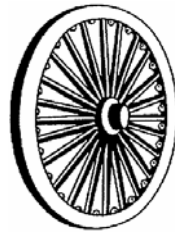


# Vipassana



# Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

Natthi rāgasamo aggi, natthi dosasamo gaho;  
natthi mohasamaṃ jālaṃ, natthi taṇhāsamā nadi.

—Dhammapada 251, Malavaggo

There is no fire like lust, no grip like hate, no net  
like delusion, no river like craving.

## What exactly does 'Moha' mean?

An abridged version of a letter Goenkaji wrote to his brothers and  
their wives from Burma.

Basin, August 7, 1968

Dear Shankar, Sita, Radhe, Vimala,

Understand the essence of Dhamma.

Shankar has asked me the meaning of 'moha', as in modern Hindi the way it is used is confusing. When we say one has great 'moha' for wealth, it means one has attachment to wealth, but the Buddha talks of three different fetters: *lobha* (craving), *dosa* (aversion) and *moha* (ignorance). If the word 'moha' also means attachment or craving, the Buddha should have spoken of only two fetters. However, he talks of three and we know that the Buddha never uses any word which is not appropriate.

'Moha' as used in Pali literature means ignorance, delusion and wrong view. If one is attached to somebody, if one has greed for something, it is one's craving which is a fetter. But to take untruth as truth, to take what is substantial as insubstantial and insubstantial as substantial is *moha*, it is wrong view. So long as one regards what is impermanent as permanent, suffering as happiness, and no-self as self, one will be strongly fettered by *moha* even though one is virtuous, has attained concentration of mind and is free from craving and aversion.

From my point of view two types of people are fettered by ignorance. The first type does not have even the basic idea of Dhamma. They are deeply fettered by iron chains of ignorance. The second type knows a little about Dhamma but is still ignorant of the highest truth. Their fetters are not made of iron but they are made of threads of silk. Even though they are soft they are very strong, so it is very difficult to break them. Why? Because those fettered by them do not see them as fetters. They regard them as adornments, as embellishments, and live happily in a fool's paradise. It is for this reason that such fetters are difficult to break. When a *Pacceka-Buddha* arises in the world he breaks free from these fetters through his own efforts. Alternatively, when a *Sammāsambuddha* arises he not only breaks free from them, but also shows the way for innumerable beings to do so. Therefore, as long as the teachings of the Buddha are practiced by people, they will understand the way to break the fetters that bind them.

Let me explain here more in detail about the fetter of *moha* existing in these two types of people. All who are bound by this fetter, without exception, take what is non-eternal as eternal, what is suffering as happiness and what is no-self as self.

Of the two types of people bound by the fetter of ignorance, those who are bound by the iron-like fetter of ignorance are not aware that they will also die one day and whatever wealth they

have earned and accumulated will also not last forever. Therefore, they regard what in reality is fleeting and impermanent to be permanent. In the same way they regard suffering born out of sensual pleasures to be happiness, although actually all sensual pleasures have suffering inherent in them. Therefore, they regard worldly suffering as pleasure and pursue it. They also regard this body as the soul, and therefore cannot eradicate their egoistic feeling that 'this is I' and 'this is mine'. At every point in life when their egos are hurt or when they are praised they say, 'I am insulted, I am praised, or this is mine, I am like this.' Such persons are tightly bound by this senseless egoistic feeling. Their fetters of ignorance can start to break only when a great man arises in this world, preaches Dhamma to them and lights the lamp of wisdom within them.

Now the still subtler aspects of the fetter of ignorance in those persons of the second type must be dealt with, but they are too imperceptible to be broken easily. Why? Because they look beautiful, feel soft and pleasant. As a result, they are very attractive. Even if one has heard the Dhamma one does not like to break this fetter and be free from it. Bound by such a fetter one is incapable of realizing the impermanent nature of this mind and matter phenomenon. One cannot understand that all beings, right from the grossest animals to the subtlest beings of the *Brahma-loka*, are changing every moment; are impermanent and subject to decay and death. Therefore, out of ignorance one thinks that such and such a world and the beings that live there are eternal. What is ignorance then? It is to regard what is ceaselessly arising and changing, all of one's conscious and unconscious nature, as eternal and to assume a permanent being exists in it. This is *moha*.

To regard suffering as happiness, sensuous pleasure as the highest pleasure—like the pleasure one feels when one contemplates *Brahma*—is another aspect of this great fetter which is soft like a silk thread but very strong and difficult to break. Just as an ignorant person regards that which keeps on ever changing as permanent and eternal, so he regards pleasant sensations which he feels while practicing meditation as permanent. Such a person fixes his mind on a subject of meditation or uses some spell or incantation to achieve *samādhi* (concentration of mind) and rises slightly higher than the first stage of *rūpāvacara jhāna* (form-sphere absorption concentration) with factors such as *vitakka* (initial application of mind) and *vicāra* (sustained application of mind). When he attains the second stage of absorption all his thoughts become still and quiet. At this stage of absorption *vitakka* and *vicāra* have subsided. The second stage of absorption (concentration) is characterized by *pīti* (rapture) and *sukha* (happiness). He experiences rapture and happiness all the way to the third stage of absorption—a still higher stage of absorption. At this stage the mind becomes so concentrated and steady that all of the other five sense organs

almost cease to work. He regards the happiness that he gets in the third stage of absorption as the highest happiness. He regards it as the happiness that one experiences when one is fully liberated, and regards it as the *summum bonum* of his life. However, what he experiences is nothing but a calm and quiet state of mind consisting of consciousness, perception, sensation and mental conditioning; nothing more than this, as the mind keeps on experiencing pleasure. This pleasure also is sensual pleasure, as it is not beyond one's senses. It also keeps on changing every moment and therefore it is subject to destruction. Therefore, such pleasure also has the seed of suffering in it. One who regards this sensuous and impermanent pleasure as permanent and everlasting, is fettered by the silk thread of ignorance; soft and pleasant to feel but hard to break.

If a meditator falls into snares at this stage one can understand it, but the tragedy is that a large number of students practicing the first or the second stage of *rūpāvacara jhāna*, begin to regard whatever little pleasure they feel, even at these stages, as permanent and eternal. Why do they do so? Because they often become tired and fatigued with the hard work of trying to concentrate their unsteady minds, which tremble constantly like the flame of a lamp disturbed by the wind, so even if they feel happy for a short while with being absorbed in any subject of meditation, they take it to be the highest pleasure and remain deluded. They feel enraptured as if every fibre of their bodies has become a cascade of happiness. Out of wrong view they regard this worldly pleasure as the transcendental pleasure, as nectar. Consequently a man fettered by the silk like soft fetter of ignorance regards himself as immortal. Such a person, even though he is free from craving and aversion, even though he has weakened the first fetter of ignorance, cannot attain the liberated state because he is still firmly chained by the subtler aspect of this fetter which is soft to feel but hard to break. As a consequence, he is still in the cycle of birth and death; he has not come out of it.

Out of billions of people, one by the result of his own endeavours, may thoroughly realize the three characteristics of reality—impermanence, suffering and no-self—and become a *Pacceka-Buddha* and attain *Nibbāna*. Alternatively, when a *Sammāsambuddha* arises in this world some may come in contact with him, become *Arahats* and attain *Nibbāna*. However, it is not possible for all to come in contact with the teachings of the Buddha, to break the fetter of ignorance as well as the fetters of craving and aversion. Only those who have earned merits by performing *pāramitās* (perfections, virtues) in their previous lives can enjoy the full benefits of the teachings of the Buddha and be freed from the cycle of birth and death. Others, who have strayed from the right path having the wrong view of a permanent, eternal soul or a creator God, are destined to keep moving in the cycle of birth and death. Therefore the path shown or taught by the Buddha is of ultimate benefit. By following other teachers one can be free from craving and aversion, but only by following the teachings of the Buddha can one also be free from *moha*.

### What is the meaning of 'Bhava'?

Shankar has also asked me to explain '*upādāna*' (grasping) and '*bhava*' (becoming) that follow '*taṇhā*' (craving). In modern Hindi '*bhava*' means '*samsāra*' (existence, round of rebirth). When one says *bhava sāgara* (ocean of life or existence or the present life) one means *samsāra sāgara*. This meaning is very close to its meaning in Pali literature, yet here it is used in the sense of *kamma* (action). When we examine each of the twelve links of the Law of Dependent Origination, we see that when any of the six sense organs comes in contact with its object then sensations arise, pleasant or unpleasant. Up to this stage no karma is performed. Mostly these pleasant or unpleasant sensations that arise are respectively the results of some past wholesome or unwholesome *kamma*. The craving that arises immediately

following this gives rise to a new cycle of *kamma*. When the craving becomes intense, it becomes *upādāna* which is rendered into English as grasping or attachment. At this stage one is compelled to perform actions: physical, vocal or mental. These actions are called *kamma bhava* or simply *bhava* (becoming).

The *kamma* that we perform because of our craving and grasping creates a *saṅkhāra* (conditioning) which gives rise to the cycle of birth and death. "Whatever I am now is the result of my past *kamma*. Thus my *kamma* is my *bhava*." Therefore we can regard *kamma* and *bhava* as synonymous. Every one of us is entangled in the fetters created by our own actions. Indeed this *bhava sāgara* is so vast and deep that it is difficult to see its end. It is in fact fathomless. Everybody's *bhava* is determined, is caused by one's *kamma*. An insect born in a cesspit moves restlessly about in it and dies after some time. The infinite numbers of suns, moons, stars and the earth and sky have no meaning for this insect. They do not matter at all to it. Its *bhava* is confined to the cesspit. In the same way everybody's *bhava* is determined by his or her *kamma*.

As mankind we are the highest among all sentient beings, but even then our *bhava* is also determined by our *kamma*. Of what use are these infinite suns, moons, stars, planets and nebulae to us? Though we may imagine their influence on us, every being is born here or there in the vast and endless world of existence according to his or her *kamma*. The *bhava* that we have created is the cause of our birth, and birth is necessarily followed by old age, death, sorrow and lamentation, and many kinds of ailments, suffering and disease. This is the Law of Dependent Origination. If *taṇhā* (craving) which follows *vedanā* (sensation) is eradicated, then *upādāna* (grasping) and *bhava*, or *kamma-bhava* (becoming), will automatically cease to be. For one who no longer creates any *bhava* for himself, his actions are like burnt seeds not capable of sprouting. One who has rooted out craving and ignorance from the mind has become an *Arahat*, and his or her actions do not bear any fruit. As a consequence, one does not create any *bhava* (future life) for oneself. So there will be no new birth, no old age, no death, no sorrow and lamentation, and no disease. All are transcended. This is the state of *Nibbāna*.

When we have understood Dhamma deeply, we realize that the creator and manager of this world is neither a God, nor a *Brahma* but our own actions. Whether 'He' exists or not we do not suffer any loss, nor do we gain anything on 'His' account. Whatever deserts we get are not because of 'Him' but because of our *kamma-bhava*. We create *bhava* by our actions and eradicate it by purifying our minds of those actions. Therefore we are responsible for liberating ourselves. How can a poor creator God or *Brahma* help us? If one proudly calls himself a 'deliverer' he definitely has a wrong view. A great man can at most show the path to the people. If he compassionately shows the right path, he is a deliverer in this sense, nothing more than this.

Suppose somebody describes to me the way from Rangoon to Mandalay, and though I understand his instructions I do not walk on that road, then Mandalay remains far away. Somebody can only show me the path, but cannot take me to the goal. I must walk there myself. One must have thoroughly understood by walking on the path that this is *bhava*, this is its cause, and this is its cessation; only then is this person really liberated, free from fetters. All others are confused, are in delusion.

Therefore, in order to be free from craving and becoming let us observe *sīla* (precepts of morality), practice *samādhi* (concentration of mind), develop *paññā* (insight wisdom), grow strong in Dhamma and be liberated from all fetters. Herein lies our welfare.

With metta for all,  
Satya Narayan Goenka



## Question-answer Session Deepavali (New Year) 1995.

Q. After practicing Vipassana my mind becomes strong. But sometimes I cannot practice it and I feel like committing suicide. What should I do?

A. (Goenkaji): How can you say that your mind becomes strong after practicing Vipassana? In fact, your mind has become weak, very weak, because you feel like committing suicide. You think thus, 'I cannot live any longer, as I don't get what I desire. Things don't happen the way I want them to happen'. So you wish to die. Don't you think that your mind is very weak?

You have not understood Vipassana correctly. Those who practice Vipassana properly never think of committing suicide, as they thoroughly understand the fact that one commits suicide when one is very unhappy. If one is very unhappy at the time of death, which is the first moment of the next life, one will be born in a world of misery and will live in misery. A Vipassana meditator never commits suicide.



### MITRA UPAKRAM

MITRA Upakram (Mind in Training for Right Awareness) is a Government of Maharashtra initiative for school teachers and students which began in Jan 2012. Last year during the summer vacation of April to June, 2,809 school teachers completed a 10 day Vipassana course and MITRA training. Thereafter courses at gypsy locations and centers were continued. Till date Teachers from around 10,000 schools have completed a 10 day Vipassana course and MITRA training and they provided MITRA training to other teachers and students and thereby lakhs of students have been taught Anapana.

Meanwhile during July 2014 conducted revenue division wise meeting and provided 70 minute Anapana training to all EO and their officers thereafter they conducted taluka wise similar meeting and provided similar training to all head masters and given them CD and other training material with direction to complete training of other teachers and students in school and start practice. As reports received this has been very successful in all districts of Vidharbha, Nashik, Marathwada, Sangli, Kolhapur covering about 40,000 schools and lakhs of students.

Dhamma Severs are required for the implementation of various activities under this Upakram.

#### The contact details are—

C/O Nutan Realities(I) Ltd, 13/1 Suryodaya Estate,  
136 Tardeo Road, Near Bachhu Motors showroom,  
Mumbai – 400034 Phone: 022 23516196  
Email: mitraupakram@gmail.com"



### V.R.I. Academic Schedule, Global Pagoda, Mumbai, for the year 2015

- (i) Learn to read and write Pali in three scripts (Burmese- Roman – Devanāgarī) (10<sup>th</sup> May to 19<sup>th</sup> May)
- (ii) Residential Pali- English Intensive Course (25<sup>th</sup> May to 9<sup>th</sup> Aug)
- (iii) Translation Workshop (10<sup>th</sup> Aug to 17<sup>th</sup> Aug)
- (iv) Workshop on Aśokan Inscription & Brāhmī Script (1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Oct)
- (v) Advance Pali Grammar Workshop (3<sup>rd</sup> Nov to 14<sup>th</sup> Nov)
- (viii) Research Methodology Workshop (15<sup>th</sup> Nov to 19<sup>th</sup> Nov)

#### Eligibility Criteria

- (i) All courses are open only to those who have done three ten-day & one Satipatthāna course.
- (ii) Graduation/ 15 yrs of schooling
- (iii) Translation and advance Grammar workshops are only for those who have completed V.R.I. Residential Pali Course /Masters in Pali.

#### V.R.I. plans to take up research projects on the following topics:

- (1) Vipassana as found in the words of saints (santa vāṇī men Vipassana), (2) Elements of Āyurveda as found in Tipiṭaka.
- (3) Transformation through Vipassana, then and now.

If anyone has done work on these topics or wishes to contribute towards these projects, he/she is welcome.

**Contact:** E-mail: mumbai@vridhamma.org; Tel.: +91-22-33747560.



### Dhamma Utkal Vipassana Meditation Centre

The construction work on the Pagoda at Dhamma Utkal, Orissa has started. Forty six meditation cells will be constructed. One ten-day Vipassana course every month is being planned at the Centre. The aim is to provide accommodation for 30 meditators.

Those meditators who want to earn merits should contact:

Utkal Vipashyana Sādhana Trust,  
Village Chanabera Post Amsena, via Khariyar Road, Dist Nuapada, Orissa 766106.



### Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

**Date:** 15-3, 19-4, 17-5, 21-6  
**Place:** 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	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

**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 High School, 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, 98922-18186. **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. 99674-80865, 99678-13469.

**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.

#### NEW APPOINTMENTS

#### Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Babu Kamble, Nashik
2. Mr. Sudarshan Desavali, Hyderabad
3. Mr. Laxminarayana Akula, Hyderabad
4. Mrs. Sushma Kar, Bhubneshwar
5. Mrs. Kumkum Rawat, Kolkata
6. Mrs. Jayashree Solanki, Durg
7. Mrs. Siddamma Pothuru, Secunderabad

3. Ms. Rohini Rangari, Pune

4. Mr. Prashant Choudhary, Pune

5. Mrs. Reena Singh, Patna

6. Mr. Vidya Namd Prasad, Muzaffarpur

7. Ms. Usha Das, Lucknow

8. Mr. Ajay Prakash Gautam, Gorakhpur

9. Mrs. Anita Gautam, Gorakhpur

10. Mr. Chandra Prakash, Gorakhpur

11. Mr. Prem Dutta Medhankar, Basti

#### NEW APPOINTMENTS

#### Children's Course Teachers

1 Ms. Rohini Joshi, Pune

2. Ms. Nehal Shah, Pune

12. Mr. Manish Parekh, Mumbai

13. Mr. Bhupendra Patel, Mumbai

14. Mrs. Ann Vu Dinh, France.



Mataji inaugurating the Picture-gallery of Relics of Lord Buddha.



Mataji at the Picture-gallery listening to an explanation about the Relics



Picture-gallery of Relics of Lord Buddha, Global Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai

### One Day Mega course on the auspicious occasion of the coming Buddha Pūrṇimā Day.

On May 4, 2015 a one-day mega course will be conducted at the Global Vipassana Pagoda in the presence of respected Mātāji. 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 'samaggānaṃ 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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### DHAMMA DOHAS

*Citta-maila tyāge nahīṃ, kare īṣa kī āṣā;*

*Yahī moha, yaha mūḍhatā, yaha bandhana, yaha pāṣa*

If one hopes to see god without purifying one's mind of defilements; this is nothing but ignorance, foolishness, a fetter and a snare.

*Kadama-kadama hai kalpanā, paga-paga buddhi vilāsa;*

*Ghirā andherā moha kā, dikhe na satya prakāṣa.*

If in every step that one takes there is imagination and the enjoyment of intellectual discussion; then there is the darkness of ignorance, no light of truth is visible.

*Rāga dvesha kī moha kī, bhari citta meṃ khāna;*

*Māitrī karuṇā dūra hai, dūra moksha nirvāṇa.*

There is a mine of craving, aversion and ignorance in our minds.

As a result loving-kindness, compassion, liberation and Nirvāṇa are far away.

*Maila maila sab koi kahe, maila na samajhe koy;*

*Rāga dvesha aur moha hī, maila citta kā hoy.*

Though we speak of dirt and defilement we don't understand what they are. Craving, aversion and ignorance are, in fact, the defilements of the mind.

*Jab tak jāgrata na huā, prajñā jñāna viveka;*

*Tab tak mohācchanna hai, satya sake na dekha.*

As long as one's wisdom, knowledge and discrimination have not awoken, one remains covered with ignorance, and cannot see the truth, cannot realize the truth.

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