

༄༅། བར་དོའི་རྩ་ཚིག་བཞུགས་སོ།

The Root Verses of the Bardos

གྲུལ་བ་ཞི་བྲི་ལྷ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། བར་དོ་རྣམ་པ་དྲུག་གི་རྩ་ཚིག་ནི།

Salutation to the peaceful and wrathful jinas. This is a summary of the six bardos.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་སྐྱི་བཞུགས་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར།

KYE MA DAG LA KYE NAE BAR DO CHAR DU DIR
alas! me to, for birthplace intermediate arising time here
(how sad to be (i.e. lifetime from birth or the (i.e. when it happens
trapped in ignorance) moment of conception until death) to me)

Alas! Now when the bardo of life is arising for me,

ཚེ་ལ་ལོང་མེད་ལེ་ལོ་སྤང་བྱས་ནས།

TSHE LA LONG ME LE LO PANG JAE NE
life in leisure without laziness abandon, stop do then
(i.e. life is very short, and we do not know when it will end)

I must abandon all laziness during my span which is too short for leisure.

ཐོས་བསམ་སྒྲོམ་གསུམ་མ་ཡིངས་ལམ་དུ་འཇུག།

THO SAM GOM SUM MA YENG LAM DU JUG
hearing, reflecting meditating three unwavering, path in, on enter, keep to
studying undistracted

Keeping to the path of undistracted listening, reflecting and meditating,

སྤང་སེམས་ལམ་སྤོང་སྐྱེ་གསུམ་མངོན་འགྱུར་སྤྱངས།

NANG SEM LAM LONG KU SUM NGON GYUR JANG
appearances, mind, citta path go well modes three become manifest, practise
ideas (Dharmakaya, develop clearly
(seeing both in sunyata) Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya)

I must progress on the path of understanding the nature of appearances and mind, and practise making the three modes of enlightenment manifest.

མི་ལུས་ལན་གཅིག་ཐོབ་པའི་དུས་ཚོད་འདིར།

MI LU LAN CHIG THOB PAI DU TSHOD DIR
human body time one get time here
(To gain a human birth, especially one with the 18 freedoms and opportunities,
uses up so much good karma that it is very difficult to get one again.)

Now at this time when I have gained my sole chance of a human birth

ཡིངས་པ་ལམ་ལ་སྤོང་བའི་དུས་མ་ཡིན།

YENG PA LAM LA TONG PAI DU MA YIN
vacillating, path to, on leisure time not have
uncertain, hazy

I have no time to waste on the path of vacillation.

Alas. Now when the bardo of life is arising for me I must abandon all laziness during my span which is too short for leisure. Keeping to the path of undistracted listening, reflecting and meditating, I must progress on the path of understanding the nature of appearances and mind, and practise making the three three modes of enlightenment manifest. Now at this time when I have gained my sole chance of a human birth, I have no time to waste on the path of vacillation.

(Alternative reading)

[Note: There is also a tradition of the six lines of these verses being read in the line order 1, 5, 6, 2, 3, 4 as below.]

Alas! Now when the bardo of life is arising for me, now at this time when I have gained my sole chance of a human birth, I have no time to waste on the path of vacillation. I must abandon all laziness during my span which is too short for leisure, and keeping to the path of undistracted listening, reflecting and meditating, I must progress on the path of understanding the nature of appearances and mind, and practise making the three modes of enlightenment manifest.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་མི་ལམ་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར།

KYE MA DAG LA MI LAM BAR DO CHAR DU DIR
alas! me to dream intermediate arising time here, now
(i.e. when it happens for me)

Alas! Now when the bardo of dreams is arising for me,

གཉི་མུག་རོ་ཉལ་བག་མིད་སྤངས་བྱས་ནས།

TI MUG RO NYAL BAG ME PANG JAE NE
stupidity, sleeping like a careless, abandon do then
mental dullness corpse unheeding

I must abandon the unheeding, corpse-like sleep of stupidity and

དྲན་པ་ཡིངས་མིད་གནས་ལྷགས་ངང་ལ་འཛོལ།

DRAN PA YENG ME NAE LUG NGANG LA JOG
attention, recollection unwavering natural mode, openness in enter and keep
of awareness original condition

Keep to the openness of my original situation with unwavering recollection.

མི་ལམ་བརླང་ལ་སྤྱལ་བསྐྱར་འོད་གསལ་སྤངས།

MI LAM ZUNG LA TRUL GYUR OD SAL JANG
dream hold with, thus transform it with the clear illumination, practice
(be aware of it and its understanding of its natural clarity,
nature and not forget it illusoriness self-luminous
upon awakening) quality

Being aware of my dreams as they come, I must transform them into the practice of natural radiance.

དུད་འདྲོ་བཞིན་དུ་ཉལ་བར་མི་བྱ་བར་མུ།

DUD DRO ZHIN DU NYAL WAR MI JA WAR
animal as sleep not doing
(i.e. with a dull mind)

Not sleeping like an animal

གཉིད་དང་མངོན་སྲུང་འདྲིས་པའི་ཉམས་ལེན་གཅིས་མུ།

NYID DANG NGON SUM DRE PAI NYAM LEN CHE
sleep and direct knowledge mix, merge practice very important,
precious

I will follow this very important practice of merging sleep with the direct experience of my true nature.

Alas! Now when the bardo of dreams is arising for me, I must abandon the unheeding corpse-like sleep of stupidity and keep to the openness of my original situation with unwavering recollection. Being aware of my dreams as they come, I must transform them into the practice of clear radiance. Not sleeping like an animal I will follow this very important practice of merging sleep with the direct experience my true nature.

(Alternative reading)

Alas! Now when the bardo of dreams is arising for me, without sleeping like an animal I will follow this very important practice of merging sleep with the direct experience of my true nature. I must abandon the unheeding corpse-like sleep of stupidity and keep to the openness of my original situation with unwavering recollection. Being aware of my dreams as they come, I must transform them into the practice of clear radiance.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་བསམ་གཏན་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདི་མུ།

KYE MA DAG LA SAM TAN BAR DO CHAR DU DIR
alas! me to mental stability, intermediate arising time here, now
meditation period (i.e. when it happens for me)

Alas! Now when the bardo of mental stability is arising for me,

རྣམ་ཡིངས་འབྲུལ་བའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་སྤངས་བྱས་ནས་མུ།

NAM YENG TRUL WAI TSHOG NAM PANG JAE NE
very wavering confusion many different kinds abandon then
(i.e. all the thoughts that arise from uncertainty about the true nature)

I must abandon all the different forms of vacillating confusion and

ཡིངས་མིད་འཛིན་མིད་མཐའ་བྲལ་ངང་དུ་འཇུག་མུ།

YENG ME DZIN ME THA DRAL NGANG DU JUG
unwavering without grasping free of all limits, openness in keep, enter and stay
(always in mNyam-bZhag, (always in rJe-Thob, no reifying conceptualisation
meditation) post-meditation)

Keep to the unwavering, ungrasping openness free of all limits.

བསྐྱེད་ཚོགས་གཉིས་ལ་བདན་པ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱུ།

KYED DZOG NYI LA TAN PA TOB PAR JA
developing system perfecting system two to, in stability, get, keep do

I must gain stability in both the developing and perfecting systems.

The Root Verses of the Bardos from the book, Collected works of C.R. Lama

བྱ་བ་སྤངས་ནས་ཚེ་གཅིག་སྐབ་དུས་འདི་ཙམ།

JA WA PANG NE TSE CHIG DRUB DU DIR
activity (dualistic and worldly) abandon then one-pointedly practise time here, now

Abandoning all worldly activities I will practise one-pointedly here and now.

ཉོན་མོངས་ལྐབས་པའི་དབང་དུ་མ་བཏང་ཞིག།

NYON MONG TRUL PAI WANG DU MA TANG ZHIG
afflictions (anger, desire, etc.) confusion power under not go, send myself must

I must not go under the bewildering power of the afflictions.

Alas! Now when the bardo of mental stability is arising for me, I must abandon all the different forms of vacillating confusion and keep to the unwavering, ungrasping openness free of all limits. I must gain stability in both the developing and perfecting systems. Abandoning all worldly activities, I will practise one-pointedly here and now. I must not go under the bewildering power of the afflictions.

(Alternative reading)

Alas! Now when the bardo of mental stability is arising for me, I will abandon all worldly activity and practise one-pointedly here and now. I must not go under the bewildering power of the afflictions. I must abandon all the different forms of vacillating confusion and keep to the unwavering, ungrasping openness free of all limits. I must gain stability in both the developing and perfecting systems.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་འཆི་ཁ་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདི་ཙམ།

KYE MA DAG LA CHI KHA BAR DO CHAR DU DIR
alas! me to death time period arising time here, now
(i.e. when it happens for me)

Alas! Now when the bardo of dying is arising for me,

ཀུན་ལ་ཆགས་སེམས་ཞེན་འཛིན་སྤངས་བྱས་ལ།

KUN LA CHAG SEM ZHEN DZIN PANG JAE LA
all to desireful mind hopes, grasping abandon do then
(worldly things) expectations

I must abandon all hopes, desires and grasping.

གདམས་ངག་གསལ་བའི་ལམ་ལ་མ་ཡིངས་འཇུག།

DAM NGAG SAL WAI LAM LA MA YENG JUG
instructions, clear path on unwavering enter, keep
doctrines (i.e. keeping them
clearly in mind)

Keeping unwaveringly on the clear path of the dharma instructions,

རང་སྐྱེ་མེད་ནམ་མཁའི་དབྱིངས་སུ་འཕྲོ།

RANG RIG KYE ME NAM KHAI YING SU PHO
own awareness, unborn sky's depth in send, merge
mind (sunyata) (like a bubble rising in boiling water)

I must integrate my awareness in the unborn sky-like space.

འདུས་བྱས་ཤིག་ལྷན་ལུས་དང་གྲུལ་ལ་ཁར་དུ།

DU JAE SHA TRAG LU DANG DRAL LA KHAD
compounded flesh blood body free of almost to, almost, on the point of

Now, as I am becoming free of this compounded body of flesh and blood,

མི་དྲག་སྐྱེ་མ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱེ།

MI TAG GYU MA YIN PAR SHE PAR JA
impermanent illusory is as know do

I must know it to be impermanent and illusory.

Alas! Now when the bardo of dying is arising for me, I must abandon all hopes, desires, and grasping. Keeping unwaveringly on the clear path of the dharma instructions, I must integrate my awareness in the unborn sky-like space. Now, as I am becoming free of this compounded body of flesh and blood, I must know it to be impermanent and illusory.

(Alternative reading)

Alas! Now when the bardo of dying is arising for me, now as I am becoming free of this compounded body of flesh and blood, I must know it to be impermanent and illusory. I must abandon all hopes, desires, and grasping and keep unwaveringly to the clear path of the dharma instructions. I must integrate my awareness in the unborn sky-like space.

ཀྱེ་མ་བདག་ལ་ཚེས་ཉིད་བར་དོ་འཆར་དུས་འདིར་དུ།

KYE MA DAG LA CHO NYID BAR DO CHAR DU DIR
alas! me to dharmata, actuality period arising time here
original situation (it starts to appear just after death)

Alas! Now when the bardo of actuality is arising for me,

ཀུན་ལ་དངངས་སྐྱབས་འཛིན་སྐྱབས་སྤངས་བྱས་ནས་དུ།

KUN LA NGANG TRAG JIG NANG PANG JAE NE
all to fear fear terror ideas abandon then
(that appears)

I must abandon all fearful and terrified notions about all that is occurring, and

གང་ཤར་རང་སྐྱབས་ལོ་ལོ་ཤེས་བྱེ།

GANG SHAR RANG NANG RIG PAR NGO SHE JA
whatever arises own idea awareness, as recognise do

Recognise that whatever arises is the natural radiance of my own awareness.

བར་དོའི་སྐྱབས་ཚུལ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱེ།

BAR DOI NANG TSHUL YIN PAR SHE PAR JA
bardo's form of arising is, as know

I must know that this is the mode of appearance of this bardo.

དོན་ཆེན་འགགས་ལ་ཐུག་པའི་དུས་གཅིག་འོང་དུ།

DON CHEN GAG LA THUG PAI DU CHIG ONG
great meaning, stop to impatient time one come
the important point (i.e. very pressing and urgent and necessary to use)

Now when this very important and crucial time is coming

The Root Verses of the Bardos from the book, Collected works of C.R. Lama

མིག་སེར་སྤངས་ནས་སྤྲོ་མ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་སྐྱོམ།

MIG SER PANG NE LA MA YAB YUM GOM
jealousy abandon then guru with his consort meditate on this

(As one approaches and is about to be born into the womb of a woman making love one very strongly meditates that the couple is in fact one's guru with his or her consort and in this way all desireful attachments are destroyed and the impulse to enter will be overcome. If we do enter, it will be by merging with their nectar.)

Abandoning all jealousy, I will meditate on my guru with his consort.

Alas! Now when the bardo of rebirth is arising for me, I must keep my mind in one-pointed devotion and strongly encourage the maturing of my good karma. Closing the womb door I must remember to reverse the process that leads to existence. This is the one time when authentic pure vision is required so, abandoning all jealousy, I will meditate on my guru with his consort.

(Alternative reading)

Alas! Now when the bardo of rebirth is arising for me, this is the one time when authentic pure vision is required so, abandoning all jealousy, I will meditate on my guru with his consort. I must keep my mind in one-pointed devotion and strongly encourage the maturing of my good karma. Closing the womb door I must remember to reverse the process that leads to existence.

འཆི་བ་འོང་སྐྱུ་མ་མེད་པའི་སྐྱོ་རིང་བོ།

CHI WA ONG NYAM MED PAI LO RING PO
death coming unthoughtful, of unbelieving

Thoughtlessly never believing that death will come

དོན་མེད་ཚེ་འདིའི་བྱ་བ་བགུ་བས་བགུ་བས་ནས།

DON ME TSHE DI JA WA DRUB DRUB NE
meaningless, worthless life this deeds, activities done done then
(i.e. actions that do not lead to awakening) (i.e. very much, all the time)

I have passed this life in the constant practice of meaningless activity,

ད་ལྟོ་སྤོང་ལོག་བྱ་ན་འདུན་མ་འཁྲུལ།

DA RE TONG LOG JA NA DUN MA TRUL
now empty-handed, without anything useful act like that if failure and loss

And now if I go from it empty-handed, that will be a great loss and failure.

དགོས་ངེས་ཤེས་པ་དམ་པའི་ཚེས་ཡིན་པས།

GOE NGE SHE PA DAM PAI CHO YIN PAE
necessary certain understanding holy, excellent dharma is, therefore
(for it alone can help at the time of death)

I must remember that the one certain necessity is the holy dharma.

ད་ལྟོ་ཉིད་དུ་ལྟོ་ཚེས་མི་བྱེད་དམ།

DAN TA NYID DU LHA CHO MI JED DAM
now, immediately meditation on the gods not do or

Therefore if now, at this moment, I do not meditate on the divine forms or

དྲིན་ཅན་སློམ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས།

DRIN CHEN LA MAI ZHAL NE DI KAD SUNG
kind guru's mouth from these words spoken

Bear in mind the instructions that I have received

སློམ་མའི་གདམས་ངག་སེམས་ལ་མ་བཞག་ན།

LA MAI DAM NGAG SEM LA MA ZHAG NA
Guru's instructions mind in not put if

From my very kind guru's own mouth,

ང་གིས་ང་ཉིད་བསྐྱུས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་པམ།

RANG GI RANG NYID LU PAR MI GYUR RAM
self by self deceived, cheated not become or,?

Will I not be my own deceiver?

Thoughtlessly never believing that death will come I have passed this life in the constant practice of meaningless activity, and now if I go from it empty-handed, that will be a great loss and failure. I must remember that the one certain necessity is the holy dharma. Therefore if now, at this moment, I do not meditate on the divine forms or bear in mind the instructions that I have received from my very kind guru's own mouth, will I not be my own deceiver?

བར་དོ་ནམ་པ་དུག་གི་ཙྰ་ཚོག་ཇོགས་སོ།

This concludes *THE ROOT VERSES OF THE SIX BARDOS*, from the terma of Karma Lingpa.

Translated by C.R. Lama and James Low at Santiniketan, Bengal, India 1978

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