

Once the Brahmin Janussoni approached the Blessed One and addressed him thus:

“I maintain, Master Gotama, and hold the view that there is no mortal who does not fear death, who is not afraid of death.”

“There is indeed, Brahmin, such a mortal who fears death, who is afraid of death. But there is also a mortal who has no fear of death, who is not afraid of death. And who is the one who fears death and the other who does not fear death?”

“There is, Brahmin, a person who is not free from lust for sensual pleasures, not free from the desire and affection for them, not free from thirsting and fevering after them, not free from craving for sensual pleasures. Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by a grave illness, he thinks: ‘Oh, those beloved sensual pleasures will leave me, and I shall have to leave them! Thereupon he grieves, moans, laments, weeps beating his breast and becomes deranged. This mortal is one who fears death, who is afraid of death.

“Further, Brahmin, there is a person who is not free from lust for this body, not free from desire and affection for it, not free from thirsting and fevering after it, not free from craving for the body. Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by a grave illness, he thinks: ‘Oh, this beloved body will leave me, and I shall have to leave it.’ Thereupon he grieves ... and becomes deranged. This mortal too is one who fears death, who is afraid of death.

“Further, Brahmin, there is a person who has not done anything good and wholesome, who has not made a shelter for himself; but he has done what is evil, cruel and wicked. Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by a grave illness, he thinks: ‘Oh, I have not done anything good and wholesome, I have not made a shelter for myself; but I have done what is evil, cruel and wicked. I shall go hereafter to the destiny of those who do such deeds.’ Thereupon he grieves ... and becomes deranged. This mortal too is one who fears death, who is afraid of death.

“Further, Brahmin, there is a person who has doubts and perplexity about the good Dhamma and has not come to certainty in it. Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by a grave illness, he thinks: ‘Oh, I am full of doubts and perplexity about the good Dhamma and have not come to certainty in it! Thereupon he grieves, moans, laments, weeps beating his breast and becomes deranged. This mortal too is one who fears death, who is afraid of death.

“These, Brahmin, are the four mortals who fear death and are afraid of death. But which mortal, Brahmin, does not fear death?”

“There is, Brahmin, a person who is free from lust for sensual pleasures, free from desire and affection for them, free from thirsting and fevering after them, free from craving for sensual pleasures. When a grave illness befalls him, no such thoughts come to him: ‘Oh, these beloved sensual pleasures will leave me and I shall have to leave them!’ hence he does not grieve or moan, lament or weep beating his breast, nor does he become deranged. This mortal is one who does not fear death, who is not afraid of death.

“Further, Brahmin, there is a person who is free from lust for this body ... when a grave illness befalls him, no such thoughts come to him: ‘Oh, this beloved body will leave me and I shall have to leave it!’ hence he does not grieve ... nor does he become deranged. This mortal too is one who does not fear death, who is not afraid of death.

“Further, Brahmin, there is a person who has not done anything evil, cruel or wicked, but has done what is good and wholesome, who has made a shelter for himself. When a grave illness befalls him, these thoughts come to him: ‘I have not done anything evil, cruel or wicked but have done what is good and wholesome, I have made a shelter for myself. I shall go hereafter to the destiny of those who do such deeds.’ Hence he does not grieve ... nor does he become deranged. This mortal too is one who does not fear death, who is not afraid of death.

“Further, Brahmin, there is a person who has no doubts and perplexity about the good Dhamma and has gained certainty in it. When a grave illness befalls him, this thought comes to him: ‘I am free of doubt and perplexity about the good Dhamma and have gained certainty in it.’ Hence he does not grieve or moan, lament or weep beating his breast, nor does he become deranged. This mortal too is one who does not fear death, who is not afraid of death.

“These, Brahmin, are the four mortals who do not fear death and are not afraid of death.”

“Excellent, Master Gotama!.... Let Master Gotama accept me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from today until life’s end.”

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