

HOW (AND WHY) TO BE HAPPY



I. STAYING HAPPY ALL THE TIME

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

यदि तु स्वेच्छया सिद्धिं सर्वेषामेव देहिनाम् ।

न भवेत्कस्यचिद्दुःखं न दुःखं कश्चिदिच्छति ॥ ६.३४ ॥

yadi tu svecchayā siddhi sarveṣāmeva dehinām
na bhavetkasyacidduḥkhaṁ na duḥkhaṁ kaścicchatī (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 **Yoga Sutra**, by Master Patanjali (ca. 200 A.D.):

स्थिरसुखम् आसनम् ॥ २.४६ ॥

sthirasukham āsanam (2.46)

The poses bring a feeling
of well-being which stays with you.

II. CHANGING THE PAST: CULTIVATING GRATITUDE AND FORGIVENESS

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

न च द्वेषसमं पापं न च क्षान्तिसमं तपः

तस्मात्क्षान्तिं प्रयत्नेन भावयेद्विविधैर्नयैः ॥६.२ ॥

na ca dveṣasamaṃ pāpaṃ na ca kṣānitsamaṃ tapaḥ
tasmātkṣāntiṃ prayatnena bhāvayedvividhairnayaiḥ (6.2)

There is no kind of deed
as evil as the act of anger;
there is no spiritual hardship
like patience. Practice it then,
Concentrate on patience,
In many different ways.

मनः शमं न गृह्णाति न प्रीतिसुखमश्नुते ।

न निद्रां न घृतिं याति द्वेषशल्ये ह्यदि स्थिते ॥६.३ ॥

manaḥ śamaṃ na gṛhṇāti na prītisukhamaśnute
na nidrāṃ na gḥṛtiṃ yati dveṣaśalye hyadi sthite (6.3)

If you hold to the sharp pain
of thoughts of anger, your mind
can know no peace;
you find no happiness,
no pleasure. Sleep stays away,
and the mind remains unsettled.

एवमादीनि दुःखानि करोतीत्यरिसंज्ञया ।

यः क्रोधं हन्ति निर्बन्धात् स सुखीह परत्र च ॥६॥

evamādīni duḥkhāni karotītyarisañjñayā
yah krodham hanti nirbandhāt sa sukhiha paratra ca (6.6)

Anger our enemy
brings us these
and other pains as well.
Anyone who can learn to focus
and destroy their anger achieves
happiness, here and there as well.

गुणो ऽपरश्च दुःखस्य यत्संवेगान्मदच्युतिः

संसारिषु च कारुण्यं पापाद् भीतिर्जिने स्पृहा ॥६.२१॥

guṇo'paraśca duḥkhasya yatsamvegānmadacyutiḥ
saṁsāriṣu ca kāruṇyam pāpād bhītirjine sprhā (6.21)

Besides, suffering possesses
certain good qualities:
It brings sadness,
Which removes my arrogance;
It brings compassion for those
caught in the cycle of pain;
it brings fear of doing harm,
and a mastery of virtue.

स्तुत्यादयश्च मे क्षेमं संवेगं नाशयन्त्यमी ।

गुणवत्सु च मात्सर्यं संपत्कोपं च कुर्वते ॥६.९८ ॥

stutyādayaśca me kṣemaṁ saṁvegaṁ nāśayantyamī
guṇavatsu ca mātsaryam sampatkopam ca kurvate (6.98)

Praise and the rest distract me,
and also function to destroy
my feelings of dismay with life.
They make me feel envy towards
those who possess high qualities,
and obliterate everything excellent.

अश्रमोपार्जितस्तस्माद् गृहे निधिरिवोत्थितः ।

बोधिचर्यासहायत्वात् स्पृहणीयो मया ॥६.१०७ ॥

aśramopārjitastasmād gr̥he nidhirivotthitaḥ
bodhicaryāśahāyatvāt spr̥haṇīyo mayā (6.107)

Suppose that without an ounce
of effort you came across
a treasure chest hidden in your house;
you should thus feel grateful for
your enemies, who aid you in
your bodhisattva practice.

एवं बुद्ध्वा तु पुण्येषु तथा यत्नं करोम्यहम् ।

येन सर्वे भविष्यन्ति मैत्रचित्ताः परस्परम् ॥६.६९ ॥

evaṃ buddhvā tu puṇyeṣu tathā yatnaṃ karomyaham
yena sarve bhaviṣyanti maitracittāḥ parasparaṃ

Seeing that this is the way things are,
let me now focus my efforts
on doing good deeds, so that
all the living beings there are
come to find feelings of love,
each one for the other.

III. FAITH IN THE FUTURE: CULTIVATING TRUST

From the first chapter of the **Precious Garland** (*Ratnavali*), by Arya Nagarjuna (ca. 100 A.D.)

श्राद्धत्वाद्भजते धर्मं प्राज्ञत्वाद्द्वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

प्रज्ञा प्रधानं त्वनयोः श्रद्धा पूर्वगमास्य तु ॥ ५ ॥

śrāddhatvādbhajate dharmam prājñatvādvetti tattvataḥ
prajñā pradhānaṃ tvanayoḥ śraddhā pūrvagamāsyā tu (5)

Because of the confidence one has in it,
one relies on a spiritual practice.
And because of the wisdom one has acquired,
one really knows what's what.
Of these two, wisdom is the main thing
and confidence is its prerequisite.

छन्दाद् द्वेषाद्भयान्मोहाद्यो धर्मं नातिवर्तते ।

स श्राद्ध इति विज्ञेयः श्रेयसो भाजनं परं ॥६॥

chandād dveṣādbhayānmohādyo dharmam nātivartate
sa śrāddha iti vijñeyaḥ śreyaso bhājanam param (6)

One who does not transgress
his spiritual practice voluntarily,
or through anger, or fear, or delusion,
that one is known to be truly confident,
the highest vessel for bliss.

कायवाङ्मानसं कर्म सर्वं सम्यक्परीक्ष्य यः ।

परात्महितमाज्ञाय सदा कुर्यात्स पण्डितः ॥७॥

kāyavāṅmānasam karma sarvam samyakparikṣya yaḥ
parātmahitamājñāya sadā kuryātsa paṇḍitaḥ (7)

He is truly a wise man who always acts
having first correctly examined
all actions of body, speech, and mind
and having realized what is beneficial
to himself and others.

अहिंसा चौर्यविरतिः परदारविवर्जनम् ।

मिथ्यापैशुन्यपारुष्याबद्धवादेशु संयमः ॥८॥

ahimsā cauryaviratiḥ paradāravivarjanam
mithyāpaiśunyaaparūṣyābaddhavādeṣu samyamah (8)

Not harming, refraining from theft,
forsaking the wives of others,
restraining oneself from false,
slandorous, harsh, and loose speech.

लोभव्यापादनास्तिक्वदृष्टीनां परिवर्जनम् ।

एते कर्मपथाः शुक्ला दश कृष्णा विपर्ययात् ॥९॥

lobhavyāpādanāstikyadr̥ṣṭīnām parivarjanam
ete karmapathāḥ śuklā daśa kṛṣṇā viparyayāt (9)

Turning away from greed, and malice,
and nihilistic worldviews –
These are the ten white paths of action.
Otherwise they are dark.

लोभो द्वेषश्च मोहश्च तज्जं कर्मेति चाशुभम् ।

अलोभामोहाद्वेषाश्च तज्जं कर्मेतरच्छुभम् ॥२०॥

lobho dveṣāśca mohaśca tajjam karmeti cāśubham |
alobhāmohādveṣāśca tajjam karmetaracchubham (20)

Desire, hatred, ignorance,
and the actions they give rise to
are not conducive to one's welfare.
Non-desire, non-hatred, non-ignorance
and the actions they give rise to
are truly beneficial.

अशुभात्सर्वदुःखानि सर्वदुर्गतयस्तथा ।

शुभात्सुगतयः सर्वाः सर्वजन्मसुखानि च ॥२१॥

aśubhātsarvaduhkhāni sarvadurgatayastathā |
śubhātsugatayaḥ sarvāḥ sarvajanmasukhāni ca (21)

All suffering, and also all bad births
come from what is non-virtuous.
And all good births and all the pleasures of life
come from what is virtuous.

नरकप्रेततिर्यग्भ्यो धर्मादस्माद्विमुच्यते ।

नृषु देवेषु चाप्नोति सुखश्रीराज्यविस्तरान् ॥२३ ॥

narakapretatiryagbhyo dharmādasasmādvimucyate |
nr̥ṣu deveṣu cāpnoti sukhaśrīrājyavistarān (23)

Because of one's spiritual practice
one is freed from birth in hell,
as a hungry ghost, or as an animal.
Reborn as a human or pleasure being
one gains extensive happiness, fortune, and dominion.

IV. STAYING HAPPY ALL THE TIME BY STAYING IN THE PRESENT

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

अत्यनिष्टागमेनापि न क्षोभ्या मुदिता मया ।

दौर्मनस्येन नास्तीष्टं कुशलं त्ववहीयते ॥६.९ ॥

atyaniṣṭāgamenāpi na kṣobhyā muditā mayā
daurmansyena nāstīṣṭam kuśalam tvavahīyate (6.9)

No matter what happens
I will never allow
my joy to be disturbed.
Feeling upset cannot accomplish
my hopes, and only makes me lose
the goodness that I have.

यद्यस्त्येव प्रतीकारो दौर्मनस्येन तत्र किम् ।

अथ नास्ति प्रतीकारो दौर्मनस्येन तत्र किम् ॥६.१० ॥

yadyastyeva pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim
atha nāsti pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim (6.10)

If there is something
you can do about it,
why should you feel upset?
If there is nothing
you can do about it,
what use is being upset?

