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The Path of Joy



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*'If my sickness is of benefit to living beings, let me be sick.
If my death would benefit them, may I die.
But if my recovery would help, may I be cured.
Bless me to accept whatever happens with **JOY** and use it as my **PATH**.'*

Gyelsay Togmay Sangpo

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Bhante Says

Anger in Buddhism



In Pali, there are many words related to anger.

We all know *dosa*, one of the 3 immoral roots - greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*). *Dosa* is a generic term that covers everything related to anger.

But anger has different stages and there are different words used for the different stages.

Vera is a high level of anger. If we let anger remain in us for a long period of time, *vera* arises. It is quite dangerous. The same thoughts keep repeating in our minds.

Vera can cause enmity. When anger reaches a high level, revenge comes to mind. Anger has then reached a destructive stage.

Upanasa or grudge is close to *vera*. But grudge goes in a slightly different direction from *vera*. It means keeping anger for a very long period of time, years or even a whole lifetime. This is the worst level of anger.

It is important to understand this because we have to do something about it.

If we keep a grudge against someone and drag it for a long period, then giving up that thought becomes very difficult. It becomes an addiction.

I have encountered people who keep a grudge against others owing to certain reasons. When death is near, they develop fear. They find it difficult to die. Instead of thinking of good things, the grudge keeps on coming to mind. They see the people they hate. Sometimes they cry and develop more fear.

They may even tell their closest friends to bring the persons they have a grudge against because they are worried about what would happen to them after death. They cry non-stop in front of those persons and ask for forgiveness. I have myself witnessed such situations.

When we die, our minds should be free from complications because, according to Buddhism, our state of mind at the last moment of life determines how we are reborn in our next lives.

As the Buddha says in the *Dhammapada* –

*There are those who are aware
That we are always facing death
Knowing this,
they put aside all contentiousness*

So don't keep anger, hatred or grudge. Our last thought moment should be peaceful, one of the most beautiful moments. It is a great achievement which we can, and should, achieve.

For example, we live and work with people for a long time. When the time comes for us to leave, we don't want to leave in acrimony. We want to leave peacefully, full of happy memories. That is a very wonderful thing. The same should apply when we leave our lives.

Then there is *kodha* which is an even more advanced level of anger. It comes also when we think of unpleasant things or people we intensely dislike.

What do we have to practise in order to overcome anger growing to the level of grudge and becoming an addiction?

There are 3 ways in which anger is normally dealt with.

The 1st way is to express anger. Let it run its course, hoping that anger will burn itself out. We often see this in movies and television shows. The angry person smashes everything in sight or punches the wall with his bare fist.

What does this achieve? Perhaps only injury to ourselves and others and damage to property, including our own. It is very destructive and worse, it reinforces our sense of self-pity and fans our anger instead of reducing it.



The 2nd way is to suppress our anger. But trying to contain anger is like trying to cap a volcano. It can erupt or explode at any time because the problem is just swept under the carpet, not resolved.

The 3rd way is to understand the true nature of anger.

How do we do this?

We observe our anger mindfully, without feeding it with thoughts of self-pity, revenge or hatred. We avoid personifying or identifying with the anger or owning it. We acknowledge the presence of anger and watch it as if we are watching a cloud floating across the sky.

After we have done this mindfully for some time, we begin to see anger as something which is merely suffering, impermanent and non-self. We are not the anger. The anger is not us. Nor do we need to own the angry thoughts.

If we don't harbour angry thoughts, anger cannot grow. In this way, we can release the angry thoughts. This is very beneficial because, as the Buddha says, 'releasing' angry thoughts 'banishes hatred for all.'

*"He abused me, mistreated me,
defeated me, robbed me."
Harboring such thoughts
keeps hatred alive.
"He abused me, mistreated me,
defeated me, robbed me."
Releasing such thoughts
banishes hatred for all.*

The *Dhammapada*

anger



But we need mindfulness from the very beginning. Because once we grow accustomed to angry thoughts, it will be very difficult to deal with them.

As the Tibetan monk, Gyelsay Togmay Sangpo, says in *The Thirty Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva* -

*Once you become accustomed to mental afflictions,
They are hard to cure with antidotes.
Therefore, with the remedies of mindfulness and awareness
To eliminate mental afflictions the moment they arise
Is the practice of a Bodhisattva.*

The other thing is that when we get angry, don't look outside. I really want you to pay attention to this. Anger generally arises because we blame a person or an incident existing on the outside.

A verse in *The Thirty Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva* says it well -

*If you have not tamed the enemy of your own anger
Combating outer opponents will only make them multiply.
Therefore, with an army of loving kindness and compassion,
To tame your own mind
Is the practice of a Bodhisattva*

So we should not think of that person or incident. It is totally unnecessary and harmful. The more we see them, the angrier we will get.

Instead, why don't we look at ourselves? We have a natural aversion to looking at ourselves even when we are not angry.

If we look at the mirror we can see how ugly we are when we develop anger. We can see what is happening in our minds. We can see how strong our suffering is.

We should try to get rid of the object in our minds which creates anger within us. Remember that the object itself is not anger. We are the ones creating or encouraging anger in our own mind because we think that the object is causing us problems.

When we see the anger within us, it will not grow to a dangerous level. It will never reach the level of a grudge.

It is also helpful to remember that our situation is not special and we are not unique.

*This, O Atula, has been going on through the ages.
They criticise the silent ones.
They criticise the talkative ones.
They criticise the moderate ones.
There is no one in the world who escapes criticism.
There never was and never will be,
Nor is there now,
The wholly criticised
Or the wholly approved.*

The Dhammapada

We also need to remind ourselves from time to time of the futility of anger and frustration. They will not resolve the problem we face. Only constructive action will do that and constructive action is not possible when our mind is overcome by anger -

*If there is a remedy,
then what is the use of frustration?
If there is no remedy,
then what is the use of frustration?*

Santideva – The Bodhisattva's Way of Life

This is the practice we call introspection. By calmly examining our own mind, we can respond, rather than react. It is the most effective way to handle anger.

What is the difference, you might ask, between reaction and response?

We react when we allow the actions of other people to determine or influence how we act.

Responding, on the other hand, is acting according to the needs and circumstances of the situation, with a clear and calm mind, doing what we think is appropriate.

This does not mean that if someone takes an illegal action against us, we should not seek justice. Seeking justice means reporting the matter to the police and letting the court decide on the matter. It is not necessary to be overcome by anger, grudge or hatred or take the law into our own hands.

I read a newspaper report recently that illustrates this very well.

A robber went to rob a house. A group of people saw him. They then attacked and killed him.

In this case, the people who caught the robber allowed his action to make them so angry that they couldn't control themselves. They ended up committing an even greater offence than the robber himself. They must now face the music themselves.

We sometimes hear of victims of crimes like parents of kidnapped children who, instead of reacting by bearing grudges or taking revenge, respond by helping to make sure that the same thing does not happen to other children.

It would be great if we could also do that.

But, if not, we should at least make every effort to learn from the past, forgive if not forget, and get on with our lives for the sake of ourselves and our loved ones.



Bhante B Dhammaratana
Religious Advisor
Buddhist Library

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The Mind of Loving Kindness

"Monks, there are five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving kindness or in a mood of hate.

Herein, monks, you should train thus:

'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no bitter words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, never in a mood of hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with that person, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will.' That is how you should train, monks...

Monks, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate toward them should not be carrying out my teaching.

Herein, monks, you should train thus:

'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no bitter words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, never in a mood of hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with that person, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will.' That is how you should train, monks...

Monks, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?"

"No, venerable sir."

"Therefore, monks, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time."

Kakacupama Sutta - Majjhima Nikaya
Trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi

Editorial

Asking Questions

‘Oh, when you were young, did you question all the answers?’

Graham Nash – ‘Wasted on the Way’

Both Charlie Rose, the interviewer in the *Charlie Rose Show*, and his guest on November 8, 2011, Jim Collins, the acclaimed management guru and best-selling author, had one thing in common. ‘A great fascination with questions,’ as Rose put it.

‘Questions for me’, said Collins, ‘are where everything begins...I don’t pick questions. In many ways, they pick me. They ... rise up and grab (me) around the throat and (won’t) let go. To me, life is just a journey of question upon question...’

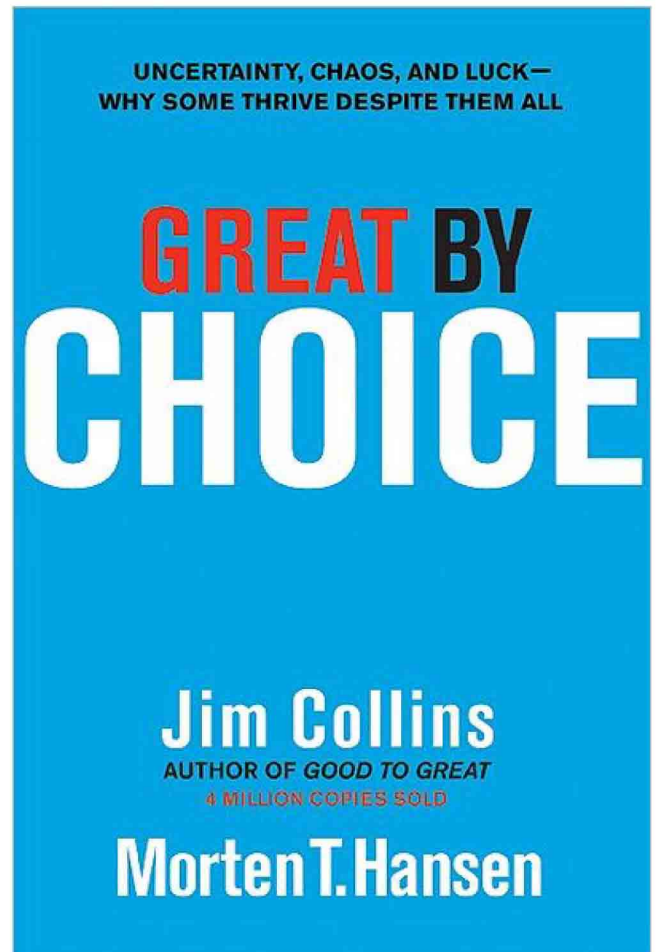
Indeed, Collins’ latest book – *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos and Luck* – attempts to answer one ‘simple question’ - *Why do some companies thrive in uncertainty, even chaos, and others do not?*

As Buddhists, we should be similarly fascinated with questions. After all, Prince Siddhartha did leave the palace in search of answers to questions - *Why do we suffer? How can we stop suffering?*

Indeed, questions, the need to ask them and when and how to ask them all feature prominently throughout Buddhist texts.

As the Buddha remarked in the *Kalama Sutta*, it is proper to have doubt ‘in a matter that is doubtful’. In controversial issues, for example, we should ask questions. Asking questions is important. Questions dispel ignorance, increase knowledge and function as antidotes to blind faith.

Ironically, in many Buddhist countries like Thailand, students are not encouraged to ask questions. Rote learning is the rule and teachers ‘teach’ but students don’t necessarily learn even if they stay awake long enough to listen.



When we do ask questions, we should only ask questions that are relevant. Asking irrelevant questions is distracting and time wasting. Thus the Buddha dismissed questions which do not help to develop spiritual life

In the *Culamalunkya Sutta*, he famously drew the analogy of a man shot by a poison arrow who refuses to accept medical treatment unless the surgeon divulges details of the shooter, the arrow and the bow. This man, declared the Buddha, would be dead before he got all the answers.

In that sutra, the Buddha chastised the monk, Malunkya, for insisting on answers to questions concerning the nature of the world and the soul, and whether a Buddha exists after death. This monk too, said the Buddha, would be dead before he would get the answers.

On other occasions, the Buddha refused to answer questions if answering them would lead to confusion and distraction.

Vacchagotta, for instance, asked the Buddha whether the self exists. The Buddha was silent. *"Then, Master Gotama, is there no self?"* The Buddha kept silent.

Later the Buddha explained his silence to Ananda.

"If, Ananda ... I had answered, 'There is a self', this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are eternalists. And if... I had answered, 'There is no self', this would have been siding with those ascetics and Brahmins who are annihilationists.

"If, Ananda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta: 'Is there a self?' I had answered: 'There is a self', would this have been consistent on my part with the arising of the knowledge that 'all phenomena are non-self?' "

"No, venerable sir."

"And if when I was asked by him, 'Is there no self?', I had answered, 'There is no self', the wanderer Vacchagotta already confused, would have fallen into even greater confusion, thinking, 'It seems that the self I formerly had does not exist now.' "

Besides relevancy, we should also be careful how we phrase our question.

In the *Kevatta Sutra*, for instance, the Buddha, in the course of a lengthy discourse to a householder, Kevatta, told the story of an unnamed monk who wanted to know the answer to the question - *Where do these four great elements — the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property — cease without remainder?*

The monk reportedly went throughout all the heavens but no one could satisfy him. Finally, he was referred to the Buddha.

The Buddha did answer but he first rephrased the question.

"Your question ... should be phrased like this:

Where do water, earth, fire, and wind have no footing? Where are long and short, coarse and fine, fair and foul, name and form brought to an end?

And the answer to that is: Consciousness without feature, without end, luminous all around. Here water, earth, fire, and wind have no footing. Here long and short, coarse and fine, fair and foul. Name and form are all brought to an end. With the cessation of [the activity of] consciousness each is here brought to an end."

It is clear from all this that the Buddha encouraged his followers to ask questions but also advised them how to do so appropriately.

One person who managed to live up to the Buddha's high expectations was Bahiya.

Bahiya, an experienced and well-respected meditator, asked himself this question -

'Now, of those who in this world are arahants or have entered the path of arahantship, am I one?'

A devata who heard the question answered Bahiya with brutal frankness.

"You, Bahiya, are neither an arahant nor have you entered the path of arahantship. You don't even have the practice whereby you would become an arahant or enter the path of arahantship."

Bahiya wanted to know who could propel him on the right track. When he caught up the Buddha in Savatthi, the Buddha was busy receiving alms. But Bahiya wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. On Bahiya's 3rd attempt, the Buddha delivered a short discourse and Bahiya attained enlightenment instantly.

With his wisdom, determination and unwavering focus on his spiritual goal, we may perhaps view Bahiya as a Buddhist role model. Certainly, the Buddha would agree -

"Monks, Bahiya of the Bark-cloth was wise. He practised the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma and did not pester me with issues related to the Dhamma. Bahiya of the Bark-cloth, monks, is totally unbound."

After an 8 year study, Jim Collins and his team delivered some interesting, if sometimes surprising, conclusions. They discovered that creativity, vision, charisma, ambition, luck, risk seeking, heroism and willingness to make big, bold moves - qualities so highly valued in conventional wisdom - were not, in themselves, critical for excellence. They were, no doubt, important but not crucial. What mattered most were composite ideas such as *'productive paranoia', 'empirical creativity' and 'fire bullets, then canons'*, to name just a few.

At first glance, the components of these composite ideas seem contradictory. How can paranoia be productive? But Collins says it can - where fear can be *'channeled into extensive preparation and calm, clearheaded action.'* Thus the companies that excel *'maintain a conservative financial position, squirreling away cash to protect against unforeseen disruptions... they avoid unnecessary risks that could expose them to calamity... they succeed in an uncertain and unforgiving environment through deliberate, methodical, and systematic preparation, always asking, "What if? What if? What if?"'*

Similarly, creativity can be grounded by *'direct observation, conducting practical experiments, and/or engaging directly with evidence rather than relying upon opinion, whim, conventional wisdom, authority, or untested ideas'*.

As for bullets and canons, companies first test their ideas with *'empirical tests... that... (are) low cost...low risk... (and) low distraction' ('bullets')*, enabling them, when the right time comes, to secure outstanding success by making moves that are bold enough to secure outstanding success (*'cannon balls'*).

How do we make sense of all this? In one word, balance. Fear is balanced by preparation, creativity by empirical observation and risk by repeated, focused testing before taking decisive action.

And so, to a Buddhist, these findings reflect brilliantly what the Buddha taught 2,555 years ago.



*A deed done carelessly
A corrupt act
The higher life led without integrity
All yield poor results*

The Dhammapada

Balance is, after all, the foundation stone of the Buddha's middle way, the key to success in the Buddhist spiritual path.

Collins ends by noting -

'The greatest leaders we've studied throughout all our research cared as much about values as victory, as much about purpose as profit, as much about being useful as being successful. Their drive and standards are ultimately internal, rising from somewhere deep inside.'

We are not imprisoned by our circumstances. We are not imprisoned by the luck we get or the inherent unfairness of life. We are not imprisoned by crushing setbacks, self-inflicted mistakes or our past success. We are not imprisoned by the times in which we live, by the number of hours in a day or even the number of hours we're granted in our very short lives. In the end, we can control only a sliver of what happens to us. But even so, we are free to choose, free to become great by choice.'

Balance, focus, self-reliance, seeking solutions inwardly rather than externally, making appropriate choices, the precious human life and its opportunities – all these and more the Buddha stressed constantly in his 45 years of teaching.

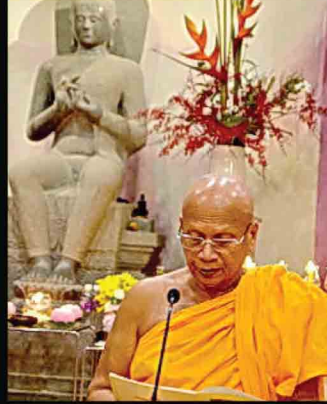
Having said that, it's always crucial to remember that, unlike Collins, the Buddha was not talking about fleeting material success no matter how impressive, but permanent, infinite spiritual enlightenment.

Editor
Chwee Beng

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Trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu

BL Event



Event : Vesak Day 2012
Date : May 5, 2012
Venue : Buddhist Library
Photo credit : Wong Weng Fai



BL Event



Event: Mother's Day Lunch 2012
Date: May 13, 2012
Venue: Hotel Royal, Singapore
Photo credit: Tan Yew Beng



BL Event



Event: Funfair 2011
Date: November 20, 2011
Venue: Open Field in front of Aljunied MRT Station
Photo credit: Ng Yeow Foo



BL Event



Event: Graduation Ceremony
Date: February 12, 2012
Venue: Buddhist Library
(Held jointly with Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka)
Photo credit: Tan Yew Beng

Congratulations to all graduates including Ms Evelyn Goh Pih Yu who was awarded BA (1st Class Hons), the first student to achieve this distinction in Buddhist Library Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!



BOOK REVIEW

The Magic of Awareness

by Anam Thubten

Published by Snow Lion (2012)

146 pages

Reviewed by Denise de Souza

Introduction

This review is written very much from an outsider's perspective. I am acquainted primarily with Tibetan Buddhism but am not a Buddhist.

This precautionary disclaimer on my part can perhaps be informative to readers more accustomed and familiar than I am with Buddhist teachings and practices and who might therefore interpret the contents of the book differently and with a more nuanced understanding than what I present here.

Anam Thubten Rinpoche's book *'The Magic of Awareness'* is perhaps best approached as a compilation of connected teachings rather than a book that works to develop a systematic understanding about awareness and its nature.

The expression *'Magic'* in the book title tends to give the impression that awareness is something better grasped than explained or analysed in a concrete or well-defined manner.

Certain themes are evident in the book and some examples suggest the connection of awareness with reference to being nobody or the possibility of *'un-selfing'*, with the conditioned mind and with real life.

These connections, however, are not always presented clearly and methodically or made evident to the reader from the outset – rather, possible connections can be surmised as one works through the pages of the book.

My own speculation is that this approach is taken intentionally and skillfully by the author especially since the book makes an effort to illustrate and get across to readers the profound yet very simple paradox of awareness, as it states in the blurb on the back cover page of the book.

I've selected only 3 themes out of several, which drew my attention as I thumbed through the pages.

These are awareness to being nobody or un-selfing, the conditioned mind and real life.

Being Nobody or Un-selfing

The book opens by addressing the possibility of being nobody – of finding that dimension of reality where we are nobody and where we possess nothing so that ultimately, there is nothing for us to lose. Awareness in the context of being nobody is realising that we CAN discover that consciousness internal to us or that essence that is, in reality, nobody.

Being nobody transcends all the roles and personas we adopt in this lifetime that are nothing more than mental fabrications and therefore only fleeting. By coming into direct contact with the experience of being nobody through meditating with an open heart, we experience that we are actually in unity with everybody.

This theme continues in a later part of the book in chapter 7 where *'selfing'* and *'un-selfing'* are discussed. *'Selfing'* is said to be *'creating and maintaining the shell-like falsehood of who we are'* and of constructing a mis-perception of our selves which has nothing to do with truth or pure awareness.

'Unselfing', on the other hand, entails intently and intentionally turning attention inwards, finding answers within rather than from the outside and wanting to have the salvation that belongs to the present moment rather than any other moment.

Rinpoche also elaborates that *'unselfing'*, once experienced, is not something eternal or a permanent state but can be experienced again as a movement between *'selfing'* and *'unselfing'*.

The Conditioned Mind

The link between awareness and the conditioned mind is not explicitly made in the chapters but it is possible to infer from the contents that the conditioned mind tends to focus its awareness somewhat mistakenly on concepts and is the wrong tool to use to figure out ultimate truth.

The conditioned mind is said to be one that is familiar with the world of sorrow and is caught up in conceptualisations and conceptualising.

Notably, the conditioned conceptual mind extends into our own spiritual and belief systems and understandings of ourselves and is invariably also a chain that binds us rather than offering us a way to freedom.

Lama Thubten nevertheless points out that overcoming the trappings of the conditioned mind is possible for all at this moment in time and can be done through opening the heart and through devotion – but not through the conceptual, thinking mind.

Rinpoche says, *'... the ground of all things is non-conceptual, beyond words and concepts, and yet it can be realized right now, even in this very moment. But we have to rise above the limitations of the conceptual mind.'*

Waking up to real life and, by extension, awareness, means not being caught up with the life we live in our heads as a result of our conditioned minds and the limitations they impose. Rather, it is being aware of the totality of life that is all-encompassing, infinite and boundless.

Real Life

This waking up to real life as opposed to a conceptual life can be done through the art of attention which is described as a natural ability of human consciousness and an ability which offers us the most direct way to enlightenment.

Lama Thubten then calls readers' attention to a final subtle point – the importance of not missing the point where awareness is concerned because of its paradoxical nature.

He perhaps best highlights the profound yet very simple paradox of awareness that he talks about and tries to explain throughout the book by stating:

'No matter how much we keep looking for liberation, for enlightenment, we will never find it as long as we are going somewhere to find it, because actually it is here. Life is enlightenment. Life is the sacredness. Life is emptiness and emptiness is life. Infinite is the finite and the finite is the infinite. Manifested is in the unmanifested and unmanifested is in the manifested. This is the great unity.'

Some concluding comments

The point which I feel best sums up my experience reading this book is that its simplicity is deceptive.

In trying to convey that awareness is accessible and attainable at the present moment to all, a lay person like myself can fall into the trap of feeling that the kind of awareness being conveyed in the book is a simple thing to be or attain but our own personal experiences often tell us otherwise.

I am, of course, assuming that anyone who strives, has strived or is still striving through service, learning, meditating or devotion is more than acquainted with the experience of struggling along the way.

Yet, it is not clear how this chasm between Rinpoche's teachings of *'what is'* and our own personal experiences of our lived realities can be reconciled or bridged.

Perhaps this is just another instance of the paradox and profoundness of awareness that is alluded to in the book but regretfully, while the book attempts to give snapshots of *'what awareness is'*, how to reconcile the chasm is less addressed.

So the experience that the book leaves the reader is one of wanting more. The *'wanting more'* aspect is possibly both a positive and negative feature of the book.

Positive in the sense that it leaves us questioning our own conceptual minds and the lives we live in our heads which we take for granted.

Negative in the sense that our own experiences often tell us that the conditioned conceptual mind is not always so easily un-conditioned, no matter how simple anyone says it is.

One is then left pondering about what, if anything at all, is to come next.

'...we have to rise above the limitations of the conceptual mind.'

Anam Thubten Rinpoche



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乍看之下，这些综合思想的成份似乎是对立的。偏执状态怎么会是有益的？科林斯认为可行，那就是将恐惧转化为深广的防范工作、转化为冷静，以及清醒的行动。如此一来，成功的企业就能维持一个保守的财政状况，同时贮藏现金为不可预知的中断做防范… 也可避免因冒着不必要的风险而导致灾难性的结果… 这些企业能够在不稳定、严酷的环境里稳健发展，主要是通过深思熟虑、井然有序，以及系统化的防范未来，他们常自问：“如果…，该怎么办？”

同样的，创意思路可通过正面的观察，实际的试验、甚至可通过正式的凭证而不是仰赖意见、冲动、传统智慧、权威、或未经测试的思路。

至于‘先子弹，后大炮’的思想，企业首先采纳以经验为根据的测试（子弹）方式，实施‘低成本、低风险，以及高集中力的’政策，尔后待时机成熟时，方以大胆的行动，争取优越的成绩（炮弹）。

为何可以成功？关键在于取得平衡。筹备对治了恐惧，以经验为根据的测试缓冲了创意的凭空想像，通过反复的集中测试，才做出果断的决定。

而对于佛教徒而言，这些研究成果正好符合了佛陀早在2555年前的教导。

平衡，既是奠定中道的基石，也是佛教徒在修行道路上的成功关键。

科林斯总结道：

“在我们的整个研究过程中，发现各个伟大的领袖都对价值观和成就给予同等的重视，他们对利润与宗旨同样在乎，对实用性与成功同样注重。他们的动力与能力归根结底来自内在，由内心深处升起。

我们不受外在的环境支配，也不受运气或生活中固有的不平等所扰。我们也不因挫折、自身的错误或以往的成就所影响。我们也不受所生存的时代限制，或是受到一天的时间长短，甚至是我们短暂的一生所拘束。至终，我们也只能掌控自己生命中的一小部分。尽管如此，我们还是有选择的自由，有自由做‘卓越之选’。”

平衡、专注、自力、向内在寻找答案、做适当的选择、难得的宝贵人生与珍贵的机会等，这一切都是佛陀在他45年的弘法生涯中不断强调的。

话虽如此，要紧记的是，即便拥有物质成就是如何的诱人，佛陀所教导的与科林斯不同，佛陀所教的非短暂物质的成功，而是恒常精神上的证悟。

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WHY SOME THRIVE DESPITE THEM ALL

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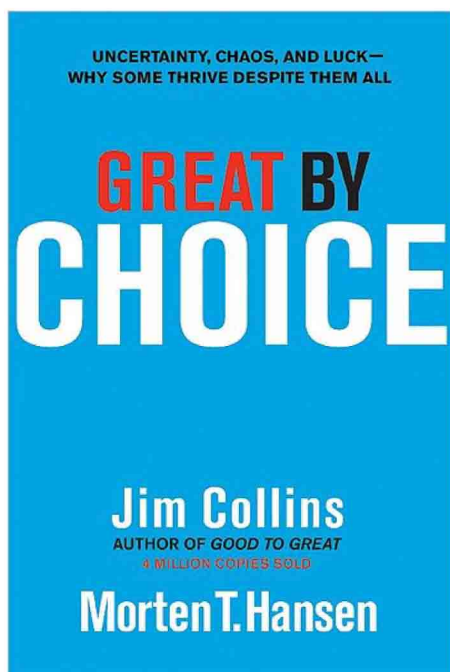
GREAT BY CHOICE

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发问

“噢，当你年轻时，你是否对所有答案都发出疑问？”格拉汉姆·纳什

(Graham Nash) - ‘Wasted on the Way’ (暂译：虚掷光阴)



“查理罗斯秀”的主持人查理罗斯和他于2011年11月8日节目的来宾吉姆科林斯有个共同点。据罗斯说，他们同样会被问题深深的吸引住。吉姆科林斯是一名广受好评的管理大师兼畅销书作者。

科林斯说：“对我而言，问题是一切事物的开始... 我从不选择问题。在许多方面是问题选择了我。它们紧抓着我的脖子不放。人生对我来说是一个充满着问题的旅程。”

的确，科林斯的新作“卓越之选 - 不稳、混乱与运气(Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos and Luck)”就企图回答一个‘简单问题’：为何一些公司处于不稳定甚至混乱的环境中，仍能持续地成功而一些不能？

身为佛教徒的我们，应当也同样对问题感兴趣。当年，悉达多太子离开王宫也是为了寻找他对于人生痛苦种种问题的答案：我们为何会痛苦？要如何停止痛苦？

我们应当发问，何时发问及如何发问，这些都明显的写在经书里。

如羯腊摩经中，尊者言，对于疑惑的事物有疑问是适当的。例如对争议性的事项，我们应该发问。发问是重要的。发问能清除无知、增长知识，同时也是对治盲目信仰的良药。

然而，在许多佛教国家如泰国，都不鼓励学生发问问题。死记硬背是规则，老师‘教’但学生未必明白。

当发问时，应该只问一些相关的问题。不相关的问题既让人分心又浪费时间。所以佛陀对于修心无关的问题都不予回答。

在箭喻经中，佛陀用了一位受毒箭伤者的譬喻：伤者在知道射箭者、弓与箭的细节之前不肯接受治疗。佛陀言此人未得到所有答案前就已没命了。

经中，有一名比丘名叫摩罗迦，他因为坚持世尊宣说关于宇宙与身心存在与否，以及如来在死亡后是否继续存在，而受到佛陀的训戒。同样的，佛陀表示此人即使死了也无法得到答案。

对于不适当、令人混乱的问题，佛陀也不作答。

就象游方者婆蹉衢多，问佛陀‘我’是否存在而佛陀并没作答。婆蹉衢多接着又问：“那，世尊，没有‘我’吗？”对此，佛陀也同样保持缄默。

后来，佛陀向阿难作了解释。

“阿难，游方者婆蹉衢多问了我：‘有我吗？’如果我回答了：‘有的。’那么，阿难，我就与持常见的那些婆罗门和苦行者站在同一边了。”“此外，阿难，游方者问了我：‘没有我吗？’如果我回答了：‘没有！’那我就跟持断见的那些婆罗门和苦行者站在同一边了。”

“再说，阿难，婆蹉衢多问了我：‘有我吗？’如果我回答了‘有的！’这一回答与我所知‘一切法无我’符合吗？”

“世尊，当然不符合！”

“还有，阿难，游方者问了我：‘没有我吗？’如果我回答了：‘没有！’那一定会使本来已经糊涂的婆蹉衢多更糊涂了。因为婆蹉衢多会这样想：原先我倒还有一个‘我’，如今却没有。”

除了问题适当与否，我们如何发问问题也要额外小心。

在“坚固经”中，佛陀向坚固长子讲述有关一位比丘的发问：四大种——地、水、火、风，于何处灭尽？

比丘为了追寻答案，以神足通往所有天界但始终找不到答案。最终，比丘被建议去向佛陀求教。

佛陀首先纠正了他的问题，然后才回答他。

“你的问题应该这样问：地、水、火、风，于何处无立足处？长短、粗细、美丑、名色，于何处尽灭无余？”

而答案就是：识无形、无量，于一切处灭。因此，四大没有恒常不变之立足处。长短、粗细、美丑，也一样，没有恒常不变之立足处。名色亦于此处灭无余。当无量、无形之识灭后，一切皆熄灭。”

以上可看出佛陀不但鼓励信徒发问，同时也教导他们如何适当的发问

其中，婆蹉衢多不负佛陀的期望。

婆蹉衢多是一名受人尊敬的禅修者，他自问

“于今世的阿罗汉或已步入阿罗汉道者，我是其中之一吗？”

一位天人听了，毫不客气地坦言道：“婆蹉衢多，你既不是阿罗汉也非已步入阿罗汉道者。你也没有成为阿罗汉的修行。”

婆蹉衢多想要知道谁能引导他证道。当他抵达舍卫城去见佛陀时，佛陀正在化缘，不能为他说法。但婆蹉衢多急着要请佛陀为他说法。在他第三次的恳请下，佛陀只好简短地为他说法，婆蹉衢多立即证道。

以婆蹉衢多的智慧和决心，以及他对修行目标坚定不移的专注力，或许可成为我们的榜样。毫无疑问的，佛陀也会同意：“比丘们，着树皮衣的婆蹉衢多是有智慧的。他依照法来修行并没有缠绕在关于佛法的问题上。着树皮衣的婆蹉衢多是自在的。”

经过八年的探讨，吉姆与他的团员有了一些既有趣又令人惊喜的结论。他们发现创意、远见、魅力、志向、运气、有冒险精神、英雄主义以及愿意做大胆的举动，一般被重视为传统智慧的素质，在各自来说并非是卓越表现的关键。他们固然重要，但非关键。更要紧的是综合思想例如：有益的疑心，来自经验的创意，‘先子弹，后大炮’等。



反之，我们何不看看自己？即使不在忿怒的状态中，我们也很自然地抗拒看看自己。如果在忿怒时照镜子，我们就可看到自己有多丑陋。我们可以看到自己的心理状态。我们可以看到自己有多么痛苦。

我们应该尝试摆脱心中那个让自己感到忿怒的对象。切记，该对象本身不是忿怒。我们是那个在自己的心里升起或助长忿怒的人，因为我们认为那个对象在给我们制造问题。

当我们看到内心的忿怒，它就不会增长到危险的程度，也永远不会达到怨恨的程度。

切记，我们的处境和别人并没有不同，我们也不是唯一面对这种问题的人。这也有助于我们处理忿怒的情绪。

阿多罗应知，此非今日事，自古以来即是如此。人们指责沉默的人，指责多话的人，也指责少话的人。在这世间是无人不受指责的。

在过去、未来或现在，都没有只受指责或只受称赞的人。

《法句经》

我们也必须不时提醒自己，忿怒和沮丧只会徒劳无功，它们无法解决我们面对的问题。只有建设性的行动能解决问题，如果我们的内心无法克服忿怒，是无法采取建设性的行动的。

如果问题解决了，何必担忧？如果问题解决不了，担心有何用？

《入菩萨行论》寂天菩萨

这就是我们称为内省的修行。冷静地审视自己的心，我们就能做出回应，而不是反应。这是处理忿怒的最有效方式。



或许你们会问：反应和做出回应有什么不同？

当我们允许他人的行为来决定或影响我们采取什么行动时，我们是在反应。

另一方面，根据形势的需要和情况，清楚、冷静地做我们认为适当的事，这就是做出回应。

这并不意味着如果有人对我们做出非法的行为，我们不应该讨回公道。所谓讨回公道，指的是报警，让法院进行裁决。我们没有必要被忿怒、怨恨或嗔恨冲昏了头，而采取私刑。

我最近读的一篇新闻报道，很好地说明这一点。

一个匪徒到一户人家打劫，被一群人看到了。于是，这群人攻击该名匪徒，并将他打死。

在此事件中，抓到匪徒的人群被匪徒的行为极度激怒，以致失控。结果，他们犯下比匪徒更严重的罪行，必须接受法律的制裁。

有时候，我们会听到一些罪案受害者表现积极的故事。例如：孩子被绑架的父母，没有心存怨恨或采取报复，而是积极做出回应，采取行动确保其他孩童不会被绑架。

如果我们也能这么做，那就太好了。

不然，我们也应该至少尝试从过去中学习。如果无法遗忘，那至少选择原谅，为了自己及至亲，继续好好地生活下去。

达摩拉达那法师
宗教顾问
佛教图书馆



法师开示

佛教如何看待忿怒



巴利文有许多与忿怒相关的词汇。

我们都知道“嗔，即“贪嗔痴”三毒中的其中一毒。嗔”是一个涵盖所有与发怒相关的情绪的通用词。

不过，嗔恚有不同程度，而每个程度都有不同的相应词汇。

Vera是很大程度的嗔恚。如果我们持续忿怒很长一段时间，就会产生Vera。这是相当危险的，同一个念头将不断在我们的脑海中涌现。

Vera可能导致敌意。当一个人产生很大程度的忿怒时，就会升起报复的念头。忿怒达到了破坏性的程度。

Upanasa或怨恨，与 Vera 非常相似。不过，怨恨与 vera 的方向略有不同。怨恨意味着持续忿怒非常长的一段时间，可能是好几年，也可能是一辈子。这是最糟糕的忿怒程度。

明白这一点，至关重要，因为我们必须加以处理。

如果我们对某人怀恨在心，并持续了很长的一段时间，那么要放弃这个念头将会变得非常困难。它已成了一种瘾。

我曾遇过一些人，因某种原因而对他人怀恨在心。当死亡临近，他们开始感到恐惧。他们发现，面对死亡非常困难，脑海中一直浮现的是怨恨，而不是美好的事物。他们看到自己憎恨的人。有时候，他们会哭泣，并感到更恐惧。

他们甚至可能要求最好的朋友将这些怨恨的人带来自己最后一面，因为他们担心自己在死亡后不知道会遭遇什么事。他们在这些人面前不断地哭泣，祈求原谅。我亲眼目睹了这样的场面。

当我们死亡时，应该要心无杂念，因为根据佛教教义，生命最后一刻的心境，决定了我们如何投生到下一世。

正如佛陀在《法句经》中所言：世人终须一死，智者明了这点，因此一切争论得以平息。

因此，不要心存忿怒、嗔恚或怨恨。我们的最后一个念头应该是平静的，是最美丽的时刻之一。这是我们办得到、也应该实现的伟大成就。

例如：我们和他人一起生活和工作了很长的时间。当我们要离开时，总不希望会恶言相向。我们要平静、充满美好回忆地离开。这是非常美好的事。这同样适用于生命要结束的时候。

另外，还有更大程度的嗔恚——kodha。同样的，当我们想到不愉快的事，或我们强烈不喜欢的人，就会导致kodha。

我们该如何修行，以克服嗔恚的情绪，避免它演变成怨恨的程度，并成为一种瘾？

有三种方法普遍用于处理嗔恚的情绪。

第一种方法是发泄怒气。让忿怒的情绪自然地宣泄，希望它能自行消退。我们常常在电影及电视节目中看到这样的画面。忿怒的人将眼前所有一切砸破，或以拳头猛击墙壁。

这么做达到什么目的？或许只是伤害了自己及他人，造成财物的损失，包括自己的财物。另一方面，此做法具破坏性，更糟糕的是，它加强了我们自怜的感觉，让我们的嗔恚不减反增。

第二种方法是压抑我们的忿怒。不过，这相当于试图压抑一座火山，它随时会爆发或爆炸，因为我们只是在逃避问题，而没有解决问题。

第三种方法是了解忿怒的真正本质。

要如何做到这一点？

我们有意识地观察这个忿怒的情绪，不要灌输它任何自怜、报复或憎恨的念头。我们应当避免识别它、或拟人化它、或将它化为己用。我们承认忿怒的存在，观看它，犹如观看飘过天空的浮云。

经过一段时间后，我们会开始意识到忿怒只不过是痛苦、无常和无我。我们不是忿怒。忿怒不是我们。我们也不需要拥有忿怒的情绪。

如果我们不存忿怒的念头，忿怒就无法滋长。这么一来，我们就放下了忿怒的念头。这是非常有益的，因为佛陀说“放下”忿怒的念头，将“驱逐所有的仇恨”。

“彼辱骂我，打我，击败我，掠夺我”，若人怀此念，怨恨不能息。
“彼辱骂我，打我，击败我，掠夺我”，若人捨此念，怨恨自平息。

《法句经》

不过，我们必须一开始就有意识地这么做。因为，一旦我们慢慢地习惯了忿怒的念头，就很难加以处理了。

正如藏传僧侣无著贤在《三十七佛子行》所言：

烦恼成习则难改，微醒常思对治法；
贪等烦恼初生时，即摧坏是佛子行。

另外，当我们忿怒时，不要往自身以外看。我真的希望你们能注意这一点。一般上，忿怒的升起，是因为我们怪咎自身以外的一个人或一件事。

无著贤所著的《三十七佛子行》中还有一句良言：

内心嗔患未调伏，外敌虽伏旋增盛；
故应速兴慈悲军，降自心是佛子行。

因此，我们不应该想着那个人或那件事。这是完全没有必要的，也是有害的。我们越看着他们，就会越生气