



# DEPRESSION ITS REAL CAUSES & REAL CURES

VERSES FROM MASTER SHANTIDEVA'S  
GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE

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## I. Recognizing the Problem

मनः शमं न गृह्णाति न प्रीतिसुखमश्नुते ।

न निद्राम् न धृतिं याति द्वेषशल्ये हृदि स्थिते ॥ ।

manaḥ śamaṁ na gr̥hṇāti na prītisukhamaśnute ।  
na nidrām na dhṛtiṁ yāti dveṣaśalye hṛdi sthite ॥ ।

When the thorn of anger is lodged in the heart  
The mind can know no peace.  
It obtains no joy or happiness  
No sleep, and no resolution. (6.3)

किं वीर्यं कुशलोत्साहस्तद्विपक्षः क उच्यते ।

आलस्यं कुत्सितासक्तिर्विषादात्मावमन्यना ॥

kiṁ vīryaṁ kuśalotsāhastadvipakṣaḥ ka ucyate ।  
ālasyaṁ kutsitāsaktirviṣādātmāvamanyaṇā ॥

What is effort? It is being happy about doing good things.  
The obstacles to it are said to be  
Laziness, attachment to contemptible things  
And depression, low self-esteem. (7.2)

यदि तु स्वेच्छया सिद्धिः सर्वेषामेव देहिनाम् ।

न भवेत्कस्यचिदुःखं न दुःखं कश्चिदिच्छति ॥

yadi tu svecchayā siddhiḥ sarveṣāmeva dehinām ।  
na bhavetkasyaciduḥkhaṁ na duḥkhaṁ kaścidicchati ॥ ।

If things occurred because we willingly chose them,  
Then no one at all would suffer  
Since no one at all wishes to suffer. (6.34)

## II. The Real Causes

### A. Anger

अनिष्टकरणाज्जातमिष्टस्य च विघातनात् ।

दौर्मनस्याशनं प्राप्य द्वेषो दृप्तो निहन्ति माम् ॥

aniṣṭakaraṇājātamīṣṭasya ca vighātanāt ।  
daurmanasyāśanaṁ prāpya dveṣo drpto nihanti mām । ।

Fed by the irritation that comes  
From getting what I don't want  
And not getting what I do want,  
Anger is inflamed and destroys me. (6.7)

### B. The Habit of Self-Cherishing

दुर्गतिमीचता मौर्ख्यम् ययैवात्मोन्नतीच्छया ।

तामेवान्यत्र संक्राम्य सुगतिः सत्कृतिर्मातिः ॥

durgatirnīcatā maurkhyam yayaivātmonnaticchayā ।  
tāmevānyatra saṁkrāmya sugatiḥ satkṛtirmatiḥ । ।

Because of my wish to be elevated in importance  
I will find myself in unpleasant realms, ugly and stupid.  
But should this wish be transferred to others,  
I will be honored in a pleasant realm. (8.127)

ये केचिद्दुःखिता लोके सर्वे ते स्वसुखेच्छया ।

ये केचित्सुखिता लोके सर्वे तेऽन्यसुखेच्छया ॥

ye kecidduḥkhitā loke sarve te svasukhecchayā ।  
ye kecitsukhitā loke sarve te'nyasukhecchayā । ।

Whatever suffering there is in the world  
Comes from the selfish desire for happiness.  
Whatever happiness there is in the world  
Comes from the desire for the happiness of others. (8.129)

### C. Idle Speech

पूर्व निरूप्य सामग्रीमारभेन्नारभेत वा ।

अनारम्भो वरं नाम न त्वारभ्य निवर्तनम् ॥

pūrvam nirūpya sāmagrīmārabhennārabheta vā ।  
anārambho varaṁ nāma na tvārabhya nivartanam ॥

Having previously examined yourself  
To see if you have the wherewithal,  
Then decide to begin a project or not.  
It would surely be better not to begin at all  
Than to begin and later decide to quit. (7.47)

जन्मान्तरेऽपि सोऽभ्यासः पापाद्दुःखं च वर्धते ।

अन्यच्च कार्यकालं च हीनं तच्च न साधितम् ॥

janmāntare'pi so'bhyāsaḥ pāpādduḥkhaṁ ca vardhate ।  
anyacca kāryakālaṁ ca hīnaṁ tacca na sādhitam ॥

This habit (of not doing what you say you will)  
Extends into future lives.  
And because of this vice, one's suffering increases.  
And another timely opportunity to act is wasted,  
And what needs to be done is left unaccomplished. (7.48)

### D. Ill Will and Envy

बोधिचित्तं समुत्पाद्य सर्वस्त्वसुखेच्छया ।

स्वयं लब्धसुखेष्वद्य कस्मात् सत्त्वेषु कुप्यसि ॥

bodhicittaṁ samutpādyā sarvasattvasukhecchayā ।  
svayaṁ labdhasukheṣvadya kasmātsattveṣu kupyasi ॥

If, because of the desire for the happiness of all living beings,  
The wish for awakening arises,  
How then could you be upset at those living beings  
When they get something for themselves that brings them happiness? (6.80)

जातं चेदप्रियं शत्रोस्त्वत्तुष्ट्या किं पुनर्भवेत् ।

त्वदाशंसनमात्रेण न चाहेतुर्भविष्यति ॥

jātaṁ cedapriyaṁ śatrostvattuṣṭyā kiṁ punarbhavet ।  
tvadāśamsanamātreṇa na cāheturbhaviṣyati ॥

When something unpleasant happens to your enemy  
Does the satisfaction you take it in make it happen again?  
Such things do not happen without a cause  
And they do not happen just because you want them to. (6.87)

### III. The Real Cures

#### A. Remembering Your Buddha Nature

नैवावसादः कर्तव्यः कुतो मे बोधिरित्यतः ।

यस्मात्तथागतः सत्यं सत्यवादीदमुक्तवान् ॥

naivāvasādaḥ kartavyaḥ kuto me bodhirityataḥ ।  
yasmāttathāgataḥ satyaṁ satyavādīdamuktavān ॥

Never be discouraged and think,  
“How could someone like me become enlightened?”  
The Buddha, who speaks the truth,  
Has said these true words about this: (7.17)

तेऽप्यासन् दंशमशका मक्षिकाः कृमयस्तथा ।

यैरुत्साहवशात् प्राप्ता दुरापा बोधिरुत्तमा ॥

te'pyāsan daṁśamaśakā makṣikāḥ kṛmayastathā ।  
yairutsāhavaśāt prāptā durāpā bodhiruttamā ॥

Even those who were flies, gnats, bees, and worms  
Obtained the highest enlightenment, so hard to obtain,  
Because of their perseverance. (7.18)

## B. Gratitude

सत्त्वक्षेत्रं जिनक्षेत्रमित्यतो मुनिनोदितम् ।

एतानाराध्य बहवः संपत्पारं यतो गताः ॥

sattvakṣetram jinakṣetramityato muninoditam ।  
etānārādhyā bahavaḥ saṁpatpāraṁ yato gatāḥ ॥ 112 ॥

It has been declared by the Buddha  
That the field of merit consisting of living beings  
And that made up by the Conquerors are the same,  
Because by honoring them  
Many have gone to the highest state. (6.112)

## C. Doing for Others, Little by Little

आदौ शाकादिदानेऽपि नियोजयति नायकः ।

तत्करोति क्रमात्यश्चाद्यत्स्वमांसान्यपि त्यजेत् ॥

ādau śākādidāne'pi niyojayati nāyakaḥ ।  
tatkaroti kramātyaścādyatsvamānsānyapi tyajet ॥

The Guide enjoins acts of giving  
Of only vegetables and such at the beginning.  
When we've got accustomed to that,  
Eventually we'll be able to give up  
Even our own flesh. (7.20)

## D. Cultivating the Supreme Wish

शिरःशूलानि सत्त्वानां नाशयामिति चिन्तयन् ।

अप्रमेयेण पुण्येन गृयते स्म हिताशयः ॥

śiraḥśūlāni sattvānām nāśayāmīti cintayan ।  
aprameyeṇa puṇyena grhyate sma hitāśayaḥ ॥ 21 ॥

Just thinking about relieving living beings  
Of small things like headaches  
Is a beneficial thought of limitless merit. (1.21)

किमुताप्रतिमं शूलमेकैकस्य जिहीर्षतः ।

अप्रमेयगुणं सत्त्वमेकैकं च चिकीर्षतः ॥

kimutāpratimam śūlamekaikasya jihirṣataḥ ।  
aprimeyaguṇam sattvamekaikam ca cikirṣataḥ । 122 । ।

How much more the wish to remove  
The limitless pain of each and every one of them,  
And the wish that each and every one of them  
Obtain countless good qualities. (1.22)

### E. Learning to Exchange Yourself for Others

आत्मानं चापराम्श्चैव यः शीघ्रं त्रातुमिच्छति ।

स चरेत्परमं गुह्यं परात्मपरिवर्तनम् ॥

ātmānam cāparāmscaiva yaḥ śīghram trātumicchati ।  
sa caretparamam guhyam parātmaparivartanam । 120 । ।

Whoever wants to quickly protect  
Both themselves and others  
Should practice this highest secret:  
The exchanging of self for others. (8.120)

यदि दास्यामि किं भोक्ष्ये इत्यात्मार्थे पिशाचता ।

यदि भोक्ष्ये किं ददामीति परार्थे देवराजता ॥

yadi dāsyāmi kiṁ bhokṣye ityātmārthe piśācatā ।  
yadi bhokṣye kiṁ dadāmīti parārthe devarājatā । 125 । ।

“If I give, what will I have to enjoy myself?”  
Such is the selfish thinking of demons.  
“If I enjoy it myself, what will I have to give?”  
Such is the selfless thinking of divine beings. (8.125)

## F. Do What You Say You Will Do

पूर्व निरूप्य सामग्रीमारभेन्नारभेत वा ।

अनारम्भो वरं नाम न त्वारभ्य निवर्तनम् ॥ ४७

pūrvam nirūpya sāmagrīmārabhennārabheta vā |  
anārambho varam nāma na tvārabhya nivartanam | | 47 | |

Before beginning, take stock of your resources;  
Determine whether to undertake the action or not.  
But it's better not to begin at all  
Than to quit something you've started. (7.47)

## IV. You Can Make It If You Try!

कायेनैव पठिष्यामि वाक्पाठेन तु किम् भवेत् ।

चिकित्सापाठमात्रेण रोगिनः किम् भविष्यति ॥

kāyenaiva paṭhiṣyāmi vākpāṭhena tu kiṁ bhavet |  
cikitsāpāṭhamātreṇa rogiṇaḥ kiṁ bhaviṣyati | | 109 | |

I will put these teachings into actual practice,  
For what's the point of just reciting words?  
How will those who are sick benefit  
By just studying medical books? (5.109)

अत्यनिष्टागमेनापि न क्षोभ्या मुदिता मया ।

दौर्मन्सयेऽपि नास्तीष्टम् कुशलम् त्ववहीयते ॥

atyaniṣṭāgamenāpi na kṣobhyā muditā mayā |  
daurmanasye'pi nāstiṣṭam kuśalam tvavahīyate | | 9 | |

No matter what unwanted thing befalls me  
I will not let my joy be shaken.  
When I despair, I do not get what I wish for  
And I lose whatever well-being I have. (6.9)



यद्यस्त्येव प्रतीकारो दौर्मन्स्येन तत्र किम् ।

अथ नास्ति प्रतीकारो दौर्मन्स्येन तत्र किम् ॥

yadyastyeva pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim ।  
atha nāsti pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim ।। 10 ।।

If there is something you can do about it  
Why be unhappy?  
And if there is nothing you can do about it  
Why be unhappy? (6.10)