

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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Words of Dhamma

*Mā pamādamanuyuñjetha, mā kāmaratisanthavaṃ;
Appamatto hi jhāyanto, pappoti vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.
—Dhammapadapāḷi -27, Appamādavaggo*

Do not give way to heedlessness. Do not indulge in sensual pleasures. Be heedful and meditate and attain great happiness.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DAILY MEDITATION

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters,

I am very happy that we have sat together and practiced pure Dhamma. Meditating together is of great importance.

Sukho buddhānaṃ uppādo,

Happiness is the arising of the Buddhas in the world.

Sukhā saddhammadesanā.

Happiness is the teaching of pure Dhamma.

Sukho saṅghassa sāmaggī,

Happiness is the coming together of meditators.

Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho.

Happiness is meditating together.

Two thousand six hundred years ago, Gotama Buddha arose in this country and taught pure Dhamma, resulting in great happiness for the world. People started living in accordance with this teaching. They started meditating together just as we have done today: there is no greater happiness than this. If one meditates alone, one becomes liberated from mental defilements and becomes truly happy. But when Dhamma brothers and sisters sit together and meditate in such large numbers, if someone's meditation is a little weak, it is strengthened because the meditation of others is strong and the entire atmosphere is charged with Dhamma vibrations. Whenever possible, meditators should have joint sitting at least once a week. If in the past week anyone's meditation has become weak, it is strengthened by the group meditation, and he is able to face the vicissitudes of life for the whole week with renewed strength.

Every meditator has to develop the strength to face the ups and downs of life. For this, it is necessary to meditate one hour in the morning and evening daily, to meditate together once a week, and to take a ten-day course at least once a year. Then we will keep progressing on the path of Dhamma. Householders face many difficulties, many obstacles. What to speak of householders, even those who have renounced the household life tell me that they are not able to meditate regularly. But we must not give up in spite of all difficulties; we must meditate daily, morning and evening.

We do physical exercise—yoga, jogging, or walking—to keep the body healthy and strong. Otherwise, the body becomes weak and diseased. In the same way, it is even more necessary to keep the mind healthy and strong. The mind is more important; one should not allow it to become weak or diseased. Vipassana is an exercise of the mind. Meditating morning and evening makes the mind strong and healthy; it is not a waste of time. We live in a complex and stressful world. If the mind is not strong, we lose the balance of the mind and become miserable. Those who do not know pure Dhamma, who have not learned this meditation, are unfortunate. But those who have received this benevolent teaching and are not using it are even more unfortunate. They have found such a priceless gem but have discarded it as if it were a useless pebble. What can be a greater misfortune?

It is a matter of great fortune to be born as a human being. Only a human being can become introverted and eradicate mental defilements from the depth of the mind. This work cannot be done by animals or birds or reptiles or insects or other lower beings. Even a

human being cannot do this work if he does not know this technique. One gets a human birth, finds such a wonderful technique, learns to use it, benefits from it, and still discontinues the practice. What a misfortune! A bankrupt person finds a treasure. And he discards it and becomes bankrupt again. A hungry person gets delicious food. And he discards it and becomes hungry again. A sick person finds medicine. And he discards it and becomes sick again. Very unfortunate, indeed! One should not make this mistake.

Sometimes meditators come to me and say: “I have stopped meditating. What to do, I am so busy.” It is a poor excuse. Do we not give food to the body three-four times a day? We do not say, “I am such a busy person, I don’t have time for food today.” This meditation that we do every morning and evening makes the mind strong. And a strong mind is more important than a strong body. If we forget this, we harm ourselves. We should never make this mistake. Even if there is too much work, we must do this exercise. Sometimes it is not possible to meditate at the same place at a fixed time. Though desirable, it is not a must. What is important is to meditate twice in twenty-four hours. In rare circumstances when one is not able to sit with closed eyes, one may meditate with open eyes; sitting with others with the mind directed inwards. We should not make an outward show of meditation; the others need not know that you are meditating. We may not be able to meditate as well as we could have done while sitting alone with closed eyes, but at least we have calmed and strengthened the mind a little. Without regular practice, the mind becomes weak. A weak mind makes us miserable because it reverts to its old behavior pattern of generating craving and aversion.

We have got human birth. We have come in contact with this wonderful Dhamma. We have developed faith in this technique because we have benefited from it, and yet, we have stopped meditating. Let us not be heedless. We are not doing anyone a favour by meditating twice a day. “Our teacher has told us, so we are doing it.” You are not doing your teacher a favour; you are doing yourself a favour. This is such great teaching. When you start feeling sensations on the body, understand the door of liberation has opened. A person who cannot feel sensation on the body is unfortunate; the door of liberation has not opened for him. And when one learns to remain equanimous to the sensations, not only has the door of liberation opened but one has entered it

and has started walking on the path of liberation.

In Vipassana we experience different types of sensations on different parts of the body and maintain equanimity toward them. A wise meditator understands from experience how the practice benefits one in daily life. Every step taken on this path takes one closer and closer to the final goal. No effort is wasted; each effort bears fruit. Lack of awareness of sensations takes us on the path of misery. Blind reaction to them out of ignorance results in misery, deep misery: **dukkhasamudayagāminīpaṭipadā**. Awareness of sensations and equanimity toward them takes us on the path that leads to liberation from all suffering: **dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā**. If we experience sensations and react to them—react with craving to pleasant sensations and with aversion to unpleasant sensations—we are on the path of bondage. This is the teaching of the Buddha; this is the enlightenment of the Buddha.

At the time of death, some sensation will arise, and if we are not aware and react with aversion, we will go to lower planes of existence. But a good meditator who remains equanimous to these sensations at the time of death will go to a favourable plane. This is how we make our own future. Death can come at any time. We do not have an agreement with death that it should come only when we are ready. We are ready whenever it comes. This is not an ordinary technique. It is a priceless gem that can liberate us from the cycle of birth and death and can improve not only this life but also future lives, ultimately leading to full liberation.

“But we do not have time. We have too much work.” We squander an invaluable jewel by making these excuses. Whenever there is sorrow or despair or dullness in daily life due to any reason, this technique will help us. Just understand, “At this moment there is sorrow or despair or dullness in my mind,” and start observing breath or sensations. The external reason is not important.

Vedanā samosaraṇā... sabbe dhammā. Whatever arises in the mind is called dhamma. A sensation arises on the body with whatever dhamma arises in the mind: this is the law of nature. The mind and the body are interrelated. When a defilement arises in the mind, some sensation will arise in the body. Whatever sensation arises in the body at that time is connected to the defilement in the mind. This is what the Buddha taught. One understands that there is a defilement

in the mind and observes sensation in the body. One practices this thoroughly, not just once or twice but again and again—every sensation is impermanent. So the defilement that is connected to it is also impermanent. How long will it last? We are observing sensations and also observing how long the defilement lasts. It becomes weak and ceases, like a thief who enters a house and, finding that the master of the house is awake, runs away. Take the example of anger. When anger arises due to any reason, one understands, "At this moment, there is anger in the mind. Now let me observe what sensation has arisen in the body." It does not matter what is the cause of this anger. One is observing sensation and understanding that it is impermanent. This anger is also impermanent. It would have increased and overpowered one completely. Now it becomes weaker and weaker and passes away. It is such a great benefit. No matter what defilement arises, whether lust or egotism or envy or fear or anything else, one does not get overpowered by it. Now that we have learned this technique, we have learned the art of living. All that we have to do is to accept, "This defilement has arisen. Let me face this enemy. Let me see what is happening in my body. It is impermanent, anicca, anicca." The enemy starts getting weaker and runs away.

Defilements will keep coming throughout our entire life, sometimes for this reason, sometimes for that reason. When you become fully liberated from all defilements, you will become a fully liberated person, an arahant. At present, that stage is far away. Now in ordinary life, one has to face these difficulties. We have found a very effective weapon in the form of these sensations. No enemy will be able to overpower us for the whole life; how will it overpower us at the time of death? It cannot overpower us. We are the masters. This is the technique for becoming our own master.

We have learned the art of living. How can there be sorrow in our lives? Sorrow is caused by defilements, not by external events. An external event has occurred; we do not generate a defilement, and we do not become miserable. An external event has occurred, we generate a defilement, and we become miserable. We are responsible for our misery. Unfavourable external events will continue to occur and if we are strong and do not generate defilements, our lives will be filled with happiness and peace. We do not harm others; we help ourselves and help others. Every meditator should understand that one has to meditate regularly

so that one is happy and peaceful for the whole life. All those who have come on the path of Vipassana should understand that they have received an invaluable jewel.

May all beings be happy, be peaceful, be liberated.

Kalyanmitta,
S. N. Goenka.

(Adapted from a Hindi discourse to about 5000 old students after group Sitting at Nagpur University Campus on 8 October 2000)

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## Q and A: Annual Conference, Dhammagiri, March 3rd, 1989

**Q:** Not only in India, but all over the world, there is so much tension, sectarian strife, violence and agitation. How can Vipassana bring about peace and conviviality in such situations.

**Goenkaji:** It's a good question. This is an all-pervading problem, the problem of the entire world. Strife is everywhere. We should go to its roots to see why everyone is so agitated, so restless. Not only is each person restless but the entire community is restless. It is true that an agitated society influences an individual. But the basic point is that one is always restless. That we do nothing to work on an individual's agitation and expect the society, the world to turn peaceful, then that is not the solution. Even if it takes time, there should be at least a few individuals who can remain calm in every and any situation. The vibrations emanating from such a person will calm the entire atmosphere, while the vibrations of an agitated person will fill the entire atmosphere with agitation. So there should be at least a few who can calm the surroundings. This will slowly spread, calming the atmosphere. I see no other way out.

**Q:** If I do not feel any subtle sensations on my body, then how do I practice metta?

**Goenkaji:** You can practice metta, though it will not be strong metta. Those who are working only with gross sensations, they, during metta, can only work at the surface level of the mind, the small part of the conscious mind, called paritta citta – May All be Happy, May All be Happy! But if one has delved into the subtle sensations, then the metta emanates from the deeper levels of the mind, and its impact will be felt much deeper on us, and on our surroundings. But if that is not working, then it can be done at least the mental level – May All Be Happy! Even if not very effective, it will certainly benefit.

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Additional Responsibility

1. Mr. Ratanshibhai Patel, To Serve as Centre Teacher of Dhamma Ambika, Navsari, Gujarat

New Responsibility Teacher

1. Mr. Narendra Bharwada, Surat

SAT

1. Mr. Parshuram More, Nanded
2. Mr. Milind Athawale, Nanded

New Appointment Bhikkhu Teacher

1. Ven Bhikkhu Vinay, Arunachal Pradesh

New Appointments Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Vikrant Modak, Igatpuri, MS

2. Ms. Varsha Walde, Nagpur, MS

- 3-4. Mr. Trevor & Mrs Irene Delaney, Goa

5. Mrs. Janki Jariwala, Surat, Guj.
6. Mr. Lalta Prasad Sharma, Bhopal, MP

7. Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Bilaspur, CG
8. Mr. Harishchandra Rai, Mau, UP
9. Mr. Prabhaker Rajagopal, Chennai, TN

10. Mrs. Sushama Gautam, Nepal
11. Mr. Krishna Bahadur Karki, Nepal
12. Mr. Nguyen Tang Hung, Nepal

13. Mr. Heng Hong Zhao, China
14. Mr. Tanagid Sathitsit, Thailand

15. Mrs. Lim O Kiem, Indonesia

Children Course Teachers

1. Mr. Tanaji Kate, Solapur, MS
2. Ms. Kayo Yoshida, Japan

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

1. **Sunday, 4th October 2026**, Sharada-Pūrṇimā plus Pujya Goenkaji's Death Anniversary.
2. **Sunday, 17th January, 2027** Sayagi U Ba Khin's and Mataji's Demise-day
3. **Sunday, 23 May 27**, Buddha Pūrṇimā
4. **Sunday, 18th July 2027** Ashadha-Pūrṇimā (Dhammacakkappavattana day)
5. **Sunday, 3rd October 2027** Sharada-Pūrṇimā plus Pujya Goenkaji's Death Anniversary.

- (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

*Durlabha jīvana manuja kā, baṛe bhāgya se pāya;
Prajñā śīla samādhi bina, deve vṛthā ganvāya.*

Rare is human life, attained by great good fortune. But without paññā, śīla, and samādhi, it is wasted in vain.

*Bina prayatna pūre na hon, choṭe moṭe kāma;
Binā svayaṃ udyama kiye, kahān mukti kā dhāma?*

Even small tasks cannot be accomplished without effort. Then where is liberation without personal effort?

*Tana jāge samvedanā, jaba mana jage vikāra;
Vipaśyanā se dekhate, hoya dukhon ke pāra.*

Sensations arise on the body, when an impurity arises in the mind. But observing them with Vipassana, one goes beyond sorrow.

*Satata sādhanā rata rahen, rahe nirantara hoṣa;
Dūra rāga kā roga ho, dūra dveṣa kā doṣa.*

Remaining ever immersed in sādhanā, aware all the time, Then the ailment of craving and the fault of aversion go away.

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