

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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Words of Dhamma

Uṭṭhātā kammadheyyesu, appamatto vidhānavā;

Samaṃ kappeti jīvikam sambhataṃ anurakkhati.

A.N., *Aṭṭhakanipātapāli-54, Dīghajāṇusuttam*

Good householders should be diligent in their occupations, wisely administering their wealth; Living a balanced life, protecting what they have amassed.

Goenkaji's Address at the World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland

The World Economic Forum was held in Davos, Switzerland, between January 27 and February 3, 2000. Vipassana Teacher S.N. Goenka was invited to speak at this forum, which brings together the world's wealthiest and most influential people every year around this time. He lectured in three sessions on successive days, beginning on January 31st. The speakers' time was limited, with each receiving 5 minutes per session. Nonetheless, it is laudable that Mr. Goenkaji condensed his speech and focused on important points of Dhamma with clarity and conviction. It appears below.

The Meaning of Happiness

Every person who is attending this Forum is among a unique group of people on our planet. They are generally among the wealthiest, most powerful, most accomplished individuals in the world. Each participant's invitation to the World Economic Forum is a recognition of their eminent status among their peers. When someone has all the wealth, power, and status that anyone could ever want, are they necessarily happy? Are all these accomplishments and the self-satisfaction they bring 'all there is'? Is there a possibility of attaining a deeper level of happiness?

Happiness is an ephemeral condition. It is rapidly fleeting: here one moment and gone the next. When everything is going well with your business, finances, and family, happiness prevails. But what happens when something unwanted happens? When something entirely out of your control happens to disturb your happiness and harmony?

Every person in the world, regardless of their power and position, will experience periods when circumstances arise that are out of their control and not to their liking. It might involve discovering that you have a terminal illness, facing the illness or death of a beloved family member, going through a divorce, or finding out that a spouse has been unfaithful. For

people used to success in life, it may simply be a failure at something: a bad business decision, your company being acquired and the resultant loss of your job, losing a political election, someone else getting the promotion that you wanted, or your child running away from home or rebelling and rejecting all the values that you hold dear. Regardless of how much wealth, prestige and power you may have, such unwanted events and failures generally create great misery.

Next comes the question: how to deal with these periods of unhappiness, which spoil an otherwise ideal life? Such periods are bound to come in even the most charmed lives. Do you behave in a balanced and equanimous manner, or do you react with aversion toward the misery that you are experiencing? Do you crave the return of your happiness? Moreover, when you become addicted to happiness and to everything always going the way you want, the misery when things do not go your way becomes even greater. In fact, it becomes unbearable. It often makes us resort to alcohol to cope with these situations of disappointment and depression and to take sleeping pills in order to obtain the rest we need to keep going. All the while, we tell the outside world and ourselves that we are sublimely happy because of our wealth, power and position.

I come from a business family and was an entrepreneur and businessman from an early age. I established import-export firms with offices around the world and developed sugar mills, weaving mills, and blanket factories. In the process, I made a lot of money. However, I also vividly remember how I reacted to events in my business and my personal life during those years. Every night, if I had not been successful in a business transaction during the day, I would lie awake for hours, contemplating what had gone wrong and considering what I should do differently next time. Even after achieving significant success that day, I would lie awake, reflecting on my accomplishment. Despite experiencing success, it did not bring me happiness or

peace of mind. I discovered that peace is intricately linked to happiness, yet I often experienced a lack of both, irrespective of my financial circumstances and my position as a community leader.

I remember a favourite poem related to this subject.

It is easy enough to be pleasant;

When life flows like a sweet song.

But the man worthwhile,

Is the one who can smile,

When things go dead wrong.

Regardless of our money, status, or prestige, how each of us deals with these times when things go 'dead wrong' is an important part of the 'meaning of happiness'.

To want to live a happy life is a basic human need. For this, one has to experience real happiness. The so-called happiness that one experiences by having money, power and indulging in sensual pleasures is not real happiness, as it is very fragile, unstable and fleeting. For real happiness, for lasting stable happiness, one will have to dive deep within and rid oneself of all the unhappiness stored in the deeper levels of the mind. As long as there is misery at the depth of the mind, all attempts to feel happy at the surface level will prove futile.

This stock of unhappiness at the depth of the mind keeps on multiplying as long as one keeps generating negativities such as anger, hatred, ill will, and animosity. The law of nature is such that as soon as one generates negativity, unhappiness arises simultaneously. It is impossible to feel happy and peaceful when one is generating negativity in the mind. Peace and negativity cannot coexist, just as light and darkness cannot coexist.

There is a systematic scientific exercise developed by a great super-scientist of my ancient country by which one can explore the truth pertaining to the mind-body phenomenon at the experiential level. This technique is called 'Vipassana', which means observing reality objectively as it is.

The technique helps one to develop the faculty of feeling and understanding the interaction of mind and matter within one's own physical structure. The technique of Vipassana involves the basic law of nature that whenever any defilement arises in the mind, simultaneously two things start happening at the physical level. One is that the breath loses its normal rhythm. I start breathing hard whenever negativity arises in my mind. This is a gross and apparent reality that everyone can experience. At the same time, at a subtler level, a biochemical reaction starts within the body: I experience a physical sensation on the body. Every defilement generates some sensation or the other in the body.

This is a practical solution. An ordinary person cannot observe abstract defilements of the mind: abstract fear, anger or passion. But with proper training

and practice, it becomes easy to observe the respiration and the sensations, both of which are directly related to the mental defilements.

The respiration and the sensations help in two ways. First, as soon as a defilement arises in the mind, the breath loses its normal rhythm, as if the defilements are shouting and saying, 'Look, something has gone wrong!' Similarly, the sensations tell me: 'Something has gone wrong.' I must accept this. Then, having been warned, I start observing the respiration and the sensations, and I find that the defilement soon passes away.

This mental-physical phenomenon is like a coin with two sides. On the one side are the thoughts or emotions that arise in the mind. On the other side are the respiration and sensations in the body. Every thought or emotion, conscious or unconscious, every mental defilement manifests in the breath and sensation of that moment. Thus, by observing the respiration or sensation, one is indirectly observing the mental defilement. Instead of running away from the problem, you are facing reality as it is. Then you find that the defilement loses its strength; it does not overpower you as it did in the past. If you are patient, then the defilement eventually disappears altogether, and you truly remain peaceful and happy.

In this way, the technique of self-observation shows us reality in its two aspects: outside and inside. Previously, one always looked outside with open eyes, missing the inner truth. Human beings have always looked outside for the cause of their unhappiness. They have always blamed and tried to change the reality outside. Being ignorant of the inner reality, they never could understand that the cause of suffering lies within, in their own blind reactions.

The more one practices this technique, the quicker one can come out of negativities. Gradually the mind becomes freed of defilements; it is purified. A pure mind is always full of love, detached love for all; full of compassion for the failings and sufferings of others; full of joy at their success and happiness; full of equanimity in the face of any situation.

When one reaches this stage, then the entire pattern of one's life starts changing. It is no longer possible for one to do anything verbally or physically that will disturb the peace and happiness of others. Instead, the balanced mind not only becomes peaceful; it helps others to become happy and peaceful also. The atmosphere surrounding such a person is permeated with peace, harmony and real happiness. It also starts impacting others.

This direct experience of reality within oneself, this technique of self-observation, is a simple, direct way to lead a truly happy life.

There are many aspects to living a happy life. Some of these are relevant to the group of people

attending this Forum. When you have all the money and possessions you could ever want, how can you really enjoy those blessings alone when millions of people in the world are unsure even of their next meal? While there is absolutely nothing wrong with earning money to provide for yourself, your family and all those that depend upon you, you must also give back to society. You are obtaining your wealth from society, so you must give something back. The attitude must be 'I am earning for myself, but I am also earning for others.'

Another aspect of happiness in business is to ensure that whatever you do to earn your money does not hurt or harm others. This is a big responsibility. Money earned at the expense of the peace and happiness of other fellow human beings will never bring happiness to you. Real happiness is not accumulating possessions or accomplishments or wealth or power. It is a state of inner being that comes from a pure and peaceful mind. Vipassana meditation is a tool that helps everyone achieve that state.

Religion

It's good that we have all gathered here today to discuss various aspects of religion. Concentrating on the idea of religion as a whole rather than on any one particular faith.

There are two significant aspects of religion, one of which is the quintessence of religion, which is of utmost importance. This is to live a moral life full of love, compassion, goodwill, and tolerance.

Every religion essentially preaches morality. This is the greatest common denominator of all religions. A moral life is a life where one abstains from all such actions, physical or vocal, which disturb the peace and harmony of other beings. A moral life is always free from negatives such as anger, hatred, ill will, and animosity. A moral life is the true religious life, where one lives in peace and harmony within oneself and generates nothing but peace and harmony toward others.

A true religious life is an 'art of living', a moral code of conduct, and a happy, harmonious, healthy and wholesome life. A true religious life is always good for oneself, good for others, and good for the entire human society.

A true religious person embodies piety, maintains a moral life, and possesses a well-controlled and disciplined mind. Such a person has a pure heart that is perpetually filled with love and compassion. Such a person is an invaluable jewel of human society and can be from any country or community, any colour, any gender, and rich or poor, educated or uneducated. Every human being is capable of becoming a true religious person.

Living a life of morality with a well-controlled, disciplined mind and with a pure heart full of love and compassion is not the monopoly of any one religion. True and pure religion never belongs to any one sect

but belongs to all. It is always nonsectarian. It is always universal.

If people practice this quintessence of religion, there is no reason for any conflict or confrontation among the people of the world regardless of their religion. Everyone in society can enjoy real peace, harmony, goodwill and happiness by following this quintessence of religion.

Beyond this aspect of the universality, the commonality of religion, there is another aspect of religion which carries immense diversity. It is the outer shell of religion. It involves rites, rituals, ceremonies, etc., which are different for various sects. Each sect has its own mythological and philosophical beliefs, with its own particular dogmas and blind faith and beliefs.

The followers of organised sectarian religions normally get deeply attached to their own rites, rituals, faith and dogmas, as they believe their own beliefs to be the only way to the ultimate freedom of salvation. Such persons often do not have even a trace of morality, a trace of love, compassion and goodwill toward others and yet remain under the illusion that they are very religious because they have performed such and such rite or ritual or because they have full faith in a particular belief. They are actually deluding themselves and missing the nectar of the practice of the true essence of religion.

And then there is the worst aspect of this outer shell. People with strong attachment to their own faith have the firm belief that the followers of all other organised sectarian religions are nonbelievers and therefore will never reach the state of salvation. They are fully convinced that converting others to their religion is a great meritorious deed, and hence apply various coercive methods.

Such blind faith of the followers of various organised religions is likely to turn into fanatic fundamentalism and violence. It leads to controversies, contradictions, violent confrontations and even wars and bloodshed, resulting in a tremendous amount of misery in the society, wiping away its peace and harmony. And all this is done in the name of religion. What a great misfortune for this human world.

When the outer shells of religion take on excessive importance, the inner core of morality tends to be overlooked. Sometimes people feel that there cannot be a religion without the hard outer shell, however undesirable it may be. But successful experiments have been carried out in the past and are also being made today, where 100 per cent importance is given to the inner core of morality, ignoring the outer shell as totally irrelevant. This practice, which is being undertaken successfully, is known as Vipassana meditation.

Kalyan Mitra, Satya Narayan Goenka

Continued (Third discourse on 'Anger' in the next issue)



Additional Responsibility

1. Shri Ramnath Shenoy, To serve as CAT for Mumbai, Thane and Nashik area.
2. Shri Vijay Singh Rajawat, To Serve as Centre Teacher of Dhamma Kanheri, Goregaon, Mumbai
- 3-4. Mr. Mahendra Shah & Mrs Ranjan Shah, To Serve as Centre Teacher of Dhamma Pattana, Mumbai
5. Mr. Mayli Murugan Sellappan, To assist the Centre Teacher in serving of Dhamma Tiveni VC, Tamil Nadu
3. Mr. Mandar Deshpande, Beed, M.S.
- 4-5. Mr. Umashankar Sontake & Mrs. Parul Meshram, Nagpur, M.S.
6. Mrs. Rekha Gokhe, Nagpur, M.S.
7. Ms. Maya Fule, Yavatmal, M.S.
- 8-9. Mr. Mahendra Kumar & Mrs. Paragi Soni, Vadodara, Guj
10. Mrs. Rohini Desai, Surat, Guj
11. Mr. Arvind Reddy, Hyderabad
12. Mr. Amarnath Meda, Suryapet, Telangana
13. Mr. Lakshmi Narayana Vummidi, Tirupati, A.P.
14. Mr. Kumar Yonzon, Sikkim
15. Ms. Gita Roka, Nepal
16. Mrs. Radha Goyal, Nepal
17. Mr. Feng Wei, China
18. Mrs. Soraya Pitanusorn, Thailand

Newly Appointed Bhikkhu/Bhikkhuni Teachers

1. Ven Bhikkhu Anuruddha, Nepal
2. Anāgarikā Mudita, Nepal
3. Ven Bhikkhuni Bodhicitta, Sri Lanka

New Appointments Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Aashish Raote, Mumbai, M.S.
2. Mrs. Renuka Daga, Thane, M.S.

Children Course Teachers

1. Dr. Himanshu Kumar Singh, Gaya, Bihar
2. MS. Keshwi, Gaya, Bihar
3. Mrs. Manju Chandak, Patna, Bihar
4. Mr. Rahul Anand, Gopalganj, Bihar

One-Day Mega Courses at Global Vipassana Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai**1) One-day Mega course on Sunday:**

1. **Sunday, 3rd** May 2026, Buddha Purnima,
2. **Sunday, 26th** July 2026, Ashadha-Pūrṇimā (Dhammacakkappavattana day)
3. **Sunday, 4th** October 2026, Sharada-Pūrṇimā plus Pujya Goenkaji's Death Anniversary.
4. **Sunday, 17th** January, 2027 Sayagi U Ba Khin's and Mataji's Demise-day

2) In addition there are Daily One-Day Courses being held in the Pagoda for Vipassana Students. Please follow the link to join and take advantage of the immense benefit of meditating in a large group **Contact for all one-day: 022 50427500 (Board Lines), & Mob. +91 8291894644 (from 11 am to 5 pm). **Online registration:** <http://oneday.globalpagoda.org>; **Email:** oneday@globalpagoda.org**

3) Dhammalaya Accommodation during Mega Courses:

Meditators can stay at Dhammalaya during mega courses and avail maximum benefit. Please **contact:** 022 50427599 or **Email-** info.dhammalaya@globalpagoda.org or info@globalpagoda.org

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Dhana vaibhava aīsvarya ke, bhale lagen ambāra.
Isa naśvara upabhoga men, kahān amara sukha sāra?*

There may be a mountain of wealth, prosperity and glory; But in this perishable indulgence, where is the essence of immutable happiness?

*Dhana vaibhava upabhoga saba, bhoge dukha ajāna.
Anāsakti se bhogate, bane sukhon kī khāna.*

One revels in wealth and prosperity, unaware of the misery they harbour; By enjoying with detachment, one transforms into a reservoir of happiness.

*Kevala sangraha hī kare, vitarāṇa kare na koya.
Aise lubdha samāja men, kshubdha sabhī jana honya.*

Only hoarding without sharing; In such a greedy society, everyone remains discontented.

*Dāna sukhon kā mūla hai, kare parigraha dūra.
Halkā phulkā cita rahe, mangala se bharapūra.*

Charity is the foundation of happiness, it helps to prevent attachment; The heart remains light, imbued with a sense of well-being.

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If undelivered, please return to:

Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403

Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India

Tel: (02553) 244998, 244076, 244086,

244144, 244440, Mob. 9405618869

Email: vri_admin@vridhamma.org

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