

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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Words of Dhamma

Nābhinandāmi maraṇaṃ, nābhinandāmi jīvitaṃ;

Kālaṇca paṭikaṅkhāmi, sampajāno patissato'ti.

— Theragathapali 196, Nisabhattheragāthā

I don't long for death; I don't long for life; I await my time, aware with constant through understanding of impermanence.

Seventy Years Have Been Completed

My life has seen seventy autumns. And who knows how many more are left? How can the ones that are left be best used? May this awareness be maintained.

On this occasion some beneficial words from the Buddha come to mind. The incident took place in Sāvatti, at Anāthapindika's Jetavana ārama. It is nighttime.

A Devaputta has come to meet the Buddha. He expresses his thoughts to the Buddha in the form of a gāthā of four lines —

Accenti kālā, tarayanti rattiyo;

Time is passing, nights are passing.

Vayogunā anupubbaṃ jahanti;

Life is gradually coming to an end.

Etaṃ bhayaṃ maraṇe pekkhamāno;

Observing the fear of (approaching) death,

Puññāni kayirātha sukhāvahāni

Perform meritorious deeds that yield pleasant fruit.

As someone has rightly said: "Morning comes, evening comes, thus, the end of life comes."

Life and Death

Do not let this invaluable human life end in vain. Engage in meritorious deeds that yield pleasant fruit, even if it's just out of fear of the approaching death. If we perform unwholesome deeds, they will result in suffering for us. If we perform wholesome deeds, they will result in happiness for us: this is the unbreakable law of nature. Therefore, it is better to do wholesome deeds rather than unwholesome deeds to avoid suffering and to enjoy happiness.

We do not know how long we have been crushed under the ever-changing wheel of existence of worldly happiness and suffering, and for how long this wheel of worldly happiness and suffering will continue in the

future. The Buddha discovered a simple and direct path to full liberation from this wheel of existence. He made it easily accessible to all. He taught the liberation-endowing technique of Vipassana to the people, by the practice of which they could be liberated from the wheel of existence and attain the eternal, unchanging Nibbānaṃ Paramamaṃ Sukhaṃ, the ultimate happiness, the ultimate peace of liberation, which is incomparable to worldly pleasures.

But this is possible only after the habit of heedlessly running after the enjoyment of worldly sensual pleasures is broken. And this is just what Vipassana enables us to do. It breaks the habit pattern of multiplication of the saṅkhāras of craving and aversion, which lie in the depth of the subconscious mind. It digs out the saṅkhāras of craving for pleasure and aversion towards suffering. It eradicates the long-standing habit of blind reactions. As long as craving for worldly pleasures remains, aversion will continue to arise towards worldly suffering, and because of these two, the wheel of existence will continue to roll. Only when the wheel of existence breaks can ultimate peace, which is supramundane, beyond the worlds, beyond the round of existence, and beyond the field of senses, be attained. It was with this purpose that the Buddha taught the beneficial technique of Vipassana.

Hinting at this, upon hearing the above gāthā of four lines, the Buddha, changing its fourth line, said:

Lokāmisam pajahe santipekkho.

One who hopes for the ultimate peace should give up the desire for worldly happiness.

Only by the intensive practice of Vipassana can one eradicate this worldly desire. While practicing Vipassana, a meditator should maintain awareness of one's impending death, but there should not be a trace of fear of death. Whenever death comes, one should be constantly prepared for it with a tranquil mind.

On the occasion of every birthday, a Vipassana meditator should certainly look back at the past. He

should make a firm resolution that he will not repeat the mistakes he has committed in the past and that he will continue to perform whatever wholesome deeds he has done until now for the rest of his life. The most important wholesome deed of all is the practice of the liberating technique of Vipassana. This should not be neglected; it should be diligently practiced. Do not postpone today's practice till tomorrow. Let these words of the Buddha constantly echo in your ears like a warning:

Ajjeva kiccamātappam, Kojaññā maraṇam suve.
Perform the work of meditation today itself,
Who knows, death may come tomorrow.

It is not necessary to invite death, but when it comes, there is no need to be afraid of it. Let us be prepared for it every moment.

Periodically, we ought to cultivate the awareness of death, or maraṇanussati. I know from personal experience that it is quite helpful. We should also periodically examine ourselves to see how our final moments will be if we pass away tomorrow. Will there be an underlying desire, even if it is to carry out a Dhamma-related task? Otherwise, if a strong emotion floods the mind, one should also invoke death awareness, maraṇanussati, and observe—if I pass away in the next instant, this emotional force will give my next life such a terrifying direction! This understanding will help to calm emotions.

Another advantage of periodically practicing dying is that it causes the mind to reflect:

"Who knows how many lives I have been rolling in the cycle of existence? This time, as a result of some wholesome deed, I have obtained the invaluable life of a human being. I have come in contact with pure Dhamma. I have developed faith in pure Dhamma, which is free from meaningless rituals and philosophies as well as from sectarian barriers. What benefit have I derived from this?" When one makes an assessment of this, whatever shortcomings remain, one develops enthusiasm to correct them. Whether death will come tomorrow morning or after a hundred autumns, I do not know. But no matter how many days I have to live, I will use them to perfect my pāramitās with a contented mind and make my human life meaningful. Whatever results come, let them come; whenever they come, let them come then. I leave that to Dhamma. On my part, let me continue to keep making the best use of the remaining time of this important life to the best of my ability.

For this purpose, let these inspiring words of the Buddha be with us:

Uttitṭhe nappamajjeyya dhammam sucaritam care.
Arise! Live the Dhamma life with diligence.

May I keep living the life of Dhamma. The results will naturally be beneficial.

NEWSLETTER VOL.8 NO.2 FEBRUARY 11, 1998

Q&A: Annual Conference, D.Giri, Mar. 1980

• **Question:** How does a meditator come out of the pain of the death of his loved one?

Goenkaji: A very good question. Often, one fails to understand that while, on one hand, my loved one has died and is not going to come back, ever, however much we wail and weep for them, however much we plead with them. Yet we cry remembering them. One does not understand that while remembering them and weeping, the sad, painful vibrations that one is generating will reach the departed. This is the law of nature. We know that the one who has left us is never coming back, but we pray that wherever they may be, may they be happy and peaceful, and may they be filled with joy. No one will ever want to see the dear one who has gone be as much in pain as they are at the moment. No one will ever want that, right? Yet we do just the opposite. The painful vibrations that we generate while remembering them will give them pain wherever they may be. That person may not even realize why they are feeling so sad, as they no longer have a memory of their past life; who is this person weeping for me, which is making me sad—they do not know. They are simply getting these vibrations, which are making them sad and restless. So we are making the one we want to see happy sad. This is a damage we inflict.

Secondly, the seeds we are planting by constant wailing are the seeds of sadness. We are generating saṅkhāras of misery, of weeping. Nature does not differentiate and say, He is weeping since his loved one has gone. Why should I give him more pain? In this regard nature is blind. As the seed, so the fruit. And the seed is of crying, which will bring similar results in the future. Why are you crying? It is alright to cry, as his dear one has gone—nature does not weigh these matters. As the seed, so the fruit, because we have made our habit such. What is nature? What is a tendency? If we have created a tendency to weep, then, as it multiplies with time, it will bring such situations in the future that will create sadness and tears. You have harmed not only yourself but the dear departed one too.

Thirdly, so long as we are making saṅkhāras of crying and weeping, we are also spreading the vibrations of sadness and tears in the environment around. It is possible the other family members are not crying at this moment; they too now are receiving the same vibrations; the entire atmosphere is turned into one of misery. As such, there is damage caused in three ways.

A good meditator will understand this well—my loved one is gone; I don't want to give them further pain. As soon as one begins to weep upon remembering the departed, one checks oneself. Instead, one begins to send metta—may you be happy, may you grow on. When these vibrations reach the one who is gone, they may not know why, but they will feel a sense of inner joy and peace. And that is what we want—to know

they are happy. And now we have begun the work of making them happy. Moreover, we are planting seeds of metta, which will bring our own sacred welfare in the future, refining our own future. We also surround the atmosphere with sacred, calming energies of mettā. The house that was shrouded in the pain of the departed loved one—we have now started to diminish this aura of pain, thus improving the family members' mental state.

A Vipassana meditator should learn to control the pain that begins to rise upon remembering the dear one. Meditate for a few minutes, bring the mind to equanimity, and then begin giving mettā. This should be well understood: whether we send the vibrations of pain or joy, they most certainly will reach the one being remembered.

How often we see that suddenly, for no apparent reason, the heart feels heavy. If nothing has happened to justify that feeling, then it can be well understood that some vibrations of sadness generated somewhere are reaching me. And then the reverse may happen – there may be a feeling of joy and happiness for no apparent reason. This too may mean that vibrations that are dear to me are touching me, bringing joy. Having understood this principle, upon death of a dear one, whenever we think of him, mettā, and only mettā is the best way.

• **Question:** There are small children at home, so it is difficult to make time for daily meditation. What shall I do?

Goenkaji: You are a householder. These difficulties will come. If we wait for all difficulties and obstacles to leave before we decide to practice, then life will go and you will not be able to meditate. Poor woman, she becomes a mother, and multifarious responsibilities come—but one has to make time amidst all this. You may utilize time to sit when the child sleeps. Of course prioritize the child's needs, but also make time for the practice.

• **Question:** We have seen that, compared to the Indian meditators, the foreigners benefit more from the Vipassana meditation. They are more disciplined, meditate more sincerely, and even while offering service, they are more eager and sincere and work more selflessly. Why is it so?

Goenkaji: The answer to this should come from you all. How can I answer? My teaching is the same for all. Do I teach something different and special to them—that this teaching is for you foreigners, while these Indians are not as bright, and so their training is a little different? I teach the same to all. If you do not work, then how can you go where they do? They work with total sincerity. They do not carry the weight on their heads of—soul, no soul—so many other religious dilemmas. They come free of preconceived notions. Leaving aside the trap of soul—no soul and other such conjectures and the mental acrobatics, they remain focused on self-improvement. They do not burden themselves with these confused ideas. While we, on the other hand, are so caught up in these beliefs. I am a Jain, a very strict Jain, a Buddhist, or a Hindu—we remain stuck even if it

means giving up one's life for these beliefs.

They have left these confusions behind. Whatever it may be, I have to become a good human being first. And this is the way. They give their all, while you hold yourself back, caught in these philosophical, sectarian bindings. If you don't work, how indeed can you receive?

Two New centres in Kutch region:

1. Dhamma Avani – Anjar Vipassana Kendra

Located near Village Ningad, 15 km from Anjar, this 15-acre site holds special historical and spiritual importance. It was here that Pujya Guruji conducted two gypsy camps in 1975. The land has been declared non-agricultural and registered under the Anjar Vipassana Kendra Trust. The plan is to develop a complete Vipassana centre for 120 meditators, including a large Dhamma hall, mini halls, a pagoda, dining facilities, and residential quarters. The estimated cost for the entire project is about Rs.12.7 crore. Meditators who want to donate can join this noble effort to help many in this area.

Contact No: +916357584102, 9426535326, Email : anjarvipassanakendra@gmail.com; Bank A/c. Name: Anjar Vipassana Kendra, HDFC- Anjar A/c. Number: 50100642034548, IFSC Code: HDFC0008795, Branch-Anjar, Chitrakut, PIN: 370110.

2. Dhamma Rava – Vagad Vipassana Kendra (Rapar)

Situated on 5.17 acres of land, about 2.5 km from Rapar town, this centre will also serve 120 meditators with full facilities for meditation practice. The land has been registered under Vagad Vipassana Kendra. The estimated cost for the project is Rs. 9.5 crore. Meditators who wish to donate may participate in this worthy endeavor, which will benefit many people in this region. For details please Contact: M. 9824897251, 9909525575, Email: vagadvipassanakendra@gmail.com; Account Name: Vagad Vipassana Kendra, Bank: Bank of India, RAPAR, A/C No: 382810210000196, IFSC Code: BKID0003828.

Both trusts are exempted under section 80-G. Please ask for receipt of the donation.

Sacred Flame (1969)

These good wishes were addressed by Goenkaji on the occasion of Dīpāvalī—the Hindu Festival of Light that comes in October-November every year. — Editor

Dīpāvalī is a sacred festival of peace, joy, and abundance. Cleaning and purifying the house and hearth before lighting up the entire house with bright diyas (clay lamps) signifying not only the cleanliness and purity but most of all, the purification of the mind. So long as there is dirt of clinging, aversion, and blind attachment, how can there be cleanliness? And if the mind is not clean, then how can there be peace and joy? The only way to dispel the dirt and darkness of mind is the light of sīla, moral conduct, samādhi, mastery over the mind and paññā, experiential wisdom.

Come, let us embrace this eternal truth; let us practice sīla, practice one-pointed focus of the mind, and awaken the inner consciousness and its wisdom; let us realize the ultimate truth, thus becoming the true recipient of endless joy, peace, and abundance.

May the light of true Dhamma sparkle during this festival of light—this will be the real Dīpāvalī, and this will nurture peace, joy, and abundance for us all.

Wishing Auspicious Joy to All

— Satyanarayan Goenka.

Additional Responsibility

- 1-2. Mr. Gautam Goswami & Mrs. Pragna Goswami, To Serve as Centre Teacher of
(1) "Dhamma Rava" – Vagar, Rapar – Kutch and
(2) "Dhamma Avani" – Anjar – Kutch

3. Mr. Arjun Bhargav, To assist Centre Teacher of Dhamma Laddha, Ladakh

New Appointments

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Aditya Sejal, Mumbai
2. Mr. Pradip Patil, Jalgaon
3. Mrs. Krishna Negi, Punjab

4. Mr. Sreekumar Chandran M., Wayanad
5. Mrs. Priti Purecha, Oman
6. Ms. Amornrat Aungwerojwit, Thailand
7. Ms. Manee Khumtai, Thailand
8. Ms. Sophany Sok, Cambodia

CCTs

1. Mr. Vinothkumar V, Chengalpattu
2. Mrs. Ushaben Daki, Junagadh
3. Mr. Khodidas Parmar, Rajkot
4. Dr. Sanjay P Kyada, Rajkot
5. Mrs. Hiral Amlani, Rajkot
6. Mrs. Somealea Ung, France

One-Day Mega Courses at Global Vipassana Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai

1) Sunday, 18-1-2026 Mataji's Demise-day (5-1-2016) and Sayagi U Ba Khin's demise day (19-1-1971).

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/register>; **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

*Aganīta bhava pisatā rahā, loka-cakra vikarāla;
Bāra-bāra pāyā janama, paṇā kāla ke gāla.*

Through countless lives I kept on being crushed, by the terrible wheel of becoming. To be born over and over, just to fall into the net of death.

*Ukhaṇe jaṇa bhava-karma kī, patha pāṇi upayukta;
Janama maraṇa ke dukkha se, sahaja ho sakūṇ mukta.*

May I find the right path for removing the roots of kamma of becoming. May I easily be released from the anguish of birth and death.

*Antima bhava dhīmāna kā, jisa dharaṭī para hoyā;
Vaha dharaṭī pāvana bane, jana-jana pūjita hoyā.*

The land in which the final birth occurs;

This place is sacred, and it is revered by multitudes.

*Aganīta janmon men sabhī, pūrṇa pāramī hoyā;
to usa sāttvika sattva men, bodhi avatarita hoyā.*

All pāramīs have been fulfilled over many incarnations.

Then in such a Sacred One, Bodhi descends.

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