

# **A Samurai and a Zen Master & other stories**

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### A Samurai and a Zen Master

A samurai, a very proud warrior, came to see a Zen Master one day. The samurai was very famous, but looking at the beauty of the Master and the Grace of the moment, he suddenly felt inferior.

He said to the Master, "Why am I feeling inferior? Just a moment ago everything was okay. As I entered your court suddenly I felt inferior. I have never felt like that before. I have faced death many times, and I have never felt any fear -- why am I now feeling frightened?"

The Master said, "Wait. When everyone else has gone, I will answer. "

People continued the whole day to come and see the Master, and the samurai was getting more and more tired waiting. By evening the room was empty, and the samurai said, "Now, can you answer me?"

The Master said, "Come outside."

It was a full moon night, the moon was just rising on the horizon. And he said, "Look at these trees. This tree is high in the sky and this small one beside it. They both have existed beside my window for years, and there has never been any problem. The smaller tree has never said to the big tree, 'Why do I feel inferior before you?' This tree is small, and that tree is big -- why have I never heard a whisper of it?"

The samurai said, "Because they can't compare."

The Master replied, "Then you need not ask me. You know the answer."

*Author Unknown*

*Found at: Parables, Stories from Around the World*

### Get Rid of Fear

"How shall I rid myself of fear?"

"How can you rid yourself of what you cling to?"

"You mean I actually cling to my fears? I cannot agree to that."

"Consider what your fear protects you from and you will agree! And you will see your folly."

*Anthony de Mello, SJ*  
*"One Minute Wisdom"*

### **Nasrudin and a Dervish**

Nasrudin was walking along a lonely road one moonlit night when he heard a snore seemingly directly beneath his feet. Suddenly he experienced fear and was about to flee when he tripped over a dervish lying in a pit which he had dug for himself, partly underground.

"Who are you?" the Mulla stammered.

"I am a dervish, and this is my contemplation place."

Nasrudin replied, "You will have to let me share it. Your snoring frightened me out of my wits, and I cannot continue any further this night."

"Take the other end of this blanket, then," said the dervish without much enthusiasm, "and lie down here. Please be quiet, because I am keeping a vigil. It is a part of a complicated series of exercises. Tomorrow I must change the pattern, and I cannot stand any interruption."

Nasrudin fell asleep for a while. Then he woke up, very thirsty.

"I am thirsty," he told the dervish.

"Then go back down the road, where there is a stream."

"No, I am still afraid." replied Nasrudin.

"I shall go for you then," said the dervish. "After all, to provide water is a sacred obligation in the East."

"No, please don't go for I am still afraid to be alone!"

"Take this knife, to defend yourself then," said the dervish.

While he was away Nasrudin frightened himself still more, working himself up into a frenzy, which he tried to counter by imagining how he would attack any demon who threatened him.

Presently the dervish returned.

"Keep your distance, or 'I'll kill you!" said Nasrudin.

"But I am the dervish," said the dervish.

"I don't care who you are-your maybe a demon in disguise. Besides, you have your head and eyebrows shaved!" The dervishes of that order shave their head and eyebrows.

"But I have come to bring you water! Don't you remember-you are thirsty!"

"Don't try and ingratiate yourself with me, Demon!"

"But that is my hole you are occupying!" said the dervish.

"That's hard luck for you, isn't it? You'll just have to find another one." replied Nasrudin.

"I suppose so," said the dervish, "but I am sure I don't know what to make of all this."

"I can tell you one thing," said Nasrudin, "and that is that fear is multidirectional."

"It certainly seems stronger than thirst, or sanity, or other peoples property," said the dervish.

"AND you don't have to have it yourself in order to suffer from it!" said Nasrudin.

*Author Unknown*

### **Our Deepest Fear**

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. Is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be. You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

*(Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Speech)*

*Our Deepest Fear was used in Nelson Mandela's speech, but it was written by Marianne Williamson. You can find it in her book "A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles," pages 190-191, 1992 publishing.*