do?

I know what Dhamma is not, but I have no inclination to be free from it.

These are not just the words of Duryodhana; every common man thinks like this. A person knows that he should not indulge in unwholesome acts of speech or body, but yet indulges in them. He understands logically that he should immerse himself in wholesome acts, but finds himself unable to do so. Why? The answer is simple. The mind is not in his control.

How then to control the mind?

(To be continued in the next issue)

Abhidhamma Seminar

Vipassana Research Institute held a workshop on Abhidhamma from 3rd to 6th April 2016 at the Seminar Hall in the Global Pagoda Campus, Mumbai.

The workshop started on the pleasant morning of April 3rd and proceeded with the sessions on Vedanā Saṃyutt by Shri Manjappaji, a Pali scholar associated with VRI for many years. The second day of the workshop welcomed Dr. Ravindra Panth, the Director of Nav Nalanda Mahavihara and former director of VRI, to conduct sessions on Abhidhamma.

Abhidhamma being a vast ocean of the profound teachings of the Buddha, Dr. Panth accommodated the sessions on Citta, Cetasika, Rūpa and Nibbāna with three sessions per day for three days.

This seminar was the first of its kind, with 75 participants in the workshop. On the final day, participants mentioned that they wished to have more workshops in the future, including ones on selected topics in Abhidhamma. Vipassana Research Institute looks forward to conducting such programs on different topics periodically for the benefit of Pali students, researchers and knowledge seekers.

INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR ON VIPASSANA

With the view to introduce the Vipassana Meditation Technique more widely, a seminar was organised at Dhammapala Vipassana Centre in Bhopal, M. P. on 21st Feb 2016. Many old students brought their friends and relatives to attend the introductory day and to see the arrangements available for meditation at the centre. There were two sessions, 10 am to 12 am and 12 am to 2 pm with the following programmes in Hindi in each session.

- Introduction to Vipassana Discourse by S. N. Goenkaji – 28 minute video.
- Introduction to Anapana and Practice by participants – 20 minutes.
- Question-Answer session – 35 minute video.

After the session, participants were guided around the Centre and shown the meditation hall, residential quarters etc. followed by Lunch.

A total of about 400 participants attended the seminar. More than a third indicated a desire to attend a course in the future.

New Centre in Ratnagiri

Konkan Vipassana Meditation Trust has acquired six and a half acres of lush green land in the Western part of Maharashtra's Konkan region in order to develop a new Vipassana Centre, Dhamma Padesh. It is located on the Mumbai Goa highway about 2 kms. from Pali village, and about 100kms from Kolhapur and 250 kms. from Goa. It is 17 kms. from the Ratnagiri railway station. A small Dhamma hall is already in place where group sittings and one-day meditation courses are being held. Plans are underway to build a meditation hall, residences and dining area for 100 meditators, as well as residences for ATs and servers. All those who wish to participate in this dhamma parami may **Contact:** Ms. Yugandhara Rajeshirke - 9421134073; Shri Santosh Ayre – 9960503598 / 9975434754; email: konkanvipassana@gmail.com. **Add:** Konkan Vipassana Meditation Centre, Ratnagiri, 109, Dhamma Vihar, Post: Khanu, District: Ratnagiri, Pin – 415803. **Acct details:** Bank of India, Pali, Acct No. 147720110000057, IFSC BKID0001477.



Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date:

Place:

19-6, 24-7, 21-8, 18-9, 16-10, 20-11, 18-12. Goregaon
(Age 10 to 16 Only) Registration before Course Thursday and Friday

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

"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 Courses 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 High School, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **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, **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Near SNTD Collage, King's Circle, Matunga (CR) Mob. 9820150336,

9892218186. **Khar:** Mahabodhi Buddha Vihar, Baudha Smashan Bhumi, Carter Rd. Danda, Khar West, Mumbai-52, Mob. 9930962652, 9869281410, **Sanpada:** Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpada. Tel: 7738649821, 9699862322, **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865. **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. 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.

Pagoda Construction at Dhammapāla Vipassana Centre, Bhopal (M.P.)

Construction work of a pagoda with 116 meditation cells has begun. This will be of great help to many serious meditators. For more information please contact the manager whose name and address are published in the schedule of Vipassana courses.

ADDITIONAL

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Shri Shyam Sunder Taparia, To Assist Coordinator Area Teacher of Bihar
2. Shri Shyam Sunder Taparia, To Serve as acting Center Teacher of Dhamma Bodhi
3. Shri Sajjan Kumar Goenka, To assist the Center Teacher of Dhamma Bodhi

4-5. Mr Sophoan Sok and Mrs Sambo Tey, To assist Coordinator Area Teacher for Cambodia in serving Dhamma Kamboja

NEWLY APPOINTED ASSISTANT TEACHERS

1. Mr. Udaykumar Gawale, Jalgoan

Pagoda Construction at Dhammavāhini Vipassana Centre, Titwala

Vipassana courses are regularly held at Dhammavāhini Vipassana Centre near Titwala Rly station in the suburbs of Mumbai. Keeping in mind the request of citizens of Mumbai the construction work of a pagoda is in progress here. For more information kindly contact the manager whose name and address are published in the schedule of Vipassana courses.

Pagoda Construction at Dhammacakka Vipassana Centre, Sarnath

The construction work of a pagoda at Sarnath where the Buddha first set the wheel of Dhamma in motion has begun. For more information kindly contact the manager whose address is published in the schedule of Vipassana courses.

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

(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

*Dukhiyāron ko dekha kara, karuṇā jage apāra,
Mana anukampā se bhare, to hī brahmavihāra.*

Seeing those who are miserable, unbounded compassion arises. The mind that is filled with profound desire to give, resides in brahmic bliss.

*Auron kī sukha śānti kā, hanana kare jaba koya,
Citta vikāra jagāya kara, pahale nija sukha khoya.*

When a person kills another's peace and joy, Then the first loss is his own happiness, due to awakening defilements in his mind.

*Duhkhamūla utkhanana kī, pāyī jisane rāha,
Vahī huā sukhaśānti kā, saccā śāhanśāha.*

He who has found the way to root out misery, Has become the emperor of true happiness and peace.

*Dūra rahe durbhāvanā. dveṣa hoyā saba dūra,
Nirmala nirmala citta men , pyāra bhare bharapūra.*

May unwholesome feelings of aversion towards others be far away. May the mind be filled with love for all.

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