

The Less Anxious Buddhist - Readings

From Nagarjuna, *Introduction to the Middle Way*

The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma is based on two truths: a truth of worldly convention and an ultimate truth.

Those who do not understand the distinction drawn between these two truths do not understand the Buddha's profound truth.

Without a foundation in the conventional truth the significance of the ultimate cannot be taught. Without understanding the significance of the ultimate, liberation is not achieved.

From Chuang Tzu, *Basic Writings*

Everything has its "that," everything has its "this." From the point of view of "that" you cannot see it, but through understanding you can know it. So I say, "that" comes out of "this" and "this" depends on "that" - which is to say that "this" and "that" give birth to each other. But where there is birth there must be death; where there is death there must be birth. Where there is acceptability there must be unacceptability; where there is unacceptability there must be acceptability. Where there is recognition of right there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong there must be recognition of right.

From Komodo (Just made this up)

So where there is recognition of serenity there must be recognition of anxiety; where there is recognition of anxiety there must be recognition of serenity. Where there is recognition of insight there must be recognition of simplemindedness; where there is recognition of simplemindedness there must be recognition of insight.

In other words, anxiety is a part of our mix, and that's ok.

But, let's not forget about ultimate truth, which can bring us from "managing" to liberation:

From Chuang Tzu, *Basic Writings*

Therefore the sage does not proceed in such a way, but illuminates all in the light of Heaven. He too recognizes a "this," but a "this" which is also "that," a "that" which is also "this." His "that" has both a right and a wrong in it; his "this" too has both a right and a wrong in it. So, in fact, does he still have a "this" and "that"? Or does he in fact no longer have a "this" and "that"? A state in which "this" and "that" no longer find their opposites is called the hinge of the Way. When the hinge is fitted into the socket, it can respond endlessly. Its right then is a single endlessness and its wrong too is a single endlessness. So, I say, the best thing to use is clarity.

Bhaya-bherava Sutta: Fear & Terror

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. Then **Janussonin** the brahman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Master Gotama, the sons of good families who have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of conviction in Master Gotama: is Master Gotama their leader? Is Master Gotama their helper? Is Master Gotama their inspirer? Do they take Master Gotama as their example?"

"Yes, brahman, so it is. The sons of good families who have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of conviction in me: I am their leader. I am their helper. I am their inspirer. They take me as their example."

"But, Master Gotama, **it's not easy to endure isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. It's not easy to maintain seclusion, not easy to enjoy being alone. The forests, as it were, plunder the mind of a monk who has not attained concentration.**"

"Yes, brahman, so it is. It's not easy to endure isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. It's not easy to maintain seclusion, not easy to enjoy being alone. The forests, as it were, plunder the mind of a monk who has not attained concentration. **Before my Awakening, when I was still an unawakened Bodhisatta, the thought occurred to me as well:** 'It's not easy to endure isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. It's not easy to maintain seclusion, not easy to enjoy being alone. The forests, as it were, plunder the mind of a monk who has not attained concentration.'

"The thought occurred to me: '**When brahmins or contemplatives who are unpurified in their bodily activities resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings, it's the fault of their unpurified bodily activities that they give rise to unskillful fear & terror. But it's not the case that I am unpurified in my bodily activities** when I resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. I am purified in my bodily activities. I am one of those noble ones who are purified in their bodily activities when they resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings.' **Seeing in myself this purity of bodily activities, I felt even more undaunted about staying in the wilderness.**

"The thought occurred to me: 'When brahmins or contemplatives who are unpurified in their **verbal activities**... unpurified in their **mental activities**... unpurified in their **livelihood** resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings, **it's the fault of their unpurified livelihood that they give rise to unskillful fear & terror.** But it's not the case that I am unpurified in my livelihood when I resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. I am purified in my livelihood. I am one of those noble ones who are purified in their livelihood when they resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings.' Seeing in myself this purity of livelihood, I felt even more undaunted about staying in the wilderness.

"The thought occurred to me: 'When brahmins or contemplatives who are **covetous & fiercely passionate for sensual pleasures**... I am not covetous...' 'When brahmins or contemplatives who have minds of **ill will**, with destructive attitudes... I have a mind of good will...'.....'When brahmins or contemplatives who are overcome by **sloth & drowsiness**... I am devoid of sloth & drowsiness...'.....'When brahmins or contemplatives who are **restless & with an unstill mind**... I have a still mind...'.....'When brahmins or contemplatives who are **uncertain & doubting**... I have gone beyond uncertainty...'.....'When brahmins or contemplatives who are given to **praising themselves & disparaging others**... I do not praise myself or disparage others...'.....'When

brahmans or contemplatives who tend toward **panic & dread... I have gone beyond horripilation...**'... ..'When brahmans or contemplatives who are **desirous of gains, offerings, & fame...** I have few wants...!.....'When brahmans or contemplatives who are **lazy & lacking in persistence...** My persistence is aroused...!.....'When brahmans or contemplatives who are **muddled in their mindfulness & unalert...** I have mindfulness established...!... ..'When brahmans or contemplatives who are **unconcentrated**, with straying minds... I am consummate in concentration...!...

"The thought occurred to me: 'When brahmans or contemplatives who are drooling idiots, resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings, it's the fault of their **drooling idiocy** that they give rise to unskillful fear & terror. But it's not the case that I am a drooling idiot, when I resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. I am **consummate in discernment**. I am one of those noble ones who are consummate in discernment when they resort to isolated forest or wilderness dwellings.' Seeing in myself this consummate discernment, I felt even more undaunted about staying in the wilderness.

"The thought occurred to me: 'What if — on recognized, designated nights such as the **eighth, fourteenth, & fifteenth of the lunar fortnight** — I were to stay in the sort of places that are awe-inspiring and make your hair stand on end, such as **park-shrines, forest-shrines, & tree-shrines?** Perhaps I would get to see that fear & terror.' So at a later time — on recognized, designated nights such as the eighth, fourteenth, & fifteenth of the lunar fortnight — I stayed in the sort of places that are awe-inspiring and make your hair stand on end, such as **park-shrines, forest-shrines, & tree-shrines**. And while I was staying there a wild animal would come, or a peacock would make a twig fall, or wind would rustle the fallen leaves. The thought would occur to me: 'Is this that fear & terror coming?' Then the thought occurred to me: 'Why do I just keep waiting for fear?'

What if I, in whatever state I'm in when fear & terror come to me, were to subdue that fear & terror in that very state?' So when fear & terror came to me while I was walking back & forth, I would not stand or sit or lie down. I would keep walking back & forth until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came to me while I was standing, I would not walk or sit or lie down. I would keep standing until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came to me while I was sitting, I would not lie down or stand up or walk. I would keep sitting until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came to me while I was lying down, I would not sit up or stand or walk. I would keep lying down until I had subdued that fear & terror.

"There are some brahmans & contemplatives, brahman, who have the perception of 'day' when it is night, and of 'night' when it is day. This, I tell you, is their being in a dwelling of delusion. As for me, **I have the perception of 'day' when it is day, and of 'night' when it is night**. If anyone, when speaking rightly, were to say, 'A being not subject to delusion has appeared in the world for the benefit & happiness of many, out of sympathy for the world, for the welfare, benefit, & happiness of human & divine beings,' he would rightly be speaking of me.

"**Unflagging persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established. My body was calm & unaroused, my mind concentrated & single.** Quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful mental qualities, I entered & remained in the **first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation**. With the **stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations**, I entered & remained in the **second jhana:**

rapture & pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance. With the **fading of rapture** I remained in **equanimity**, mindful & alert, and physically sensitive of pleasure. I entered & remained in the **third jhana**, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the **abandoning of pleasure & pain** — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — I entered & remained in the **fourth jhana**: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the *knowledge of recollecting my past lives*. I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two... five, ten... fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion: 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes & details.

"This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the *knowledge of the passing away & reappearance of beings*. I saw — by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human — beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings — who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech & mind, who reviled noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views — with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But these beings — who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, & mind, who did not revile noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views — with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.' Thus — by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human — I saw beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their **kamma**.

"This was the second knowledge I attained in the second watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the *knowledge of the ending of the mental fermentations*. I discerned, as it had come to be, that '**This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress...** These are fermentations... This is the origination of fermentations... This is the cessation of fermentations... This is the way leading to the cessation of fermentations.' My heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, was released from the fermentation of sensuality, released from the fermentation of becoming, released from the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there was

the knowledge, 'Released.' I discerned that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute.

"Now, brahman, if the thought should occur to you, 'Perhaps Gotama the contemplative is even today not free of passion, not free of aversion, not free of delusion, which is why he resorts to isolated forest & wilderness dwellings,' it should not be seen in that way. **It's through seeing two compelling reasons that I resort to isolated forest & wilderness dwellings: seeing a pleasant abiding for myself in the present, and feeling sympathy for future generations.**"

"How truly future generations have been shown sympathy by Master Gotama in the manner of one who is worthy & rightly self-awakened! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life."

Subrahma's Problem by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Today, in both East and West, a general breakdown of law and order has planted in us an implacable sense of uneasiness that creeps up on us on the streets, in our workplace, and even in our homes. The rising number of drug addicts, the increase in petty crime, the decline of respect for others — all these have jointly infected our most ordinary human encounters with an intensified atmosphere of suspicion. Many people only feel at ease behind double-locked doors, with windows secured by metal bars and gates guarded by high-alert sensors. Yet, it is often only when we have armored ourselves with the most impregnable defense systems that we discover a still more intrusive source of insecurity. This sense of fear and dread, which can eat away at our most precious moments of enjoyment, does not stem from outside threats but swells up inexplicably from within. Though it may wrap itself around our everyday affairs and send us into flurries of concern, its true cause is not so much external dangers as an unlocalized anxiety floating dizzily along the edges of the mind.

A little known sutta tucked away in the Devaputta-samyutta gives us an insight into the nature of this hidden anguish far more poignant and realistic than our most astute existentialist philosophers. In his short sutta, only eight lines of print in the Pali, a young god named Subrahma appears before the Awakened One and explains the problem weighing on his heart:

**Always anxious is this mind,
The mind is always agitated,
About problems present and future;
Please tell me the release from fear.**

It is perhaps ironic that it takes a deva to express so succinctly, with such elegant simplicity, the dilemma at the crux of the human condition. Subrahma's confession also makes it clear that

neither the deva world nor any other set of outer conditions offers a final refuge from anguish. Luxurious mansions, lucrative jobs, unchallenged authority, high-alert security systems: none of these can guarantee inner stillness and peace. For the source of all problems is the mind itself, which follows us wherever we may go.

To understand Subrahma's distress we need only sit down quietly, draw our attention inward, and watch our thoughts as they tumble by. If we do not fix on any one thought but simply observe each thought as it passes by, we will almost surely find waves of anxiety, care, and worry running through and beneath this ceaseless procession. Our fears and concerns need not assume vast proportions, booming forth bold metaphysical decrees. But beneath the melody of constantly changing thoughts, punctuating them like the thumping of the bass in a jazz quintet, is the persistent throb of worry and care, the second rhythm of the heart.

Subrahma underscores the predicament he faced — the predicament faced by all "unenlightened worldlings" — by repeating the words "always" (*niccā*) in the first two lines. This repetition is significant. It does not mean that every thought we think is plagued by worry and dread, nor does it rule out the joy of successful achievement, the pleasure of requited love, or courage in the face of life's daunting challenges. But it does underscore the stubborn persistence of anxious dread, which trails behind us like a gruffy mongrel — growling when we cast a backward glance, ready to snap at our heels when we're off guard.

Fear and anxiety haunt the corridors of the mind because the mind is a function of time, a rolling glimmer of awareness that flows inexorably from a past that can never be undone into a future that teases us with a perpetual, undecipherable "not yet." It is just because the mind attempts to clamp down on the **passage of time**, wrapping its tentacles around a thousand projects and concerns, that the passage of time appears so formidable. For time means change, and change brings dissolution, the breaking of the bonds that we have forged with so much toil. Time also means the uncertainty of the future, plummeting us into unexpected challenges and inevitable old age and death.

When Subrahma came to the Buddha with his urgent plea for help, he was not seeking a prescription of Prozac that would tide him through his next round of business deals and his dalliance with celestial nymphs. He wanted nothing less than total release from fear, and thus the Buddha did not have to pull any punches with his answer. In four piquant lines he told Subrahma the only effective way to heal his inner wound, to heal it with no danger of relapse:

**Not apart from awakening and austerity,
Not apart from sense restraint,
Not apart from relinquishing all,
Do I see any safety for living beings.**

The ultimate escape from anxiety, the Buddha makes clear, is summed up in four simple measures. The most decisive are "awakening" (*bodhi*) and "relinquishment" (*nissagga*), wisdom and release. These, however, do not arise in a vacuum but only as a consequence of training in virtue and meditation, expressed here as restraint of the sense faculties and "austerity" (*tapas*), the energy of contemplative endeavor. The entire programme is directed to digging up the hidden root of anguish, which the existentialists, with all their philosophical acumen, could not discern. That root is clinging. Asleep in the deep night of ignorance, we cling to our possessions, our loved ones, our position and status; and most tenaciously of all, we cling to these "five

aggregates" of form, feeling, perception, volitional activity, and consciousness, taking them to be permanent, pleasurable, and a truly existent self.

To cling to anything is to aim at preserving it, at sealing it off from the ravenous appetite of time. Yet to make such an attempt is to run smack up against the fixed decree written into the texture of being: that whatever comes to be must pass away. It is not only the object of clinging that must yield to the law of impermanence. The subject too, the one who clings, and the very act of clinging, are also bound to dissolve, perish, and pass away. To sit back trying to shape a world that will conform to our heart's desires is to fight against the inflexible law of change. But try as we may there is no escape: the sonorous truth swells up from the depths of being, and we can either heed its message or continue to stuff our ears.

The cutting irony in the solution the Buddha holds out to Subrahma lies in the fact that the prescription requires a voluntary assent to the act we instinctively try to avoid. The final escape from anxiety and care is not a warm assurance that the universe will give us a cheerful hug. It is, rather, a call for us to take the step that we habitually resist. What we fear above all else, what causes the tremors of anxiety to ripple through our heart, is the giving up of what we cherish. Yet the Buddha tells us that the only way to reach true safety is by giving up all: "Not apart from relinquishing all do I see any safety for living beings." In the end we have no choice: we must give up all, for when death comes to claim us everything we identify with will be taken away. But to go beyond anxiety we must let go now — not, of course, by a premature act of renunciation, which in many cases might even be harmful or self-destructive — but by wearing away the clinging, attachment, and acquisitiveness that lie within as the buried root of fear.

This relinquishment of clinging cannot come about through the forcible rejection of what we love and cherish. It arises from wisdom, from insight, from awakening, from breaking through the deep dark sleep of ignorance. The sovereign remedy is to see that right now, at this very moment, there is nothing we can truly claim as ours, for in reality "All this is empty of self and of what belongs to self." Form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness: all are to be given up by seeing them as they really are, as "not mine, not I, not my self." To see the truth that all conditioned things are impermanent, disintegrating, and bound to perish, is to turn away from clinging, to relinquish all. And to relinquish all is to find ourselves, not barren and empty-handed, but rich with the wealth of the noble ones. For one without clinging, there is no fear, no tremor or agitation, no dark winds of anxiety. The one without clinging is *akutobhaya*, one who faces no danger from any quarter. Though dwelling in the midst of aging, sickness, and death, he has reached what lies beyond aging, sickness, and death. Though the leaves fall and world systems shimmer, he sees security everywhere.

Sallatha Sutta: The Arrow

"Monks, an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person feels feelings of pleasure, feelings of pain, feelings of neither-pleasure-nor-pain. A well-instructed disciple of the noble ones also feels feelings of pleasure, feelings of pain, feelings of neither-pleasure-nor-pain. So what difference, what distinction, what distinguishing factor is there between the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones and the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person?"

"For us, lord, the teachings have the Blessed One as their root, their guide, & their arbitrator. It would be good if the Blessed One himself would explicate the meaning of this statement. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it."

"In that case, monks, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks responded.

The Blessed One said, **"When touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental.** Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, were to shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pains of two arrows; in the same way, when touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental.

"As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is resistant. Any resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he delights in sensual pleasure. Why is that? Because **the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person does not discern any escape from painful feeling aside from sensual pleasure.** As he is delighting in sensual pleasure, any passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He does not discern, as it actually is present, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling. As he does not discern the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling, then any ignorance-obsession with regard to that feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain obsesses him.

"Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it as though joined with it. This is called an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person joined with birth, aging, & death; with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is joined, I tell you, with suffering & stress.

"Now, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones, when touched with a feeling of pain, does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. So he feels one pain: physical, but not mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, did not shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pain of only one arrow. In the same way, when touched with a feeling of pain, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. He feels one pain: physical, but not mental.

"As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is not resistant. No resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he does not delight in sensual pleasure. Why is that? Because the well-instructed disciple of **the noble ones discerns an escape from painful feeling aside from sensual pleasure.** As he is not delighting in sensual pleasure, no passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He discerns, as it actually is present, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling. As he discerns the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling, no ignorance-obsession with regard to that feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain obsesses him.

"Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it disjoined from it. This is called a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones disjoined from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is disjoined, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"This is the difference, this the distinction, this the distinguishing factor between the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones and the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person."

The discerning person, learned, doesn't sense a (mental) feeling of pleasure or pain: This is the difference in skillfulness between the sage & the person run-of-the-mill. For a learned person who has fathomed the Dhamma, clearly seeing this world & the next, desirable things don't charm the mind, undesirable ones bring no resistance. His acceptance & rejection are scattered, gone to their end, do not exist. Knowing the dustless, sorrowless state, he discerns rightly, has gone, beyond becoming, to the Further Shore.

Upādāparitassanā Sutta: Grasping and Worry

[*At Saavatthi the Blessed One said:*] "Monks, I will explain to you grasping and worrying, and also not grasping and not worrying... **Here, monks, the uninstructed worldling, with no regard for Noble Ones,[1] unskilled and untrained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones,... of those who are worthy[2]... regards body as the self, the self as having body, body as being in the self, or the self as being in the body. Change occurs to this man's body, and it becomes different. Because of this change and alteration in his body, his consciousness is preoccupied with bodily change. Due to this preoccupation with bodily change, worried thoughts arise and persist, laying a firm hold on his mind.** Through this mental obsession he becomes fearful and distressed, and being full of desire[3] and attachment he is worried. He regards feeling as the self,... change occurs to his feeling... he is worried. [*Similarly with 'perception,' 'the mental formations' and 'consciousness'*]. In this way, monks, grasping and worrying arise. And how, monks, do not grasping and not worrying arise?"

"Here, monks, the well-instructed Ariyan disciple, who has regard for the Noble Ones, is skilled and trained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones,... of those who are worthy, **does not regard body as the self, the self as having body, body as being in the self, or the self as being in the body. Change occurs to this man's body, and it becomes different, but despite this change and alteration in his body, his consciousness is not preoccupied with bodily change... Not being full of desire and attachment, he is not worried.** [*Similarly with feeling, perception, the mental formations and 'consciousness'*]. **In this way, monks, grasping and worrying do not arise."**

Gilāna Sutta (SN 35:74)

Near Sāvattḥī. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, in such and such a dwelling a certain **monk—newly ordained, not well known—is diseased, in pain, severely ill.** It would be good if the Blessed One would visit the monk, out of sympathy for him."

Then the Blessed One, on hearing the word "newly ordained," on hearing the word "diseased," and realizing that the monk was not well known, went to him. The monk saw the Blessed One coming from afar and, on seeing him, stirred in his bed. Then the Blessed One said to him, "Enough, monk. Don't stir in your bed. There are these seats made ready. I will sit down there."

The Blessed One sat down on a seat made ready. Having sat down, he said to the monk, “I hope you are getting better, monk. I hope you are comfortable. I hope that your pains are lessening and not increasing. I hope that there are signs of their lessening, and not of their increasing.”

“I am not getting better, lord. I am not comfortable. My extreme pains are increasing, not lessening. There are signs of their increasing, and not of their lessening.”

“Then I hope you have no anxiety, monk. I hope you have no remorse.”

“Yes, lord, I do have not a small amount of anxiety, not a small amount of remorse.”

“I hope you can’t fault yourself with regard to your virtue.”

“No, lord, I can’t fault myself with regard to my virtue.”

“Then **what are you anxious about?** What is your remorse?”

“I understand that the Blessed One has not taught the Dhamma with purity of virtue as its goal.”

“If you understand that I have not taught the Dhamma with purity of virtue as its goal, then for what goal do you understand that I have taught the Dhamma?”

“I understand that the Blessed One has taught the Dhamma with the fading of passion as its goal.”

“Good, good, monk. It’s good that you understand that I have taught the Dhamma with the fading of passion as its goal, for I *have* taught the Dhamma with the fading of passion as its goal.

“What do you think, monk? Is the eye constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“... Is the ear constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“... Is the nose constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“... Is the tongue constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“... Is the body constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“What do you think, monk? Is the intellect constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” “

And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.” “

And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows *disenchanted* with the eye, disenchanted with the ear, disenchanted with the nose, disenchanted with the tongue,

disenchanted with the body, disenchanted with the intellect. *Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released.* With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monk delighted in the Blessed One's words. And while this explanation was being given, there arose for the monk the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: "*Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.*"

Medicine Buddha Prayers

*bcom ldan 'da de bzhin gshegs pa
dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i
sangs rgyas sman gyi bla vaidūrya'i 'od kyi rgyal po la
phyag 'tshal lo/ mchod do/ skyab su mchi'o//*

**I bow down to the Lord, Tathāgata, Destroyer of the Enemy;
Perfect Fully Enlightened One,
Medicine Teacher, Light of Vaiḍūrya.
I worship and take refuge in him.**

*thugs rje kun la snyoms pa'i bcom ldan 'das/
mtshan tsam thos pas ngan 'gro'i sdug bsngal sel/
dug gsum nad sel sangs rgyas sman gyi bla/
vaidḍūrya yi 'od la phyag 'tshal lo//*

**I bow down to the Lord Light of Vaiḍūrya,
Who has impartial compassion towards all beings.
Buddha Medicine Teacher, dispeller of the three poisons and diseases--
Just by hearing his name the suffering of the miserable states is dispelled.**

**OM NAMO BHAGAVATE / BHAIṢHAJYE
GURU VAIDŪRYA / PRABHA RĀJAYA / TATHĀGATĀYA /
ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TADYATHĀ /
OM BHAIṢHAJYE BHAIṢHAJYE / MAHĀBHAIṢHAJYE BHAIṢHAJYE /
RĀJA SAMUDGATE SVĀHĀ**

**OM BHAIṢHAJYE BHAIṢHAJYE / MAHĀBHAIṢHAJYE BHAIṢHAJYE /
RĀJA SAMUDGATE SVĀHĀ**

*sems can nad pa ji snyed pa/
myur du nad las thar gyur cig/
'gro ba'i nad rnams ma lus pa/
rtag tu 'byung ba med par shog//*

**May all sick beings quickly
Be freed from disease.
May no diseases ever come
To any living being.**

*gangs ri rva bas bskor ba'i zhing khams 'dir/
phan dang bde ba ma lus 'byung ba'i gnas/
sryan ras gzigs dbang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho yi/
zhabs pad srid mtha'i bar du brtan gyur cig//*

**In the land surrounded by walls of snow mountains,
The source of benefit and happiness
Resides Tenzin Gyatso, the embodiment of Avalokiteshvara.
May his lotus feet stand firm until the end of Saṃsāra.**

Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way*

Chapter 5 - Guarding Alertness

40. With the utmost effort I should check
To see that the crazed elephant of my mind
Is not wandering off but is bound
To the great pillar of thinking about Dharma.

41. Those who strive by all means for concentration
Should not wander off even a moment;
By thinking "How is my mind behaving?" --
They should closely analyse their mind.

42. But if I am unable to do this
When afraid or involved in celebrations, then I should relax.

53. Whenever I have impatience, laziness, cowardice,
Shamelessness or the desire to talk nonsense;
If thoughts of partiality arise,
At these times too I should remain like a block of wood.

54. Having in this way examined his mind for disturbing conceptions
And for thoughts that strive for meaningless things,
The courageous Bodhisattva should hold his mind steady
Through the application of remedial forces.

55. Being very resolute and faithful,
Steady, respectful, polite,
With a sense of shame, apprehensive and peaceful,
I should strive to make others happy.

Chapter 10 - Concluding Verses

22. May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed;
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefitting one another.

41. May no living creature ever suffer,
Commit evil or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,

Or their minds ever be depressed.

55. For as long as space endures
And for as long as living beings remain,
Until then may I too abide
To dispel the misery of the world.

56. May all the pains of living creatures
Ripen (solely) upon myself,
And through the might of the Bodhisattva Sangha
May all being experience happiness.

Abhaya Sutta: Fearless

Then Janussonin the brahman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: **"I am of the view & opinion that there is no one who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death."**

[The Blessed One said:] **"Brahman, there are those who, subject to death, are afraid & in terror of death. And there are those who, subject to death, are not afraid or in terror of death."**

"And who is the person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death? **There is the case of the person who has not abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, & craving for sensuality. Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, 'O, those beloved sensual pleasures will be taken from me, and I will be taken from them!' He grieves & is tormented, weeps, beats his breast, & grows delirious.** This is a person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death.

"Furthermore, there is the case of the person who has not abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, & *craving for the body*. Then he comes down with a serious disease. **As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, 'O, my beloved body will be taken from me, and I will be taken from my body!'** He grieves & is tormented, weeps, beats his breast, & grows delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death.

"Furthermore, there is the case of the person who has not done what is good, has not done what is skillful, has not given protection to those in fear, and instead has done what is evil, savage, & cruel. Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, 'I have not done what is good, have not done what is skillful, have not given protection to those in fear, and instead have done what is evil, savage, and cruel. **To the extent that there is a destination for those who have not done what is good, have not done what is skillful, have not given protection to those in fear, and instead have done what is evil, savage, & cruel, that's where I'm headed after death.'** He grieves & is tormented, weeps,

beats his breast, & grows delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death.

"Furthermore, there is the case of the person in doubt & perplexity, who has not arrived at certainty with regard to the True Dhamma. Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, '**How doubtful & perplexed I am! I have not arrived at any certainty with regard to the True Dhamma!**' He grieves & is tormented, weeps, beats his breast, & grows delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death.

"These, brahman, are four people who, subject to death, are afraid & in terror of death.

"And who is the person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death?

"There is the case of the person who *has abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, and craving for sensuality.* Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought does not occur to him, '*O, those beloved sensual pleasures will be taken from me, and I will be taken from them!*' He does not grieve, is not tormented; does not weep, beat his breast, or grow delirious. This is a person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death.

"Furthermore, there is the case of the person who *has abandoned* passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, and *craving for the body.* Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought does not occur to him, '*O, my beloved body will be taken from me, and I will be taken from my body!*' He does not grieve, is not tormented; does not weep, beat his breast, or grow delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death.

"Furthermore, there is the case of the person who *has done what is good, has done what is skillful, has given protection to those in fear, and has not done what is evil, savage, or cruel.* Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, '*I have done what is good, have done what is skillful, have given protection to those in fear, and I have not done what is evil, savage, or cruel. To the extent that there is a destination for those who have done what is good, what is skillful, have given protection to those in fear, and have not done what is evil, savage, or cruel, that's where I'm headed after death.*' He does not grieve, is not tormented; does not weep, beat his breast, or grow delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death.

"Furthermore, there is the case of the person who *has no doubt or perplexity, who has arrived at certainty with regard to the True Dhamma.* Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, '*I have no doubt or perplexity. I have arrived at certainty with regard to the True Dhamma.*' He does not grieve, is not tormented; does not weep, beat his breast, or grow delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death.

"These, brahman, are four people who, subject to death, are not afraid or in terror of death."

[When this was said, Janussonin the brahman said to the Blessed One:] "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life."

From the Saccaka Sutta: Longer Discourse to Saccaka

"I thought: 'Suppose I were to practice going altogether without food.' Then devas came to me and said, 'Dear sir, please don't practice going altogether without food. If you go altogether without food, we'll infuse divine nourishment in through your pores, and you will survive on that.' I thought, 'If I were to claim to be completely fasting while these devas are infusing divine nourishment in through my pores, I would be lying.' So I dismissed them, saying, 'Enough.'

"I thought: 'Suppose I were to take only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup.' So I took only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup. My body became extremely emaciated. Simply from my eating so little, my limbs became like the jointed segments of vine stems or bamboo stems... My backside became like a camel's hoof... My spine stood out like a string of beads... My ribs jutted out like the jutting rafters of an old, run-down barn... The gleam of my eyes appeared to be sunk deep in my eye sockets like the gleam of water deep in a well... My scalp shriveled & withered like a green bitter gourd, shriveled & withered in the heat & the wind... The skin of my belly became so stuck to my spine that when I thought of touching my belly, I grabbed hold of my spine as well; and when I thought of touching my spine, I grabbed hold of the skin of my belly as well... If I urinated or defecated, I fell over on my face right there... Simply from my eating so little, if I tried to ease my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair — rotted at its roots — fell from my body as I rubbed, simply from eating so little.

"People on seeing me would say, 'Gotama the contemplative is black.' Other people would say, 'Gotama the contemplative isn't black, he's brown.' Others would say, 'Gotama the contemplative is neither black nor brown, he's golden-skinned.' So much had the clear, bright color of my skin deteriorated, simply from eating so little.

"I thought: 'Whatever brahmins or contemplatives in the past have felt painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None have been greater than this. Whatever brahmins or contemplatives in the future will feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None will be greater than this. Whatever brahmins or contemplatives in the present are feeling painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None is greater than this. But **with this racking practice of austerities I haven't attained any superior human state, any distinction in knowledge or vision worthy of the noble ones. Could there be another path to Awakening?**'

"I thought: 'I recall once, when my father the Sakyan was working, and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, then — quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful mental qualities — I entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure

born from seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Could that be the path to Awakening?' Then following on that memory came the realization: 'That is the path to Awakening.' I thought: 'So why am I afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities?' I thought: 'I am no longer afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities, but that pleasure is not easy to achieve with a body so extremely emaciated. Suppose I were to take some solid food: some rice & porridge.' So I took some solid food: some rice & porridge. Now five monks had been attending on me, thinking, 'If Gotama, our contemplative, achieves some higher state, he will tell us.' But when they saw me taking some solid food — some rice & porridge — they were disgusted and left me, thinking, 'Gotama the contemplative is living luxuriously. He has abandoned his exertion and is backsliding into abundance.'

"So when I had taken solid food and regained strength, then — quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful mental qualities, I entered & remained in the **first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation**. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, I entered & remained in the **second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation** — internal assurance. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. **With the fading of rapture I remained equanimous, mindful, & alert, and sensed pleasure with the body. I entered & remained in the third jhana**, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — I entered & remained in the **fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain**. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the **mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability**, I directed it to the knowledge of recollecting my past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two...five, ten...fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion: 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes & details.

"This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away & reappearance of beings.

Psalm 23 King James Version (KJV)

23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of**

death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Vajrapāṇi Mantra

OM VAJRAPĀṆI HŪṀ PHAT

Thich Nhat Hanh *Fear: Getting Through the Storm Exercises*

Releasing Fear from Body and Feelings: Eight Simple Mindfulness Exercises:

1. “Breathing in, I know this is an in-breath. Breathing out, I know this is an out-breath.”
2. “Breathing in, I follow my in-breath all the way from the beginning to the end. Breathing out, I follow my out-breath all the way from the beginning to the end.”
3. Breathing in, I’m aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I’m aware of my whole body.”
4. “Breathing in, I am aware of some tension and pain in my body; breathing out, I calm and release the tension and pain in my body.”
5. “Breathing in, I feel joy. Breathing out, I know joy is there.”
6. “Breathing in, I feel happy. Breathing out, I know happiness is there.”
7. “Breathing in, I know that a painful feeling is there. Breathing out, I calm that painful feeling.” The second zone of energy, which is mindfulness and concentration, comes up and embraces the first zone of energy, the painful feeling. We follow this method exactly. With the energy of mindfulness and concentration, we just recognize and embrace the painful feeling. “Hello, my fear. Hello, my anger. Hello, my sadness. I know you are there. I’m going to take good care of you.” The sunlight doesn’t just surround the lotus flower; its photons actually penetrate the lotus flower with energy, and soon the flower will open. That is exactly the same as what we do. When we embrace our pain, particles of the energy of mindfulness and concentration begin to penetrate, like photons, into the zone of pain.
8. Calm and release the tension in the painful feeling—to embrace, soothe, and bring relief to the feeling: “Breathing in, I calm my mental formations. Breathing out, I calm my mental formations.” Every time the pain manifests, we have to let it manifest; we should not push it down. We shouldn’t try to suppress it. We have to let it come and take good care of it. Letting negative seeds get weaker in the storehouse consciousness.

Transforming the Roots of Fear in the Mind: Eight Breathing Exercises:

1. “Breathing in, I am aware of my mind. Breathing out, I am aware of my mind.” When fear is there, we say: “Breathing in, I know the mental formation of fear is in me.” When the mental formation of fear is there, we breathe in and recognize the presence of fear in us. With

mindfulness and concentration, we recognize and embrace the mental formation that is there. Then we can look deeply into the nature of that mental formation.

2. “Breathing in, I make my mind happy. Breathing out, I make my mind happy.” Making positive seeds stronger. Selective watering. Smile - mouth yoga!
3. insight: “Breathing in, I concentrate my mind. Breathing out, I concentrate my mind.” Concentration has the power to burn away afflictions, just like sunlight focused by a lens can burn a piece of paper underneath. Concentration on emptiness-interbeing - you see it deeply.
4. “Breathing in, I liberate my mind. Breathing out, I liberate my mind.”
5. “Breathing in, I observe the impermanent nature of all Dharmas. Breathing out, I observe the impermanent nature of all Dharmas.” While breathing in and breathing out, we keep our concentration on impermanence alive until we can make a breakthrough into the heart of reality. The object of our observation may be a flower, a pebble, someone we love, or someone we hate; it may be us, our pain, our fear, or our sorrow. Anything can serve as the object of our meditation.
6. “Breathing in, I observe the disappearance of desire. Breathing out, I observe the disappearance of desire.”
7. “Breathing in, I observe cessation. Breathing out, I observe cessation.”
8. “Breathing in, I observe letting go. Breathing out, I observe letting go.” Our true nature is nirvana. So if someone close to you has just passed away, be sure to look for her in her new manifestation. It’s impossible for her to die. She is continued in many ways. Using the eyes of wisdom, you can recognize her around you and inside you. And you can continue to talk to her: “Darling, I know you are still there in your new form. It’s impossible for you to die.” The eighth exercise helps us release our illusions and be in touch with the true nature of reality.

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