

WHY WE'RE NOT HAPPY: THE CAUSES OF SUFFERING

From the **Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life**, by Master Shantideva (ca. 700 A.D.):

यदि तु स्वेच्छया सिद्धि सर्वेषामेव देहिनाम् ।

न भवेत्कस्यचिद्दुःखं न दुःखं कश्चिदिच्छति ॥ ६.३४ ॥

yadi tu svecchayā siddhi sarveṣāmeva dehinām |
na bhavetkasyacidduḥkhaṁ na duḥkhaṁ kaścicdicchatī || (6.34)

If everything just happened
Because we want it to happen,
Then since no one at all
Wants any pain, there wouldn't be
A single being in a body at all
Who ever had any pain at all.

From the Second Chapter of the **Yoga Sutra**, by Master Patanjali (ca. 200 A.D.):

अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः पञ्च क्लेशाः ॥ ३ ॥

avidyāsmitārāgadveṣābhiniveśāḥ pañca kleśāḥ || (3)

The five negative thoughts are ignorance,
selfness, liking, disliking, and grasping.

अविद्या क्षेत्रम् उत्तरेषां प्रसुप्ततनुविच्छिन्नोदाराणाम् ॥ ४ ॥

avidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṁ prasuptatanuvicchinnotdārāṇām || (4)

Ignorance is the field for the ones that come after it,
Whether they are dormant, dwindling, interrupted, or flourishing.

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ॥ ५ ॥
anityāśuciduḥkhānātmasu nityaśucisukhātmakhyātiravidyā ॥ (5)

In ignorance we misunderstand our world:
Things that cannot last,
Things which are unclean, and painful,
Seem to us as if they will last,
And as if they are clean,
And pleasant, and very much themselves.

दृग्दर्शनशक्त्योरेकात्मतेवास्मिता ॥ ६ ॥
dṛgdarśanaśaktyorekātmatevāsmitā ॥ (6)

Selfness is where the strong impression
Of someone seeing something
And the something someone sees
Makes it seem as if
Each one were itself.

सुखानुशयी रागः ॥ ७ ॥
sukhānuśatī rāgaḥ ॥ (7)

Assailed by what feels good,
We begin to like things.

दुःखानुशयी द्वेषः ॥ ८ ॥
duḥkhānuśatī dveṣaḥ ॥ (8)

Assailed by what feels bad,
We begin to dislike things.

स्वरसवाही विदुषोऽपि तथारूढोऽभिनिवेशः ॥ ९ ॥

svarasavāhī viduṣo'pi tathārūḍho'bhiniveśaḥ|| (9)

Grasping is a thought
That comes on all of its own,
Even for those who understand,
And then grows ever stronger.

ते प्रतिप्रसवहेयाः सूक्ष्माः ॥ १० ॥

te pratiprasavaheyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ|| (10)

Cutting off their flow
Requires the elimination
Of very subtle problems.

ध्यानहेयास्तद्वृत्तयः ॥ ११ ॥

dhyānaheyāstadvṛttayaḥ|| (11)

These ways that the mind turns
Are eliminated by deep meditation.

क्लेशमूलः कर्माशयो दृष्टादृष्टजन्मवेदनीयः ॥ १२ ॥

kleśamūlaḥ karmāśayo dṛṣṭādṛṣṭajanmavedanīyaḥ|| (12)

These negative thoughts are the very root
Of the storehouse, planted by the things we do.
And then we experience things,
In lifetimes we see or not.

सति मूले तद्विपाको जात्यायुर्भोगाः ॥ १३ ॥

sati mūle tadvipāko jātyāyurbhogāḥ || (13)

As long as this root is still there,
Then we will experience the ripening
Of these actions in our lives to come.

ते ह्लादपरितापफलाः पुण्यापुण्यहेतुत्वात् ॥ १४ ॥

te hlādaparitāpaphalāḥ puṇyāpuṇyahetutvāt || (14)

There is a connection of cause and effect:
The seeds ripen into experiences refreshingly pleasant,
Or painful in their torment;
Depending on whether you have done good to others,
Or done them wrong instead.