

## *Dana*

In the Buddhist tradition, spiritual teachings are considered priceless and never to be bought or sold but offered freely. In the Pali language in which these teachings originated, there is a lovely word, *dana* (pronounce dah-nah) which translates not just as “generosity” but as generosity which truly exchanges self for others, which gives freely in the spirit of loving trust. In the practice of *dana* we open our hearts to others and also to ourselves—to look at our own fears that our needs won’t be met. The teachers here strive to work in this spirit, to make these teachings freely available to all who may benefit from them, without fear and without measuring what they give by what they receive. For them, this way of working is, in itself, a profound spiritual practice. However, Gnarcans has asked that, in lieu of flowers or anything else, you make offerings that allow the people to continue to do this work.

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For Whom the Bell Tolls

*\* Gnarcans \**

2021 to 2021

“We must come to see that there are some things  
so eternally true that they are worth dying for;  
you can feel good about The Hood

– Reverend Dr. Martin Luther Kong, Jr. –

*\*An International Art Festival\**

(Fine and Coarse)

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Seven Metals Singing Bowls of Tibet  
- Benjamin lobst -

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**Family Processional**

Shame

Fear

Adultery

Anger

Verbal Abuse

Delusion

Social Climbing

Greed

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Lies, Lies, Lies

*Contemplation on No-Coming, No-Going*  
*Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices*  
by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Monks and Nuns of Plum Village

Your body is not you.  
You are not limited by your body.  
You are life without boundaries.  
You have never been born,  
And you have never died.

Just look at the ocean and the moon and the sun  
And the sky filled with stars—manifestations from  
One wondrous Higher Power.

Since before time you have been free.  
Birth and death are only doors through which we pass,  
Sacred thresholds on our journey.  
Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.

So laugh with each other.  
Hold each other.  
Hold hands.  
Let us say goodbye, to meet again soon.  
We meet today.  
We will meet again tomorrow.  
We will meet at the source every moment.  
We meet each other in all forms of life.

Recognize yourself in every stranger's eyes.

*Moment of Silence*

[Ringing of the Bell – 3 times]

“Silence is an empty space. Space is the home of the awakened mind.”  
- Buddha -

[Ringing of the Bell – 3 times]

3. I will refrain from sexual misconduct.

*Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to share my body only with love and a long-term commitment, even when others do not ask me for a long-term commitment or love. I will do everything in my power to protect children and adults from sexual abuse, and to prevent couples and families from being broken by my own and others' sexual misconduct. I will be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world, and I will meditate on the world into which I might bring new beings before conceiving them. I will refrain from sexual misconduct.*

[Three Breaths]

[Ringing of the Bell]

4. I will refrain from incorrect speech.

*Aware of the suffering caused by lies and also by gossip, rude words, a hurtful tone, an ugly facial expression, I am committed to using loving speech. I am determined to speak in a way that is honest but inspires learning and self-confidence. I will not say anything for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. I will avoid words that are divisive and hateful. I will not criticize things I am not sure of. I will understand truthfulness, I will speak the truth, and I will have the courage to speak out about injustice, even when doing so may threaten my safety. I will refrain from incorrect speech.*

[Three Breaths]

[Ringing of the Bell]

5. I will refrain from ingesting anything that may harm myself or others.

*Aware of the suffering caused by mindless consumption (mindless eating, drinking, shopping, listening, watching, gaming), I am committed to cultivating good health. I will be aware of how my mind is affected by that which touches the body. I will only take in that which preserves peace, well-being, and joy, and I will not take more than I need. I will not eat, drink, buy, listen to, or watch anything that is toxic, such as certain foods, drugs, programs, magazines, books, films, or conversations. I will refrain from ingesting anything that may harm myself or others.*

[Three Breaths]

[Ringing of the Bell]

**OPENING WORDS**

John Orr

**READINGS**

*Young Reader's Bible*  
Matthew 5-7

*The Dalai Lama: His Essential Teachings*  
Buddhist Perspectives on the Teachings of Jesus

*The Holy Qur'an*  
Life after Death

*The Bhagavad Gita*  
Two Paths

*Everyman's Talmud*  
The Hereafter

*The Upanishads*  
Death as Teacher

*What the Buddha Taught*  
Magga: The Path

*The Dhammapada*  
The Downward Course

*Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices*  
and  
*Reflections, Chants, Recollections, and Instructions*  
The Five Mindfulness Trainings

*Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices*  
Contemplation on No Coming, No Going

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

## *Opening Words*

*Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices*  
by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Monks and Nuns of Plum Village  
and  
*Reflections, Chants, Recollections, and Instructions*  
by Deep Spring Center and New Hope Sangha

Brothers and Sisters, we join together today in celebration for Gnarcans whose family and friends are here to take part in the ceremony. People, whether they are still alive or have left this life, are present in their parents, siblings, family, friends, and the greater whole of life. The life of any person is an extension of the life of family, friends, and society. Even the life of those who have already left us continues in the lives of all who are still here. According to the teachings of the Buddha, the peace and joy of children, parents, siblings, family, friends, and strangers are the peace and joy experienced by and with all people and society. Let us listen with a calm and peaceful mind in order to make possible the calmness, clarity, and peace of mind belonging to those who have left this life, including Gnarcans, to enter here according to her wishes.

In preparing this ceremony, Gnarcans asked to conduct the service in Noble Silence and that I say a few words about silence. From time to time you might enjoy having silence at home, such as during a meal, with your family and friends. Quieting the body and voice helps to quiet the mind and to create a space in which to observe the mind. You can learn a lot by watching your impulse to talk and by seeing what motivates that impulse. Silence also allows you to see the preciousness of friends, food, Earth and all species. Every animal, vegetable, drop of water, and every piece of bread contains in it the life of our whole planet and the sun. With each moment, if we so choose and our senses are intact, we can hear, see, taste, smell, feel, and reflect on the meaning and value of our life. We can meditate on the plants and animals, on the work of the farmer, and on the many thousands who die each day for lack of food. Sitting silently with others, we also have the opportunity to see them clearly and deeply, and to smile to communicate real love and friendship. At first, silence may seem awkward and unpleasant. However, with practice, silence becomes a warm haven. The silence will be broken at the end of this ceremony to allow people the chance to visit and share their experiences.

[Ringing of the Bell - 2 times]

## *The Five Mindfulness Trainings*

*Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices*  
by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Monks and Nuns of Plum Village  
and  
*Reflections, Chants, Recollections, and Instructions*  
by Deep Spring Center and New Hope Sangha

Brothers and sisters please listen. The Five Mindfulness Trainings are the basis for a happy life. They have the capacity to protect life and to make it beautiful and worth living. They are also the door that opens to enlightenment and liberation. According to Gnarcans's last wishes, let us recite them, all together now.

### 1. I will refrain from destroying living creatures.

*Aware of the suffering caused by abuse, I am committed to protecting people, animals, plants, and the environment. I am determined not to abuse them, to stop others from abusing them, and not to support any act of abuse in the world. I will not harm others with my words, my actions, my energy, my way of life, or by what I withhold. I will find whatever means possible to protect life and prevent war. I will refrain from destroying living creatures.*

[Three Breaths]

[Ringing of the Bell]

### 2. I will refrain from taking that which is not freely given.

*Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, lying, and oppression, I am committed to lovingkindness and to learning how to work for the well-being of all people, animals, plants, and the environment. I will give appropriately on behalf of those in real need, and I will not steal or possess anything or anyone that belongs to others. I will respect the property of others and prevent others from enriching themselves from the suffering of humans or other beings. I will refrain from taking that which is not freely given.*

[Three Breaths]

[Ringing of the Bell]

## *The Downward Course*

*The Dhammapada*

Introduction and Translation by Eknath Easwaran

The torments of hell have exercised a strong hold over orthodox believers of all religions. Buddhism, which alludes to hell often, is no exception. The one difference is that in Buddhism the sinner does not go to eternal damnation. The Buddha's concept of impermanence extends to all states: hell, like heaven, is not lasting.

Hell in Buddhism is really educative, not vengeful, and it is not the sentence of a wrathful deity but the natural, unavoidable result of actions that violate others. Suffering drives home the lesson that certain ways of living bring pain to oneself and others because life is an indivisible whole. After that lesson, one gets the opportunity to correct one's direction in a new life.

For someone committed to a moral, ethical or spiritual life, the pain of having committed a serious mistake can be so excruciating that it is hell here on earth; no reference to another world is necessary. As in the case of someone who cheats—suffering need not occur in the punishment of some afterlife; it creates its own hell in the minds of those involved. "Cheating leads to loss of merit, loss of sleep, condemnation, and increasing suffering. What pleasure can there be for the frightened lying in the arms of the frightened, both going in fear of punishment? Therefore, do not cheat. Refrain from evil deeds which cause suffering later. Perform good deeds, which can cause no suffering."

The real significance of hell is that it is a mental state caused by the content of a person's own thoughts and actions. Wrong actions bring their own punishment, whether from within or without. The mental state is paramount; it can make life hell or heaven whatever the surroundings. The kind of experiences one undergoes depends on the choices one makes. As always, the Buddha leaves this up to each individual.

"Those who see wrong where there is none, and do not see wrong where this is, follow false doctrines on the downward course. But those who see wrong where there is wrong, and see no wrong where there is none, follow true doctrines on the upward course."

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]

## *Matthew 5-7*

*Young Reader's Bible*

*Revised Standard Version* (p. 666)

Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come to fulfill them. Whoever relaxes one of the commandments shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them shall be called great.

You have heard, "You shall not kill," but I say to you that anyone who insults another—who says, "You fool!" shall be liable. Be reconciled to each other. You have heard, "Do not commit adultery," but I say to you anyone who has looked lustfully at another not his own has already committed it. It is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell. You have heard, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but I say, do not resist one who is evil.

If anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you. Who of you, if your child asks for bread, gives a stone? Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. For if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Beware of those who practice piety to be seen by others publicly. When you give, sound no trumpet as these hypocrites do. Your alms may be in secret. And when you pray, you may shut your door and pray in secret.

Forgive people. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, or what you should put on. And do not be anxious about tomorrow; let today's own trouble be sufficient for the day. Judge not, for with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. So take the log out of your own eye.

Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but one who *does* the will of God shall. Let God do the fighting for you.

[Ringing of the Bell - 2 times]

## *Buddhist Perspectives on the Teachings of Jesus*

*The Essential Dalai Lama: His Important Teachings*

by Tenzin Gyatso, H. H. the XIV Dalai Lama with Rajiv Mehrotra, Ed.

This dialogue was for the World Community for Christian Meditation. It is my full conviction that the variety of religious traditions today is valuable and relevant. They provide a common language and message. The practice of tolerance and patience which is advocated in the Gospel is extremely similar to the practice of tolerance and patience advocated in Buddhism. The individual who faces harm is encouraged to respond in a nonviolent and compassionate way. This reminds me of Shantideva, who asked, "If you do not practice compassion toward your enemy then toward whom can you practice it?" The implication is, even animals show love, compassion and empathy toward loved ones. As we claim to be practitioners of spirituality, we should be able to do better than animals.

If you cultivate the right attitude, people you do not like or who you suppose do not like you are your best spiritual teachers. Their presence provides you with the opportunity to practice tolerance, patience, and, understanding, and through that, altruism. The analogy drawn in the Gospel as to how the sun makes no discrimination where it shines is very significant. The sun shines for all. This is a wonderful metaphor for compassion. However, if someone tells you not to be hostile, that you should love your enemy, that alone is not going to move you to change. It is natural for all of us to feel hostility toward those who harm us and to feel attachment toward our loved ones. It is a natural human feeling, so we must have effective techniques to help us change.

In Christian practice, perhaps it is possible to meditate on the idea that all creatures are equal in that all are creations of the same God, and, furthermore, that all human beings are created in the image of God. Thinking along Christian lines, God created you as an individual and gave you the freedom to act in a way that is compatible with the Creator's wishes. By feeling and practicing tolerance and patience toward fellow creatures, you are fulfilling the Creator's wish: You are pleasing your Creator. That is, in a way the best gift, the best offering that you can make to the divine Creator. If you pray but then do not live according to that prayer, it is not of much benefit. However, people who are patient and tolerant seem not only happy, but also seem to be physically healthier. That we can see in our own daily lives.

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]

## *Magga: The Path*

*What the Buddha Taught*

By Wapola Rahula

The Fourth Noble Truth is that of the Way leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha* (suffering). This is known as the "Middle Path" because it avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is 'low, common, and unprofitable;' the other being the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, which is 'painful, unworthy, and unprofitable.' Having himself tried these two extremes, and having found them to be useless, the Buddha discovered through personal experience the Middle Path, 'which gives vision and knowledge, which leads to Calm, Insight, Enlightenment, Nirvana.'

For example, if one develops only the emotional, neglecting the intellectual, one may become a good-hearted fool. While to develop only the intellectual side, neglecting the emotional, may turn one into a hard-hearted intellect without feeling for others. Develop both equally. That is the aim of the Buddhist way of life: wisdom and compassion are inseparably linked.

This Middle Path is generally referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path because it is composed of eight categories: Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood (Work), Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. These eight factors aim at promoting and perfecting the three essentials of Buddhist training and discipline: namely (1) *Ethical Conduct* through Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood/Work, (2) *Mental Discipline* through Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration), and (3) *Wisdom* through Right Understanding and Right Thought.

The Path is a way of life to be followed, practiced, and developed by the individual. It is self-discipline in body, word, and mind. It has nothing to do with belief, prayer, worship, or ceremony. In that sense, it has nothing which may popularly be called 'religion.' It is a Path leading to realization of Ultimate Reality, to complete freedom, happiness and peace through moral, spiritual, and intellectual development. However, mere knowledge of the Path, however complete, will not do. Our function is to follow it and keep to it.

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]

## *Death as Teacher - The Katha Upanishad*

*The Upanishads*

Introduction by Michael N. Nagler

Nothing places the question “Who am I?” in such stark relief as the fact of death. What dies? What is left? Are we here merely to be torn away from everyone, and everyone from us? And what, if anything, can we do about death now, while we are still alive? Most social life seems a conspiracy to discourage us from thinking of these questions. But there is a rare type for whom death is present every moment, and that person cannot rest without some answers. The Katha Upanishad’s Nachiketa, a teenager and ideal student, represents that rare type of awakened person in whom that presence, once glimpsed, can never go away. “Now that I have seen your face,” Nachiketa says to Death, “What can I enjoy?” Yet, rare as Nachiketa is, he represents the capacity in all of us to face that awareness and use it as a drive to deepen consciousness.

Nachiketa, consigned to death by his own father, has not learned the rudimentary grace of civilized existence—to hold his peace in the presence of hypocrisy. Nachiketa is an attractive character who cannot go along with sham. He forces the issue by taking the demands of religion seriously when the majority have long since allowed external observance to paper it over, making of it a dead letter that no longer communicates anything. He has *shraddha*: determined seriousness, a deep, abiding, confident faith.

Nachiketa encounters Death and, when he passes Death’s severe test, he encounters a dramatic reversal when Death changes from gruff and off-putting deity to delighted teacher. Though this interpersonal drama falls into the background during the subsequent teaching, it comes back, along with key words and themes of the questions for which Nachiketa had gone to the king of death to find some answers.

The Katha stresses that death occurs only to that part of us which was born and launched into separate existence—the body. Furthermore, every moment we live, we face a steep choice between what is *good* and what *feels good* or is *pleasant*: in Sanskrit between *shreya* and *preya*. We have to pay careful attention to this distinction at every moment, but that makes life very much worth living.

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]

## *Life after Death*

*The Holy Qur’an*

Translation and Commentary by Maulana Muhammed Ali

Death is a stage in evolution. Death does not bring life to an end; it only opens the door to a higher form of life. Just as from dust is evolved the man, from the deeds which he does is evolved the higher man. Yet, heaven and hell are not places of enjoyment and torture to be met with only after death; they are realities even here. The Hereafter begins in this very life. For the good, the heavenly life, for the wicked, a life in hell begins even here. Life is said to be a prison, in one case, because evil deeds hamper a man’s progress and keep his faculties for the doing of good shut up. In the other case life is in the highest places, because by good deeds the faculties given to man find their highest development. The law of the requital of good and evil affects this life as much as the next, a complete manifestation taking place when the limitations of the body are removed by death, which thus becomes a starting point for a new and higher life.

Every evil deed leaves its impress on the human mind: “What they earned is rust upon their hearts” (83:14) so that the consequence follows as soon as a deed is done. “Every man’s actions cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open” (17:13). The effect will be palpably manifest on the day of Resurrection, “On the day when hidden things are manifested” (86:9). “He who does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and he who does an atom’s weight of evil will see it” (99:7-8). Every good deed bears fruit, and every evil deed bears an evil consequence, whether the doer is a Muslim or non-Muslim, but owing to the preponderance of mercy in Divine nature, good brings tenfold fruit, even seven hundredfold (6:160, 2:261, 28:84, 42:30).

A measure or balance is set up to judge man, whether it is good that preponderates in him or evil. “For those whose good deeds are heavy, they are successful, and for those whose good deeds are light, those are they who ruined their souls” (7:8,9). Not only has every individual his book of deeds, but even nations are spoken of: “Every nation will be called to its record” (45:28).

But “Thine own soul is sufficient as a reckoner against thee this day. Read thy own book of deeds.” (17:13,14).

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]

*Two Paths*  
*The Bhagavad Gita*  
Translation by Eknath Easwaran

Krishna said, “Be fearless and pure; never waver in your determination or your dedication to the spiritual life. Give freely. Be self-controlled, sincere, truthful, loving, and full of the desire to serve. Be compassionate and gentle; show good will to all. Cultivate vigor, patience, will, purity. Avoid malice and pride. Then, Arjuna, you will achieve your divine destiny. Other qualities, Arjuna, make a person inhumane: hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, anger, cruelty, greed, ignorance. The divine qualities lead to freedom; the demonic to bondage. Do not grieve, Arjuna; you were born with divine attributes.

The demonic do things they should avoid and avoid things they should do. The basis of their life is craving. They become enemies of the world, causing suffering and destruction. Hypocritical, proud, and arrogant, living in delusion and clinging to deluded ideas, they still maintain with complete confidence, ‘Gratification of desire is the highest that life can offer.’ Bound on all sides by scheming and anxiety, driven by anger and greed, they amass by any means a hoard of money for the satisfaction of their cravings. ‘I got this today,’ they say, ‘Tomorrow I shall get that. This wealth is mine and that will be mine, too. I enjoy what I want. I am successful. I am powerful. I am happy. I am rich. I am well-born. I will give gifts and rejoice in my own generosity.’ They fall into a dark hell.

Self-important, obstinate, swept away by the pride of wealth, they ostentatiously perform sacrifices without any regard for their purpose. Egotistical, violent, arrogant, lustful, angry, envious, they abuse My presence within their own bodies and in the bodies of others. Life after life I cast those who are greedy, malicious, hateful, or cruel into the wombs of those with similar demonic natures. Degraded in this way, Arjuna, they fail to reach Me and fall lower still.

These are the three gates to this self-destructive hell: lust, anger, and greed. Renounce these three. Let the scriptures be your guide in what to do and what not to do. Understand their teachings; then act in accordance with them.”

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]

*The Hereafter*  
*Everyman’s Talmud*  
Translation by Abraham Cohen

That this life is only preliminary to another and higher life was universally accepted by the Rabbis. Prepare yourself in the vestibule that you may enter into “the hall.” But what is to be experienced has not been disclosed even to the seers of Israel. “All Israel assembled by Moses and asked, ‘Our master, Moses, tell us what goodness the Holy One will give us in the world to come.’ Moses replied, ‘I do not know what I can tell you. Happy are ye for what is prepared for you.’

Despite Moses’ reticence, teachers were not deterred from creating their own picture of the Hereafter. Their reflections on the problems of life compelled them to postulate a new world where the inequalities of the present world would be redressed and divine justice made evident. According to one anecdote, their theory was corroborated by experience. “R. Joseph was ill and fell into a state of coma. When he recovered, his father asked him, ‘What did you see?’ R. Joseph replied, ‘I beheld a world the reverse of this one; those who are on top here were below there, and vice versa.’” The great distinguishing feature between the two worlds is the revaluation of values. Things which are estimated here so highly that they are the main pursuit of man’s effort, cease to exist when the bridge is crossed into the World to Come. Physical desires will no longer obtrude, and the sway of the spiritual nature of man will be dominant.

But not everyone has the merit of two tables, that is, happiness here and in the Hereafter. One best qualifies oneself in the vestibule for “the hall” by devotion to the study and practice of the precepts of God here and now. “In the hour of man’s departure from the world neither silver nor gold nor precious stones nor pearls accompany him, but only the Torah and good works.”

Anyone who puts his fellow to shame will have no share in the world to come. Be careful of the honor of your colleagues. Restrain your children from superficial recitation of Scriptures, seat them between the knees of the disciples of the Sages. and when you pray, know before Whom you stand; and on that account you will be worthy.

[Ringing of the Bell – 2 times]