



## WORDS OF DHAMMA

Asare saramatino, sare casaradassino;

Te saram nadhigacchanti, Micchasankappagochara.

— *Dhammapada 11, Yamakkavaggo*

Those who mistake the unessential to be essential, and the essential to be unessential, dwelling in wrong thoughts, never arrive at the essential.

## The Importance of Right View (Sammādiṭṭhi)

(A letter written by Goenkaji from Myanmar to members of his family in India)

Rangoon, 5-6-1968

Dear Shankar and Sita, Radhe and Vimala,

Live a Dhamma life!

When it is said we should have right view in life what is meant is that we should consider everything thoroughly and see things as they really are. We should neither overstate them nor understate them. Often we overstate—this is wrong view.

For example, suppose I am a devotee of some ordinary god, a bhumattha deva (a god living on the earth) or an ākāsattha deva (a god living in the sky), when I worship him, I praise him to the skies. I call him omnipotent and omniscient—though this is not true. I may even make declarations that this is true in the name of Dhamma. This has two disadvantages—firstly it becomes difficult for me to come out of the spider's web of wrong view that I myself have created, and secondly the poor god whom I praise, and who is worshipped by many as omnipotent, develops illusion and delusion. A human being born in this world normally cannot see or comprehend another being born in a higher world. These gods and goddesses have their limitations, and when they are worshipped and praised by human beings in such an exaggerated way, these poor gods and goddesses begin to think of themselves as omnipotent and so they also develop wrong view. Thus it is clear that if a man develops wrong view and is far away from right view, he not only harms himself but also harms others.

We see in the suttas that Baka Brahma had developed wrong view due to being worshipped by men and gods in the manner mentioned above. As he was definitely mighty and long-lived he began to consider himself unborn and immortal—the creator and preserver of the world. Only by coming in contact with the Buddha was he able to shed his wrong view and thereby realize what the reality of his situation was.

Such wrong views are found in other aspects of life as well. If we praise someone highly this person often begins to consider himself special and develops a superiority complex; someone who is not praised in this way begins to consider himself low and may develop an inferiority complex. In order to clarify this, the Buddha said, "A man is not a sudra or a brahmin on account of his birth but on account of his actions."

In the Vasala sutta the Buddha defines who an outcaste (vasala) is. He said an outcaste is one who is jealous, angry, hostile, hypocritical, tyrannical, cruel, or murderous is an outcaste. One who is a thief, a robber, an embezzler, a highwayman, a debt defaulter, bears false witness, is adulterous, does not respect one's elders, does not take care of elderly parents, is deceitful, conceals sinful actions, tells a lie to get something that belongs to others, indulges in self aggrandizement, is a glutton, sleeps too much, is lazy, is a miser and a fool, does not feel shame nor fear while doing evil actions, speaks ill of good persons and true Dhamma, and pretends to know Dhamma while neither understanding Dhamma nor living a Dhammic life. Such a person is low, an outcaste, even though one is born of a brahmini's womb or of any other womb. One is not a brahmin or a non-brahmin by birth, but by virtue of one's actions.

Describing the qualities of a brahman the Buddha said that one who destroys the stream of craving, discards sense desires by striving, transcends all conditioned things, practises Samatha and Vipassana continuously, who is fearless, unattached, pure, who meditates and practises equanimity, does not kill and harm anybody, is peaceful, has control over the sense organs, is detached from unwholesome physical, vocal and mental actions, is truthful, is patient, is fond of a secluded life, is frugal, renounces worldly life, is free from anger, is patient, forgiving, wise and judicious, who knows what the path is and what it is not, knows both truth and untruth, who practises loving kindness for all beings animate and inanimate, abides practising compassion and sympathetic joy, is free from craving and aversion, pride and ill feeling, anger and ignorance, who is moderate in speech, speaks softly, speaks the truth, is free from doubt and fear, free from sorrow and fetters, has no taints (āsavas) is a person who deserves to be called a Brahman in the true sense of the term whether born of a brahmani's womb or non brahmani's womb. This view is called right view.

Of course, there is a difference between one human being and another. This is unavoidable. Some are superior, some are not. Not even politicians can make all people equal although they shout slogans of equality. What then should the yard stick be to determine the way to regard a man or woman as high or low, superior or inferior? The Buddha says that one who is virtuous, practises concentration and has attained wisdom is superior and someone who doesn't is definitely inferior. Anyone walking on the path of Dhamma can become virtuous, can practise and develop concentration and can attain wisdom. This is what is meant by equality in Dhamma;

its doors are open for everyone. One is not regarded as high or low simply because one is born into a so-called high or low caste. To always regard one as high and the other low in this way is not Dhamma—it is wrong view. Right view is to regard one as high or low according to his or her ethical character.

There is another type of wrong view. It is indisputable that all objects of the sensuous world are impermanent. Whatever we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, smell with our noses, taste with our tongues, touch with our bodies and think with our minds—all these are changing every moment and are not eternal. Even knowing all this if we have a wrong view that Brahma pervades every atom, and because Brahma is eternal, permanent and unchanging then all atoms must therefore be eternal, permanent and unchanging, then we are inclined to live in a world of illusion and see untruth as truth.

For example, if our ornaments are made of impure gold, mixed with copper and brass we won't be satisfied with them, so what we do is gild them and make them appear to be pure gold. Even though this is an illusion, we regard it as reality and feel happy. If we don't do this we will always feel unhappy knowing that our ornaments look impure, being made mostly of copper and brass. In the same way, even though we know that everything we experience with our sense organs is impermanent—constantly changing into what is unsatisfactory and unpleasant—we take them to be permanent and unchanging and feel happy. Man knows that he is mortal, knows that he is subject to old age, disease and death. But who wants to die? So he considers himself immortal and tries to keep himself happy. Thus he gilds everything and makes it glitter, and then taken in by this he considers himself to be part of an immortal and eternal God. He regards his soul within to be immortal and deathless and thinks that even if this body dissolves, the soul is immortal and cannot be burnt by fire or be rotted by water, nor can it be damaged by weapons. Man's desire to be immortal has been nurtured by a false view, but this does not change reality—as truth is truth.

There is a very large bird called an ostrich. In the deserts of Africa when there are great sand storms the ostrich seeks protection, so it buries its head in the sand and pretends not to feel the presence of these storms. Like this ostrich, we cannot ignore the realities of life. We call the changing nature of mind and body 'eternal Brahma' and regard it as true. To do so is to deceive ourselves.

Right view consists in seeing things as they are. We should not assume things. We should not gild them. So long as a meditator does not transcend the field of the senses by practising meditation, and reach a state where all sense activities come to a stop, one is still in the changing field of the senses, still in the impermanent world. The pleasure that a meditator feels when his mind becomes very concentrated after vitakka (initial application) and vicara (sustained application) recede, is, as a matter of fact, born out of the senses. It is not the pleasure that is experienced after transcending the field of the senses. To regard such impermanent pleasure as permanent calling it paramānanda (highest pleasure), brahmānanda, ātmānanda or sacchidānanda is to live in a fool's paradise.

There is no doubt that there is such a permanent and eternal state which is unborn and immortal. It is not merely a figment of one's imagination, but it is a state beyond the field of the senses. To attain that state one has to complete the journey from the grossest state of the field of the senses to the

subtlest state. Only then can one realize it. One has to take the help of truth in order to complete the journey. We cannot reach the goal of truth by walking with the crutches of that which is untrue. No matter what subtle experiences we have within the world of the senses while practising meditation, we have to continue our journey by viewing them correctly. When we view them as changing and impermanent we move forward step by step with proper understanding. However, our progress will stop if we take the help of that which is not true. If we begin to regard any of these pleasures born out of the senses as eternal, permanent and unchanging we are far away from the truth—our connection with truth ends. This is a wrong view in which the whole world is entangled. Our eyes are blurred, we have developed cataracts. Similarly, we regard something as truth because it is written in our scriptures or our ancestors have been regarding it as so. Even though these beliefs do not let us see the truth clearly, we accept them as the truth because we have developed cataracts of wrong view.

How can one become a brahmin without doing the work of a brahmin? How can a spirit or a deity or a yakka of the lower world become omnipotent and all powerful? How can the ever changing form of nature be eternal and permanent? Knowing all this we are still attached to such wrong views. Why? Because they are old beliefs, liked by our ancestors, and whether we like them or not they are still wrong views. To eradicate such views is to develop right view.

With metta for all,  
Satya Narayan Goenka.



## Questions and Answers from Diwali—Indian New Year 1995 (cont'd)

- Q:** If we wish for the improvement of someone's health can our Vipassana practice be of help?
- A:** After an hour-long practice of Vipassana, with the mind purified somewhat, then practice metta-bhavana, directing your attention to the person who is sick, 'may you be happy, may you be peaceful'. These Dhamma vibrations will reach that person. Moreover, if that person also happens to be a Vipassana meditator, then when he receives these Dhamma vibrations he will get strength from the Dhamma. In this way at least his mental pain will be alleviated. Now he will be able to face the physical pain and when the mind become stronger, a way for physical relief is also made possible. If someone with a physical illness also becomes mentally ill, then curing his illness will take a very long time. However, if the illness is only limited to the body and does not affect the mind, then the recovery can be faster. We can help others in this way.
- Q:** Should we stop eating in order to deepen our practice?
- A:** One should not go to extremes. A person who eats too much cannot practice properly. If we eat too much then we become lazy, we become drowsy. However, it also does not help if one thinks that if I don't eat anything at all my meditation will improve. In between these two extremes we have to walk on the middle-path. We should eat what is required to nourish the body for meditation, not more than that. We should not completely fill up the stomach. We should always leave a part of it empty, but we should not starve ourselves. We must find the right quantity of food. When someone understands this, then their progress on the path is assured. The Buddha said again and again, '*bhojane ca mattaññu*' which means one should know the

right quantity of food to take Those who know this they make progress on the path.

**Q:** My foot becomes numb during meditation. Sometimes I fear it might be impossible to walk after sitting. What should I do?

**A:** To some extent, it did become impossible for me to walk as well. But, it did not happen due to prolonged sitting! Rather, it happened because of too much walking. Here again, one should not go to extremes. The one-hour sittings of adhitthana, where you meditate with complete stillness, are only during the course. After reaching home you may have the resolve, 'I will just forcibly sit for one hour without moving my leg; no matter what'. Don't go to such extremes. If you can sit effortlessly then fine, otherwise just change your posture. There should be no forced effort about anything. On the courses the hour-long sitting is a must, so don't worry about numbness. If we change the posture when we need to then we will not lose our ability to walk. Not at all!

**Q:** Our meditation is based on reality, on concrete facts. Do we have any evidence of the reality of freedom from the cycle of birth and death?

**A:** Certainly we have evidence. This is why we continue to practice. As you progress on the path, you will be able to observe on your own that, 'look this is death from moment-to-moment, and this is re-birth'. Passing-away and arising again. Passing-away and arising. The cycle of birth and death is in perpetual motion. As we keep on working on the path, finally the stage will arrive when there is no more arising, no more passing-away. This is a state that is beyond our sensory perception. Where nothing is born and nothing dies. Nothing arises and nothing passes away. Only when one experiences this state, does it become clear, that in order to achieve it, all the sankharas that cause this phenomena of 'arising-passing' have to be completely removed. If one has reached this stage in this life-time, then he will be able to attain it in future also. Therefore, it is important to experience it in this very life, and this can only happen if all those sankharas that pull us to the lower planes are totally eradicated. That is when one experiences the stage we call deathless or Nibbana for the first time.

**Q:** How do we introduce Dhamma to children in a Vipassana family who are yet too young to learn Anapana?

**A:** They become capable of practicing Anapana quite early in life, but if they are very young, then give them metta. If the child is sleeping then sit near them and give them metta. Sit for an hour and then give them metta. If they are awake, then take them in your lap, rock them to sleep and then give them metta. They will start absorbing the vibrations of metta. As soon as they grow a bit older, they will easily practice Anapana and soon after that they will learn to practice Vipassana.

**Q:** When I sit for meditation I remove my glasses and I feel sensations, should I do the same thing when walking?

**A:** Why would someone with glasses remove them while walking around? If you run into something and stumble, people will blame me and I don't want that. When you sit and meditate, go ahead and remove your glasses. At all other times, we have to work with open eyes. We can continue to be aware of the sensations, but, we shall always work with our glasses on. See I have put my glasses on — I need them too!

**Q:** My body has become quite frail. You said to follow the advice of the doctor, so I had three surgeries for my cancer. Now I do not want to undergo another surgical procedure. This disease is not going to leave me. What should I do?

**A:** I say get freed from the diseases of the mind. Then you will see that no matter what the situation is, you are always in a positive state of mind. There is a pain somewhere in the body, but your mind is free from pain, and you shall not let the mind get agitated. Then you have understood the Dhamma! Because of the accumulated kammās of this life or of a past life, some kind of disease has manifested in the body, but now if you are established in Dhamma, then there is no agitation. And oh how intense the pain as one approaches closer to death! Only those who are dying understand their own pain, no one else can. But even with so much pain, many meditators pass away with a smile on their face and without any sedative drugs or painkillers as they are developed in the Dhamma. Oh how can cancer affect such persons? If an illness comes then we will try and treat it, but if the doctor says this is beyond any treatment, then we have our own remedy. We shall not allow our minds to get agitated; we shall not lose our equanimity

**Q:** Could you please explain the meaning of 'kalyāṇamitta'?

**A:** *Kalyāṇ* means welfare, and *mitta* means friend. One who is a friend in our welfare is therefore a '*kalyāṇamitta*'.

*Pāpa* means immoral, blameworthy acts. Hence one who leads us on an immoral, unwholesome path would be a '*pāpamitta*', and one who leads us to our well-being is a '*kalyāṇamitta*'.

*Kalyāṇamitta*

Satya Narayan Goenka



## Auspicious Death

► Dr. Ishwarchand Sinha (Homeopath), a senior assistant teacher from Muzaffarpur, Bihar who was also a center teacher for the Dhamma Licchavi Vipassana Center, passed away on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2014. He had been bed-ridden for nearly a month and a half, but apart from physical weakness, he did not complain of any pain. Just a few moments before his death he said to his family members and students who were present, 'now I am leaving.' Not only did he alleviate the physical sufferings of many in his capacity as a doctor, but he also earned a lot of merits by serving people with his Dhamma service. The Dhamma family wishes him well.

► On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2014, assistant teacher Mr. Ramchandra Sinha, also of Muzaffarpur passed away. He had lived with cancer for many years and had endured it with remarkable equanimity till his last moments. His Dhamma service helped so many students, and his own personal practice yielded fruits, and granted him a peaceful passage. The Dhamma family also wishes him well.



## Contact for Dhammalaya (Guest House within the Pagoda premises)

For reservation and booking of accommodation at the Dhammalaya Guest House, please contact: 'Dhammalaya' Global Vipassana Pagoda, Gorai Ganv, Borivali (W) Mumbai - 400091. Phones: (Reception) +91-22-33747599/598 (Pagoda Office) +91-22-33747501 Mobile: 09769048260 (Sri Bishwadev Tripathi) Email: info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org

**Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai****Date:**25-1-2015, 15-2, 15-3, 19-4, 17-5, 21-6  
(age 10 to 16 Only)**Place:**

Goregaon

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	Matunga	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

**2 Day Residential Anapana Course for Children:** (age 10 to 16 Only for Girls) 25 to 26-12-2014, (age 10 to 16 Only for Boys) 27 to 28-12-2014 **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 Only 15<sup>th</sup> December)

**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 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:-- Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Tel: 2624-2025. **Dombivili:** K B Vira HighSchool, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **Ulhasnagar:** 703-A Block /1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNTD College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Mob. 98201-50336. **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 Church Andheri, Mob. 9820459449. 9664782244, 9699668642. **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.

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 mega-course to commemorate the death anniversary of Sayagi U-Ba-Khin.

On January 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 a one-day mega course will be conducted at the Global Vipassana Pagoda. Course hours: 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Non-meditators can participate in the discourse at 3:00 PM. Please contact the following numbers for registration. Please only come with registration and 'samagganam taposukho' – take advantage of the happiness of practicing meditation with such a large group. (**Contact:** 022-28451170, 022-337475-01/43/44-ext 9. Phone booking hours: 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM every day. Online Registration: [www.oneday.globalpagoda.org](http://www.oneday.globalpagoda.org))

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### NEW APPOINTMENTS Children's Course Teachers

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr Jana Srisailam, Telangana      | 8. Ms. Sujata More, Mumbai.           |
| 2. Mrs Kovelamudi Madhavi, Telangana | 9. Mrs Aditi Nagpal, Delhi            |
| 3. Mrs Paloju Sunita, Telangana      | 10. Mrs Vivek Pal, Delhi              |
| 4. Mr Regonda Mahipal, Telangana     | 11. Ven Ellegama Pannasila, Sri Lanka |
| 5. Mrs Yerra Sunita, AP              | 12. Mrs Rohini Kulatunga, Sri Lanka   |
| 6. Mrs Adarsh Rao, Bangalore         | 13. Mrs Vindhya Warakagoda, Sri Lanka |
| 7. Mrs Medha Dalvi, Mumbai           | 14. Mr Chamath Gunawardena, Sri Lanka |
|                                      | 15. Mrs Nilakshi de Silva, Sri Lanka  |

### DHAMMA DOHAS

*Māne sāra asāra ko, aura sāra nissāra;*

*Kahān mile usa mādha ko, suddha dharma ka sāra.*

How can such an ignorant person who regards non essence as essence and essence as non-essence find the quintessence of pure dhamma?

*Mata kara bahasa na tarka kara, mata kara vāda vivāda;*

*Dharmavāna karate nahīn, jhagaḍe aura fasāda.*

Don't argue, don't enter into debate, One who is really virtuous neither fights nor creates disturbance.

*Bhinna maton kī mānyatā, darśana ke siddhānta;*

*Dharama chūṭā ulajhana baḍhi, sabhī ho gaye bhrānta.*

All who hold different views and different philosophical theories, go astray on the path because they are greatly confused and consequently so far away from the Dhamma.

*Kare dārśanika kalpanā, kare vitarka vicāra;*

*Yaha samyaka darśana nahīn, yaha na sāḅṣātkāra.*

Philosophical thinking and all debates about what is truth and what is not are not right thinking, nor realization.

*Darśana jaba samyaka bane, to samyaka ho jñāna;*

*To hī samyaka mukti ho, prakṛte pada nirvaṇa.*

Freedom from suffering and attainment of Nirvana is possible when one attains right knowledge at the experiential level.

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LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500/- (US \$100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF Vipassana Research Institute

Edited and published by R. P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri-422 403 and printed at Akshar Chitra Press, 69, B-Road, Satpur, Nashik-422 007

5 January, 2015

Posted at Igatpuri, Dist. Nashik, Posting Day: Purnima of every month

WPP POSTAL LICENCE NUMBER – AR/Techno/WPP-04/2012-2014

REGISTERED NO. NSK/232/2012-2014

PRINTED MATTER

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