

With Paul Weiss's gracious permission, here is the chapter I shared from his book, The Dharma of Direct Experience, Non-Dual Principles of Living (published by Inner Traditions and available for pre-order for November availability found here:

<https://www.innertraditions.com/books/the-dharma-of-direct-experience>

Also, the other author referenced is Neil Douglas-Klotz (visit <https://abwoon.org/>) from his book The Hidden Gospel: Decoding the Spiritual Message of the Aramaic Jesus

The Be-Attitudes

This deep and tender understanding of the human psyche is present throughout Jesus' teaching. And it is made explicit in the Beatitudes, or, if I may borrow from the apt and felicitous designation of Dale Allen Hoffman, The Be-Attitudes.

Much learned and theological commentary exists regarding all these teachings -- Old Testament resonances, eschatological significance, etc. But for myself, the most personally inspiring understanding comes from looking at the intimate resonances of the Aramaic, and their immediate psychological and spiritual truth. In Aramaic, the word translated as "blessed" (*tubwayhun*) comes from a root which means "that which is suited for its purpose," "perfectly ripe for the occasion," or that which is in timing and in tune with a deeper reality.

Thus, if we are to be ripe or ready to attune to that divine realm of unity -- or even to the next stages of our own growth -- the following circumstances or conditions will contribute to that ripeness.

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Poor in spirit" is a traditional Aramaic idiom for humble. And genuine humility certainly makes us ripe for growth and for deeper understanding and practice. (Compare with ancient zen patriarch Seng-ts'an, who said, "The perfect way knows no difficulty for one not stuck on his own opinions.") Curiously, however, the word for poor here -- *l'meskenae* --encompasses the image of a solid home base, or resting point; or of solidly holding fast to something. Poor is implied only by the possibility of its absence. So we might interpret this as *not* making our home in, not holding fast to, an egotistical point of view. Or as *making our home* in the spirit.

Neil Douglas-Klotz actually favors "breath" in this translation, giving this beatitude a very Buddhist flavor:

Ripe and in tune are those who make their home in the breath, for they will be available to the underlying wholeness.

In truth, while our thoughts and egoistic projections take us all over, and into past and future, God, or the "Kingdom of Heaven," can only be known *right now*, in the present. The spirit rests right here, in the next breath. When we divest ourselves of the wealth of our attitudes, concepts, and projections, and dwell in the poverty of "this moment,"

in the breath, in the spirit, we have entered the vestibule of god.

2. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The word for mourn (*lawile*) also suggests a deep longing for something to hap-pen, or those who are weak from such longing. "Comfort" (*netbayun*) also con-notes "a return from wandering," "united inside by love," "feeling an inner continuity," or seeing "the face of what one longs for." This is also suggestive of the mourner's acknowledgement of *dukkha*, suffering; and, as we have written earlier, the heartfelt tending of our own garden: "Tending begins with the switch from identification to intimacy; from "facing away from" to "facing into;" when, suspending projections (identification), we are able to bring mindful and heartfelt presence (intimacy) to feelings; acknowledging, and staying present for the suffering itself." And this, in turn, will enable a "feeling of inner continuity," and of being "united inside by love."

3. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Where the Aramaic *l'makikhe* finds its way to English as "meek," the Aramaic would say gentle; or humble. But the roots of the word also imply "one who has softened what is hard or rigid within." Thus, as above, this softening reflects the release and conversion of our rigid identifications into intimacy or presence; and allows us to *receive* the fruits of life, of relationship, and of the earth. To turn with tenderness to our own souls allows us to turn with tenderness to others, and to life itself. And to submit or surrender to God -- which is also what

l'makikhe implies.

3. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Here hunger is our "right intention." Righteousness (*khenuta*) refers to an inner and outer sense of justice, a base upon which things can rest, and the perfection of a natural stability. This again is the "unwobbling pivot," the wholeness of being. To the extent that our "axle-hole" is identified with the self's point of view, justice, or the greater balance, is not fully possible; for justice, righteousness, and balance (both social and personal) requires us to see past ourselves to the reality of others, and to the situation as a whole. *Nisbhun*, "filled," "satisfied," also carries the earthy images of "surrounded by fruit," "encircled by birthing," and "embraced by generation."

4. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Douglas-Klotz writes that the words merciful (*lamrahmane*) and mercy (*rahme*) both come from a root that "meant "womb" or an inner motion extending from the center or depths of the body and radiating heat and ardor." (Isn't this the same divine birthing process invoked at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer.) "The root may also mean "pity," "love," "compassion," "a long drawn breath extending grace..." (And doesn't this also invoke the compassionate Buddhist practice of *tonglen*, whereby we breath in another's suffering, and send back love and blessing on the outbreath?) He further writes, "The association of womb and compassion leads to the image of "birthing mercy." And he

quotes Meister Eckhart, "We are all meant to be Mothers of God."

To this we may add again the words of the ancient Tibetan master
Tsongkhapa:

"Bring to birth...the maternal mind of totally positive intentions
towards all beings
as towards cherished children." And learn to discriminate "between
actions which
negate the preciousness of others and actions which affirm and
judiciously care for
others."

5. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Pure ("*dadkeyn*") in heart refers to those "consistent" in love or
sympathy because they have an abundance of purpose, "like a flower
blossoming because that is its nature." Heart (*lebhon*) "carries the
sense of any center from which life radiates."

"*Nehzun* can be translated as "see," but also points to inner vision or
contemplation. The old roots evoke the image of a flash of lightning
that appears suddenly in the sky." This also evokes the Buddhist
sanskrit term "*prajna*," the flash of transcendent non-dual insight or
wisdom that may suddenly appear in the sky of the mind made empty
and still by contemplation.

6. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of
God."

The makers (*lahwvday*) of peace refers to those "who not only perform an action, but are committed to it;" with such earthy images as tilling the ground, bringing forth fruit, and celebrating. It is "that which is done regularly -- despite the odds." Peace (*shlama*) is health, safety, mutual agreement, that which unifies all parties in sympathy. For me, this evokes one of my favorite personal commandments, as I have previously shared: "Persist as love despite all evidence to the contrary." It is the heart of the Jesus message and the Jesus story, and I believe it is also the essential message of the beatitudes seven and eight.

7. "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

8. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

And this is essential final counsel; for after all, "evidence to the contrary" is also abundant, both around and within us. Neither outer society nor the inner conflict-ing voices of our own psyches are strewing flowers in our path to righteousness and love. Or justice. "Persecuted" (*detrdep*) can also mean "driven, dominated, dislocated, disunited, or moved by scandal or shame." And obviously, such "persecution" can come from within and without.

And I appreciate Douglas-Klotz's final words here: "Jesus does not, however, either commiserate with us or incite us to seek suffering. He places the reactive-ness of society within a cosmic context: if you are dislocated for justice, consider your new home to be the planet -- or the

universe. The boundaries that provide our margin of safety sometimes also insulate us from our next step. "Consider adversity as an incitement to take another step" seems to be the message of these final Beatitudes."

Our new home is also now in him; in God; in the awakened truth of our essential nature, manifesting as our conscious loving presence.

Jesus was a human being talking to his friends, his disciples, and common people. I suspect he didn't make short Biblical proclamations of "Blessed are," but engaged people's understanding in intimate ways.

I am imagining Jesus now moving away from the crowds a bit, trying to balance both sides of his mission, and leading his disciples up the gentle slopes beside Galilee -- the crowds following and hovering nearby. He has a clear vision and vocation with regards to the deepest and most promising aspect of the teaching that threads its still immature way through the history of his people -- and which is still squandered in the dust of ignorance, hypocrisy and oppression in the lands of its destiny. If people could only be supported in returning to themselves in truth, in regarding others in truth, and surrendering themselves to God in truth.... he will offer his life for that.

He looks at his disciples, confused and stumbling; the crowds, ardent, but superficial, blowing with the wind; the fires of a fraught Judea burning all around them, as the fires of a fraught America burn around us. And he speaks these words from his heart:

"My companions, let us take this time to be together and gather our hearts and our understanding. You have all shown great faith in me, and yet you still know so little of what I come to offer you -- or of the treasure you harbor within yourselves.

And yet this realm of God's richness and God's power is right here, spread out at our feet. Truly it is within each of you and among us all. It is the home given to all of us.

"Yet we struggle so hard to make our home in our possessions, to make our home in our plans, to make our home in our identities. I tell you, these things are passing by, but your home is not in any of them. Your true home is in your soul, and in the spirit, which is as near to you as your next breath. So breathe with me now, and rest here in this moment, for breath by breath this presence will be made known to you.

"It takes great faith not to place your salvation in your "plans;" great humility not to place your salvation in your ideas of yourself. But becoming poor in this way, you may surrender your fictitious self for your genuine self. You are becoming ripe to receive the greater blessings of Wholeness, which is the nature in which God already holds you. It will never be defined by your ideas, but only experienced directly as you open more deeply into this moment. Do you find this hard, this teaching which should come as a relief?

"Our plans, our possessions, our identities leave us with so many anxieties, trying to hold the dry leaves of ourselves together in a windstorm. Plans often seem to fail us, love often seems to leave us, the heart is left hanging; and we long for that one thing that would

make us whole. We may respond over time by making our-selves more rigid, our hearts harder or more protected, our opinions stronger, the self puffed up or beaten down. But I say first soften, and allow back in and hold the simple truth of your suffering, your grief -- for it is the reverse face of love. Allow back in and hold the preciousness of your own longing, for it is the calling of love. Here, in this holding, your genuine self will be restored to the love that unites you and makes you whole in the cradle of your own tenderness and presence. This gentleness will restore you to intimacy with your experience; to intimacy with the blessing of others; to intimacy with the blessings of the earth; to intimacy with God. To turn with tenderness to your own souls allows you to turn with tenderness to others, and to receive more of life itself."

"Now, casting away the illusions and projections of the false self, you will begin to restore balance to your soul. And you can then act to restore balance to the world. Because you can see more clearly, without distortion; with a natural compassion; and with a sense of justice that seeks only to restore and uphold the integrity of people and of situations. And you will discern the opportunities for restoring greater reciprocity even with those with whom you are in conflict.

"Friends, this we are being called to. But there is even a greater secret here that is the true nature of this blessing; the true nature of the ripeness to which you are being called, by which you are being made suited for a higher purpose. For you are becoming the very womb of blessing. As body, heart, and mind become united, and the divine energy of your own soul is no longer contracted and turned inward to a

false self-image, that energy naturally radiates as your full feeling attention, as the ardor of your own love that acts to extend grace.

"My dear friends, is this not the moment then, and have you not yourselves be-come, the very moment of creation itself, when that same grace was birthed from the womb of God, extending into all manifestation, all appearance, all form? Even as God has birthed us, we are birthing God in each moment. We, but not now we, are the center from which life radiates. This is the path of practice and of love that is laid before you, that the priests of this earth know nothing about, but is as pre-sent before you as the earth itself. And if you become quiet in your souls, consist-ent in your love, and abundant in your purpose -- in your acts, in your prayers, in your meditation -- you will till this ground and bring forth its fruit. You will see God before you on this earth, and in the lifetime of your body.

"Do I make this sound too easy? Do I puff you up with ideals? No, you know bet-ter by now what this world offers; what your own mind's offer. Alas, our mind's have manifested the order of this world, and the order of this world dominates our minds and dislocates our souls. Our hearts are driven by the evidence to the contrary of all that I have spoken. We will be persecuted by distraction, doubt, hatred, self-negation, and despair, perhaps, at our own acts and at the acts of others all around us. All will slander this truth, this way, this genuine life that I offer you. For you will hold a mirror to their own greed, power, and self-hatred, and they will not tolerate it. And you who do good, they will accuse you, and stir up the people against you.

"But I say, turn the face of adversity into the face of encouragement, and persist as love despite all evidence to the contrary. And be exceedingly glad that this frail mask of negation is all the Deceiver can throw at you, when love is already what you are. For your "I Am" will be even as my "I Am;" and your wholeness will be my wholeness; and you will love each other as I have loved you. Be glad with me now, for the time is short, and *my* time most of all. If you do not tend your own souls, who will? And if you are not here for others, what are you on this earth? And if you do not let the light shine from you right now, where do you think the light will come from?"

Paul Weiss

Bar Harbor, Maine

<https://www.thewholehealthcenter.org/>