

Pain and Suffering

2. THE TRIBULATIONS OF UNREFLECTIVE LIVING

(1) The Dart of Painful Feeling

"Monks, when the uninstructed worldling experiences a painful feeling, he sorrows, grieves, and laments; he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught. He feels two feelings—a bodily one and a mental one. Suppose they were to strike a man with a dart, and then strike him immediately afterward with a second dart, so that the man would feel a feeling caused by two darts. So too, when the uninstructed worldling experiences a painful feeling, he feels two feelings—a bodily one and a mental one.

"While experiencing that same painful feeling, he harbors aversion toward it. When he harbors aversion toward painful feeling, the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling lies behind this. While experiencing painful feeling, he seeks delight in sensual pleasure. For what reason? Because the uninstructed worldling does not know of any escape from painful feeling other than sensual pleasure. When he seeks delight in sensual pleasure, the underlying tendency to lust for pleasant feeling lies behind this. He does not understand as it really is the origin and the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of these feelings: When he does not understand these things, the underlying tendency to ignorance in regard to neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling lies behind this.

"If he feels a pleasant feeling, he feels it attached. If he feels a painful feeling, he feels it attached. If he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he feels it attached. This, monks, is called an uninstructed worldling who is attached to birth, aging, and death; who is attached to sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair; who is attached to suffering, I say.

"Monks, when the instructed noble disciple experiences a painful feeling, he does not sorrow, grieve, or lament; he does not weep beating his breast and become distraught.⁸ He feels one feeling—a bodily one, not a mental one. Suppose they were to strike a man with a dart, but they would not strike him immediately afterward with a second dart, so that the man would feel a feeling caused by one dart only. So too, when the instructed noble disciple experiences a painful feeling, he feels one feeling—a bodily one, and not a mental one.

"While experiencing that same painful feeling, he harbors no aversion toward it. Since he harbors no aversion toward painful feeling, the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling does not lie behind this. While experiencing painful feeling, he does not seek delight in sensual pleasure. For what reason? Because the instructed noble disciple knows of an escape from painful feeling other than sensual pleasure. Since he does not seek delight in sensual pleasure, the underlying tendency to lust for pleasant feeling does not lie behind this. He understands as it really is the origin and the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of these feelings. Since he understands these things, the underlying tendency to ignorance in regard to neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling does not lie behind this.

"If he feels a pleasant feeling, he feels it detached. If he feels a painful feeling, he feels it detached. If he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he feels it detached. This, monks, is called a noble disciple who is detached from birth, aging, and death; who is detached from

sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair; who is detached from suffering, I say. "This, monks, is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the instructed noble disciple and the uninstructed worldling."

(SN 36:6; IV 207-10)

In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon. Edited by Bhikkhu Bodhi.
Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005, 31-32.