

Relax

AND WORK HARD



AND OTHER PARADOXES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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I. Relax and Work Hard

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*:

एवं क्षमो भजेद्वीर्यं वीर्ये बोधिर्यतः स्थिता ।

evaṃ kṣamo bhajedvīryaṃ vīrye bodhiryataḥ sthitā ।

न हि वीर्यं विना पुण्यं यथा वायुं विनागतिः ॥

na hi vīryaṃ vinā puṇyaṃ yathā vāyuṃ vināgatiḥ ॥

Once you have practiced patience, begin
Your practice of effort, for enlightenment lies
In making these kinds of effort.
Without a breeze they never flicker,
And just so in the absence of effort
Merit can never occur. (7.1)

I. Relax and Work Hard, cont.

From the *Bhagavad Gita*:

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥

yaḥ paśyati tathātmānamakartāraṁ sa paśyati ॥

One who sees that all actions
Are actually done only through the workings of nature
And thus that the self is not an actor at all,
Truly sees. (13.29)

II. The Paradoxical Nature of Karma

From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*:

ये केचिद् दुःखिता लोके सर्वे ते स्वसुखेच्छया ।

ये केचित् सुखिता लोके सर्वे तेऽन्यसुखेच्छया ॥

ye kecid duḥkhitā loke sarve te svasukhecchayā |

ye kecit sukhitā loke sarve te'nyasucecchayā ||

The total amount of happiness

That exists in the world has come from

Wanting to make others happy.

The total amount of suffering

That exists in the world has come from

Wanting to make yourself happy. (8.129)

II. The Paradoxical Nature of Karma, cont.

From the *New Testament* (Mathew 5.2-11):

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of
evil against you falsely for My sake.

II. The Paradoxical Nature of Karma, cont.

From the *Eight Verses for Developing the Good Heart*, by Dorje Senge of Langri Tang (1054-1123)

Wherever I am and whomever I'm with
May I view myself as lowest of all;
And from the bottom of my heart,
May I cherish others and consider them supreme.

May I accept any loss from such unfair treatment
As being attacked and belittled
By those who are jealous of me; and
May I give every gain to others.

May I view one whom
I greatly hoped would help me, but
Instead mistreats or evens harms me
As my greatest spiritual teacher.

III. The Paradox of Reaching the Goal of a Spiritual Practice

From Arya Nagarjuna's **Wisdom: A Song on the Root of the Middle Way**
(*Mulamadhyamakakarika*):

निर्वास्याम्यनुपादानो निर्वाणं मे भविष्यति।

इति येषां ग्रहस्तेषामुपादानमहाग्रहः ॥

nirvāsyāmyanupādāno nirvāṇaṃ me bhaviṣyati ।

iti yeṣāṃ grahasteṣāmupādānamahāgrahaḥ ॥

“Without grasping, I will extinguish suffering

And nirvana will be mine!”

The grasping of those who say this

Is a great grasping and clinging. (16.9)

III. The Paradox of Reaching the Goal of a Spiritual Practice, cont.

From the *Heart Sutra*:

न विद्या नाविद्या न क्षयो यावन्न जरामरणं न जरामरणक्षयः ।

na vidyā nāvidyā na kṣayo yāvanna jarāmaraṇam na jarāmaraṇakṣayaḥ ।

There is no misunderstanding your world. There is no stopping this misunderstanding, and the same is true all the way up to your old age and your death, and to stopping your old age and death.

न दुःखसमुदयनिरोधमार्गा ।

na duḥkhasamudayanirodhamārgā ।

There is no suffering. There is no source of this suffering. There is no stopping this suffering. There is no path to stop this suffering.

न ज्ञानं न प्राप्तिर्नाप्रप्तिः ।

na jñānam na prāptirnāpraptiḥ ।

There is no knowledge. There is nothing to reach. And there is nothing not to reach.

IV. The Paradox of Talking about Ultimate Reality

From the first chapter of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao-tzu:

The tao that can be told
is not the eternal Tao
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name.

The unnamable is the eternally real.
Naming is the origin
of all particular things.

From Arya Nagarjuna's **Wisdom: A Song on the Root of the Middle Way**
(*Mulamadhyamakakarika*):

शून्यता सर्वदृष्टीनां प्रोक्ता निःसरणं जिनैः ।

येषां तु शून्यतादृष्टिस्तानसाध्यान् बभाषिरे ॥

śūnyatā sarvadr̥ṣṭīnām proktā niḥsaraṇam jinaiḥ ।
yeṣām tu śūnyatādr̥ṣṭīstānasādhyān babhāṣire ॥

Emptiness has been taught by the Conquerors
As the refutation of all viewpoints.
Those for whom emptiness is a viewpoint
Are said to be hopeless. (13.8)