
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

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Chapter #1

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WE ARE WHAT WE THINK.
ALL THAT WE ARE ARISES WITH OUR THOUGHTS.
WITH OUR THOUGHTS WE MAKE THE WORLD.
SPEAK OR ACT WITH AN IMPURE MIND
AND TROUBLE WILL FOLLOW YOU
AS THE WHEEL FOLLOWS THE OX THAT DRAWS THE CART.

WE ARE WHAT WE THINK.
ALL THAT WE ARE ARISES WITH OUR THOUGHTS.
WITH OUR THOUGHTS WE MAKE THE WORLD.
SPEAK OR ACT WITH A PURE MIND
AND HAPPINESS WILL FOLLOW YOU
AS YOUR SHADOW, UNSHAKABLE.

"LOOK HOW HE ABUSED ME AND BEAT ME,
HOW HE THREW ME DOWN AND ROBBED ME."
LIVE WITH SUCH THOUGHTS AND YOU LIVE IN HATE.

"LOOK HOW HE ABUSED ME AND BEAT ME,
HOW HE THREW ME DOWN AND ROBBED ME."
ABANDON SUCH THOUGHTS, AND LIVE IN LOVE.

IN THIS WORLD
HATE NEVER YET DISPELLED HATE.
ONLY LOVE DISPELS HATE.
THIS IS THE LAW,
ANCIENT AND INEXHAUSTIBLE.

YOU TOO SHALL PASS AWAY.
KNOWING THIS, HOW CAN YOU QUARREL?

HOW EASILY THE WIND OVERTURNS A FRAIL TREE.
SEEK HAPPINESS IN THE SENSES,
INDULGE IN FOOD AND SLEEP,
AND YOU TOO WILL BE UPROOTED.

THE WIND CANNOT OVERTURN A MOUNTAIN.
TEMPTATION CANNOT TOUCH THE MAN
WHO IS AWAKE, STRONG AND HUMBLE,
WHO MASTERS HIMSELF AND MINDS THE LAW.

IF A MAN'S THOUGHTS ARE MUDDY,
IF HE IS RECKLESS AND FULL OF DECEIT,
HOW CAN HE WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE?

WHOEVER IS MASTER OF HIS OWN NATURE,
BRIGHT, CLEAR AND TRUE,
HE MAY INDEED WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE.

My beloved bodhisattvas.... Yes, that's how I look at you. That's how you have to start looking at yourselves. *Bodhisattva* means a buddha in essence, a buddha in seed, a buddha asleep, but with all the potential to be awake. In that sense everybody is a bodhisattva, but not everybody can be called a bodhisattva -- only those who have started groping for the light, who have started longing for the dawn, in whose hearts the seed is no longer a seed but has become a sprout, has started growing.

You are bodhisattvas because of your longing to be conscious, to be alert, because of your quest for the truth. The truth is not far away, but there are very few fortunate ones in the world who long for it. It is *not* far away but it is arduous, it is hard to achieve. It is hard to achieve, not because of its nature, but because of our investment in lies.

We have invested for lives and lives in lies. Our investment is so much that the very idea of truth makes us frightened. We want to avoid it, we want to escape from the truth. Lies are beautiful escapes -- convenient, comfortable dreams. But dreams are dreams. They can enchant you for the moment, they can enslave you for the moment, but only for the moment. And each dream is followed by tremendous frustration, and each desire is followed by deep failure.

But we go on rushing into new lies; if old lies are known, we immediately invent new lies. Remember that only lies can be invented; truth cannot be invented. Truth already is!

Truth has to be discovered, not invented. Lies cannot be discovered, they have to be invented.

Mind feels very good with lies because the mind becomes the inventor, the doer. And as the mind becomes the doer, ego is created. With truth, you have nothing to do...and because you have nothing to do, mind ceases, and with the mind the ego disappears, evaporates. That's the risk, the ultimate risk.

You have moved towards that risk. You have taken a few steps -- staggering, stumbling, groping, haltingly, with many doubts, but still you have taken a few steps; hence I call you bodhisattvas.

And THE DHAMMAPADA, the teaching of Gautama the Buddha, can only be taught to the bodhisattvas. It cannot be taught to the ordinary, mediocre humanity, because it cannot be understood by them.

These words of Buddha come from eternal silence. They can reach you only if you receive them in silence. These words of Buddha come from immense purity. Unless you become a vehicle, a receptacle, humble, egoless, alert, aware, you will not be able to understand them. Intellectually you will understand them -- they are very simple words, the simplest possible. But their very simplicity is a problem, because *you* are not simple. To understand simplicity you need simplicity of the heart, because only the simple heart can understand the simple truth. Only the pure can understand that which has come out of purity.

I have waited long...now the time is ripe, you are ready. The seeds can be sown. These tremendously important words can be uttered again. For twenty-five centuries, such a gathering has not existed at all. Yes, there have been a few enlightened masters with a few disciples -- half a dozen at the most -- and in small gatherings THE DHAMMAPADA has been taught. But those small gatherings cannot transform such a huge humanity. It is like throwing sugar in the ocean with spoons: it cannot make it sweet -- your sugar is simply wasted.

A great, unheard-of experiment has to be done, on such a large scale that at least the most substantial part of humanity is touched by it -- at least the soul of humanity, the center of humanity, can be awakened by it. On the periphery, the mediocre minds will go on sleeping -- let them sleep -- but at the center where intelligence exists a light can be kindled.

The time is ripe, the time has come for it. My whole work here consists in creating a buddhafield, an energy field where these eternal truths can be uttered again. It is a rare opportunity. Only once in a while, after centuries, does such an opportunity exist. Don't miss it. Be very alert, mindful. Listen to these words not only with the head but with your heart, with every fiber of your being. Let your totality be stirred by them.

And after these ten days of silence, it is exactly the right moment to bring Buddha back, to make him alive again amongst you, to let him move amongst you, to let the winds of Buddha pass through you. Yes, he can be called back again, because nobody ever disappears. Buddha is no longer an embodied person; certainly he does not exist as an individual anywhere -- but his essence, his soul, is part of the cosmic soul now.

If many many people -- with deep longing, with immense longing, with prayerful hearts -- desire it, passionately desire it, then the soul that has disappeared into the cosmic soul can again become manifest in millions of ways.

No true master ever dies, he cannot die. Death does not appear for the masters, does not exist for them. Hence they are masters. They have known the eternity of life. They have seen that the body disappears but that the body is not all: the body is only the periphery, the body is only the garments. The body is the house, the abode, but the guest never disappears. The guest only moves from one abode to another. One day, ultimately, the guest starts living

under the sky, with no shelter...but the guest continues. Only bodies, houses, come and go, are born and then die. But there is an inner continuum, an inner continuity -- that is eternal, timeless, deathless.

Whenever you can love a master -- a master like Jesus, Buddha, Zarathustra, Lao Tzu -- if your passion is total, immediately you are bridged.

My talking on Buddha is not just a commentary: it is creating a bridge. Buddha is one of the most important masters who has ever existed on the earth -- incomparable, unique. And if you can have a taste of his being, you will be infinitely benefited, blessed.

I am immensely glad, because after these ten days of silence I can say to you that many of you are now ready to commune with me in silence. That is the ultimate in communication. Words are inadequate; words say, but only partially. Silence communes totally.

And to use words is a dangerous game too, because the meaning will remain with me, only the word will reach you; and you will give it your own meaning, your own color. It will not contain the same truth that it was meant to contain. It will contain something else, something far poorer. It will contain your meaning, not my meaning. You can distort language -- in fact it is almost impossible to avoid distortion -- but you cannot distort silence. Either you understand or you don't understand.

And for these ten days there were only two categories of people here: those who understood and those who did not. But there was not a single person who *mis*understood. You cannot misunderstand silence -- that's the beauty of silence. The demarcation is absolute: either you understand or, simply, you don't understand -- there is nothing to misunderstand.

With words the case is just the opposite: it is very difficult to understand, it is very difficult to understand that you don't understand; these two are almost impossibilities. And the third is the only possibility: misunderstanding.

These ten days have been of strange beauty, and of a mysterious majesty too. I no longer really belong to this shore. My ship has been waiting for me for a long time -- I should have gone. It is a miracle that I am still in the body. The whole credit goes to you: to your love, to your prayers, to your longing. You would like me to linger a little while longer on this shore, hence the impossible has become possible.

These ten days, I was not feeling together with my body. I was feeling very uprooted, dislocated. It is strange to be in the body when you don't feel that you are in the body. And it is also strange to go on living in a place which no longer belongs to you -- my home is on the other shore. And the call comes persistently. But because you need me, it is the compassion of the universe -- you can call it God's compassion -- that is allowing me to be in the body a little more.

It was strange, it was beautiful, it was mysterious, it was majestic, it was magical. And many of you have felt it. Many of you have felt it in different ways. A few have felt it as a very frightening phenomenon, as if death is knocking on the door. A few have felt it as a great confusion. A few have felt shocked, utterly shocked. But everybody has been touched in some way or other.

Only the newcomers were a little at a loss -- they could not comprehend what was going on. But I feel thankful to them too. Although they could not understand what was going on, they waited -- they were waiting for me to speak, they were waiting for me to say something, they were hoping. Many were afraid that I might not speak ever again...that was also a possibility. I was not certain myself.

Words are becoming more and more difficult for me. They are becoming more and more of an effort. I have to say something so I go on saying something to you. But I would like you

to get ready as soon as possible so that we can simply sit in silence...listening to the birds and their songs...or listening just to your own heartbeat...just being here, doing nothing....

Get ready as soon as possible, because I may stop speaking any day. And let the news be spread to all the nooks and corners of the world: those who want to understand me only through the words, they should come soon, because I may stop speaking *any* day. Unpredictably, any day, it may happen -- it may happen even in the middle of a sentence. Then I am not going to complete the sentence! Then it will hang forever and forever...incomplete.

But this time you have pulled me back.

These sayings of Buddha are called THE DHAMMAPADA. This name has to be understood. *Dhamma* means many things. It means the ultimate law, logos. By "ultimate law" is meant that which keeps the whole universe together. Invisible it is, intangible it is -- but *it is* certainly; otherwise the universe would fall apart. Such a vast, infinite universe, running so smoothly, so harmoniously, is enough proof that there must be an undercurrent that connects everything, that joins everything, that bridges everything -- that we are not islands, that the smallest grass leaf is joined to the greatest star. Destroy a small grass leaf and you have destroyed something of immense value to the existence itself.

In existence there is no hierarchy, there is nothing small and nothing great. The greatest star and the smallest grass leaf, both exist as equals; hence the other meaning of the word 'dhamma'. The other meaning is justice, the equality, the nonhierarchic existence. Existence is absolutely communist; it knows no classes, it is all one. Hence the other meaning of the word 'dhamma' -- justice.

And the third meaning is righteousness, virtue. Existence is very virtuous. Even if you find something which you cannot call virtue, it must be because of your misunderstanding; otherwise the existence is absolutely virtuous. Whatsoever happens here, always happens rightly. The wrong never happens. It may appear wrong to you because you have a certain idea of what right is, but when you look without any prejudice, nothing is wrong, all is right. Birth is right, death is right. Beauty is right and ugliness is right.

But our minds are small, our comprehension is limited; we cannot see the whole, we always see only a small part. We are like a person who is hiding behind his door and looking through the keyhole into the street. He always sees things...yes, somebody is moving, a car suddenly passes by. One moment it was not there, one moment it is there, and another moment it is gone forever. That's how we are looking at existence. We say something is in the future, then it comes into the present, and then it has gone into the past.

In fact, time is a human invention. It is always now! Existence knows no past, no future -- it knows only the present.

But we are sitting behind a keyhole and looking. A person is not there, then suddenly he appears; and then as suddenly as he appears he disappears too. Now you have to create time. Before the person appeared he was in the future; he *was* there, but for you he was in the future. Then he appeared; now he is in the present -- he is the same! And you cannot see him anymore through your small keyhole -- he has become past. Nothing is past, nothing is future -- all is always present. But our ways of seeing are very limited.

Hence we go on asking why there is misery in the world, why there is this and that...why? If we can look at the whole, all these whys disappear. And to look at the whole, you will have to come out of your room, you will have to open the door...you will have to drop this keyhole vision.

This is what mind is: a keyhole, and a very small keyhole it is. Compared to the vast

universe, what are our eyes, ears, hands? What can we grasp? Nothing of much importance. And those tiny fragments of truth, we become too much attached to them.

If you see the whole, everything is as it should be -- that is the meaning of "everything is right." Wrong exists not. Only God exists; the Devil is man's creation.

The third meaning of 'dhamma' can be God -- but Buddha never uses the word 'God' because it has become wrongly associated with the idea of a person, and the law is a presence, not a person. Hence Buddha never uses the word 'God', but whenever he wants to convey something of God he uses the word 'dhamma'. His mind is that of a very profound scientist. Because of this, many have thought him to be an atheist -- he is not. He is the greatest theist the world has ever known or will ever know -- but he never talks about God. He never uses the word, that's all, but by 'dhamma' he means exactly the same. "That which is" is the meaning of the word 'God', and that's exactly the meaning of 'dhamma'. 'Dhamma' also means discipline -- different dimensions of the word. One who wants to know the truth will have to discipline himself in many ways. Don't forget the meaning of the word 'discipline' -- it simply means the capacity to learn, the availability to learn, the receptivity to learn. Hence the word 'disciple'. 'Disciple' means one who is ready to drop his old prejudices, to put his mind aside, and look into the matter without any prejudice, without any a priori conception.

And 'dhamma' also means the ultimate truth. When mind disappears, when the ego disappears, then what remains? Something certainly remains, but it cannot be called 'something' -- hence Buddha calls it 'nothing'. But let me remind you, otherwise you will misunderstand him: whenever he uses the word 'nothing' he means no-thing. Divide the word in two; don't use it as one word -- bring a hyphen between 'no' and 'thing', then you know exactly the meaning of 'nothing'.

The ultimate law is not a thing. It is not an object that you can observe. It is your interiority, it is subjectivity.

Buddha would have agreed totally with the Danish thinker, Soren Kierkegaard. He says: Truth is subjectivity. That is the difference between fact and truth. A fact is an objective thing. Science goes on searching for more and more facts, and science will never arrive at truth -- it cannot by the very definition of the word. Truth is the interiority of the scientist, but he never looks at it. He goes on observing other things. He never becomes aware of his own being.

That is the last meaning of 'dhamma': your interiority, your subjectivity, your truth.

One thing very significant -- allow it to sink deep into your heart: truth is never a theory, a hypothesis; it is always an experience. Hence my truth cannot be your truth. My truth is inescapably my truth; it will remain my truth, it cannot be yours. We cannot share it. Truth is unsharable, untransferable, incommunicable, inexpressible.

I can explain to you how I have attained it, but I cannot say what it is. The "how" is explainable, but not the "why." The discipline can be shown, but not the goal. Each one has to come to it in his own way. Each one has to come to it in his own inner being. In absolute aloneness it is revealed.

And the second word is PADA. 'Pada' also has many meanings. One, the most fundamental meaning, is path. Religion has two dimensions: the dimension of "what" and the dimension of "how." The "what" cannot be talked about; it is impossible. But the "how" can be talked about, the "how" is sharable. That is the meaning of 'path'. I can indicate the path to you; I can show you how I have traveled, how I reached the sunlit peaks. I can tell you about the whole geography of it, the whole topography of it. I can give you a contour map, but I

cannot say how it feels to be on the sunlit peak.

It is like you can ask Edmund Hillary or Tensing how they reached the highest peak of the Himalayas, Gaurishankar. They can give you the whole map of how they reached. But if you ask them what they felt when they reached, they can only shrug their shoulders. That freedom that they must have known is unspeakable; the beauty, the benediction, the vast sky, the height, and the colorful clouds, and the sun and the unpolluted air, and the virgin snow on which nobody had ever traveled before...all that is impossible to convey. One has to reach those sunlit peaks to know it. 'Pada' means path, 'pada' also means step, foot, foundation. All these meanings are significant. You have to move from where you are. You have to become a great process, a growth. People have become stagnant pools; they have to become rivers, because only rivers reach the ocean. And it also means foundation, because it is the fundamental truth of life. Without dhamma, without relating in some way to the ultimate truth, your life has no foundation, no meaning, no significance, it cannot have any glory. It will be an exercise in utter futility. If you are not bridged with the total you cannot have any significance of your own. You will remain a driftwood -- at the mercy of the winds, not knowing where you are going and not knowing who you are. The search for truth, the passionate search for truth, creates the bridge, gives you a foundation. These sutras that are compiled as THE DHAMMAPADA are to be understood not intellectually but existentially. Become like sponges: let it soak, let it sink into you. Don't be sitting there judging; otherwise you will miss the Buddha. Don't sit there constantly chattering in your mind about whether it is right or wrong -- you will miss the point. Don't be bothered whether it is right or wrong.

The first, the most primary thing, is to understand what it is -- what Buddha is saying, what Buddha is trying to say. There is no need to judge right now. The first, basic need is to understand exactly what he means. And the beauty of it is that if you understand exactly what it means, you will be convinced of its truth, you will know its truth. Truth has its own ways of convincing people; it needs no other proofs.

Truth never argues: it is a song, not a syllogism.

The sutras:

WE ARE WHAT WE THINK.
ALL THAT WE ARE ARISES WITH OUR THOUGHTS.
WITH OUR THOUGHTS WE MAKE THE WORLD.

It has been said to you again and again that the Eastern mystics believe that the world is illusory. It is true: they not only believe that the world is untrue, illusory, maya -- they *know* that it is maya, it is an illusion, a dream. But when they use the word *sansara* -- the world -- they don't mean the objective world that science investigates; no, not at all. They don't mean the world of the trees and the mountains and the rivers; no, not at all. They mean the world that you create, spin and weave inside your mind, the wheel of the mind that goes on moving and spinning. Sansara has nothing to do with the outside world.

There are three things to be remembered. One is the outside world, the objective world. Buddha will never say anything about it because that is not his concern; he is not an Albert Einstein. Then there is a second world: the world of the mind, the world that the psychoanalysts, the psychiatrists, the psychologists investigate. Buddha will have a few things to say about it, not many, just a few -- in fact, one: that it is illusory, that it has no truth, either objective or subjective, that it is in between.

The first world is the objective world, which science investigates. The second world is the world of the mind, which the psychologist investigates. And the third world is your subjectivity, your interiority, your inner self.

Buddha's indication is towards the interiormost core of your being. But you are too much involved with the mind. Unless he helps you to become untrapped from the mind, you will never know the third, the real world: your inner substance. Hence he starts with the statement: WE ARE WHAT WE THINK. That's what everybody is: his mind. ALL THAT WE ARE ARISES WITH OUR THOUGHTS.

Just imagine for a single moment that all thoughts have ceased...then who are you? If *all* thoughts cease for a single moment, then who are you? No answer will be coming. You cannot say, "I am a Catholic," "I am a Protestant," "I am a Hindu," "I am a Mohammedan" -- you cannot say that. All thoughts have ceased. So the Koran has disappeared, the Bible, the Gita...all words have ceased! You cannot even utter your name. All language has disappeared so you cannot say to which country you belong, to which race. When thoughts cease, *who are you?* An utter emptiness, nothingness, no-thingness.

It is because of this that Buddha has used a strange word; nobody has ever done such a thing before, or since. The mystics have always used the word 'self' for the interiormost core of your being -- Buddha uses the word 'no-self'. And I perfectly agree with him; he is far more accurate, closer to truth. To use the word 'self' -- even if you use the word 'Self' with a capital 'S', does not make much difference. It continues to give you the sense of the ego, and with a capital 'S' it may give you an even bigger ego.

Buddha does not use the words *atma*, 'self', *atta*. He uses just the opposite word: 'no-self', *anatma*, *anatta*. He says when mind ceases, there is no self left -- you have become universal, you have overflowed the boundaries of the ego, you are a pure space, uncontaminated by anything. You are just a mirror reflecting nothing.

WE ARE WHAT WE THINK. ALL THAT WE ARE ARISES WITH OUR THOUGHTS. WITH OUR THOUGHTS WE MAKE THE WORLD.

If you really want to know *who*, in reality, you are, you will have to learn how to cease as a mind, how to stop thinking. That's what meditation is all about. Meditation means going out of the mind, dropping the mind and moving in the space called no-mind. And in no-mind you will know the ultimate truth, dhamma.

And moving from mind to no-mind is the step, *pada*. And this is the whole secret of THE DHAMMAPADA.

SPEAK OR ACT WITH AN IMPURE MIND
AND TROUBLE WILL FOLLOW YOU
AS THE WHEEL FOLLOWS THE OX THAT DRAWS THE CART.

Whenever Buddha uses the phrase 'impure mind' you can misunderstand it. By 'impure mind' he means mind, because *all* mind is impure. Mind as such is impure, and no-mind is pure. Purity means no-mind; impurity means mind.

SPEAK OR ACT WITH AN IMPURE MIND -- speak or act with mind -- AND TROUBLE WILL FOLLOW YOU.... Misery is a by-product, the shadow of the mind, the shadow of the illusory mind. Misery is a nightmare. You suffer only because you are asleep. And there is no way of escaping it while you are asleep. Unless you become awakened the nightmare will persist. It may change forms, it can have millions of forms, but it will persist.

Misery is the shadow of the mind: mind means sleep, mind means unconsciousness, mind

means unawareness. Mind means not knowing who you are and still pretending that you know. Mind means not knowing where you are going and still pretending that you know the goal, that you know what life is meant for -- not knowing anything about life and still believing that you know.

This mind will bring misery as certainly AS THE WHEEL FOLLOWS THE OX THAT DRAWS THE CART.

WE ARE WHAT WE THINK.
ALL THAT WE ARE ARISES WITH OUR THOUGHTS.
WITH OUR THOUGHTS WE MAKE THE WORLD.
SPEAK OR ACT WITH A PURE MIND
AND HAPPINESS WILL FOLLOW YOU
AS YOUR SHADOW, UNSHAKABLE.

Again, remember: when Buddha says "pure mind" he means no-mind. It is very difficult to translate a man like Buddha. It is almost an impossible job, because a man like Buddha uses language in his own way; he creates his own language. He cannot use the ordinary language with ordinary meanings, because he has something extraordinary to convey.

Ordinary words are absolutely meaningless in reference to the experience of a Buddha. But you should understand the problem. The problem is, he cannot use an absolutely new language; nobody will understand. It will look like gibberish.

That's how the word 'gibberish' came into existence. It comes from a Sufi; his name was Jabbar. He invented a new language. Nobody was able to make head or tail of it. How can you understand an absolutely new language? He looked like a madman, uttering nonsense, utter nonsense. That's how it happens! If you listen to a Chinese and you don't understand Chinese, it is utter nonsense.

Somebody was asking a man who had gone to China, "How do they find such strange names for people? -- Ching, Chung, Chang...."

The man said, "They have a way: they collect all the spoons in the house and they throw them upwards, and when those spoons fall down...ching! chung! chang! or whatsoever sound they make, that's how they name a child."

But the same is the case: if a Chinese hears English he thinks, "What nonsense!"

If that is the case with languages which millions of people use, what will be the case with a Buddha if he invents an original language? Only he will understand it and nobody else. Jabbar did that -- must have been a very courageous man. People thought that he was mad.

The English word 'gibberish' comes from Jabbar. Nobody knows what he was saying. Nobody has even tried to collect it...how to collect it? There was no alphabet. And what he was saying was making no sense at all, so we don't know what treasures we have missed.

The problem for Buddha is that either he has to use your language as *you* use it -- then he cannot convey his experience at all -- or he has to invent a new language nobody will understand. So all great masters have to be very much in the middle. They will use your language, but they will give your words their color, their flavor. The bottles will be yours, the wine will be theirs. And thinking that because the bottles are yours the wine is also yours, you will carry them for centuries. And there is a possibility that, thinking that it is your wine because the bottle is yours, sometimes you may drink out of it, you may become drunk.

That's why it is very difficult to translate. Buddha used a language that was understood by

the people who surrounded him, but he gave twists and turns to words in such a subtle way that even people who knew the language were not alerted, were not shocked. They thought they were hearing their own language.

Buddha uses the words "pure mind" for no-mind, because if you say "no-mind," immediately it becomes impossible to understand. But if you say "pure mind," then some communication is possible. Slowly slowly, he will convince you that pure mind means no-mind. But that will take time; very slowly you have to be caught and trapped into a totally new experience. But remember always: pure mind means no-mind, impure means mind.

By putting these adjectives, impure and pure, he is compromising with you so that you don't become alerted too early and escape. You have to be allured, seduced. All great masters are seductive -- that is their art. They seduce you in such a way that slowly slowly, you are ready to drink anything, whatsoever they give. First they supply you with ordinary water, then slowly slowly, wine has to be mixed in it. Then water has to be withdrawn...and one day you are completely drunk. But it has to be a very slow process.

As you go deeper into the sutras you will understand. Impure mind means mind, pure mind means no-mind. And happiness will follow you if you have a pure mind or no mind....
HAPPINESS WILL FOLLOW YOU AS YOUR SHADOW, UNSHAKABLE.

Misery is a by-product, so is bliss. Misery is a by-product of being asleep, bliss is a by-product of being awake. Hence you cannot seek and search for bliss directly, and those who seek and search for bliss directly are bound to fail, doomed to fail. Bliss can be attained only by those who don't seek bliss directly; on the contrary, they seek awareness. And when awareness comes, bliss comes of its own accord, just like your shadow, unshakable.

"LOOK HOW HE ABUSED ME AND BEAT ME,
HOW HE THREW ME DOWN AND ROBBED ME."
LIVE WITH SUCH THOUGHTS AND YOU LIVE IN HATE.

"LOOK HOW HE ABUSED ME AND BEAT ME,
HOW HE THREW ME DOWN AND ROBBED ME."
ABANDON SUCH THOUGHTS, AND LIVE IN LOVE.

Something of profound importance: hate exists with the past and the future -- love needs no past, no future. Love exists in the present. Hate has a reference in the past: somebody abused you yesterday and you are carrying it like a wound, a hangover. Or you are afraid that somebody is going to abuse you tomorrow -- a fear, a shadow of the fear. And you are already getting ready, you are getting prepared to encounter it.

Hate exists in the past and the future. You cannot hate in the present -- try, and you will be utterly impotent. Try it today: sit silently and hate somebody in the present, with no reference to the past or the future...you cannot do it. It cannot be done; in the very nature of things it is impossible. Hate can exist only if you remember the past: this man did something to you yesterday -- then hate is possible. Or this man is going to do something tomorrow -- then too hate is possible. But if you don't have any reference to the past or the future -- this man has not done anything to you and he is not going to do anything to you, this man is just sitting there -- how can you hate? But you can love.

Love needs no reference -- that's the beauty of love and the freedom of love. Hate is a bondage. Hate is imprisonment -- imposed by you upon yourself. And hate creates hate, hate provokes hate. If you hate somebody you are creating hate in that person's heart for yourself.

And the whole world exists in hate, in destructiveness, in violence, in jealousy, in competitiveness. People are at each other's throats either in reality, actuality, in action, or at least in their minds, in their thoughts, everybody is murdering, killing. That's why we have created a hell out of this beautiful earth -- which could have become a paradise.

Love, and the earth becomes a paradise again. And the immense beauty of love is that it has no reference. Love comes from you for no reason at all. It is your outpouring bliss, it is your sharing of your heart. It is the sharing of the song of your being. And sharing is so joyful -- hence one shares! Sharing for sharing's sake, for no other motive.

But what love you have known in the past is not the love Buddha is talking about or I am talking about. Your love is nothing but the other side of hate. Hence your love has reference: somebody has been beautiful to you yesterday, so nice he was that you feel great love for him. This is not love; this is the other side of hate -- the reference proves it. Or somebody is going to be nice to you tomorrow: the way he smiled at you, the way he talked to you, the way he invited you to his house tomorrow -- he is going to be loving to you. And great love arises.

This is not the love buddhas talk about. This is hate disguised as love -- that's why your love can turn into hate any moment. Scratch a person just a little bit, and the love disappears and hate arises. It is not even skin-deep. Even so-called great lovers are continuously fighting, continuously at each other's throats -- nagging, destructive. And people think this is love....

You can ask Astha and Abhiyana -- they are in such a love that Astha is having a black eye almost every day. Great fight! But when great fight goes on, people think something is happening. When nothing is happening -- no fight, no quarrel -- people feel empty. "It is better to be fighting than to be empty" -- that's the idea of millions of people in the world. At least the fight keeps you engaged, at least the fight keeps you involved, and the fight makes you important. Life seems to have some meaning -- ugly meaning, but at least some meaning.

Your love is not really love: it is its very opposite. It is hate disguised as love, camouflaged as love, parading as love. True love has no reference. It thinks not of the yesterdays, it thinks not of the tomorrows. True love is a spontaneous welling up of joy in you...and the sharing of it...and the showering of it...for no other reason, for no other motive, than just the joy of sharing it.

The birds singing in the morning, this cuckoo calling from the distance...for no reason. The heart is just so full of joy that a song bursts forth. When I am talking about love I am talking about such love. Remember it. And if you can move into the dimension of this love, you will be in paradise -- immediately. And you will start creating a paradise on the earth. Love creates love just as hate creates hate.

IN THIS WORLD
HATE NEVER YET DISPELLED HATE.
ONLY LOVE DISPELS HATE.
THIS IS THE LAW,
ANCIENT AND INEXHAUSTIBLE.

Aes dhammo sanantano -- this the law, eternal, ancient and inexhaustible.

What is the law? That hate never dispels hate -- darkness cannot dispel darkness -- that only love dispels hate. Only light can dispel darkness: love is light, the light of your being, and hate is the darkness of your being. If you are dark inside, you go on throwing hate all around you. If you are light within, luminous, then you go on radiating light around you.

A sannyasin has to be a radiant love, a radiant light.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO.... Buddha repeats this again and again -- this is the eternal law. What is the eternal law? Only love dispels hate, only light dispels darkness. Why? -- because darkness in itself is only a negative state; it has no positive existence of its own. It does not exist really -- how can you dispel it? You cannot do anything directly to darkness. If you want to do anything to darkness you will have to do something with light. Bring light in and darkness is gone, take light out and darkness comes in. But you cannot bring darkness in or out directly -- you cannot do anything with darkness. Remember, you cannot do anything with hate either.

And that's the difference between moral teachers and religious mystics: moral teachers go on propounding the false law. They go on propounding, "Fight with darkness -- fight with hate, fight with anger, fight with sex, fight with this, fight with that!" Their whole approach is, "Fight the negative," while the real, true master teaches you the positive law: *aes dhammo sanantano* -- the eternal law, "Do not fight with darkness." And hate is darkness, and sex is darkness, and jealousy is darkness, and greed is darkness and anger is darkness.

Bring the light in....

How is the light brought in? Become silent, thoughtless, conscious, alert, aware, awake -- this is how light is brought in. And the moment you are alert, aware, hate will not be found. Try to hate somebody with awareness....

These are experiments to be done, not just words to be understood -- experiments to be done. That's why I say don't try to understand only intellectually: become existential experimenters.

Try to hate somebody consciously and you will find it impossible. Either consciousness disappears, then you can hate; or if you are conscious, hate disappears. They can't exist together. There is no coexistence possible: light and darkness cannot exist together -- because darkness is nothing but the absence of light.

The true masters teach you how to attain to God; they never say renounce the world. Renunciation is negative. They don't tell you to escape from the world, they teach you to escape into God. They teach you to attain to truth, not to fight with lies. And lies are millions. If you go on fighting it will take millions of lives, and still nothing will be attained. And truth is one; hence truth can be attained instantly, this very moment it is possible.

YOU TOO SHALL PASS AWAY.
KNOWING THIS, HOW CAN YOU QUARREL?

Life is so short, so momentary, and you are wasting it in quarreling? Use the whole energy for meditation -- it is the same energy. You can fight with it or you can become a light through it.

HOW EASILY THE WIND OVERTURNS A FRAIL TREE.
SEEK HAPPINESS IN THE SENSES,
INDULGE IN FOOD AND SLEEP,
AND YOU TOO WILL BE UPROOTED.

Buddha says: Remember, if you depend on the senses you will remain very fragile -- because senses cannot give you strength. They cannot give you strength because they cannot give you a constant foundation. They are constantly in flux; everything is changing. Where can you have a shelter? Where can you make a foundation?

One moment this woman looks beautiful and another moment another woman. If you just decide by the senses, you will be a constant turmoil -- you cannot decide because senses go on changing their opinions. One moment something seems so incredible, and another moment it is just ugly, unbearable. And we depend on these senses.

Buddha says: Don't depend on senses -- depend on awareness. Awareness is something hidden behind the senses. It is not the eye that sees. If you go to the eye specialist he will say it is the eye that sees, but that is not true. The eye is only a mechanism -- through which somebody else sees. The eye is only a window; the window cannot see. When you stand at the window, you can look outside. Somebody passing in the street may think, "The window is seeing me." The eye is only a window, an aperture. Who is behind the eye?

The ear does not hear -- who is behind the ear who hears? Who is the one who feels? Go on searching for that and you will find some foundation; otherwise, your life will be just a dry leaf in the wind.

THE WIND CANNOT OVERTURN A MOUNTAIN.
TEMPTATION CANNOT TOUCH THE MAN
WHO IS AWAKE, STRONG AND HUMBLE,
WHO MASTERS HIMSELF AND MINDS THE LAW.

Meditation will make you awake, strong *and* humble. Meditation will make you awake because it will give you the first experience of yourself. You are not the body, you are not the mind -- you are the pure witnessing consciousness. And when this witnessing consciousness is touched, a great awakening happens -- as if a snake was sitting coiled up and suddenly it uncoils, as if somebody was asleep and has been shaken and awakened. Suddenly a great awakening inside: for the first time you feel *you are*. For the first time you feel the truth of your being.

And certainly it makes you strong; you are no longer fragile, not like a frail tree that any wind can overturn. Now you become a mountain! Now you have a foundation, now you are rooted -- no wind can overturn a mountain. You become awake, you become strong, and still you become humble. This strength does not bring any ego in you. You become humble because you become aware that the same witnessing soul exists in everybody, even in animals, birds, plants, rocks.

These are only different ways of sleeping! Somebody sleeps on the right side, and somebody sleeps on the left side, and somebody sleeps on the back...these are only different ways of sleeping. A rock has its own way of sleep, a tree a different way of sleep, a bird still a different way -- but only differences in the ways and methods of sleeping; otherwise deep down at the core of every being is the same witnessing, the same God. That makes you humble. Even before a rock you know you are nobody special, because the whole existence is made of the same stuff called consciousness. And if you are awake, strong, and humble, this gives you a mastery over yourself.

IF A MAN'S THOUGHTS ARE MUDDY,
IF HE IS RECKLESS AND FULL OF DECEIT,
HOW CAN HE WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE?

Buddha chose for his sannyasins the yellow robe, just as I have chosen the orange. That is the difference between my approach and the Buddha's approach. Yellow represents death -- the yellow leaf. Yellow represents the setting sun, the evening.

Buddha emphasized death too much -- that's a way. If you emphasize death too much, it helps: people become more and more aware of life in contrast to death. And when you emphasize death again and again and again, you help people to awaken. They have to be awake because death is coming. Whenever a new sannyasin would be initiated by Buddha, he would tell him, "Go to the cemetery -- and just be there and go on watching funeral pyres, dead bodies being carried, burned...go on watching. And go on remembering this is going to happen to you too. Three months' meditation on death, then come back." That was the beginning of sannyas.

There are only two possible ways. One is, emphasize death; the other is, emphasize life. Because these are the only two things in existence -- life and death. Buddha chose death as a symbol; hence the yellow robe.

The orange represents life; it is the color of blood. It represents the morning sun, the early dawn, the eastern sky becoming red. My emphasis is on life. But the purpose is the same. I want you to be so passionately in love with life that your very passion for life makes you aware, your very intensity to live it makes you awake.

And death is in the future, and life is now, so if you think of death you will be thinking of the future. If you think of death it will be an inference: you will see somebody else dying, you will never see yourself dying. You can imagine, you can infer, you can think, but this will be a thinking.

Life need not be thought, it can be lived. It can help you to be mindless more than death can. Hence my choice is far better than Buddha's choice, because life is right now; you need not go to a cemetery. All that you need is to be alert and life is everywhere...in the flowers, in the birds, in the people around you, the children laughing...and in you!...and right now! You need not think about it, you need not infer it. You can just close your eyes and feel it -- you can feel the tickle of it, you can feel the beat of it.

But both methods can be used: death can be used for you to become a meditator, or life can be used -- my choice is life. And I emphasize and repeat that my choice is far better than Buddha's. Buddha's choice of death as a symbol helped this whole country to become dead, dull, insipid. My choice of life as the symbol can revive this country -- not only this country but the whole world -- because it is not only the Buddha who has chosen death as a symbol, Christianity has also chosen death as a symbol -- the cross. So the two greatest religions of the world, Christianity and Buddhism, are death-oriented. And because of these two religions.... And their impact has been the greatest: Christianity has transformed the whole West, and Buddhism has transformed the whole East.

Jesus and Buddha have been the two greatest teachers, but the choice of death as a symbol has been dangerous, has been a calamity. I choose life. I would like this whole earth to be full of life, more and more life, pulsating life. But what Buddha says about his yellow robe I would also say about my orange robe. He says: IF A MAN'S THOUGHTS ARE MUDDY, IF HE IS RECKLESS AND FULL OF DECEIT, HOW CAN HE WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE?

WHOEVER IS MASTER OF HIS OWN NATURE,
BRIGHT, CLEAR AND TRUE,
HE MAY INDEED WEAR THE ORANGE ROBE.

What he says about the yellow robe, I say about the orange robe: WHOEVER IS...BRIGHT, CLEAR AND TRUE, HE MAY INDEED WEAR THE ORANGE ROBE.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #2

Chapter title: An empty chair

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
AN EMPTY CHAIR
A SILENT HALL
AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHA --
HOW ELOQUENT!
HOW RARE!

Yes, Subhuti, that's the only way to introduce the Buddha to you. Silence is the only language he can be expressed in. Words are too profane, too inadequate, too limited. Only an empty space...utterly silent...can represent the being of a buddha.

There is a temple in Japan, absolutely empty, not even a statue of the Buddha in the temple, and it is known as a temple dedicated to Buddha. When visitors come and they ask, "Where is the Buddha? The temple is dedicated to him..." the priest laughs and he says, "This empty space, this silence -- this is Buddha!"

Stones cannot represent him, statues cannot represent him. Buddha is not a stone, not a statue. Buddha is not a form -- Buddha is a formless fragrance. Hence, it was not just accidental that ten days' silence preceded these talks on Buddha. That silence was the only possible preface.

Subhuti, you are right: "An empty chair..." Yes, only an empty chair can represent him. This chair *is* empty, and this man talking to you is empty. It is an empty space pouring itself into you. There is nobody within, just a silence.

Because you cannot understand silence, it has to be translated into language. It is because of *your* limitation that I have to speak; otherwise there is no need. Truth cannot be said, has never been said, will never be said. All scriptures talk *about* truth, go on talking about it, about and about, but no scripture has yet been capable of expressing it -- neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran -- because it is impossible in the very nature of things to express it.

It cannot be said -- it can only be shown. It cannot be logically proved, but love can prove it. Where logic fails, love succeeds. Where language fails, silence succeeds.

I cannot prove it, but the absence of the 'I' within me can become an absolute proof for it. If you want to understand Buddha, really, you will have to come closer and closer to this silence that I am, you will have to become more and more intimate, available, vulnerable, to this nobody who is talking to you.

I am not a person. The person died long ago. It is a presence -- an absence and a presence. I am absent as a person, as an individual; I am present as a vehicle, a passage, a hollow bamboo. It can become a flute -- only the hollow bamboo can become a flute.

I have given myself to the whole. Now whatsoever the will of the whole...if he wants to speak through me, I am available; if he does not want to speak through me, I am available. His will is the only will now. I have no will of my own.

That's why many times you will find contradictions in my statements -- because I cannot change anything. God is contradictory because God is a paradox. He contains the polar opposites: he is darkness and light, summer and winter, life and death. Sometimes he speaks as life and sometimes as death, and sometimes he comes as summer and sometimes as winter...what can I do?

If I interfere, I will misrepresent. If I try to be consistent then I will be false. I can be true only if I will remain available to all the contradictions that God contains.

This chair, Subhuti, is certainly empty. And the day you are able to see this chair empty, this body empty, this being empty, you will have seen me, you will have contacted me. That is the real moment when the disciple meets the master. It is a dissolution, a disappearance...the dewdrop slipping into the ocean, or the ocean slipping into the dewdrop. It is the same! -- the master disappearing into the disciple and the disciple disappearing into the master. And then there prevails a profound silence.

It is not a dialogue! That's where Eastern religions, particularly Buddhism, have reached higher pinnacles than Christianity, Judaism, Islam -- because Islam, Judaism, Christianity, remain clinging somehow to the idea of a dialogue. But a dialogue presupposes duality, twoness. Islam, Christianity, Judaism, are religions of prayer. Prayer presupposes that there is a God separate from you, that you can address him.

Hence Martin Buber's book became very famous -- I AND THOU. That is the essence of prayer. But 'I' and 'thou'...a duality is needed for a dialogue. And howsoever beautiful the dialogue may be, it is still a division, a split; it is not yet union. The river has not entered into the ocean. Maybe it has come very close, just on the verge, but it is holding back.

Buddhism is not the religion of prayer, it is the religion of meditation. And that's the difference between prayer and meditation: prayer is a dialogue, meditation is a silence. Prayer has to be addressed to somebody -- real, unreal, but it has to be addressed to somebody. Meditation is not an address at all; one has simply to fall into silence, one has simply to disappear into nothingness. When one is not, meditation is.

And Buddha is meditation -- that is his flavor. These ten days we remained silent, we remained in meditation. The real thing has been said. Those who have not heard the real thing, now for them I will be speaking.

The meditation that prevailed for ten days was with a difference -- and that is the difference between Buddha's and my approach -- a little difference, but of tremendous import. And that has to be understood by you, because I am not a mere commentator on Buddha. I am not only echoing him, I am not simply a mirror to reflect him; I am a response, not a reflection. I am not a scholar, I am not going to make a scholarly analysis of his

statements -- I am a poet!

I have seen the same nothingness that he has seen, and, certainly, I have seen it in my own way. Buddha has his own way, I have my own way -- of seeing, of being. Both ways reach the same peak, but the ways are different. My way has a little difference -- little, but of profound import, remember.

These ten days were not only of silent meditation -- these ten days were of music, silence, and meditation. Music is my contribution to it. Buddha would not have allowed it. On that point we would have quarreled. He would not have allowed music; he would have said that music is a disturbance. He would have insisted on pure silence, he would have said that is enough. But that is where we agree to disagree.

To me, music and meditation are two aspects of the same phenomenon. And without music, meditation lacks something; without music, meditation is a little dull, unalive. Without meditation, music is simply noise -- harmonious, but noise. Without meditation, music is an entertainment. And without music, meditation becomes more and more negative, tends to be death-oriented.

Hence my insistence that music and meditation should go together. That adds a new dimension -- to both. Both are enriched by it.

Remember three M's just as you remember three R's. The first M is mathematics; mathematics is the purest science. The second M is music; music is pure art. And the third M is meditation; meditation is pure religion. Where all these three meet, you attain the trinity.

My approach is scientific. Even if I make illogical statements, I make them very very logically. Even if I assert paradoxes, they are asserted in a logical way. Whatever I am saying has a mathematics behind it, a method, a certain scientific approach. I am not an unscientific person. My science serves my religion; the science is not the end but it is a beautiful beginning.

And my approach is artistic, aesthetic. I cannot help you unless this energy field becomes musical. Music is pure art. And if it is joined with mathematics, it becomes a tremendously powerful instrument to penetrate into your interiority. Of course, it will not be complete unless meditation is the highest peak, the purest religion.

And we are trying to create the ultimate synthesis. This is my trinity: mathematics, music, meditation. This is my *trimurti* -- three faces of God. You can attain to God through one face, but then your experience of God will not be so rich as it will be when you attain two faces. But it will still lack something unless you attain all the three faces. When you know God as a trinity, when you have come through all the three dimensions, your experience, your nirvana, your enlightenment, will be the richest.

Buddha insists on meditation alone; that is one face of God. Mohammed insists on prayer, music, singing; hence the Koran has the quality of music in it. No other scripture has so much music in it as the Koran. The very word *koran* simply means "Recite! Sing!" That was the first revelation to Mohammed. Something from the beyond called forth and said, "Recite! Recite! Sing!"

Islam is another face of God. And there are religions which have approached God through the third M: mathematics. Jainism is the purest representative of the third approach. Mahavira speaks like Albert Einstein. It is not an accident that Mahavira was the first person in human history to talk about the theory of relativity. After twenty-five centuries, Albert Einstein was able to prove it scientifically, but Mahavira saw it in his vision.

If you read Mahavira, his statements are absolutely logical, mathematical. Jaina scriptures have no juice in them -- dry, arithmetical. That is another face of God. And only three kinds

of religion have existed in the world: the religions of mathematics, represented by Jainism; the religions of music, represented by Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism; and the religions of meditation, represented by Buddhism, Taoism.

My effort here is to give you a total religion, which contains all the three M's in it. It is a very ambitious adventure. It has never been tried before; hence I am going to be opposed as nobody has ever been opposed before. You are moving with a dangerous person, but the journey is going to be of tremendous beauty. Dangers, hazards don't make a journey ugly; on the contrary, they make it tremendously beautiful. All the dangers that you will have to face with me are going to give you a thrill. The journey is not going to be dull, it is going to be very alive. We are going to move towards God in such a multidimensional way that each moment of the journey is going to be precious.

I started these Buddha lectures with a ten-day silence deliberately. It was a device to start with silence -- Buddha would have been very happy. He must have shrugged his shoulders a little bit because of the music, but what can I do? It can't be helped.

My religion has to be a religion of dance, love, laughter. It has to be life-oriented, it has to be life-affirmative. It has to be a love affair with life. It is not a renunciation but a rejoicing.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IT IS ABOUT THIS FEELING THAT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE, AND AS SOON AS I FEEL IT, IT SEEMS SO FAR AWAY -- BUT WHAT IS THIS "IT"?

Deva Prashantam, it is one of the perennial problems encountered by every seeker of truth. You cannot grasp truth -- if you try, it will be far far away. You cannot possess truth -- if you try, you will find your hands utterly empty. Truth cannot be possessed because it is not a thing. On the contrary, you have to be courageous enough to be possessed by truth -- because it is a love affair.

Allow yourself to be possessed by it and you will know what it is. But you have been doing just the contrary: you have been trying to have a grip on it. That's what mind always longs for, desires. That's what mind calls "understanding." Unless the mind is capable of catching hold of something, the mind is not satisfied.

But truth is mercurial: if you try to hold it in your hands, the firmer the grip, the more elusive it will become, and the farthest -- so far away that you will stop believing in it, trusting in it...so far away that you will not be able to see that it exists at all.

Truth comes; it cannot be brought. Truth happens; you cannot do anything about it -- because the doer is the problem, the hindrance, the obstacle. The doer is the ego. And if you somehow manage and don't allow the doer to interfere, it comes by the back door -- as the one who experiences, as an observer, as an experiencer. It is the same ego again, in new garments.

That's why when you feel it, it is lost -- the doer has come now as a feeler. The doer has to be dissolved totally; it has not to be allowed back in some subtle way, in some secret way.

Let the truth be! Don't be in a hurry to understand it or to feel it -- just let it be there. You need not do *anything* about it. If you can remain in such a state of nondoing, of no-effort, of no-ego, you will understand, you will feel, you will know, you will have it. It can only be had indirectly, not directly.

Prashantam, that's where you are missing it. And that's where everybody misses it. Yes,

there are moments when suddenly it is so close by...you would like to grab it. The very desire to grab comes out of greed, the very desire to grab comes out of fear. The very desire to grab is a mind desire. And as the mind enters in, truth goes out.

Can't you simply be silent, not doing anything at all -- not on the intellectual level, not on the physical level, not on the emotional level -- doing nothing at all, just being there, utterly quiet? And then you will be possessed by it. And the only way to know it is to be possessed by it.

You say, "It is about this feeling that it has always been there...."

Yes, it *has* always been there. It is our very being. It is the stuff we are made of. Truth is not something separate from you: you *are* truth. It is your very consciousness, the very ground of your being. You need not go anywhere else to seek and search, to Kashi or to Kaaba. Not even a single step is needed.

Lao Tzu says: You can find it sitting in your own house, no need to go anywhere -- because it is already there! When you go on a search, when you move into seeking, you go farther away from it. Each search takes you away from the truth that is already there.

And there are moments when you feel it, that it has always been there -- moments of joy, love, beauty. Moments when suddenly the world stops: a beautiful sunset...and you are gripped by it. Remember I am saying you are gripped by it, possessed by it, not that *you* possess it. How can you possess a sunset? The sunset possesses you, fills you; every nook and corner of your being is overflowing with the beauty of it.

And then one knows, deep down in the depths of one's being, it has always been there. Not even the words are needed; one simply knows without words -- one feels.

Or, when you are in love...or when you listen to beautiful poetry...or the songs of the birds...or just the wind blowing through the pine trees...or the sound of water.... Whenever you allow yourself to be possessed you will find, suddenly, out of nowhere, truth has appeared, God has appeared, dhamma has appeared. You have touched something intangible, you have seen something invisible. You have been in contact with something eternal...*aes dhammo sanantano* -- the eternal law, the inexhaustible law.

Whenever you are in a state of harmony, everything humming, functioning in harmony, whenever you are in accord...and these moments happen to everybody. These moments have nothing to do with churches and the temples and the mosques. In fact, it is very rare to find a person becoming enlightened in a church or in a mosque, in a temple.

Buddha became enlightened under a tree, watching the last morning star disappearing in the sky; not in a temple, not in a church -- under a tree, watching a star. Must have become possessed. And the disappearing star, slowly slowly disappearing...going, going, gone. One moment before it was there, and now it is no longer there. And in that moment, suddenly something in him, the last citadel of the ego, disappeared too. Just like the disappearing morning star, his ego disappeared too.

The sky was empty, and he was empty. And whenever two things are empty, they become one -- because two empty things cannot be demarcated. By what will you demarcate emptiness? Two nothings cannot be kept separate; two nothings become one nothing. The star disappeared there, and the sky was empty, and the ego disappeared inside and the sky was empty inside too...and suddenly the inner and the outer were gone. It was only one sky.

That moment Buddha became enlightened. That moment he came to know dhamma, the logos, the tao, God, the cosmic principle of life.

Mahavira became enlightened, not in a temple -- not even in a Jaina temple! There were Jaina temples in Mahavira's time. Mahavira was the twenty-fourth *tirthankara* of the Jains --

the twenty-fourth great master. Twenty-three masters had preceded him. There were Jaina temples, but he didn't become enlightened in a Jaina temple -- the Jainas should note the fact. He became enlightened in the forest. Just sitting there, doing nothing, and suddenly it came. It comes like a flood.

Mohammed became enlightened on a mountain. And so is the case with everybody: Lao Tzu, Zarathustra, Kabir, Nanak...not a single person has ever become enlightened in a temple, church or mosque. Why do you go there?

Go early in the morning to see the sunrise. Sit in the middle of the night watching the sky full of stars. Go, befriend trees and rocks. Go, lie down by the side of the river and listen to its sound. And you will be coming closer and closer to the real temple of God. Nature is his real temple. And there, be possessed -- don't try to possess. The effort to possess is worldly; the desire to be possessed is divine.

Prashantam, next time it happens, don't try to do anything about it. No need to understand, no need to observe, no need to examine, no need to analyze -- let it be there! Be possessed by it! Dance it! Sing it! And be totally one with it. That is the only way to know it.

You ask me, "It is about this feeling that it has always been there" -- the feeling is absolutely true -- "and as soon as I feel it, it seems so far away." Because with the feeling, the 'T' comes in -- and the 'T' is the distance between you and truth. The bigger the 'T', the bigger the distance, the smaller the 'T', the smaller the distance. No 'T', no distance. And you ask me, "...but what is this 'it'?"

I cannot say it. It is *now*. Be possessed! It is *here*. Be possessed! It is not in my words but in the gaps. It is not in my statements but in the intervals. Read it between the lines.

But remember one thing very very significant: that you have to be possessed by it to understand it. And we are very much afraid of being possessed -- it seems as if we are losing control, it seems as if we are dissolving. "Who knows where it will land us? Who knows whether I will be able to come back from it or not?"

All these fears arise and you shrink back. And that is the moment you create the distance. The distance is your creation. Otherwise, it is always here, it is always now. Don't create the distance, don't bring fear in.

In all the languages of the world there are words for religious people like 'God-fearing' -- ugly words, absolute lies, because a religious person is not a God-fearing person at all. A religious person is a God-loving person, not a God-fearing person. But the priest depends on fear, he exploits your fear, and he creates fear in you. His whole business depends on whether you are afraid.

Drop your fears. There is no need to be afraid of God. God simply means the totality, the whole, that which is. We are part of it! How can the part be afraid of the whole? The whole cares for the part, the whole loves the part, because the whole will not be the whole without the part. It cannot be indifferent to the part.

Knowing this, one trusts. Knowing this, one allows the whole to possess. Knowing this, one drops all fears, one surrenders. And only in surrender it is, only in trust it is.

I can indicate towards it, but I cannot explain it to you. And it is already happening to you, Prashantam. You are blessed. Just stop your ways of creating distance between you and it. And that can be easily done: just take a little risk, a step into the unknown.... Fear will be there -- in spite of it, go into the unknown. Let the fear be there -- still go into the unknown. Only by going into the unknown will the fear disappear, because you will come to know there is nothing to fear.

And once you are enchanted by the unknown, then there is no end to this pilgrimage -- it

is an eternal journey, never-ending, always ongoing; it is inexhaustible. *aes dhammo sanantano* -- it is eternal and inexhaustible....

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS YOUR HOBBY?

Anando, I have none. I don't need any. A hobby is needed to keep you occupied. When you are tired of your ordinary occupation -- and naturally one gets tired of earning bread and butter -- when you are tired of your ordinary occupation there are only two alternatives. Either be unoccupied...which creates great fear in you, because to be unoccupied means to be with oneself, to be utterly alone with oneself. It is to face one's own abysmal depth -- it frightens, it scares. It means to face one's life and one's death, it means to face one's own interiority -- which is infinite, so vast you cannot comprehend it. And the very vastness frightens. A great trembling arises in you.

The one alternative is: meditate when you are unoccupied with your ordinary business. The other alternative is: get occupied again in some foolish activity, and call it a hobby.

A few people collect postage stamps -- now, see the stupidity of it -- and they call it a hobby. And all hobbies are like that. These are ways and means to keep escaping from yourself.

I am utterly blissful with myself. To be alone, to be, without doing anything, is such a profound experience that if once you have tasted it you will drop all these stupid activities called hobbies. Hobbies are pseudo occupations. When real occupations are not there, you get into pseudo occupations. Now, see the foolishness of it. Six days of the week you are waiting for Sunday -- so that you can relax, so that you can rest, so that you can be with yourself. You are tired of the world; the world is too much with you. You are tired of people, you are tired of everything. And you are hoping Sunday will come soon, and when Sunday comes you are again occupied -- now it is your hobby. You cannot remain unoccupied; that is your problem.

And it often happens that a person is more tired after Sunday than after any other day, because of so many hobbies, and going for a picnic, and driving, and doing a thousand and one things for which you have been waiting for six days. And you were thinking you were going to rest?

You cannot rest! You don't know how to rest. You cannot relax -- you don't know how to relax. Even in the name of relaxation you will get into some work, some kind of work; even in the name of rest you will start some kind of work. Simply because you are not paid for it, does it become rest? You will play cards or chess. You are not paid for it, that's true, but that doesn't make much difference; it is only unpaid work.

Rather than searching for hobbies, use the opportunities. Whenever you are capable of having a time empty, utterly unoccupied, with yourself, remain...remain in it, don't move out of it. Don't start collecting stamps.

Two old Jewish men were sitting on a park bench. "Well, what do you do now that you are retired?" asked one.

"I have a hobby: I raise pigeons," replied the other.

"Pigeons? Where do you keep them? You live in a condominium!"

"I keep them in a closet."

"In your closet? Don't they shit on your shoes and on your clothes?"

"No," said the man. "I keep them in a box."

"In a box? How do they breathe?"

"Breathe? They don't breathe," said the man, "they are dead."

"Dead?" exclaimed the friend, shocked. "You keep dead pigeons?"

"What the hell, it is only a hobby!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THIS MORNING WHEN YOU ADDRESSED US "MY BELOVED BODHISATTVAS," IT FELT AT THAT MOMENT AS THOUGH IT WERE ACTUALLY TRUE. BUT LATER ON, EVEN A POSSIBILITY THAT WE ONE DAY WILL BECOME BODHISATTVAS SEEMED LIKE A DREAM....

Sheela, it is a truth -- that's why when uttered with trust, with love, it immediately strikes something deep in your heart, it rings a bell. But it is because of my trust that it rings a bell. I say again: You *are* bodhisattvas -- buddhas in essence, in seed, in potentiality.

When I say it, I mean it. When I say it, I say it because it is so. And in that moment you are so in tune with me that it appears absolutely true; no proof is needed, no argument is needed.

I need not argue for the truths that I utter. In fact, no truth ever needs any argument; it is simple, but it immediately rings a bell. The only thing needed is that it should come from the heart, then it reaches your heart.

I am not talking from my head. I am pouring my being into your being. It is a meeting of energies. It is a meeting of souls. Hence, when you are with me, it appears absolutely true -- you cannot doubt it, it is impossible. But when you are alone and I am not there, doubts arise. Your old mind comes back, with a vengeance, and says, "Sheela, you, and a bodhisattva? And what about your love with Veetrag? -- and you, a bodhisattva? And what about your jealousies, and what about your anger, and what about all that you are? You a bodhisattva? He must have been joking; he tricked you!" Great doubts arise because they are always there in your mind.

It is like you come with me, we go along, we walk side by side for the time being. I have a light in my hand, but because of my light, your path is also lighted. Then the moment comes when we part -- we have to part; a crossroad has come, our paths separate. I move in one direction, you move in another. Suddenly you are in darkness and you are very much puzzled: "What happened to the light?"

That light was not yours. Of course, your path was lighted, but the light was not yours. So when you are with me, there is a light surrounding you. In that light, things are very clear. When you are not with me suddenly there is darkness, and in that darkness you will doubt everything that you had trusted, and in that darkness you will doubt even the possibility of light. You will doubt even the reality of the light that you had lived just a few moments before. Your mind will say, "You must have been dreaming. You must have been hallucinating. What light? Where is the light? If it was there, where has it gone?"

And this will happen again and again. This has a deep significance to be understood. When you are with me, here, listening to me, sitting by my side, the situation can remain the same even when you are not physically with me. You will have to go a little deeper in your

love, so that even if physically you are far away, spiritually you are not. Then the trust will continue. Then doubts will not dare to come in.

Right now doubts come in because you have a certain love for me but it is not yet total. There are spaces within your being you have not allowed access to me yet. And this is not only so with Sheela, it is so with many of you. You are keeping a few corners still hidden, separate, private, of your own. You have not opened your heart totally, you are not utterly naked. And if you are hiding something, then whatsoever you are hiding will remain a distance between me and you.

So when you are here, under my impact, when you are here physically with me, my presence can put your mind aside. But when you are not physically with me, your mind will come back -- you have not put it aside! Learn a lesson: when you go away from me, when you cannot see me, try to still be with me. Imbibe the spirit of closeness, intimacy -- then even death cannot separate us. Then there is no question of space and time. Then you are with me forever. And the trust will persist, and the trust will continue; it will become a constant factor in you. The *only* thing that will be constant will be your trust. Everything else will change, but not the trust.

You will have found the center of your being. And that finding is arriving home.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THERE IS SO MUCH NONSENSE ABOUT YOUR TEACHINGS AND THE
ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ASHRAM IN THE PRESS RECENTLY. IT SOMEHOW
INFURIATES ME BECAUSE IT SEEMS SO FAR FROM THE ACTUAL FACTS.
LETTERS IN RESPONSE TO THE CONTRARY ARE NOT BEING PUBLISHED. NOW,
I KNOW THIS MUST MAKE NO DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER TO YOU. IS THIS
THEN WHAT JESUS MEANS WHEN HE SAYS TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK?

Zareen, it is as it should be. A man like me cannot remain unopposed. A man like me is bound to divide people into two categories: those who are with me and those who are not with me.

Just the other day, an old friend wrote a letter to me suggesting.... Right now there are only two kinds of people: those who are devotees, who are utterly in love with me, and those who are enemies, full of hatred for me. He wants to create a third category of people who are neither devotees nor enemies, but impartial thinkers.

His idea looks logical, but it is not possible. It has never happened, and it is not going to happen. It cannot happen. In fact, he himself is finding it difficult to become a sannyasin. He has been an old friend and he feels it a little difficult to surrender now as a disciple. He cannot be a devotee and he cannot be an enemy either. He knows me, he loves me; he has been a friend of long standing. So it is really his problem.

He cannot surrender because of his ego that he was a friend to me, a colleague. He cannot be against me because he feels for me. Now he is in a jam, so he wants to find a way out; he wants to create a third force -- people who are neither for nor against but impartial. Those people will be impotent. And I am not interested in impartial people. I am not interested in the third force at all, for a certain reason: because they will be utterly cold. I am far more interested in people who have a very strong hatred for me -- they are at least hot, and hot people are good people. They can be transformed; they are not ice-cold.

Those who are hotly in hate with me sooner or later will have become devotees -- because you cannot live in hate long. It hurts you. By hating me you cannot love me. Zareen, you are right, it doesn't matter at all to me. If the whole world hates me, it doesn't matter, it makes no difference. I remain in my absolute bliss.

My bliss cannot be affected by people's hatred, opposition. But think of those people who are living in hatred -- they are torturing themselves, they are hurting themselves, they are wounding themselves. How long can they go on doing it? Sooner or later their wounds would like to heal. And sooner or later, their very heated antagonism itself will turn into a passionate love.

I am reminded, Zareen, of a beautiful story:

A Sufi mystic wrote a book on the Koran. It was opposed by all the authorities, by the official religion. They banned it, they made it a crime to read it. It was sacrilegious, they thought, dangerous, because he was interpreting the Koran in such a way as nobody had ever interpreted it. He was going against the tradition.

He called his chief disciple, gave him the book, and told him to go the chief priest and present the book to him -- and watch everything. "Whatever happens, you have to report it correctly. So be very alert: whatsoever happens...when you give the book as a present, how he reacts, what he does, what he says, remember accurately because you have to report the whole scene. And let me tell you," the master told him, "that this is a kind of test for you. It is not only the question of giving the book to the chief priest and coming back; the whole point is reporting everything as it happens."

The man went, very alert, very cautious. Entering into the house of the chief priest, he made himself very alert, shook his body, because everything had to be observed minutely. Then he went in.

As he presented the book to the chief priest and told the name of his master, the priest threw the book out of the house, onto the road, and said, "Why didn't you tell me before that this is from that dangerous man? I would not even have touched it. I will have to wash my hands now. It is a sin to touch his book!"

The wife of the chief priest was sitting by his side. She said, "You are being unnecessarily hard on the poor man. He has not done any harm to you. Even if you wanted to throw the book, you could have thrown it later on. And I don't see the point in throwing it because you have a big library -- thousands of books are there; this book can also be kept in the library. If you don't want to read it, there is no need to read it. But you could have done at least one thing: you could have thrown it afterwards, washed your hands, taken a bath, or whatsoever you wanted to do -- but why are you hurting this poor man?"

The man went back, told the master the whole thing as it happened, in minute detail. The master asked, "What is your reaction, then?"

The man said, "My reaction is that the wife of the chief priest is a very religious woman. I felt much respect for her. And the chief priest is simply ugly -- I wanted to cut his throat!"

The master said, "Now listen: I am more interested in the chief priest -- he can be converted because he is hot. If he can be so full of hate, he can also be so full of love, because it is the same energy that becomes hate or love. Love standing upside-down is hate -- love doing *shirshasana*, a headstand, is hate. But it is very easy to put a man back on his feet. As far as the wife is concerned, she is cold, ice-cold. I have no hope for her; she cannot be converted."

I totally agree with the Sufi master. Those who are against me, Zareen, why are they against me? Their hearts are stirred. Something has started happening to them, and they don't want it to happen. It is risky. I have started influencing their lives and they don't want to go with me.

Their whole investment is against it. They want to avoid me, and they see that they cannot avoid me -- they are becoming heated up. Hence the hatred; hence they are inventing all kinds of lies. But I have great hope for these people -- in fact, I love these people. Sooner or later they are going to end up with me.

The real problem is with those people who are indifferent, ice-cold, neither for nor against. I would like to divide the whole humanity into two camps: the friends and the enemies. And the more friends I have the more enemies are bound to be there. There is a certain balance in it; in life everything balances. If you have so many friends, you are bound to have so many enemies; otherwise the balance will be lost. If you have more friends, you will have more enemies; the balance has to be kept. Life continuously balances itself. I watch the whole scene and enjoy it.

Zareen, you need not be worried about it. But I can understand your concern.

You say, "There is so much nonsense about your teachings and the activities of your ashram in the press recently...."

There will be more and more every day, because more and more people are going to come to me. Millions are on the way. And the more people become interested in me and the work that is going on here, the more and more people become involved in it, the more and more people will be against it -- a kind of balance. It is how things happen in the world; it is a natural phenomenon.

And all kinds of nonsense is bound to be told, because the people who are against have never been here. If they had been here they would have not been against, so they live on rumors. And negative things have a way of their own: they spread more easily, faster, quicker, because the whole of humanity lives in negativity.

For example, just the other day I received a letter from Canada saying that the Canadian government is becoming concerned, very much concerned, about my sannyasins and the people coming to me from Canada. And they are seriously inquiring into the whole phenomenon, because they are afraid that my commune may turn into another Jonestown. Now, I feel happy, because when governments become concerned that means something *is* happening. When a faraway country becomes so much concerned that they are thinking of sending a team to investigate the whole phenomenon, that mean things are on the way, that I am becoming some kind of disturbance to them. I must be popping up in their dreams.

And on what grounds are they becoming so much afraid? Because one American sannyasin committed suicide, another American sannyasin went mad. These two instances are enough.... Now, Americans are all mad! And have you seen an American who has never pondered the possibility of committing suicide? The psychologists say that every American, at least four times in his life, thinks of committing suicide. The greatest rate of suicide is in America.

Out of one hundred thousand sannyasins, one sannyasin commits suicide -- that is enough! And that too an American sannyasin. What else were you expecting from an American sannyasin? Another American goes mad...it is absolutely normal! But the negative catches our attention immediately. How many Americans have gone sane, nobody bothers. And how many Americans have been prevented from committing suicide, nobody counts. They will never be counted.

And journalists, the press, and other media, they are also only interested in the negative things. Unless you do something wrong, you are not news. George Bernard Shaw says: If a dog bites a man, it is not news. But if a man bites a dog, it *is* news.

Something is newsworthy only if it is outlandish, if it is eye-catching.

You can go on doing a thousand and one things and nobody will take any note. Do only one thing wrong and the whole world suddenly becomes interested in you.

And then people are very inventive. When you tell a rumor to a person you add something to it. People are creative! And when that person shares the rumor with somebody else, do you think he will share it exactly as you told him? He will give it a new color, a little more depth, a little larger dimension. He will make it more attractive, he will exaggerate it. And it goes on and on from mouth to mouth.

Rumors have a way of spreading, and everybody contributes to them. They don't have anything that relates to the facts. But this is how it always happens. And then it continues.... I will be gone and the rumors will continue, and they will go on increasing. They become independent forces; they go on growing.

I have heard:

God has the blues. Saint Peter suggests a trip to Earth to pick up a nice Greek girl, possibly in the old swan suit. God says, "No. As long as I stuck to those Greek girls it was alright. But once I made the mistake of knocking up a Jewish girl, two thousand years ago, and I'll be damned if they aren't still talking about it!"

Rumors go on and on.... And what they are doing to me is nothing uncommon; it is expected. They have always done such things to Jesus, to Socrates, to Mansoor, to Buddha, to Kabir. If they don't do these things to me, *that* will be a surprise. In fact, I will not feel good if they don't do these things to me. I would like to be counted with the buddhas -- and that is the only way!

Jesus decided to return to earth. He had seen that in America there was a resurgence of Jesus freaks and born-again baptists, so he thought it was a good time to come. He brought Peter along with him.

When he came to Earth he made the announcement that he was Jesus, the Son of God. No one would believe him; they thought he was some kind of nut. So Jesus asked Peter, "How can I get them to believe me, to convince them that I am the true savior?"

Peter said, "Remember that trick you did in Galilee, when you walked across the water? I bet that would work."

So they made a press announcement that tomorrow Jesus would walk on water. On the next day, the television and newspapers were at the lake to watch Jesus walk on water. Jesus and Peter arrived and rowed out to the middle of the lake, then Jesus climbed over the side of the boat and immediately sank. When he came back up, Peter, in shock, asked, "What happened? Why did you sink?"

"Shut up, you fool!" said Jesus. "The last time I did this I didn't have these damned holes in my feet!"

Things are more difficult than they were in the time of Jesus and Buddha! But I am enjoying, I am having a good time. Zareen, don't be worried at all. My suggestion is: you should enjoy it.

You say, "It somehow infuriates me because it seems so far from the actual facts."

Don't feel infuriated, don't feel angry -- that won't help. My people have to learn to laugh at all these stupid things that are bound to become more and more intense. As my work deepens, more and more nonsense rumors will go around -- which will have nothing to do with the facts. Or, even if they have something to do with the facts, they will distort them.

People are going to invent many kinds of stories. If you become infuriated, in a way you help them. That's what they want. That's what they *want!* -- that if my people become infuriated, angry, then they can crush, destroy you. And, certainly, they can crush and they can destroy you. My people are very few, a chosen few.

Don't feel infuriated; otherwise you will be playing into their hands. When such things come to your notice, have a good laugh. Learn to laugh -- respond with laughter! Laughter has to be your protection. And your laughter will make them look stupid. When somebody says something against me, have a good laugh. Pat him on the back, hug him! Give him a good kiss!

That's what Jesus means, really: love your enemies. But I know, it is easy to love your enemies -- it is more difficult to love your neighbors. So I say, just as Jesus says, again: Love your neighbors. They are the same people! Hug your neighbors; don't just go on loving them spiritually -- express it. When somebody is saying some nonsense thing about me, express your love. Let him feel puzzled -- let him feel either he is mad or you are mad. He will never be able to figure it out, what happened -- why you hugged him. He was not saying such nice things about your master...why did you hug him? That might give him a longing to come and see the master too. When the disciple is doing such a thing it is worth taking the trouble to go and see what is happening there.

Zareen, no need to be angry.

And you say, "Letters in response to the contrary are not being published."

They will not be published, because the newspapers, the television, the radio, they are in the hands of the vested interests. They will publish everything that is against me, because some newspaper is owned by a Hindu, some newspaper is owned by a Jaina, some newspaper is owned by a Mohammedan, some newspaper is owned by a Christian -- and all the newspapers are owned by different kinds of politicians. Your letters will not be published. These things have to be taken for granted.

You say, "Now, I know this must make no difference whatsoever to you. Is this then what Jesus means when he says to turn the other cheek?"

Yes, that's exactly what Jesus means. That's the best way to transform people, to convert people. The best possible way to convert people to your own way is to give the other cheek. Love them. Laugh at their nonsensical statements. Enjoy their rumors. Make jokes out of them, and make them puzzled.

If you can do that much, you are doing my work, Zareen.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #3

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MISTAKING THE FALSE FOR THE TRUE
AND THE TRUE FOR THE FALSE,
YOU OVERLOOK THE HEART
AND FILL YOURSELF WITH DESIRE.

SEE THE FALSE AS FALSE,
THE TRUE AS TRUE.
LOOK INTO YOUR HEART.
FOLLOW YOUR NATURE.

AN UNREFLECTING MIND IS A POOR ROOF.
PASSION, LIKE THE RAIN, FLOODS THE HOUSE.
BUT IF THE ROOF IS STRONG, THERE IS SHELTER.

WHOEVER FOLLOWS IMPURE THOUGHTS
SUFFERS IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.
IN BOTH WORLDS HE SUFFERS,
AND HOW GREATLY,
WHEN HE SEES THE WRONG HE HAS DONE.

BUT WHOEVER FOLLOWS THE LAW
IS JOYFUL HERE AND JOYFUL THERE.
IN BOTH WORLDS HE REJOICES,
AND HOW GREATLY,
WHEN HE SEES THE GOOD HE HAS DONE.

FOR GREAT IS THE HARVEST IN THIS WORLD,
AND GREATER STILL IN THE NEXT.

HOWEVER MANY HOLY WORDS YOU READ,
HOWEVER MANY YOU SPEAK,
WHAT GOOD WILL THEY DO YOU

IF YOU DO NOT ACT UPON THEM?
ARE YOU A SHEPHERD
WHO COUNTS ANOTHER MAN'S SHEEP,
NEVER SHARING THE WAY?
READ AS FEW WORDS AS YOU LIKE
AND SPEAK FEWER.
BUT ACT UPON THE LAW.

GIVE UP THE OLD WAYS --
PASSION, ENMITY, FOLLY.
KNOW THE TRUTH AND FIND PEACE.
SHARE THE WAY.

Truth is. It needs no effort on your part to invent it. Truth has to be discovered, not invented. And what is hindering us from discovering it? We have been taught many lies, mountains of lies. Those are the barriers which go on falsifying the truth, which do not allow our hearts to reflect that which is.

Truth is not a logical conclusion. Truth is existence, reality. It is already here -- it has always been here. Only truth exists. Then why cannot we find it? How do we manage not to find it? Because from the very childhood we are taught falsities, prejudices, ideologies, religions, philosophies...all lead you astray.

Truth is not an idea. You need not be a Hindu to know it, or a Mohammedan, or a Christian. If you are a Hindu you will never know it; your very being a Hindu will keep you blind. What do we mean when we say, "I am a Hindu, or a Mohammedan, or a Jew"? We mean, "I have already got ideas about truth -- ideas from the Bible or the Koran or the Gita, but I have got ideas already. I don't know the truth, but I know much about it." And that knowing much about it is the only problem that has to be solved.

Once you drop your ideas about truth you will be confronting it, within and without both. You will be facing it -- because there is nothing else!

But the parents, the society, the state, the church, the educational system, they all depend on lies. As the child is born they start trapping it into lies. And the child is helpless. He cannot escape his parents, he is utterly dependent. You can exploit his dependence...and it has been exploited down the ages.

Nobody has been exploited so much as children -- neither the proletariat nor women, nobody has been exploited so much and so deeply and so destructively as the innocent children. Because they are helpless and dependent they *have* to learn whatsoever you teach them. They have to imbibe all the falsehoods that you go on forcing upon them. It is a question of survival for them -- they cannot survive without you. It is a question of life and death! They have to be Hindus, they have to be Mohammedans, they have to be Jainas, they have to be Buddhists, they have to be communists. Whatsoever you are interested in putting into their minds, you go on putting it in.

Instead of making them more alert, more aware, more alive, more reflective, instead of making them more mirrorlike, pure, you make them full of ideas...layers and layers of dust. And then it becomes impossible for them to see that which is. They start seeing that which is not and they stop seeing that which is.

Hence, to be really religious means a rebirth: again becoming like a child, dropping all that the society has given to you.

Religion is a rebellion -- a rebellion against all that has been forced upon you, a rebellion against being reduced to a computer. Just look inside! Whatsoever you know, you have been

told; it is not *your* knowing, it is not authentic. How can it be authentic if it is not yours? You are not a witness to it, you are just a victim -- a victim of circumstances.

It is just an accident to be born in India or to be born in England. It is just an accident to be born in a Hindu family or in a Christian family. Because of these accidents your essential nature has been lost -- you have been forced to lose it. If you want to regain it you will have to be reborn.

That's precisely what the meaning is when Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Unless you are born again you will not enter into the Kingdom of God." He does not mean that you actually have to die, commit suicide, and then be born again. That won't help, because again you will be born to some parents in a certain society, within a certain church, and again the same stupidity is going to be done to you.

Jesus means by 'rebirth' that deliberately, consciously, now you are capable of dropping all that has been taught to you. Drop your knowledge and become innocent. And that is the only way to become innocent. Knowledge is a contamination. To be in a state of not-knowing is innocence, and to function from that state is the only way to know the truth.

Meditate over these tremendously significant sutras of Gautama the Buddha. He says:

MISTAKING THE FALSE FOR THE TRUE
AND THE TRUE FOR THE FALSE,
YOU OVERLOOK THE HEART
AND FILL YOURSELF WITH DESIRE.

Mind is nothing but desire. The heart knows no desire. You will be surprised to hear it, that all desires belong to the head. The heart lives in the present; it pulsates, beats, in the herenow. It knows nothing of the past and it knows nothing of the future. It is always now, here.

And I am not talking about a certain philosophy. I am simply stating a fact so simple you can observe it within yourself: your heart is beating now. It cannot beat in the past, it cannot beat in the future. The heart only knows the present, hence it is utterly pure. It is not polluted by the past memories, by knowledge, by experience, by all that you have been told and taught, by the scriptures, by the traditions. It knows nothing of all that nonsense! And it knows nothing of the future, of the morrow. For it, past exists no more, the future not yet. It is *utterly* here. It is immediate.

But the mind is just the opposite of the heart: the mind is never now, here. Either it thinks of beautiful experiences of the past or it desires the same beautiful experiences in the future. It goes on shuttling between past and future, it never stops at the present. It is utterly unaware of the present. For the mind, the present exists not. See the point: the present is the only thing that exists, but for the mind the present is the only thing that exists not. Past is nonexistential, future is nonexistential, but those are the things which are existential for the mind.

The head is the problem...and the heart is the solution. The child functions from the heart. As you start growing, you start moving from the heart to the head. When you graduate from the university you have completely forgotten about the heart. You are hung up in the head, your whole energy has moved to the head. Now you don't know anything of reality. You are full of garbage -- scholarly garbage, academic nonsense. You may be a Ph.D., a D.Litt. You know much, knowing nothing at all! -- because real knowing happens in the heart, not in the head. And the universities exist to distract your energies from the heart to the head.

All the universities in the world up to now have been enemies of humanity. Their whole function is to serve the state and the church. They are agents of the status quo, they are agents

of the vested interests. They don't serve you, they serve the powers, the masters, the oppressors, the exploiters. Whosoever happens to be in power the universities serve. They are not in the service of humanity yet.

If they were really in the service of humanity, then the university would be the place to learn rebellion. The university would create revolutionaries. The university would not create conventionalists, conformists; the university would create nonconformists, nonconventional people. It would create rebels -- adventurous, ready to risk their lives for truth. That has not happened yet.

It is a sad fact that in the name of education something ugly is continued, something very ugly. Behind a facade, something very criminal continues. And this is the crime: that they divert your energies from the heart to the head, they destroy your capacity to love and they force you to learn logic. Logic is more important than love for them, thinking is more important than sensitivity. This is just putting the bullocks behind the cart. It is totally topsy-turvy.

That's why humanity is in such a mess: the untrue seems to be true and the true seems to be untrue. They have succeeded in distorting your vision. The buddhas have been fighting against all these vested interests.

Buddha says: **MISTAKING THE FALSE FOR THE TRUE AND THE TRUE FOR THE FALSE, YOU OVERLOOK THE HEART AND FILL YOURSELF WITH DESIRE.**

Mind is desire, and you go on filling yourself with more and more desire, more and more ambition, more and more longing for power, prestige, wealth. And you completely forget that there is a heart beating within you which already lives in God, which is already part of the ultimate law -- *aes dhammo sanantano* -- which is already part of the inexhaustible, eternal law. You are joined from the heart to God. Your hearts are the roots in the soil of God.

Your hearts are still being nourished by God, by truth, but you are not there. You have vacated the place. You live in your head. Day in, day out, you live in your head; you never descend from there. Even in the night while asleep you go on rumbling in the head...dreams, and dreams upon dreams. In the day thoughts, in the night dreams. They are not different.

The dream is only a translation of thinking in the language of sleep, and vice versa: thinking is nothing but a translation of dreaming in the language of the day. You go on moving between these two: dreaming and thinking. Both are desiring. What do you think? What is there to think except desire? And what do you dream except desire?

Buddha says the false appears to be true because you have become false to your own truth, to your own heart. Come back to the heart, and then you will be able to know the truth as the truth and the false as the false. That is enlightenment, that is coming home.

SEE THE FALSE AS FALSE.

But from where to begin? Begin from seeing the false as the false. That's why all the buddhas appear to be negative, all buddhas appear to be destructive. They negate. Jesus negates. He says again and again: It has been told to you in the past, but I say to you.... And he changes the whole standpoint.

For example, he says: It has been told to you in the past that tit for tat is the law. If somebody throws a brick at you, react by throwing a rock. But I say unto you, if somebody hits you on one cheek, give him the other cheek too. And if somebody takes away your coat, give him your shirt too. And if somebody forces you to go one mile with him, go two miles.

Mohammed is against all kinds of images of God, because his people were worshipping

for centuries; they had three hundred and sixty-five gods -- one god for every day of the year. The Kaaba of Mohammed's days was one of the greatest temples on the earth -- dedicated to three hundred and sixty-five gods! Mohammed destroyed all those idols. It looks negative....

Buddha says: There is no truth in the Vedas, in the Upanishads. Beware of beautiful words, beware of philosophic speculation. Don't waste your time with hairsplitting, with logic. Be silent! Throw the Vedas out of your head, only then can you be silent. He looks negative, he looks nihilistic, he looks dangerous -- but that is the only way you can be helped.

You have to be told the false is false. You have to begin with this: *neti, neti* -- neither this nor that. The master has to say to you, "This is false, that is false." He has to go on pointing out to you whatsoever is false first, because when you have known all that is false, suddenly a transformation happens in your consciousness. When you have become aware of the false, you start becoming aware of the true.

You cannot be taught what is truth, but you can certainly be taught what is not truth. You have been conditioned, you can be unconditioned. You have been hypnotized -- as Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Jinas.... The function of a master is to dehypnotize you. Once you are dehypnotized, suddenly you will be able to see the truth. The truth need not be taught.

SEE THE FALSE AS FALSE, THE TRUE AS TRUE.

LOOK INTO YOUR HEART.
FOLLOW YOUR NATURE.

One of the most significant statements ever: LOOK INTO YOUR HEART. FOLLOW YOUR NATURE. He is not saying follow scriptures. He is not saying follow me. He is not saying follow certain rules of conduct. He is not teaching you any morality. He is not trying to create a certain character around you, because all characters are beautiful prison cells. He is not giving you a certain way of life. Rather he is giving you courage, encouragement, to follow your own nature. He wants you to be brave enough to listen to your own heart and go accordingly.

"Follow your nature" means flow with yourself. *You* are the scripture...and hidden deep down within you is a still, small voice. If you become silent you will be guided from there.

The master has only to make you aware of your *inner* master. Then his function is fulfilled. Then he can leave you to yourself; he can throw you back upon yourself. A master is not to enslave the disciple; a master is to free him, to give him total freedom. And this is the only possibility of attaining total freedom: FOLLOW YOUR NATURE. By "nature" Buddha means dhamma. Just as it is the nature of water to flow downwards and it is the nature of fire to rise upwards, so there is a certain nature hidden in you. If all the conditionings that have been put around you by the society are removed, suddenly you will discover your nature. Your nature has become God. *Aes dhammo sanantano* -- this is the eternal, inexhaustible law: your nature is to become God.

Man is a potential god -- a bodhisattva. Man is *meant* to become a god. Less than that won't satisfy you, less than that is of no use. You can have all the money in the world, all the power, all the prestige possible, and still you will remain empty -- unless your divine nature flowers, opens its buds, unless you become a lotus, a one-thousand-petaled lotus, unless your divinity is revealed to you, you can never be contented.

The ordinary religious person is told to remain satisfied, contented, with whatsoever is the case. The so-called religious saints go on teaching people: Be satisfied. Satisfaction is one of

their fundamental teachings. That is not the way of the true masters.

The true master creates discontent in you -- and such a discontent that nothing of this world can ever satisfy it. He creates such a longing in you, that unless you attain to the ultimate you will remain aflame, afire. He creates pain in your heart, he creates anguish...because life is slipping by every moment, and each moment gone is gone forever, and you have not attained to God yet, and one day is over.

He creates such a deep longing in you, such pain in the heart! He creates tears in your eyes, because only through such divine discontent will you move, will you take the quantum leap, the ultimate jump into the unknown. It is only through such divine discontent that you will gather together all your energies, and you will risk, and you will go on the ultimate adventure of finding who you are.

Follow your own nature. Your nature is consciousness. But you have been told by the priests: follow certain rules of conduct, the ten commandments, follow certain principles -- not your nature. Priests are very much afraid of your nature, because if you follow your nature you will get out of their grip, you will be a slave no more. You won't go to the churches and the temples and the mosques, and you won't listen to your stupid priests, politicians, the so-called leaders. I call them "so-called leaders" because what is actually happening is that blind people are leading other blind people.

You won't listen to them anymore if you listen to your own nature. If you know your own inner voice you will become free. Your inner voice has to be crushed, destroyed, utterly destroyed -- at least distorted so much that even if you hear it you can't understand it. And they have succeeded. Unless you struggle hard *against* them there is no possibility of succeeding. Their exploitation is so old, their oppression is so ancient, their strategies are so cunning...and they have infinite power in their hands. And what are you against them as an individual?

But if you go in, if you listen to your heart, you will attain to such power that no power on the earth can enslave you again.

FOLLOW YOUR NATURE.... But how to follow your nature if you don't know what it is? And you are not allowed to know it! You are given precise instructions as to what to do: what to eat, when to get up in the morning, when to go to bed. You have been given precise instructions. Those instructions, if followed, make you a slave. If not followed, they make you a criminal. If followed, you become a saint -- but a slave. People will worship you, respect you, but all that respect is a mutual understanding: "If you follow our instructions, we will respect you. If you don't follow, you will be thrown into jail."

Either you are made a slave spiritually or a prisoner physically: these are the two alternatives the society gives to you. And it never lets you become aware that there is a source of infinite guidance within you, from where God speaks.

God still speaks, he has not stopped speaking. He is not partial -- it is not that he spoke to Mohammed and to Moses and he does not speak to you. He is speaking to you as much as he was speaking to Mohammed. The only difference is, Mohammed was ready to listen and you are not ready to listen. Mohammed was available and you are not available.

To become available to your inner nature is what I call meditation.

Remember these two words. 'Character' is an invention of the politicians and the priests; it is a conspiracy against you. Consciousness is your nature. Yes, a man of consciousness has a certain character, but that character follows his consciousness. It is not imposed by anybody else on him; it is his own decision. And he is not engaged in it; he is totally free to change it any moment. As circumstances change, his consciousness gives him different directions and

he changes his character.

The man of character -- the so-called man of character -- is encaged. Even if circumstances change he goes on repeating the same character, although it is no longer relevant, it does not fit. The context in which it was meaningful has disappeared, but he goes on repeating the same nonsense. He is like a parrot. He is a machine: he does not respond, he only reacts.

A man of consciousness responds, and his responses are spontaneous. He is mirrorlike: he reflects whatsoever confronts him. And out of this spontaneity, out of this consciousness, a new kind of action is born. That action never creates any bondage, any karma. That action frees you. You remain a freedom if you listen to your nature.

But this simple advice seems to be very difficult for people. It should be the simplest thing in the world. Each child is born following his nature, but as you grow up, slowly you lose contact with it -- you are forced to lose contact with it. The contact can be regained, it can be rediscovered. Later on, when you become very knowledgeable, encaged in a certain character, utterly blind to your own heart and nature, you start asking such questions.

Just the other day Prem Vijen asked:

"Beloved Master, what do you mean when you say 'Go in'?" Such a simple statement -- "Go in" -- and you ask me, "What do you mean?" Can't you understand these simple words, 'go in'? I know you understand the words, but going in has become so difficult because you have been taught only how to go out. You can only go out, you only know how to go out. Your consciousness has been turned towards others; it has forgotten the way to itself. You go on knocking on others' doors, and whenever it is said to you, "Go home," you say, "What do you mean by 'going home'?" You know only others' houses, but you don't know your own home. And you are carrying it within yourself. You have been forced to become extroverts. One has to learn again ways of inwardness.

Soren Kierkegaard has said: Religion means inwardness -- going into your own interiority. But the simple words, 'go in', have become so difficult to understand. Mind only knows how to go out; it has no reverse gear in it.

I have heard that when Ford made his first cars they had no reverse gear. It was a later addition. Without a reverse gear it was really a problem: whenever you wanted to come back you had to go miles unnecessarily, you had to go round. Even if you wanted to go a few feet back, you might have to take a journey of miles. Then Ford became aware that a reverse gear was needed.

I am teaching you here that the reverse gear is there, built in, you have just forgotten about it. You know how to go out. Nobody asks, "What does it mean when you say 'Go out'?" But everybody wants to ask, "What do you mean when you say 'Go in'?" Simple words!

Thinking is going out: nonthinking is going in. Think, and you have started moving away from yourself. Thought is the way leading you farther away. Thought is a project. No-thought...and suddenly you are in. Without thought you cannot go out, without desire you cannot go out. You need the fuel of desire and the vehicle of thought to go out.

Sitting silently, doing nothing...not even thinking, not even desiring...and where will you be?

Going in is not really going in. It is simply stopping going out...and suddenly you find yourself in.

Prem Vijen, you need not go in because if you go you will always go out. Going means going out. Stop going! Stop going anywhere! Can't you sit silently without going anywhere?

Yes, physically you can sit, that is not very difficult. You can learn a yoga posture and you can make your body almost a statue, but the problem is -- what are you doing inside? Desires, thoughts, memories, imagination, all kinds of projects? -- stop them too.

How to stop them? Just become indifferent to them, unconcerned. Even if they are there, don't pay attention to them. Even if they are there, don't give them any importance. Even if they are there, let them be. You sit silently inside -- *watching*. Remember that word 'watching' -- witnessing, just being alert.

And as watching grows, becomes deeper, the same energy that was becoming desires and thoughts and memories and imagination -- the same energy is absorbed in the new depth. The same energy is used by this deepening inwardness. And you will know what it means when I say "Go in."

Don't start looking in the dictionaries or in the *ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA*. It is not a question of words! Words are simple to understand; when I say "Go in," that's exactly what I mean -- go in! Don't start asking about the words -- listen to the hidden message; otherwise you will miss the train. What do I mean by 'missing the train'?

Let me tell you a story:

A naive farmer's wife arrived at Paddington Station to catch a train, and having some time to spare before the train arrived, she thought she would check out her weight on a nearby weighing machine.

She got on, put in a penny and out popped a card which read, "You weigh one hundred and fifty pounds and in five minutes from now you will fart." Red with embarrassment and feeling a little outraged, she got off the scale and hurried away. Five minutes later, to her total amazement, she farted loud and long.

Very embarrassed, but intrigued, she made her way back to the machine to see what it had to say this time. In went the penny -- out came the card: "You still weigh one hundred and fifty pounds and in five minutes from now you will be raped." She jumped off the machine in disgust and walked firmly away.

A newspaper salesman, who was having a particularly slack morning, saw this country bumpkin and thought to have some fun, so before she knew what was happening, she was pulled behind the counter and raped. Emerging a few minutes later in a terrible state, with her hat on one side, the heel of her shoe broken, and in a total state of shock, she staggered back to the machine and blindly put in a penny. Out came the card: "You still weigh one hundred and fifty pounds, and with all this farting and fucking, you've missed the train!"

If you become too much interested in words -- "What does it mean to go in? What does it mean, verbally, linguistically?" -- Vijn, you are going to miss the train. Don't waste time with words!

And it is a particularly new kind of disease that has gripped the intellectuals of the world. For at least fifty years the philosophical world has become too much interested in words, linguistic analysis. They don't ask anymore what God is. They don't ask anymore whether God exists or not. The contemporary philosophers ask, "What does it mean when you use the word 'God'?" It is not a question of whether God exists or not. It is not a question of what God is. It is not a question of how to attain God. Now the question has taken a very new turn: "What do you mean when you use the word 'God'?"

What do you mean when you use the word 'rose'? Now it is easy: you can take hold of the philosopher, force him to go to the garden, and you can show him the rose: "This is what I

mean when I use the word 'rose'." But this cannot be done with the word 'God' -- and this cannot be done with the word 'meditation' and this cannot be done with the words 'going in'. These are subtle phenomena. Don't become linguistically interested. I am not here to teach you linguistic analysis.

My whole approach is existential. If you really want to know what it means to go in, go in! And the way is: watch your thoughts and don't get identified with them. Just remain a watcher, utterly indifferent, neither for nor against. Don't judge, because every judgment brings identification. Don't say, "These thoughts are wrong," and don't say, "These thoughts are good." Don't comment on the thoughts. Just let them pass as if it is just traffic passing by, and you are standing by the side of the road unconcerned, looking at the traffic.

It does not matter what is passing by -- a bus, a truck, a bicycle. If you can watch the thought process of your mind with such unconcern, with such detachment, that moment is not very far away when one day the whole traffic disappears...because the traffic can exist only if you go on giving energy to it. If you stop giving energy to it... And that's what watching is: stopping giving energy to it, stopping energy moving into the traffic. It is *your* energy that makes those thoughts move. When your energy is not coming they start falling; they cannot stand on their own.

And when the road of the mind is utterly empty, you are *in*. That's what I mean, Vijen, when I say "Go in." And that's what Buddha means when he says: FOLLOW YOUR NATURE.

AN UNREFLECTING MIND IS A POOR ROOF.
PASSION, LIKE THE RAIN, FLOODS THE HOUSE.
BUT IF THE ROOF IS STRONG, THERE IS SHELTER.

AN UNREFLECTING MIND.... Buddha does not mean by "reflection" thinking, mind you. By "reflection" he simply means reflection, not thinking -- reflection in the sense that a mirror reflects. When you come before a mirror, the mirror is not thinking about you. The mirror simply mirrors! That mirroring is what Buddha means.

AN UNREFLECTING MIND -- a mind that has forgotten how to mirror -- IS A POOR ROOF. And we have forgotten how to mirror. We know how to think, we don't know how to reflect.

Just think of a child: a child is born, for the first time a child opens his eyes -- he will see the trees, but he will not be able to say to himself, "These are trees." He will see light, but he will not be able to say within himself, "This is electric light." He will see the redness of the rose, but he will not be able to say, "This is a roseflower and the color is red." He will see *everything*, but he will not say anything inside. That is mirroring: he will simply mirror. The trees will still be green, in fact far greener than they will ever be again, because the mirror is completely pure, crystalline. The mirror has no dust...thoughts gather dust.

When you go into the garden and you say, "The rose is beautiful," you may not even be seeing the rose. You may be simply repeating a cliché. Because you have heard it said that the roses are beautiful you are saying it. Seeing a beautiful sunset, you may *not* be seeing it, you may not be attentive, you may not be aware...but unconsciously, automatically, you simply assert, "It is a beautiful sunset." You don't mean it at all; you are simply saying it because you have been told. You are repeating somebody else's statement. If you watch deeply, you may even be able to find whose statement this is -- your mother's, your father's, your teacher's, your friend's. If you watch closely you may be able to hear the exact voice of

who had said for the first time that the sunset is beautiful...and you are simply repeating it. You have not seen *this* sunset. You have not seen the thisness, the present, the immediate beauty of it.

Buddha says: AN UNREFLECTING MIND IS A POOR ROOF. PASSION, LIKE THE RAIN, FLOODS THE HOUSE.

A mind that has forgotten how to mirror the truth is always a victim of desire -- a victim of the head, a victim of the future, a victim of constant longing for this and for that. And no desire can ever be fulfilled. By the time one desire is fulfilled it has created ten more desires.

And this goes on and on...and life is short, and death may knock you down any moment.

You come into the world to be fulfilled, but you go empty-handed, you go unfulfilled. Hence you will have to come again. Unless you learn the lesson you will have to be thrown back again and again into some womb, you will have to be reborn. You will be sent back to the school. Millions of times you have been sent, and if you don't pay attention, this life also you are going to miss the train.

Be aware! Start cleansing your mirror so that you can reflect.

PASSION, LIKE THE RAIN, FLOODS THE HOUSE. BUT IF THE ROOF IS STRONG, THERE IS SHELTER. If you know how to reflect reality there is shelter. You are secure because you are in God, because you are part of truth.

WHOEVER FOLLOWS IMPURE THOUGHTS
SUFFERS IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.
IN BOTH WORLDS HE SUFFERS,
AND HOW GREATLY,
WHEN HE SEES THE WRONG HE HAS DONE.

All thoughts are impure. A thought cannot be pure. So let me remind you again: whenever Buddha says "impure thoughts" he means thoughts. He uses the adjective 'impure' to emphasize it, because if he simply says "thoughts" you may not understand rightly. So he says "impure thoughts," but he always means thoughts. All thoughts are impure, because a thought means you are thinking of the other, a desire has arisen. And whenever he says "a pure thought" he means a no-thought.

Only a no-thought is pure, because then you are utterly yourself, alone, nothing interfering.

Jean-Paul Sartre says: The other is hell. And he is right in a way, because whenever you are thinking of the other you are in hell. And all thoughts are addressed to others. When you are in a state of no-thought you are alone, and aloneness is purity. And in that aloneness happens all that is worth happening.

BUT WHOEVER FOLLOWS THE LAW
IS JOYFUL HERE AND JOYFUL THERE.
IN BOTH WORLDS HE REJOICES,
AND HOW GREATLY,
WHEN HE SEES THE GOOD HE HAS DONE.

Retrospectively, when you see that you have created a hell for yourself -- nobody else is responsible but you -- when you see this you will suffer very much, terribly. There is not even an excuse, you cannot throw the responsibility on somebody else's shoulders: it is your responsibility.

Suffering will be there and more so, more intensely so, because you will feel also, "I have been foolish. Nobody has made me suffer. It is because of my thoughts. It is because of my becoming more and more extrovert, becoming more and more interested in things of the outside, that I have suffered. I am solely responsible."

This will give you great anguish -- and vice versa. If you follow the law, dhamma, tao, if you follow your innermost core, your nature, you will be joyful here and there.

Buddha is not much concerned with the "there." But he says if you are joyful here you are bound to be joyful there. If this moment you are rejoicing, the next moment you will be rejoicing more, because the next moment is going to be born out of *this* moment.

And your bliss gathers momentum, it is accumulative. If this moment you are suffering, the next moment you will be suffering more, because you are learning the ways of suffering, you are becoming habituated to suffering. You will create more suffering the next moment because you are becoming more efficient in creating it. So whatsoever the nature of this moment is, it is going to be strengthened more, deepened, in the next.

But Buddha is not concerned with the next moment at all. He is simply stating a fact.

Don't be bothered with the next moment, or the next life, or the next world. Make this moment rejoicing, make this moment a moment of bliss, and the next will follow it, and the next life, and the next world. And everything that you are this moment is going to become deepened more and more. And when you see that you are responsible for your bliss, your bliss will be far more. When you see that nobody has given it to you, that you have not been a beggar, that it is not a gift from somebody else -- because nobody has given it to you, nobody can take it away -- when you see this you will be far happier.

FOR GREAT IS THE HARVEST IN THIS WORLD,
AND GREATER STILL IN THE NEXT.

HOWEVER MANY HOLY WORDS YOU READ,
HOWEVER MANY YOU SPEAK,
WHAT GOOD WILL THEY DO YOU
IF YOU DO NOT ACT UPON THEM?

But the whole thing depends on action. It is not a question of just thinking beautiful thoughts. It is not just a question of beautiful desires -- of God, of paradise, of moksha. It is not a question of thinking of meditation, but acting, doing something about it. Action and only action can help. You have to become involved, you have to become committed.

Many people come to me and say, "We love your discourses, but we don't want to meditate and we don't want to become sannyasins. Isn't it enough," they ask, "just to listen to your beautiful discourses?" It is utterly futile!

Just to listen to my discourses is very stupid. If you are not going to act, don't waste time -- it is an exercise in futility! If you just go on listening to me and never act, my words may be soothing, my words may be consoling, my words may be convincing, you may enjoy what I am saying intellectually, you may enjoy the space that is created by my presence, but this alone is not going to help. Action is absolutely needed.

If you are convinced of some truth, act upon it, and act immediately! -- because mind is very cunning, and the greatest cunningness of the mind is postponement. It says, "Tomorrow..." and tomorrow never comes. It says, "Yes, we are going to meditate one day. Let us first understand what meditation is." And then you can go on understanding what meditation is your whole life, and you will never act. And unless you act nothing is ever

going to happen, no transformation is going to happen.

Sannyas is a commitment. It is actively showing your love towards me. It is getting involved with my destiny. It is entering into my boat. It is dangerous -- it is safer to stand on the bank and listen. Then it is a kind of entertainment -- a spiritual entertainment! -- but utterly useless, just killing time.

And that's what people go on doing in the so-called spiritual gatherings -- *satsangs*. They go to the Sunday sermon and they listen very attentively and very seriously, but out of the church it has no effect on their lives. In fact, even the preacher is not affected by what he is saying. It is his business to say these things, he is paid for it. He is a professional. And it is a formality for the listeners -- just to have a good reputation in the community, that they are religious, that they go to the church every Sunday. And it is a beautiful social gathering too -- meeting people, talking to people, gossiping. It gives a good opportunity -- in the name of religion. A social gathering! It is an old kind of Rotary Club, Lions Club, etcetera. It does not matter, it does not change their lives.

Once I used to live in the neighborhood of a Christian priest, a very eloquent speaker. One day he was showing his garden to me, and we started talking about this and that. And he said, "Can you help my son?"

I said, "What is the matter with your son?"

He said, "He has started taking my sermons too seriously. I have to preach and I have to talk about great things. He comes to listen and he has started to take them too seriously. Now he does not want to get married; he wants to become a holy man. Can't you help him?"

"I can -- that's my business! I can help -- I help holy people to become unholy again. You send him to me. I will pull him down."

"But listen," the priest said, "he is taking my words too seriously." Even the priest does not mean that anybody should take his words too seriously -- and nobody ever does except a few foolish people.

But when you are around a Buddha, a Jesus, a Krishna, a Mohammed, it is not a question of taking their words seriously. It is a question of seeing the authenticity of their words and then acting upon it. If it stirs your heart, if a bell starts ringing in your heart, then don't stop it. Then follow, then go deeper into it, because that is the only way to be transformed. That is the only way to know the eternal -- *aes dhammo sanantano*. That is the only way to know the eternal harmony of existence.

And to know the eternal harmony is to know bliss, is to know God, is to go beyond time, is to go beyond death, is to go beyond misery.

Two women are talking in a tea room at four o'clock, over large gooey ice-cream sundaes and little sugary cakes. They have not seen each other since high-school days, and one is bragging about her very advantageous marriage.

"My husband buys me whole new sets of diamonds when the ones I have get dirty," she says. "I never even bother to clean them."

"Fantastic!" says the other women.

"Yes," says the first, "we get a new car every two months. None of this hire-purchase stuff! My husband buys them outright, and we give them to the Negro gardener and houseman and like that for presents."

"Fantastic!" says the other.

"And our house," pursues the first, "well, what's the use of talking about it? It's just...."

"Fantastic!" finishes the other.

"Yes, and tell me, what are you doing nowadays?" says the first woman.

"I go to Charm School," says the other.

"Charm School? Why, how quaint! What do you learn there?"

"Well, we learn to say 'Fantastic' instead of 'Bullshit'!"

You can start calling bullshit "fantastic," but it makes no difference. You can learn religious, spiritual garbage....

There are many people here too who are very expert in so-called esoteric jargon. They always talk of so many planes, so many bodies, so many centers...and they talk so seriously that it seems they know what they are talking about. Avoid esoteric garbage! Avoid esoteric knowledge! It is not knowledge, it is just to befool people. If you are interested in such things you should read the great literature that has been created by theosophists.

Anything goes, you just have to talk in such a way that it seems otherworldly. It can neither be proved nor disproved. Now how can you prove how many planes there are? Seven or thirteen?

One man came to me. His religious sect believes in fourteen planes, and he had a chart, he had brought the chart. Mahavira has attained only to the fifth plane, Buddha to the sixth, Kabir, Nanak, to the ninth -- because he was a Punjabi he had been a little generous with Nanak and Kabir. But his own Radhaswami guru, he has attained to the fourteenth! Even Buddha is just hanging around the sixth! And Mohammed, do you know where Mohammed is? -- just the third! A Hindu and a Punjabi, how can you allow Mohammed to go beyond the third? He keeps him third-rate. Jesus he is a little more generous with -- on the fourth; he places Jesus on the fourth. But his own guru -- nobody knows about his guru -- he has reached the fourteenth! The fourteenth is called *satch-khand* -- the plane of truth.

So I asked him, "What about the other thirteen?"

He said, "They are just coming closer and closer to truth, only approximately true."

Now, can there be an approximate truth? Either something is true or something is not true. Either I am here in the chair or I am not in the chair -- I cannot be approximately in the chair. So "approximate truth" is a beautiful name for a lie.

He had come to ask me what my opinion is about the fourteen planes. I said, "I have reached the fifteenth. And just as *you* are asking about the planes, your Radhaswami guru asks me again and again how to enter into the fifteenth."

He was very angry. He said, "Never heard about the fifteenth plane!"

I said, "How can you hear? Your guru has only reached the fourteenth, so you have heard about fourteen. But I have reached the fifteenth!"

Just nonsense! But it can be presented in such a way that it looks very spiritual. Avoid!

Buddha says: **HOWEVER MANY HOLY WORDS YOU READ, HOWEVER MANY YOU SPEAK, WHAT GOOD WILL THEY DO YOU IF YOU DO NOT ACT UPON THEM?**

Belief remains in the world of words. It is trust, it is deep trust, that takes you into action. Action is risky. To talk about the other shore is simple, but to swim to the other shore is dangerous, because no map exists. In fact nobody can be certain about the other shore, whether it exists or not.

Just ordinary belief won't do. Unless you have a tremendous trust in life, unless you have a tremendous trust in your own inner voice, you can't go on the journey of the uncharted sea.

But only action will prove that you trust, and only action can transform you.

ARE YOU A SHEPHERD
WHO COUNTS ANOTHER MAN'S SHEEP,
NEVER SHARING THE WAY?

Buddha used to say it again and again: that there are foolish people who go on counting other people's cows -- that this man has fifteen cows, this man has thirteen cows -- and they themselves don't have a single one! What is the point of counting other people's cows or sheep? It is not going to feed you, it is not going to nourish you. It is a sheer wastage of time!

But this is what happens in the name of religion. What the Vedas say...people waste their whole lives in trying to decipher the meaning of the Vedas. There are people who have wasted their whole lives in finding out the true meaning of the Bible. This is counting other people's sheep!

You can go in and you can hear the Bible arising there -- as Jesus heard it. Jesus has no privilege over you. Nobody is privileged! Before the eternal law, before dhamma, everybody is equal. In this world everybody is unequal and can never be equal. In this world communism is impossible.

But in the inner world everybody is equal -- *only* communism is possible. Communism is an inner phenomenon. The efforts that are being made to make the outer world a communist world are futile; it cannot happen in the very nature of things.

In Soviet Russia now the old classes are not there, but new classes have come up. Old classes are replaced by new classes. First there were the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; now there are the people who rule, the rulers, the Communist Party members, and the people who are ruled. It is the same game played in different names.

In the outer world communism is impossible. Inequality is the law; everybody is unequal in the outer world. Somebody is stronger than you, somebody is more intelligent, somebody is more beautiful, somebody is talented, somebody is a genius.... People *are* different, and they cannot be forced to be equal; that will be destroying humanity. They will remain unequal.

But in the inner, as you move inwards, inequality starts disappearing. At the innermost core there is absolute equality. Communism is an inner phenomenon.

That's why I am going to call my new ashram a commune. Communism comes from the word 'commune'. It is going to be an inner equality. People will remain different, as much as possible; in fact, as far as the outside world is concerned, everybody should have his unique individuality, his own flavor, his own signature. On the outside everybody should be allowed absolute freedom to be himself. In the inner, the ego disappears, the personality disappears, there is only pure consciousness. And two consciousnesses are not higher or lower. There is no hierarchy.

Don't go on counting other people's sheep. Go in! Don't go on reading scriptures. Go in! Don't go on listening to others' words. Share the way! If you come across a buddha you are fortunate. If you fall in love with a buddha you are blessed. Don't just go on listening to his words. Follow the way, share the way! Look where he is pointing, don't start worshipping his finger. Look at the moon!

READ AS FEW WORDS AS YOU LIKE

AND SPEAK FEWER.
BUT ACT UPON THE LAW.

Let me remind you again, because the word 'law' in English has wrong associations. It is a translation for dhamma: the eternal law, the cosmic law, logos. ACT UPON THE LAW does not mean act according to the Indian Penal Code. Act according to the law means act according to your inner nature.

GIVE UP THE OLD WAYS --
PASSION, ENMITY, FOLLY.
KNOW THE TRUTH AND FIND PEACE.
SHARE THE WAY.

GIVE UP THE OLD WAYS.... You have to become discontinuous from the past. You have to exist in a new way. You have to simply cut yourself from your past with a single stroke. And that's what sannyas is all about: cutting yourself from your past with a single stroke of the sword.

What are the old ways? -- the way of desire, the way of hate, and the way of stupidity. Don't function out of hatred and don't desire things, possessions. And don't be superstitious, foolish. If you can do this much, if you can take this leap into the unknown...because the past is known and you are accustomed to doing things in a certain way. When you drop the past you will be at a loss for a few days, disoriented, not knowing what to do, how to do it. You will be in a vacuum. That vacuum has to be passed through. It is painful -- that is the price we have to pay for truth.

Once you have passed that vacuum: KNOW THE TRUTH AND FIND PEACE. Then truth is known and truth follows peace like a shadow.

SHARE THE WAY, Buddha insists again. But this can't happen just by listening, just by reading the works of the masters.

SHARE THE WAY.
AES DHAMMO SANANTANO.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #4

Chapter title: Just lucky, I guess!

24 June 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
UPON RETURNING TO HOLLAND LAST YEAR I STARTED COMMUNICATING ABOUT YOU WITH AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF URGENCY. I FELT YOU IMPARTED THIS URGENCY TO ME, BUT IT SEEMED ALSO TO BE A PART OF MY NATURE.
THIS FEELING OF NOT HAVING A SECOND TO LOSE, THE WISH TO GET MORE DUTCH PEOPLE TO BECOME SANNYASINS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, MADE ME FAR FROM PLAYFUL. THE SERIOUSNESS LED TO MUCH ANGUISH BECAUSE I WAS CONFRONTED WITH INDIFFERENCE, RIDICULE AND CONTEMPT, ESPECIALLY FROM THE JOURNALISTS. OBJECTIVELY I DID NOT FAIL -- FAR FROM IT -- BUT IN TERMS OF BEING, MY TRIP WAS NOT EXACTLY wu-wei. I SIMPLY COULD NOT COMBINE THIS URGENCY WITH JOY AND RELAXATION. WILL YOU SAY A FEW WORDS ON THIS URGENCY, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE GIVEN ME SO MUCH ALREADY?

Deva Amrito, the playfulness that I talk about comes very slowly. You cannot just jump out of your seriousness which you have accumulated for lives. Now it has a force of its own.

It is not a simple matter to relax; it is one of the most complex phenomena possible, because all that we are taught is tension, anxiety, anguish. Seriousness is the very core the society is built around. Playfulness is for small children, not for grown-up people. And I am teaching you to be children again, to be playful again. It is a quantum leap, a jump...but it takes time to understand.

And as far as I am concerned, you have been immensely successful: objectively, certainly, but subjectively too. Unexpectedly you have been successful. Anybody else in your place would have been in a madhouse.

You were excited, and it is natural to be excited. When somebody understands me, feels me, he immediately starts feeling an urgency -- not a single moment to lose. And the word

has to be spread. A kind of tremendous immediacy overwhelms. It is natural! It is true that there is not a single moment to lose. And if you love me, you would like all those people to come to me, because they may not get the opportunity again -- for centuries, for lives together!

When you love, and you have found a treasure, you would like to share it. And if the treasure is such that it can disappear any moment, how can you avoid the feeling of immense urgency? You will have to shout from the tops of the houses.

And the response that you will get is absolutely certain and fixed. The more you would like people to come to me, the more they will escape -- from you, from the very idea of coming to me. And the only way to escape is to ridicule you, to laugh at you, to call you mad. That is their way of defending themselves. If they listen to you understandingly, if they allow you to overwhelm their being, to overflow into their being, to flood their being, then they will also find themselves in the same grip. And it will be very difficult for them to avoid.

Hence, from the very beginning they will ridicule you, criticize you, oppose you, laugh at you. They will do everything possible to create the feeling in you that *you* are wrong. But they failed. They could not create that feeling in you. The more they ridiculed you, the more they laughed, the more they criticized, the more you tried to convince them.

And you have been objectively successful -- you have convinced thousands of people. Since your going to Holland, many many Dutch people have arrived, and more are arriving, and more will go on arriving. You have created a great stir. You have touched many people's hearts. And it has been a great experience for your inner growth too.

The impact that you created has not got into your head yet; it has not made you more of an egoist. In fact, it has made you more humble. It may not have been exactly wu-wei, but it was very close. And I was not expecting it to be absolutely wu-wei, but it has been more than I was expecting.

I was a little bit afraid, Amrito, that you might go mad. The urgency was such, your ecstasy was such, you were so passionately in love with me, that I was afraid deep down. I was sending you with all kinds of apprehensions. But you survived the test. You have come back. The turmoil that was created around you because of your talking about me -- in the newspapers, on the radio, the TV -- the way you talked, it gave the sense of your immense love, it gave the sense that you have found the home.

Many have been convinced. And many who have not been convinced have also started thinking about it. And even those who have ridiculed you and have opposed you are impressed; otherwise who cares? Why should you oppose somebody if you are not impressed? Why should you ridicule and laugh if you are simply alert that he is mad? Nobody laughs at a madman, nobody ridicules a madman. It is enough to know that he is mad and everything is finished!

You have created a chain which will go on. And I would like many of my sannyasins to be so excited, to feel the urgency, to go to their countries and spread the word. And you will have to shout from the tops of the houses.

And whenever you are in love you look mad -- you *are* mad. Love is madness...but far higher than the so-called, mediocre, mundane sanity. And love *is* blindness, but a blindness that is capable of seeing the invisible.

Love is not part of the ordinary world that we have created. We have expelled love from it. So whenever you are in love -- and to be in love with a master, to be in love with a buddha, is the ultimate love -- it drives you crazy. It makes you part of the beyond. Nobody can believe it.

How can your friends, Amrito, believe it, that it has happened to you and it has not happened to them? It is so much against their egos that you have found and they have not found yet, and still they are struggling. No, the easier way for them is to deny, to say that you have not found, that you are in an illusion, that you have been hypnotized, that you are hallucinating, that you have been drugged. That gives them a consolation, that gives them a kind of at-easeness. If you have really found, then they will feel very very uneasy -- then their lives are failures.

It has been a beautiful experience. I know you could not be very playful. It was difficult. Next time when I send you, you will be more playful. Now don't get afraid! I know that you don't want to go back again. Enough is enough...but one more time. Next time the whole project is to be playful. Then people will laugh more and they will think that you have gone even more mad. But laugh...dance, sing. This time you were arguing. Next time no arguing -- singing, dancing, hugging people.

But I am absolutely happy. Whatever has happened has been good objectively, has been good for others, has been good for you. It is a device: to send you for a particular purpose is a device for your inner growth. And you have been successful. There was every possibility of being a failure.

I am reminded:

Once George Gurdjieff asked P.D. Ouspensky, his chief disciple of those days, to come from London to a faraway place somewhere in the Caucasus. It was very difficult. Financially Ouspensky was bankrupt. He had no money, no house to live in, nobody to support him. And such a long journey! And the times were very dangerous. In those parts of the world it was dangerous to move, because the Russian revolution was happening. People were being massacred, killed, murdered. There was no peace. Even Gurdjieff had to leave Russia, and he was hiding in the mountains of the Caucasus.

It was not a right time to go there; it was very dangerous. The journey was not easy: all the trains were unsettled, roads were cut, bridges were broken. It was chaos! But when the master calls, the disciple has to follow. Whatever belongings he had, he sold. He borrowed money from people, and traveled thousands of miles. It took him almost thirty days to reach Gurdjieff. Tired, tattered, thinking many times, "What am I doing? People are escaping from Russia, and I am going there!" And he was on the blacklist of the communists, because he was a well-known figure -- chief disciple of George Gurdjieff, a well-known, world-famous mathematician, a great author, one of the greatest the world has ever known. His books were translated into almost all the languages of the world. Going back to Russia was dangerous. He could be caught, imprisoned, killed. He was anticommunist! -- no sensible person can be a communist, because the whole idea is nonsense. But he traveled...and when he reached Gurdjieff, Gurdjieff looked at him and the first thing that he said was, "Go back to London and start work again."

Now that was too much. Ouspensky failed. He could not trust this man. Now what kind of a joke is this? Playing with somebody's life in such a way...and immediately he said, "Go back right now! I have nothing else to say."

Ouspensky went back -- turned against Gurdjieff, became an enemy. That was a great device of a great master. If he had trusted, he would have become enlightened. He missed the opportunity. He died an unenlightened person.

When things are going smooth and easy, trust is easy -- but it is worthless. When things

become difficult, arduous, impossible, and you can still trust, when it becomes absolutely illogical to trust and you can still trust, only such a trust becomes a transforming force.

Amrito, I am going to send you one more time. And remember, I am not a very consistent man: it may be twice, thrice...it depends. But for the moment, one time I am going to send you -- that much is certain.

And this time the project is being playful.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD, AND WHY DO THESE RELIGIONS CONTINUOUSLY QUARREL WITH EACH OTHER?

Geetam, it is natural that there should be so many religions. In fact, more are needed. As I see it, each individual should have his own religion; there should be as many religions as there are people. The number is not so much: there are only three hundred religions -- and how many people on the earth?

Each individual should have his own religion, because each individual is so unique, so different from anybody else. How can two persons have one religion? It is impossible. But we have been asking the impossible. Each individual has to reach God in his own way, and that way is never going to be traveled by anybody else again.

Hence, buddhas can only indicate, can only give you hints. They cannot provide you with certain, absolutely certain maps -- just hints, a few hints. And those hints have not to be taken very seriously -- very playfully. You are not to become a fanatic. If you become a fanatic you are no longer religious.

A religious person is humble, available to all kinds of hints; he is a seeker, a searcher, an explorer, and he will learn from every possible source. He will learn from the Bible, and he will learn from the Vedas, and he will learn from THE DHAMMAPADA. He will listen to Buddha, to Jesus, to Zarathustra. He will learn from all possible sources, but still he will remain himself. He will not become an imitation, he will not become a carbon copy. He will retain his authenticity. He will be humble, sincere, authentic; he will not become pseudo. He will not be a follower, he will be a lover.

He will love the buddha, but he will not follow him; he will not follow him in the details. How can you follow a buddha in the details? He is a totally different kind of person. You have never been before, nobody like you has ever been before, and nobody who is exactly like you will ever be there again. Hence your religion has to be *your* religion, your truth has to be *your* truth.

And that is the beauty of truth, that it always comes in such a unique form that you can say, "This is a special gift from God to me." Hence there are so many religions. And it is beautiful! -- there should be many more. Many people have been trying to make one religion; that is utter stupidity. You cannot create one religion. You can enforce one religion on people, but that will destroy their spirit, their freedom; that will cripple their being and paralyze their growth.

Just as there are so many languages, there are so many religions. The variety is beautiful, the variety makes it possible for you to choose according to your type. Religion is not and cannot be decided by birth, and those who decide their religion by their birth are utter fools. You cannot be born a Hindu and you cannot be born a Christian; birth has nothing to do with

your religion. Religion is an inquiry. You may be born to Hindu parents -- that is one thing -- but if your parents really love you they will not convert you into a Hindu. Of course they will tell you all they have known and experienced, but they will leave you free. And they will tell you, "Become more alert, watchful, mature, and when you are mature enough and you want to decide, choose your own religion."

Go to the mosque, go to the church, go to the temple, go to the *gurudwara*. Listen to all kinds of things, see all kinds of flowers: the garden of God is so full of variety, is so rich because of variety. There are roses and lotuses and a thousand and one other flowers. Go and choose your own perfume, your own fragrance, because unless you yourself choose you will not be dedicated to it, you will not be surrendered to it.

The world is not religious because religion is imposed upon us. The parents are in a hurry to impose; the church, the state, the country -- everybody is in a hurry to impose a certain religion on the child. How foolish! How stupid! Religion needs maturity, great understanding, before one can choose.

Nobody is born a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Parsi. Everybody is born clean, innocent, a TABULA RASA, and then everyone has to seek and search. This is the beauty of life because life is an inquiry. And don't be settled too early; there is no need. It is possible that no existing religion may satisfy you. But that is good; that means a new religion is born in you. The world becomes richer: one more religion, one more flower, one more tree -- a new phenomenon.

Buddha brings a new religion into the world; the world was poorer before Buddha because it was missing Buddhism. Buddha could have followed the religion of his parents; then the world would have been still poor. The world would have missed something immensely valuable, a new door to God. Buddha opened a new door, a new vision, a new insight. He was not convinced by his parents' religion; otherwise, he would have remained a Hindu. He rebelled. All religious people are rebellious people.

He went on an individual search -- all religious people are explorers, all religious people are adventurers. It would have been easy and convenient and comfortable to believe in the religion that had been believed in by the parents and the parents' parents, and for centuries. It would have been more convenient because you need not inquire, you need not go through the whole effort of finding the truth. It has been found by some seer in the past -- you can simply borrow it. But a borrowed truth is not a truth at all. A borrowed truth is a lie.

Buddha went on a search; arduous was the inquiry. He risked all -- his kingdom, his life. But when you risk so much, life showers new treasures on you. A new religion, a new insight, a new vision, was born into the world.

Mohammed could have followed his parents' religion. Jesus could have followed Judaism. Become a Jesus, become a Buddha, become a Mohammed! Don't be a Mohammedan and don't be a Buddhist and don't be a Christian -- explore! Don't waste life in imitating, because then you will remain pseudo. And a pseudo person cannot be religious. Great authenticity, sincerity is needed.

So, Geetam, it is good that there are three hundred religions -- there should be more! I am always for variety. I want the world richer in every possible way. Would you like the whole world to have only one kind of flower -- just roses, or just lotuses? Will it not be an impoverished world, very poor? Would you like the world to have only one language? Then the different nuances of the different languages will disappear.

There are things which can be said only in Arabic and cannot be said in any other language; and there are things which can be said only in Hebrew and cannot be said in any

other language. There are things which can be said only in Chinese and cannot be said in any other language. If the world has only one language, many many beautiful things will remain unsaid.

Lao Tzu can speak only Chinese. You may not have pondered over the problem: just think of Lao Tzu writing his TAO TEH CHING in English...and the book will be totally different. It will miss something of immense value; it will have something different, a totally different color to it, but it will miss the flavor that it has in Chinese.

Now, Chinese has no alphabet; it is written in symbols. Because there is no alphabet, symbols can be interpreted in a thousand and one ways; symbols are more fluid, less fixed, more poetic, less prosaic. One symbol can mean many things. It is not scientific; it is very difficult to write scientific treatises in Chinese. For that, English is a far more adequate language.

But what Lao Tzu has given to the world would not have been possible without Chinese. Each symbol has many meanings, a multiplicity of meanings. You can choose your meaning according to your state of mind. Each symbol has many layers of meaning. As you grow in your understanding, the meaning of the symbols changes.

Hence, in the East a totally different kind of reading has existed which is nonexistent in the West. You would not like to read the same Bernard Shaw book again and again and again, or would you? Unless you are insane you would not like to read it again and again and again. What is the point? Once you have read it, it is finished! That's why the paperback has come into existence: read it and throw it. But in the East a different kind of reading exists: the same book is read again and again the whole life long.

The TAO TEH CHING is not a book which can be published in paperback -- they are doing that now. It should not be published in paperback -- it cannot be, because it is a totally different kind of book. It has layers and layers of meaning. When for the first time you read it, it is one book because you know only one meaning, the superficial. After meditating for a few months you read it again; another meaning reveals itself; after meditating a few months more you read it again...a third meaning. It has to go on, it has to become a life's study.

And you will go on finding the meanings -- they are inexhaustible. *Aes dhammo sanantano*: the ultimate is eternal and inexhaustible. It is not a fiction; you cannot just read it and be finished with it. One reading is not going to help you at all; it simply introduces you, it does not give you the core of it. It takes a whole life to come to the core of it.

Now we need all kinds of languages. English is needed for its definiteness, for its certainty. Each word has a definition. Science cannot develop without such a language.

Science could not be born in India because of the language; Sanskrit is a poetic language. You can sing it -- it has that quality -- you can chant it, but you cannot make much of a syllogism out of it. Many songs, certainly, but it is not argumentative; expressive but nonargumentative.

Arabic has a very haunting quality. If you chant it, it will become a haunting in your heart. Stop chanting it and the chanting continues in the heart. Arabic has that quality in it because it is a desert language; desert languages have a haunting quality. When you are calling somebody in a desert, far away, you have to call in a certain way -- and in a desert you can call people who are very far away; if you call them in a rhythmic way your sound will reach them.

Hence the beauty of the Koran. It is not a book to be read -- those who read the Koran will miss its meaning -- it is a book to be sung. It is not a book to be studied: it is a book to be danced, only then will you reach its inner spirit.

It is beautiful that there are many languages because there are many things to be said, expressed, communicated. And as the world grows, many more languages are needed, because as the world grows, many more things people are feeling, people are going through, people are reaching.

Religion is nothing but a language for expressing the ultimate. Geetam, there is nothing wrong in there being many religions. Of course, there is certainly something wrong in their constant quarreling with each other. That shows that the so-called religions have lost their religious quality, they have become political; that these so-called religions no longer have alive masters in them but only dead, dull, mediocre priests. They go on quarreling, they go on trying to convert, because numbers create power. If there are more Christians then Christianity has more power and the pope in the Vatican becomes more powerful. If Hindus are more in number, of course they are more in power.

Numbers give power. So Christianity wants everybody to be a Christian, and Mohammedans would like everybody to be a Mohammedan, Their ways and means may differ, but the effort and the desire is the same, a very deep political desire -- it is power politics. Then naturally quarreling will arise. Politics is quarreling; it has nothing to do with religion.

Religions should be as many as possible. And there is no question of any conflict: it is a question of like and dislike. If I like roses, you don't try to come and convince me that I should like marigolds -- you simply accept my liking. And if you like marigolds, it's perfectly okay; there is no question of arguing, quarreling. We need not fight with each other -- actually or intellectually. I can leave you to your choice, and I don't feel offended because you like marigolds and I don't like them.

Likes and dislikes are individual affairs. One may like the Bhagavadgita, another may like the Koran, somebody else may like THE DHAMMAPADA -- it's perfectly okay, absolutely okay. We should share our likings with each other, but we should not try to convert the other, to force the other into our fold. Yes, share by all means, because sharing shows your love. If you have found a source, share! But the sharing should be out of love, not for power politics. It is not to convince the other and to drag him into your fold. Religions have been doing such ugly things. People have been converted at the point of the bayonet; people are being converted by money, by bribing them...by any means, right or wrong. Become a Christian! Become a Mohammedan! Become a Hindu! Grab more and more people so you become more powerful, and don't allow anybody else to leave your fold.

Mulla Nasruddin's son was asking him, "Papa, when a Christian becomes a Mohammedan, what do you call him?"

Nasruddin smiled and said, "He has come to his senses, he is a man of understanding, wisdom. He has understood what is false as false and what is truth as truth."

The boy asks again, "And Papa, if a Mohammedan becomes a Christian what do you call him?"

Nasruddin was very angry and said, "He is a traitor! He has betrayed. He is stupid!"

Now, if a Christian becomes a Mohammedan, he is a man of intelligence, a wise man; and if a Mohammedan becomes a Christian he is a traitor, stupid. And the same is the situation if you ask the Christian.

A Hindu became a Christian. All the Hindus were against him, naturally -- he had betrayed them! But Christians made him a saint. Sadhu Sunder Singh was his name. They

almost worshipped him as if he was an incarnation of Jesus, because he proved the truth of Christianity. And Hindus? -- they were so angry with the man that they wanted to kill him. And there is every possibility that they did kill him, because one day he suddenly disappeared and his body has not been found since then. It is still a mystery what happened to Sadhu Sunder Singh.

I know a man who was a Hindu and became a Jaina. Hindus were very much against him, naturally, obviously. They tried in every way to destroy the man, but he became the most famous Jaina saint. Ganesh Varni was his name. He defeated all other Jaina saints; he reached the highest pinnacle. What was his real quality? Why did he reach the highest pinnacle? Because basically he was a Hindu and became a Jaina. "He proved that Jainism is far higher than Hinduism; otherwise, why has this man, such a wise man, come to our fold?"

Geetam, these religions quarrel because they are not religious; they have become more and more political. And when you quarrel, then everything is right -- in love and war everything is right.

A Catholic is trying to convert a Jew and tells him that if he becomes a Catholic his prayers will certainly be answered -- because the priest will give them to the bishop, who will give them to the cardinal, who will give them to the pope, who will shove them up into heaven through a hole at the top of the Vatican, which just matches a hole in the floor of heaven, where Saint Peter will take them to the Virgin Mary, who will intercede on their behalf with Jesus, who will say a good word for them to God.

The Jew repeats this whole itinerary with an astonished air, ending, "You know it must be true, because I have always wondered what they do with all the shit in heaven. They must throw it down that little hole in the Vatican, where the pope gives it to the cardinal, who gives it to the bishop, who gives it to the priest, who gives it to you -- and you are trying to hand it to me?"

Religions are good -- many more are needed -- but quarreling religions are not religions. The very quarreling attitude makes them political. And the priest and the politician have been in a very subtle conspiracy down the ages -- because the politician can dominate the people through the priest very easily. The priest possesses the souls of the people and the politician possesses the bodies of the people. Both are oppressors, exploiters. Both are in the same business, both are partners. Both can help each other. The politician can help the priest because he has temporal power, and the priest can help the politician because people listen to him, worship him, take his word as divine.

Do you know, Buddhism did not become a great religion because of Buddha; it became a great religion because of the emperor Ashoka. It was *not* because of Buddha that millions of people became Buddhists, no. While Buddha was alive, only a few, a few chosen people were courageous enough to walk with him in his light, to commune with him. And they were courageous -- because they had to suffer, they had to suffer much ridicule, opposition, because the established Hindu church was against this man Buddha.

Buddhism became a world religion not because of Buddha but because of the emperor Ashoka. When the Buddhist priests joined hands with the emperor Ashoka, then the religion became a world religion. The whole of Asia was converted. Now the priests would help Ashoka to retain his power, and Ashoka would help the priests become more and more powerful.

Christianity became a world religion not because of Jesus. Jesus was very alone -- only a

few disciples, twelve disciples, and a few hundred sympathizers, that's all. And even those disciples disappeared when Jesus was being crucified, and the sympathizers simply forgot about him; they stopped talking about the man because it was dangerous even to show sympathy.

It is said that the people who had sympathized with Jesus came to spit on his face while he was dying to show the people, "We are against, we are not for him." To prove to the people...because this man is dying -- now they will be in trouble. They have to live, they still have to live. They have to give some proof that they are against this man.

They denied Jesus while he was dying. They threw mud, stones, they spat on his face, just to show the crowds, "See, isn't this enough proof that the rumors that you have heard that we are sympathizers are absolutely wrong, unfounded? We are against him as much as you are -- in fact, we are more against him than you are."

The enemies were not spitting on him but the friends. Jesus became a world force not because of himself but only when the Roman emperors and Christian priests joined hands. Now, this is an irony. Jesus was crucified by a Roman emperor -- see how history moves! Pontius Pilate was just a representative of the Roman power, of the Roman emperor; he simply followed the orders from Rome. Who would ever have thought that Rome would become the central place of Christianity? Who would ever have thought while Jesus was being crucified that Rome would be the residence of the pope? But that's how it happened. When priests joined hands with Emperor Constantine and other Roman emperors, Christianity became a world force.

Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism -- they have all depended on politics. They are not true religions anymore but political games being played in the name of religion.

I would like the world to have many more religions, so many that each individual has his own religion -- then no priest will be needed. That is the only way to drop the priests. If you have your own religion, no priest is needed -- you are the priest and you are the follower and you are everything.

You have to listen to your inner voice. Buddha says: Follow your own nature; there is no need for anybody to intercede on your behalf.

But I am not in favor of creating one religion; enough of that nonsense! In the past we have been trying to do that: make one religion so that quarreling can stop. But it is not possible. Even if you can enforce one religion, if the whole world becomes Christian, then again there will be Protestants and Catholics and a thousand and one sects. And the same game will start again: people will start quarreling -- because their needs are different, their understandings are different.

I have heard:

A beautiful young woman came home from London. She belonged to a small village, was from a Catholic family. After three or four years of living in London she had become very rich; she came back to see her parents. The mother could not believe her eyes. She asked, "How did you manage? You have become so rich -- such beautiful clothes, a diamond ring, a beautiful car!"

And the girl said, "Mother, I have become a prostitute."

Just hearing this the mother fainted, became unconscious. When she came back she asked again, "What did you say?"

The girl said, "Mother, I said I have become a prostitute."

And the mother started laughing and she said, "I misunderstood you -- I thought you said

you had become a Protestant."

To be a prostitute is okay, but to become a Protestant...? The same quarreling will start. Even small religions -- for example, Jainism, one of the smallest religions in the world -- have so many sects, sects within sects. In fact, we have not yet become aware of the great necessity that each individual needs his own version of God, and each individual has his own way of approaching God.

A man picked up by a prostitute in a bar is amazed by the college pennants and diplomas ornamenting the walls of her room.

"Are these your diplomas?" he asks.

"Sure," she says airily. "I have my Master of Arts from Columbia, and took my Ph.D. in Shakespeare at Oxford."

The man is incredulous. "But how did a girl like you get into a profession like this?"

"I don't know," she says. "Just lucky, I guess."

People have different understandings, different ways of looking at things, different interpretations. And they have to be allowed this freedom.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
MY PARENTS WERE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. MY BROTHER WAS A JUNKIE, MY SISTER A COMPULSIVE LIAR. AS FOR ME, I AM SO SERIOUS THAT IF I SMILE MY MOUTH HURTS. HOW DID I END UP HERE?

Prem Parijat, just lucky, I guess! You will live in ecstasy and you will die in ecstasy.

Did you hear about the man eighty-seven years of age who married a nineteen-year-old girl?

He died of a new disease called ecstasy. It took them three days to wipe the smile off his face.

Now, this is going to happen to you too: living your life will be a laughter; dying, it will be difficult for the people to wipe off your smile.

It may be just because your parents are Christian missionaries that you have landed here, because to be born to *any* kind of missionaries -- Christian, Hindu or Mohammedan -- is to be fed up with all that nonsense. To be born to a priest is to know one thing for certain: that priests don't believe in God. It is their business; they pretend.

It is a rare opportunity to be born in the house of a priest, because children are very perceptive and they can see through and through that all that nonsense that their father in preaching is *just* preaching -- he does not mean it because he never practices it. The children of the priests are bound to become aware of the hypocrisy of the so-called religious people.

It may be just because of it, because it is almost impossible to be in the house of a priest and not to know that he is the most irreligious person possible in the world.

Priests are exploiting religion. They are exploiting people's trust. They are the greatest cheaters in the world, because to exploit people's trust is the greatest crime. You are destroying their trust. But they live on that kind of cheating; that is their whole trade secret.

The bishop was very proud of an elegant mansion he had constructed as his official residence. One day, a friend and the bishop were engaged in conversation and the bishop was pursuing a seemingly atheistic train of thought....

That kind of thinking is becoming very prevalent in Christian circles: religionless religion, Godless Christianity -- these are being talked about, discussed. After Friedrich Nietzsche, who declared that God is dead, Christianity has been in a turmoil -- what to do now? They have been trying every possible way to create a Christianity which does not need God anymore, so that the profession can expand again.

Now God has become a barrier; the moment you assert the word 'God', you put people off. So Christian theologians are discussing, thinking, meditating, how to create a Christianity that does not need God at all. And it is possible! -- because Buddhism is there without any God, and Jainism is there without any God, so why can't there be a Christianity without God?

...This bishop was pursuing a seemingly atheistic train of thought. The friend asked him, "Bishop, do you believe in God or not? Say it exactly, say it in short. Don't go round and round. Say simply yes or no -- do you believe in God?"

After a long hesitation, the bishop replied, "Of course I do! Who do you think paid for this house?"

Now, the house that he has made, a beautiful mansion, is possible only because people still believe in God; and because they believe in God, they believe in the bishop. He cannot publicly declare there is no God. If you drop God, then Jesus is no longer the Son of God, then the pope is no longer the representative of Jesus, and so on and so forth. And they all go down the drain. It needs a hierarchy: God at the top and the priest at the bottom, the whole ladder.

And the priest certainly knows that there is no God. If he was aware that there is a God, he would not have been a priest in the first place -- he would be a Jesus, he would be a Buddha, but not a priest. He would be a prophet but not a priest. He would bring something of the unknown into people's lives, but he would not be part of a status quo, he would not be part of the established church. No man of understanding, no man who has some religious consciousness and experiences, can be part of any established church. It has never happened. Buddha has to leave his fold, Jesus has to leave his fold, Mohammed has to leave his fold -- this has always been so. Whenever a religious man is born, he has to leave his fold, because the fold is already in the hands of the politicians and the priests, whose whole interest is in exploiting people.

Anand Moksha has written to me:

During the time of the major earthquakes in Guatemala in 1976, the Catholic bishop at Lake Atitlan befriended me and allowed me to stay in his garden for a while.

A few months passed and after-shock tremors were still common. At that time I discovered that a beautiful house on a hillside was for rent for very little money. The reason was that a large boulder ominously overhung the house and people were afraid. I felt the vibes and it seemed okay to me -- so I rented the place.

When I told the bishop, he reacted with nervous dismay and swung his arms about, saying, "Aren't you worried about that rock tumbling down on the house?"

I replied, "If the Lord wants to take me, he will."

The bishop shrugged his shoulders and said, "You don't believe *that*, do you?"

It may be simply, Parijat, that just because you were born of Christian missionaries it became possible for you to be here. Christian missionaries, and twenty-five years in India! -- that is too much. In the first place, Christian missionaries and in the second place, twenty-five years in India...that is enough, more than enough, to convince the children that their parents are pseudo, that they are talking business, that they don't believe. It is not a question of belief at all.

I have heard a small story:

In a school, a Christian missionary school, the teacher asked the children, "Who is the greatest man in history?"

An American boy says, "Abraham Lincoln."

A Mohammedan boy says, "Hazrat Mohammed."

A Hindu girl says, "Lord Krishna."

And so on and so forth...and finally, the little Jewish boy stands up and says, "Jesus Christ."

The teacher could not believe her ears -- the Jew and saying Jesus Christ? She asked, "Do you really mean that?"

He said, "That is not the question. In my heart of hearts I know it is Moses -- but business is business."

To be with Christian missionaries for twenty-five years, *and* in India, and seeing what they are doing, is enough to disillusion you. The whole credit goes to your parents and their twenty-five years in India. They have brought you here -- be thankful to them.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL THAT I AM A VERY SPECIAL PERSON. I AM SO SPECIAL THAT I WANT JUST TO BE ORDINARY. PLEASE CAN YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THIS?

Anand Sangito, everybody here thinks exactly the same. And not only here, but everywhere else. Everyone deep in their heart knows that he is special. This is a joke God plays on people. When he makes a new man and pushes him down towards the earth, he whispers in his ear, "You are special. You are incomparable, you are just unique!"

But this he goes on doing to everybody and everybody goes on carrying it deep in the heart, although people don't say it as loudly as you are doing, because they are afraid others may feel offended. And nobody is going to be convinced, so what is the point of saying it? If you tell somebody, "I am special," you cannot convince him because he himself knows that he is special. How can you convince anybody? Yes, maybe sometimes somebody may be convinced, at least pretend to be convinced. If he has some work with you, as a bribe he may say, "Yes, you are special, you are great." But deep down he knows business is business.

A braggart is telling his friend about his three cars, etcetera, etcetera. When he also mentions that he has two kept mistresses in New York, but that he has made his ravishingly beautiful and terribly passionate private secretary pregnant, and must therefore take his gorgeous blond stenographer with him on his business trip to Rio de Janeiro to see the carnival, the listener suddenly begins to pant, grabs at his own necktie, and has a heart attack.

The braggart interrupts his tale, gets water, pats the victim on the back, etcetera, etcetera, and he asks solicitously what the matter is. "Can I help it?" the man gasps. "I am allergic to bullshit."

It is better to keep such bullshit hidden deep down inside yourself, because people are allergic. But in a way it is good that you exposed your mind.

If you think you are special then you are bound to create misery for yourself. If you think that you are higher than others, wiser than others, then you will attain to a very strong ego. And the ego is poison, pure poison. And the more egoistic you become, the more it hurts, because it is a wound. The more egoistic you become, the more you become unbridged from life. You fall separate from life; you are no longer in the flow of existence, you have become a rock in the river. You have become ice-cold, you have lost all warmth, all love. A special person cannot love, because where are you going to find another special person?

I have heard about a man who remained unmarried his whole life, and when he was dying, ninety years old, somebody asked him, "You have remained unmarried your whole life, but you have never said what the reason was. Now you are dying, at least quench our curiosity. If there is any secret, now you can tell it, because you are dying; you will be gone. Even if the secret is known, it can't harm you."

The man said, "Yes, there is a secret. It is not that I am against marriage, but I was searching for a perfect woman. I searched and searched, and my whole life slipped by."

The inquirer asked, "But upon this big earth, so many millions of people, half of them women, couldn't you find one perfect woman?"

A tear rolled down from the eye of the dying man. He said, "Yes, I did find one."

The inquirer was absolutely shocked. He said, "Then what happened? Why didn't you get married?"

And the old man said, "But the woman was searching for a perfect husband."

Your life will become very difficult if you live with such ideas. And yes, the ego is so tricky, so cunning, it can give you, Sangito, this new project: "You are so special, become just ordinary." But in your ordinariness you will know you are the most extraordinarily ordinary man. Nobody is more ordinary than you! It will be the same game, camouflaged.

That's what so-called humble people go on doing. They say, "I am the most humble man. I am just the dust on your feet." But they don't mean it! Don't say, "Yes, I know you are," otherwise they will never be able to forgive you. They are waiting for you to say, "You are the most humble man I have ever seen, you are the most pious man I have ever seen." Then they will be satisfied, contented. It is ego hiding behind humbleness. You cannot drop the ego in this way.

You ask, "I feel that I am a very very special person. I am so special that I want just to be ordinary. Please can you say something about this?"

No one is special, or, *everyone* is special. No one is ordinary, or everyone is ordinary. Whatsoever you think about yourself, please think the same about everyone else, and the problem will be solved. You can choose. If you want the word 'special', you can think you are special -- but then everybody is special. Not only people, but trees, birds, animals, rocks -- the whole existence is special, because you come out of this existence and you will dissolve into this existence. But if you love the word 'ordinary' -- which is a beautiful word, more relaxed -- then know that everybody is ordinary. Then the whole existence is ordinary.

One thing to be remembered: whatsoever you think about yourself, think the same for everybody else and the ego will disappear. The ego is the illusion that is created by thinking about yourself in one way and thinking about others in another. It is double thinking. If you drop the double thinking, ego dies of its own accord.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN I CAME HERE I FELT GOD TO BE VERY NEAR -- ANY MOMENT AND I WOULD BE WITH HIM -- BUT AS TIME PASSES IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE. HE IS NOT AROUND; IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HIM.
WHY IS IT SO? PLEASE SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.

Vedant Bharti, you must be carrying a certain image of God in your mind; hence you are missing. And unless you drop that image you are going to miss. God has no obligation to fulfill your idea of him. You must be carrying a certain idea that "God looks like this, behaves like this...." That's why it is becoming impossible: *you* are making it impossible.

God can be known only by those who are capable of dropping all ideas about God. Any idea that you have accumulated in yourself in your ignorance is a hindrance. Drop all ideas about God and you will be surprised, you will be shocked, you will not be able to believe your eyes...because only God is! Then you will never ask, "Where is God?" You will ask, "Is there any place where God is not?"

Then in the very ordinariness of things you will see something tremendously extraordinary. Then ordinary pebbles are transformed into diamonds. Then ordinary humanity is no longer ordinary -- then something luminous is in everybody's heart. Then man comes closer to the divine, and the divine comes closer to man; the human and the divine disappear into each other, the world and God disappear into each other. Then you are not searching for a God who is separate and high and far away, living in the seventh heaven; then he lives in your neighborhood as your neighbor. Then he is human, he is animal, he is vegetable, he is mineral...he is all.

And when you can see that he surrounds you, not as a person but as a presence, then only does your inquiry come to a fulfillment. God is not hiding from you but you are keeping your eyes closed because of so many prejudices. Somebody has a Hindu idea of God, and somebody has a Christian idea of God, and somebody else a Mohammedan idea of God. Now, God is neither Mohammedan, nor Christian, nor Hindu, so all these people who are carrying these ideas are bound to go on stumbling in darkness and more darkness. From darkness to darkness will be their journey, from death to death they will move. They will never know the light.

A Hindu cannot know God, a Mohammedan cannot know God. First you will have to cleanse your mind completely of all Hinduism, all Mohammedanism, all Buddhism. When you are utterly thoughtless, just alert, aware, watchful, then God explodes. And he explodes all over the place.

Vedant Bharti, you say, "When I came here I felt God to be very near." That was your imagination.

"...Any moment and I would be with him." That was your wish.

"...But as time passes it seems impossible" -- because no imagination can ever become real. No dream of yours can ever be fulfilled. Reality has to be discovered, not imagined.

Now you say, "He is not around; it is difficult to see him."

Only he is around. It is difficult to see him because your eyes are too burdened with your own prejudices, concepts, systems of thought. Be a little more childlike, be a little more innocent. God comes only when the heart is innocent. God comes only when you are utterly empty of all ideas. He is always ready to come, he is standing at the door, but you cannot hear because your mind is so full of turmoil, full of thoughts, millions of thoughts clamoring around. Your mind is so noisy you cannot hear the silent knock on the door.

Be silent, be innocent.

God is. Only God is.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #5

Chapter title: Wakefulness is life

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WAKEFULNESS IS THE WAY TO LIFE.
THE FOOL SLEEPS
AS IF HE WERE ALREADY DEAD,
BUT THE MASTER IS AWAKE
AND HE LIVES FOREVER.

HE WATCHES.
HE IS CLEAR.

HOW HAPPY HE IS!
FOR HE SEES THAT WAKEFULNESS IS LIFE.
HOW HAPPY HE IS,
FOLLOWING THE PATH OF THE AWAKENED.

WITH GREAT PERSEVERANCE
HE MEDITATES, SEEKING
FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS.

SO AWAKE, REFLECT, WATCH.
WORK WITH CARE AND ATTENTION.
LIVE IN THE WAY
AND THE LIGHT WILL GROW IN YOU.

BY WATCHING AND WORKING
THE MASTER MAKES FOR HIMSELF AN ISLAND
WHICH THE FLOOD CANNOT OVERWHELM.

One of the most important things to be understood about man is that man is asleep. Even while he thinks he is awake, he is not. His wakefulness is very fragile; his wakefulness is so tiny it doesn't matter at all. His wakefulness is only a beautiful name, but utterly empty.

You sleep in the night, you sleep in the day; from birth to death you go on changing your

patterns of sleep, but you never really awake. Just by opening the eyes don't befool yourself that you are awake. Unless the inner eyes open, unless your inside becomes full of light, unless you can see yourself, who you are, don't think that you are awake.

That is the greatest illusion man lives in. And once you accept that you are already awake, then there is no question of making any effort to be awake.

The first thing to sink deep in your heart is that you are asleep, utterly asleep. You are dreaming, day in, day out. You are dreaming sometimes with open eyes and sometimes with closed eyes, but you *are* dreaming, you are a dream. You are not yet a reality.

And, of course, in a dream whatsoever you do is meaningless, whatsoever you think is pointless, whatsoever you project remains part of your dreams and never allows you to see that which is. Hence Buddha's insistence...and not only Gautama the Buddha but all the buddhas have insisted on only one thing: Awake! Continuously, for centuries, their whole teaching can be contained in a single word: Be *awake!*

And they have been devising methods, strategies, they have been creating contexts and spaces, and energy fields in which you can be shocked into awareness. Yes, unless you are shocked, shaken to your very foundations, you will not awaken. The sleep has been so long, it has reached to the very core of your being; you are soaked in it. Each cell of your body and each fiber of your mind has become full of sleep. It is not a small phenomenon. Hence great effort is needed to be alert, to be attentive, to be watchful, to become a witness.

If on any one single theme all the buddhas of the world agree, this is the theme: that man as he is is asleep, and man as he should be should be awake. Wakefulness is the goal, and wakefulness is the taste of all their teachings. Zarathustra, Lao Tzu, Jesus, Buddha, Bahauddin, Kabir, Nanak -- all the awakened ones have been teaching one single theme, in different languages, in different metaphors, but their song is the same. Just as the sea tastes of salt -- whether the sea is tasted from the north or from the east or from the west, the sea always tastes of salt -- the taste of buddhahood is wakefulness.

But you will not make any effort if you go on believing that you are already awake; then there is no question of making any effort. Why bother? And you have created religions, gods, prayers, rituals, out of your dreams -- your gods are as much part of your dreams as anything else. Your politics is part of your dreams, your religions are part of your dreams, your poetry, your painting, your art -- whatsoever you do, because you are asleep, you make it according to your own state of mind.

The Bible says God created man in his own image -- the truth seems to be just the opposite: man has created God in his own image. Your gods are false because you are false. Your religion is pseudo because you are pseudo. Your scriptures cannot have any significance because you don't have any significance.

Two priest are playing golf. The younger one misses an easy putt and says, "Shit!" The older one berates him for this, saying that if he continues to use profanity like that God will certainly blast him with a thunderbolt. They keep playing and the younger priest misses another putt, and again says, "Shit!"

The skies suddenly open: a thunderbolt flashes out, and strikes the older priest dead. There is a pause, and the heavenly voice is heard saying in accents of thunder, "Shit!"

Your gods cannot be different from you. Who will create them? Who will give them shape and color and form? You create them, you sculpt them; they have eyes like you, noses like you -- and minds like you! The Old Testament God says, "I am a very jealous God!"

Now who has created this God who is jealous? God cannot be jealous. And if God is jealous, then what is wrong in being jealous? If even God is jealous, why should you be thought to be doing something wrong when you are jealous? Then jealousy is divine.

The Old Testament God says, "I am a very angry God! If you don't follow my commandments, I will destroy you. You will be thrown into hellfire for eternity. And because I am very jealous," the God says, "don't worship anybody else. I cannot tolerate it."

Who created such a God? It must be out of our own jealousy, out of our own anger, that we have created this image.

A Jew who has a long run of bad luck goes out into the woods and lifts his voice in prayer and recrimination. "Oh, God," he asks heaven tearfully, "haven't I always been a good Jew? Haven't I always given charity, even to those damn goyim? Didn't I bring up my family decent? Never drink, swear, gamble; no bad women, nothing! Why do you do this to me God? Why? Why?"

A dark cloud suddenly appears overhead, and a tremendous voice replies, "You piss me off!"

The God certainly cannot be different from you. It is your projection, it is your shadow. It echoes you and nobody else. That's why there are so many gods in the world. The Hindus have a certain idea about God -- the Hindu idea -- it reflects the Hindu mind.

If you go back into Hindu scriptures you will be surprised. You will not be able to believe what kind of gods Hindus have created -- very sexual. Adultery is very common amongst Hindu gods, and not only do they play their games of adultery in the Hindu paradise, they can't even leave the earth alone; they come to the earth too, to rape women, to seduce simple women. They don't even leave the wives of the great seers alone. And because they have infinite power they can even appear as the husbands, they can look like the husbands. And the women have no idea who is hiding behind the facade.

Who has created these gods? -- it must have been deep down a very sexual mind.

And the same is the case with all other gods of all other religions. It is because of this that Buddha never talked about God. He said: What is the point of talking about God to people who are asleep? They will listen in their sleep. They will dream about whatsoever is said to them, and they will create their own gods -- which will be utterly false, utterly impotent, utterly meaningless. It is better not to have such gods.

That's why Buddha is not interested in talking about gods. His whole interest is in waking you up.

It is said about a Buddhist enlightened master who was sitting by the side of the river one evening, enjoying the sound of the water, the sound of the wind passing through the trees.... A man came and asked him, "Can you tell me in a single word the essence of your religion?"

The master remained silent, utterly silent, as if he had not heard the question. The questioner said, "Are you deaf or something?"

The master said, "I have heard your question, and I have answered it too! Silence is the answer. I remained silent -- that pause, that interval, was my answer."

The man said, "I cannot understand such a mysterious answer. Can't you be a little more clear?"

So the master wrote on the sand "meditation," in small letters with his finger. The man said, "I can read now. It is a little better than at first. At least I have got a word to ponder

over. But can't you make it a little *more* clear?"

The master wrote again "MEDITATION." Of course this time he wrote in bigger letters. The man was feeling a little embarrassed, puzzled, offended, angry. He said, "*Again* you write meditation? Can't you be a little clear for me?"

And the master wrote in very big letters, capital letters, "M E D I T A T I O N ."
The man said, "You seem to be mad."

The master said, "I have already come down very much. The first answer was the right answer, the second was not so right, the third even more wrong, the fourth has gone very wrong" -- because when you write "MEDITATION" with capital letters you have made a god out of it.

That's why the word 'God' is written with capital 'G'. Whenever you want to make something supreme, ultimate, you write it with a capital letter.

The master said, "I have already committed a sin." He erased all those words he had written, and he said, "Please listen to my first answer -- only then I am true."

Silence is the space in which one awakens, and the noisy mind is the space in which one remains asleep. If your mind continues chattering, you are asleep. Sitting silently, if the mind disappears and you can hear the chattering birds and no mind inside, a silence...this whistle of the bird, the chirping, and no mind functioning in your head, utter silence...then awareness wells up in you. It does not come from the outside, it arises in you, it grows in you. Otherwise remember: you are asleep.

A husband and wife were asleep. About 3 AM the wife dreamt of secretly meeting another man. Then she dreamt she saw her husband coming. In her sleep she shrieked, "Heavens, my husband!"

Her husband, waking suddenly, leapt out of the window.

And remember, it is not a laughing matter; it is the reality, it is how you are living. It is how man exists in his ordinary state.

A wife tries to win back her husband's love, on the advice of a woman friend, by bringing him his slippers and pipe when he comes home late one night, giving him a tall drink, cuddling up in his lap dressed only in a silk dressing gown, and ending with the murmured offer, "Let's go upstairs, darling!"

"I might as well," says her bemused husband, "I'll get hell when I get home anyway!"

We go on living absolutely inattentive to what is happening around us. Yes, we have become very efficient in doing things. What we are doing, we have become so efficient in doing that we don't need any awareness to do it. It has become mechanical, automatic. We function like robots. We are not men yet; we are machines.

That's what George Gurdjieff used to say again and again, that man as he exists is a machine. He offended many people, because nobody likes to be called a machine. Machines like to be called gods; then they feel very happy, puffed up. Gurdjieff used to call people machines, and he was right. If you watch yourself you will know how mechanically you behave.

The Russian psychologist Pavlov, and the American psychologist Skinner, are ninety-nine point nine percent right about man: they believe that man is a beautiful machine,

that's all. There is no soul in him. I say ninety-nine point nine percent they are right; they only miss by a very small margin. In that small margin are the buddhas, the awakened ones. But they can be forgiven, because Pavlov never came across a buddha -- he came across millions of people like you.

Skinner has been studying men and rats and finds no difference. Rats are simple beings, that's all; man is a little more complicated. Man is a highly sophisticated machine, rats are simple machines. It is easier to study rats; that's why psychologists go on studying rats. They study rats and they conclude about man -- and their conclusions are almost right. I say "almost," mind you, because that point one percent is the *most* important phenomenon that has happened: a Buddha, a Jesus, a Mohammed. These few awakened people are the real men, but where can B.F. Skinner find a buddha? Certainly not in America.

I have heard:

A man asked a rabbi, "Why didn't Jesus choose to be born in twentieth-century America?"

The rabbi shrugged his shoulders and said, "In America? It would have been impossible. Where can you find a virgin, firstly? And secondly, where will you find three wise men?"

And without a virgin mother and three wise men, how can Jesus be born?

I have heard:

In a church, the priest asked the audience, "Please stand up, all the women who are virgins!"

Just one woman with a small baby girl stood up. Certainly she was a mother, and the priest said, "Do you think yourself to be a virgin? You are a mother!"

She said, "Yes, I am -- but this girl is a virgin, and she cannot stand on her own."

Where is B.F. Skinner going to find a buddha? And even if he can find a buddha, his preconceived prejudices, ideas, will not allow him to see. He will go on seeing his rats. He cannot understand anything that rats cannot do. Now, rats don't meditate, rats don't become enlightened. And his conception of man is only a magnified form of a rat. And still I say that he is right about the greater majority of people; his conclusions are not wrong. And buddhas will agree with him about the so-called normal humanity: the normal humanity is utterly asleep. Even animals are not so asleep.

Have you seen a deer in the jungle -- how alert he looks, how watchfully he walks? Have you seen a bird sitting on the tree -- how intelligently he goes on watching what is happening all around? You move towards the bird -- there is a certain space he allows; beyond that, one step more, and he flies away. He has a certain alertness about his territory. If somebody enters into that territory then it is dangerous.

If you look around you will be surprised: man seems to be the most asleep animal on the earth.

A woman buys a parrot at an auction of the furnishings of a fancy whorehouse, and keeps the parrot's cage covered for two weeks to make it forget its profane vocabulary. When the cage is finally uncovered, the parrot looks around and remarks, "Awrrk! New house. New madam." When the woman's daughters come in, he adds, "Awrrk! New girls."

When her husband comes home that night, the parrot says, "Awrrk! Awrrk! Same old

customers. Hello, Joe!"

Man is in a very fallen state. In fact, that is the meaning of the Christian parable of the fall of Adam, his expulsion. But why were Adam and Eve expelled from paradise? They were expelled because they had eaten the fruit of knowledge. They were expelled because they had become minds, and they had lost their consciousness. If you become a mind you lose consciousness -- mind means sleep, mind means noise, mind means mechanicalness.

If you become a mind you lose consciousness. Hence, the whole work that has to be done is: how to become consciousness again and lose the mind. You have to throw out of your system all that you have gathered as knowledge. It is knowledge that keeps you asleep; hence, the more knowledgeable a person is, the more asleep.

That has been my own observation too. Innocent villagers are far more alert and awake than the professors in the universities and the pundits in the temples. The pundits are nothing but parrots; the academicians in the universities are full of nothing but holy cow dung, full of absolutely meaningless noise -- just minds and no consciousness.

People who work with nature -- farmers, gardeners, woodcutters, carpenters, painters -- they are far more alert than the people that function in the universities as deans and vice-chancellors and chancellors. Because when you work with nature, nature is alert, trees are alert; their form of alertness is certainly different, but they are very alert.

Now there are scientific proofs of their alertness. If the woodcutter comes with an axe in his hand and with the deliberate desire to cut the tree, all the trees that see him coming tremble. Now there are scientific proofs about it; I am not talking poetry, I am talking science when I say this. Now there are instruments to measure whether the tree is happy or unhappy, afraid or unafraid, sad or ecstatic. When the woodcutter comes, all the trees that see him start trembling. They become aware that death is close by. And the woodcutter has not cut any tree yet -- just his coming....

And one thing more, far more strange: if the woodcutter is simply passing by there with no deliberate idea to cut a tree, then no tree becomes afraid. It is the same woodcutter, with the same axe. It seems that his intention to cut a tree affects the trees. It means that his intention is being understood; it means the very vibe is being decoded by the trees.

And one more significant fact has been observed scientifically: that if you go into the forest and kill an animal, it is not only the animal kingdom around that becomes shaken, but trees also. If you kill a deer, all the deer that are around feel the vibe of murder, become sad; a great trembling arises in them. Suddenly they are afraid for no particular reason at all. They may not have seen the deer being killed, but somehow, in a subtle way, they are affected -- instinctively, intuitively. But it is not only the deer which are affected -- the trees are affected, the parrots are affected, the tigers are affected, the eagles are affected, the grass leaves are affected. Murder has happened, destruction has happened, death has happened -- everything that is around is affected.

Man seems to be the most asleep....

These sutras of Buddha have to be meditated on deeply, imbibed, followed.

WAKEFULNESS IS THE WAY TO LIFE.

You are alive only in the proportion that you are aware. Awareness is the difference between death and life. You are not alive just because you are breathing, you are not alive

just because your heart is beating. Physiologically you can be kept alive in a hospital, without any consciousness. Your heart will go on beating and you will be able to breathe. You can be kept in such a mechanical arrangement that you will remain alive for years -- in the sense of breathing and the heart beating and the blood circulating. There are now many people around the world in advanced countries who are just vegetating in the hospitals, because advanced technology has made it possible for your death to be postponed indefinitely -- for years, for centuries, you can be kept alive. If this is life, then you can be kept alive. But this is not life at all. Just to vegetate is not life.

Buddhas have a different definition. Their definition consists of awareness. They don't say you are alive because you can breathe, they don't say you are alive because your blood circulates; they say you are alive if you are awake. So except for the awakened ones nobody is really alive. You are corpses -- walking, talking, doing things -- you are robots.

WAKEFULNESS IS THE WAY TO LIFE, says Buddha. Become more wakeful and you will become more alive. And life is God -- there is no other God. Hence Buddha talks about life and awareness. Life is the goal and awareness is the methodology, the technique to attain it.

THE FOOL SLEEPS....

And all are asleep, so all are foolish. Don't feel offended. The facts have to be stated as they are. You function in sleep; that's why you go on stumbling, you go on doing things you don't want to do. You go on doing things you have decided not to do. You go on doing things you know are not right to do, and you don't do things which you know are right.

How is this possible? Why can't you walk straight? Why do you go on getting trapped into bypaths? Why do you go on going astray?

A young man with a fine voice is asked to take part in a pageant play, though he tries to beg off, saying he always gets embarrassed under such circumstances. He is assured it will be very simple, and he will have only one line to say: "I come to snatch a kiss, and dart into the fray. Hark! I hear a pistol shot..." and then stride offstage.

At the performance he comes onstage, very embarrassed already by the tight-fitting colonial knee-breeches he has been made to put on at the last moment, and becomes completely unstrung at the sight of the beautiful heroine lying back on a garden seat, awaiting him, in a white gown. He clears his throat and announces: "I come to kiss your snatch -- no! -- snatch a kiss, and fart into the dray -- I mean, dart into the fray! Hark! -- I hear a shistol pot -- no! -- a shostil pit, a pistil shit. Oh, bat shit, rat shit, shit on you all! I never wanted to be in this damned play anyhow!"

This is what is happening. Watch your life: everything that you go on doing is so confused and so confusing. You don't have any clarity, you don't have any perceptiveness. You are not alert. You can't see! You can't hear! Certainly, you have ears so you *can* hear, but there is nobody inside to understand it. Certainly you have eyes so you can see, but there is nobody present inside. So your eyes go on seeing and your ears go on listening, but nothing is understood.

If you really had eyes you would see God everywhere. And if you could hear you would hear the celestial music, you would hear the harmony of existence.

And on each step you stumble, on each step you commit something wrong. And still you

go on believing that you are aware. Drop that idea completely. Dropping it is a great leap, a great step, because once you drop the idea that "I am aware" you will start seeking and searching for ways and means to be aware. So the first thing to sink into you is that you *are* asleep, utterly asleep.

Modern psychology has discovered a few things which are significant; although they have been discovered only intellectually, still it is a good beginning. If intellectually they have been discovered, then sooner or later existentially also they will be experienced.

Freud is a great pioneer; of course, not a buddha, but still a man of great significance, because he was the first to make the idea accepted by the larger part of humanity that man has a great unconscious hidden in him. The conscious mind is only one tenth, and the unconscious mind is nine times bigger than the conscious.

Then his disciple, Jung, went a little further, a little deeper, and discovered the collective unconscious. Behind the individual unconscious there is a collective unconscious. Now somebody is needed to discover one thing more which is there, and I hope.... Sooner or later the psychological investigations that are going on, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, are bound to discover it -- the cosmic unconscious. Buddhas have talked about it.

So we can say: the conscious mind, a very fragile thing, a very small part of your being. Behind the conscious is the subconscious mind -- vague. You can hear its whispering but you cannot figure it out. It is always there, behind the conscious, pulling its strings.

Third: the unconscious mind which you come across only in dreams or when you take drugs. Then, the collective unconscious mind. You come across it only when you go into a very deep inquiry into your unconscious mind; then you come across the collective unconscious. And if you go still further, deeper, you will come to the cosmic unconscious.

The cosmic unconscious is nature. The collective unconscious is the whole of humanity that has lived up to now, it is part of you. The unconscious is your individual unconscious that the society has repressed in you, that has not been allowed expression. Hence it comes by the back door in the night, in your dreams. And the conscious mind...I will call it the so-called conscious mind because it is only so-called. It is so tiny, just a flicker, but even if it is just a flicker it is important because it has the seed; the seeds are always small. It has great potential.

Now a totally new dimension is opening up. Just as Freud opened the dimension below the conscious, Sri Aurobindo opened the dimension above the conscious. Freud and Sri Aurobindo are the two most important people of this age. Both are intellectuals, neither of them is an awakened person, but both have done a great service to humanity. Intellectually they have made us aware that we are not so small as we appear from the surface, that the surface is hiding great depths and heights.

Freud went into the depths, Sri Aurobindo tried to penetrate into the heights. Above our so-called conscious mind is the real conscious mind; that is attained only through meditation. When your ordinary conscious mind is added to meditation, when the ordinary conscious mind is plus meditation, it becomes the real conscious mind. Beyond the real conscious mind is the superconscious mind.

When you are meditating you have only glimpses. Meditation is a groping in the dark. Yes, a few windows open up, but you fall back again and again. Superconscious mind means samadhi -- you have attained a crystal-clear perceptiveness, you have attained an integrated awareness. Now you cannot fall below it; it is yours. Even in sleep it will remain with you.

Beyond the superconscious is the collective superconscious; the collective superconscious is what is known as "gods" in religions. And beyond the collective superconscious is the

cosmic superconscious which even goes beyond gods. Buddha calls it nirvana, Mahavira calls it *kaivalya*, Hindu mystics have called it moksha; you can call it the truth.

These are the nine states of your being, and you are just living in a small corner of your being -- the tiny conscious mind; as if somebody has a palace and has completely forgotten about the palace and has started living on the porch -- and thinks this is all.

Freud and Sri Aurobindo are both great intellectual giants, pioneers, philosophers, but both are doing great guesswork. Instead of teaching students the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, it would be far better if people were taught more about Sri Aurobindo, because he is the greatest philosopher of this age. But he is completely neglected, ignored by the academic world -- for a certain reason.

The reason is, even to read Sri Aurobindo will make you feel that you are unaware; and he himself is not a buddha yet, but still he will create a very embarrassing situation for you. If he is right, then what are you doing? Then why are you not exploring the heights of your being?

Freud was accepted with great resistance, but finally he was accepted. Sri Aurobindo is not even accepted yet. In fact there is not even any opposition to him; he is simply ignored. And the reason is clear. Freud talks about something below you -- that is not so embarrassing; you can feel good knowing that you are conscious, and below your consciousness there is subconsciousness and unconsciousness and collective unconsciousness. But those states are all below you; you are at the top, you can feel very good. But if you study Sri Aurobindo, you will feel embarrassed, offended, because there are higher states than you -- and man's ego never wants to accept that there is anything higher than him. Man wants to believe that he is the highest pinnacle, the climax, the Gourishankar, the Everest -- that there is nothing higher than him....

That's why the modern man wants to deny God, because to accept God means you have to accept something higher than you. And the modern ego is so puffed up that the modern mind says there is no God and there is no beyond and there is no afterlife. And it feels very good -- denying your own kingdom, denying your own heights, you feel very good. Look at the foolishness of it.

Buddha is right. He says:

THE FOOL SLEEPS
AS IF HE WERE ALREADY DEAD,
BUT THE MASTER IS AWAKE
AND HE LIVES FOREVER.

Awareness is eternal, it knows no death. Only unawareness dies. So if you remain unconscious, asleep, you will have to die again. If you want to get rid of this whole misery of being born and dying again and again, if you want to get rid of the wheel of birth and death, you will have to become absolutely alert. You will have to reach higher and higher into consciousness.

And these things are not to be accepted on intellectual grounds; these things have to become experiential, these things have to become existential. I am not telling you to be convinced philosophically, because philosophical conviction brings nothing, no harvest. The real harvest comes only when you make great effort to wake yourself up.

But these intellectual maps can create a desire, a longing in you; can make you aware of the potential, of the possible; can make you aware that you are not what you appear to be --

you are far more.

THE FOOL SLEEPS AS IF HE WERE ALREADY DEAD, BUT THE MASTER IS AWAKE AND HE LIVES FOREVER.

HE WATCHES.
HE IS CLEAR.

Simple and beautiful statements. Truth is always simple and always beautiful. Just to see the simplicity of these two statements...but how much they contain -- worlds within worlds, infinite worlds. HE WATCHES. HE IS CLEAR.

The only thing that has to be learned is watchfulness. Watch! Watch every act that you do. Watch every thought that passes in your mind. Watch every desire that takes possession of you. Watch even small gestures -- walking, talking, eating, taking a bath. Go on watching everything. Let everything become an opportunity to watch.

Don't eat mechanically, don't just go on stuffing yourself -- be very watchful. Chew well and watchfully...and you will be surprised how much you have been missing up to now, because each bite will give you tremendous satisfaction; if you eat watchfully, it will become more tasteful. Even ordinary food tastes if you are watchful; and if you are not watchful, you can eat the most tasteful food but there will be no taste in it, because there is nobody to watch. You simply go on stuffing yourself.

Eat slowly, watchfully; each bite has to be chewed, tasted. Smell, touch, feel the breeze and the sunrays. Look at the moon and become just a silent pool of watchfulness, and the moon will be reflected in you with tremendous beauty. Move in life remaining continuously watchful.

Again and again you will forget. Don't become miserable because of that; it is natural. For millions of lives you have never tried watchfulness, so it is simple, natural, that you go on forgetting again and again. But the moment you remember, again watch.

Remember one thing: when you remember that you have forgotten watching, don't become repentful, don't repent; otherwise, again you are wasting time. Don't feel miserable: "I missed again." Don't start feeling, "I am a sinner." Don't start condemning yourself, because this is a sheer waste of time. Never repent for the past! Live in the moment. If you had forgotten, so what? It was natural -- it has become a habit, and habits die hard. And these are not habits imbibed in one life; these are habits imbibed in millions of lives. So if you can remain watchful even for a few moments, feel thankful to God -- feel thankful. Even those few moments are more than expected.

HE WATCHES. HE IS CLEAR.

And when you watch, a clarity arises. Why does clarity arise out of watchfulness? Because the more watchful you become, the more all your hastiness slows down. You become more graceful. As you watch, your chattering mind chatters less, because the energy that was becoming chattering is turning and becoming watchfulness -- it is the same energy! Now more and more energy will be transformed into watchfulness and the mind will not get its nourishment. Thoughts will start becoming thinner, they will start losing weight. Slowly slowly, they will start dying. And as thoughts start dying, clarity arises. Now your mind becomes a mirror.

HOW HAPPY HE IS! And when one is clear, one is blissful. It is confusion that is the root cause of misery; it is clarity that is the foundation of blissfulness.

HOW HAPPY HE IS!
FOR HE SEES THAT WAKEFULNESS IS LIFE.

And now he knows there is no death, because wakefulness can never be destroyed. When death comes, you will watch it too. You will die watching; watching will not die. Your body will disappear, dust unto dust, but your watchfulness will remain; it will become part of the cosmic whole. It will become cosmic consciousness.

In these moments the seers of the Upanishads declare, "*Aham brahmasmi!* -- I am the cosmic consciousness!" It is in such spaces that al-Hillaj Mansoor announced, "*Ana'l haq!* -- I am the truth!"

These are the heights which are your birthright. If you are not getting them, only you are responsible and nobody else.

HOW HAPPY HE IS! FOR HE SEES THAT WAKEFULNESS IS LIFE.

HOW HAPPY HE IS,
FOLLOWING THE PATH OF THE AWAKENED.

WITH GREAT PERSEVERANCE
HE MEDITATES, SEEKING
FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS.

Listen to these words very attentively: WITH GREAT PERSEVERANCE... Unless you bring total effort to waking yourself up it is not going to happen. Partial efforts are futile. You cannot be just so-so, you cannot be just lukewarm. It is not going to help. Lukewarm water cannot evaporate, and lukewarm efforts to be alert are bound to fail. Transformation happens only when you put your total energy into it. When you are boiling at a hundred degrees heat, then you evaporate, then the alchemical change happens. Then you start rising up.

Have you not watched? -- water flows downwards, but vapor rises upwards. Exactly the same happens: unconsciousness goes downwards, consciousness goes upwards. And one thing more: upwards is synonymous with inwards, and downwards is synonymous with outwards. Consciousness goes inwards, unconsciousness goes outwards. Unconsciousness makes you interested in others -- things, people, but it is always the others. Unconsciousness keeps you completely in darkness; your eyes go on being focused on others. It creates a kind of exteriority, it makes you extroverts. Consciousness creates interiority, it makes you introverts; it takes you inward, deeper and deeper.

And deeper and deeper also means higher and higher; they grow simultaneously, just as a tree grows. You only see it going upwards, you don't see the roots going downwards. But first the roots have to go downwards, only then can the tree go upwards. If a tree wants to reach the sky, then it will have to send roots to the very bottom, to the lowest depths possible. The tree grows simultaneously in both directions. In exactly the same way consciousness grows upwards...downwards, it sends its roots into your being.

I talked about nine states of consciousness. Your branches of consciousness will go upwards, from conscious -- so-called conscious -- to real conscious, from real conscious to superconscious, from superconscious to collective conscious, from collective conscious to cosmic conscious. And your roots will be growing from so-called conscious to subconscious, from subconscious to unconscious, from unconscious to collective unconscious, from collective unconscious to cosmic unconscious. The moment your roots reach nature, your

flowers start blooming in God. Hence nature and God are not divided -- in the awakened one they are bridged.

The really awakened one is not against nature, cannot be; he is all for nature. In fact, he helps you to go both ways -- on one side into nature, on the other side into God. That's my effort here. I would like you to be natural, so natural that your roots go to the deepest core of your being -- because that is the only way to help you grow upwards. Roots have to be strongly in the soil, so strong that they can support a high-rising cedar of Lebanon. If it has to go hundreds of feet upwards, it will need great roots. Because of this I am being misunderstood all over this country particularly, and all over the world in general.

Roots have to reach to the sex energy, because that is the lowest, the bottom in you; only then can your flowers bloom in superconsciousness, in samadhi. The lotus can bloom only if it is rooted in the mud deep down in the lake. This is possible only with great perseverance. Man as he is is very lazy; because he is asleep he is lazy.

This story is of a husband and wife who agree that whoever speaks first will have to close the street door which has accidentally been left open. Robbers find the open door, enter, and seeing the silent couple making no move, eat the food on the table, take all the valuables, and finally rape the wife, and propose to shave off the husband's beard. "Alright," the husband cries at that point, "I'll close the goddamn door!"

People are really lazy, utterly lazy. Laziness is part of sleep. Hence, perseverance, effort, continuous effort, constant effort, will be needed. You will fall back again and again. You are in the state of a drunkard; hence falling backward is forgivable. But the moment you recognize, whenever a ray of light happens and you remember, put your total energy into it again. Don't remain a fool, don't remain asleep, don't remain a drunkard.

There were these three drunkards walking down the street. One was carrying a loaf of bread, the other a jug of wine and the third a car door. As they were walking along, a policeman stopped them and asked, "Where are you going?" "On a picnic," replied the man with the bread. "On a picnic?" said the cop. "The bread I can understand -- you can eat it when you get hungry; the wine you can drink when you get thirsty. But why the car door? -- that I can't understand." "Well," said the man with the door, "if it gets too cold I can roll up the window."

You will have to come out of many layers of drunkenness. Greed is a state of drunkenness, and everybody is greedy -- greedy for more. Mind continuously asks for more and more, and the demand is never-ending. If you are after money, more money. If you are after political power, more power. If you are after prestige, more prestige. If you are interested in becoming humble, then more humbleness, because you have to be the *most* humble man in the world. If you are after renunciation, then more and more renunciation. There is never any end to this constant demand of the mind -- more....

Greed is a drunkenness, it is a sleep. So is anger. Have you not observed that in anger you can do things which you cannot do ordinarily? You say things for which you repent later on. And you cannot believe later on that you uttered such nonsense, that you are capable of uttering such nonsense. What happens when you are angry? You are in a state of drunkenness.

Become more watchful and anger will be less and greed will be less and jealousy will be less.

I don't say to you: Don't be angry, because that's what has been said to you down the ages. Your so-called saints have been telling you, "Don't be angry!" so you have learned ways of repressing anger. But the more you repress anger, the bigger the unconscious you are creating in yourself. You are throwing things into the basement, and then you will be afraid to enter into the basement, because all these things -- anger and greed and sex -- are there. You know! You have been throwing them there. All kinds of rubbish are there, and dangerous, poisonous. You will not be ready to go in.

That's why people don't want to go in, because going in means encountering all these things. And nobody wants to encounter these things; one wants to avoid them. For thousands of years you have been told to repress, and because of repression you have become more and more unconscious. I cannot say to you repress. I would like to say to you just the opposite: don't repress -- watch, be alert. When anger arises, sit down in your room, close your doors and watch it.

You know only two ways: either to be angry, be violent, destructive, or to repress it. You don't know the third way, and the third way is the way of the buddhas: neither indulge nor repress -- watch. Indulgence creates habit. If you become angry today and again tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow again, you are creating a habit; you are conditioning yourself to be more and more angry.

So indulgence cannot take you out of it. That's where the modern growth movement is stuck. Encounter groups, primal therapy, gestalt, bioenergetics...and so many beautiful things are happening in the world, but they are stuck at a certain point. Their problem is: they teach expression -- and it is good, it is far better than repression. If there is only this choice, repress or express, then I would suggest express. But this is not the real choice; there is a third alternative far more important than both these. If you express, you become habitual; you learn by doing it again and again -- you can't get out of it.

In this commune there are at least fifty therapy groups running, for a certain reason. It is just to balance the thousands of years of repression; it is just to balance. It is just to bring to light all that you have repressed as Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans, Jainas, Buddhists. It is just to undo the centuries' old harm that has been done to you.

But remember, these groups are not the end; they only prepare you for meditation. They are not the goal; they are just simple means to undo the wrong of the past. Once you have thrown out of your system all that you have been repressing all along, I have to lead you into watchfulness. Now it will be easier to watch.

But you are not to become a group-addicted person, you are not to become a groupie. There are people now in the world who are group-addicted; they go from one group to another. One encounter finishes -- then another marathon, then gestalt, then this and that.... After just a few days the itch arises -- because where to express? In the normal society they cannot express, they have to repress.

So the group becomes just an outlet. The normal society forces you to repress, the group helps you to express but you are not *really* growing. Again you will be back in the normal society, again repressing. And if you express in the normal society, you will be getting into far more dangerous situations. You may murder somebody -- you have so much anger. You will be in jail, imprisoned forever. Or if you go on fighting with everybody -- if you slap the boss in the office, if you beat your wife, your children, your husband -- then your whole life will become a chaos, it will be impossible to live it. So after a few days of accumulation you

need another encounter. A few days of encountering and you feel unburdened; back in society you will be burdened again.

This is not going to help. This is a temporary relief. You can scream to your heart's desire in a primal therapy group, but if you start screaming on the road, then you will be taken to the police station. You can scream in a group context -- it is allowed, helped, provoked; you are persuaded to scream, because since your childhood you have been repressing it. It has become a wound; it needs to be opened. If the pus oozes out and the wound is left open to the winds and to the sun and to the rain, it will heal itself, because you have a healing energy; it is inbuilt. But back in the society again...how long can you remain in a primal therapy group? Back in the same old society again, you will have to repress; you cannot go on screaming there.

Then the scream gathers, then the steam gathers. Then one day you have to go into the group again. This is a temporary relief; good as far as it goes, but it cannot make you a buddha. That's where this commune is different from institutes like Esalen. They end with groups -- we begin with groups. Where they end, that's exactly the point from where we begin.

And it is not a coincidence that thousands of therapists have become interested in my work. They have come here.... Among my sannyasins, the greatest group from any profession is that of psychotherapists. A great need is felt now all over the world that encounter, primal therapy, gestalt, can help a little bit to unburden people, but they cannot help to make them buddhas -- they cannot help them to become awakened.

Indulgence creates habit, repression gathers the poison within. In indulgence you throw the poison on others, but they are not going to remain silent -- they will throw it back. It becomes a match: you throw your anger on others, they throw their anger on you -- but nobody is helped, everybody is harmed and hurt.

And if you repress.... Because of this futility of indulgence, priests invented repression. It keeps you out of danger. Repression keeps you a good citizen, a gentleman. It keeps you out of the dangers of getting caught by the law, getting caught into enmity; it keeps you smooth. Repression helps you to become a better social person, that's true. But it makes you a wound inside, just a wound, and the pus goes on gathering inside. Outside it functions as a lubricating agent, but inside you become more and more mad.

If this society and this century are the maddest in the whole history, the credit goes to the past. Five thousand years of saintly advice to people -- the credit goes to those saints. If people are becoming mad, if people are becoming insane, if people are committing suicide, if people are becoming murderous, the credit certainly goes to all your so-called saints, priests, preachers, leaders. They are responsible for it.

Just the other day I was telling you the Canadian government wants to investigate, make a deep investigation of this commune because one American citizen who was a sannyasin has committed suicide, and another American who was a sannyasin has gone mad too. Now, I wonder: the person who has committed suicide was sixty years old. He has been a Christian for sixty years, but Christianity is not investigated. And he has been a sannyasin for not even sixty days! The credit goes to Christianity, not to me.

The man who went mad was a Protestant. Now, I am condemned because he was a sannyasin, but the Protestant church is not condemned. And he was brought up as a Protestant, he lived as a Protestant for thirty-five years, and for just a few days he was a sannyasin. Now, American society is not condemned.

This is strange logic...and I am trying to help people. When he had come here, he was

already mad. He has come here after six years of psychoanalysis; because psychoanalysis could not help him he had come here and became a sannyasin. Because the Protestant church and the priests could not help him, he had come here and become a sannyasin. But they had done such a good job that it was difficult to bring him back down to earth.

And he did not remain here for long; he was here for only three weeks. Now, the credit cannot go to me. If he becomes mad, I cannot be held responsible. But this strange logic is there.

Here, also, the same logic continues. If a sannyasin misbehaves, I am condemned. But so many Hindus are put in jail every day -- Hinduism is not condemned. So many Mohammedans misbehave, but Mohammedanism is not condemned. If a Sikh murders somebody, Sikhism is not condemned. This is a very stupid and absurd world.

People come to me for help. Many are helped. Ninety-nine percent of people are helped. But the one percent has been damaged so much that it is almost impossible to help them. They can also be helped, but I am not allowed to help them.

For example, an exhibitionist comes here who once in a while exposes himself naked. Now, he can be helped, easily helped -- if he is allowed to move naked. He is not dangerous; he is not doing any harm to anybody. He simply has this eccentric idea...he enjoys it to shock you. This is the way of shocking you, this is the way of gaining attention: he exposes himself naked. If he is simply allowed to move naked and nobody pays any attention to him, he will be cured.

The cure is simple, very simple! Don't be shocked, and don't pay attention. It is to shock you and to get your attention that he is an exhibitionist. If nobody pays any attention, if he comes naked to you and you talk to him as if he is not naked, he will be puzzled. He will not be able to believe what is happening. He will go and look in the mirror to see whether he is naked or not! And what is the point? If nobody pays any attention and nobody is shocked, he may try wearing clothes -- maybe these are strange people and they can be shocked by wearing clothes!

People can be helped, but the society does not allow me to help them. Even that one percent can be cured, because nobody is really incurable. But time will be needed, perseverance will be needed.

Buddha says: WITH GREAT PERSEVERANCE HE MEDITATES, SEEKING FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS.

Meditate -- meditation means watchfulness -- and you will attain to freedom and bliss.

SO AWAKE, REFLECT, WATCH.
WORK WITH CARE AND ATTENTION.
LIVE IN THE WAY
AND THE LIGHT WILL GROW IN YOU.

The light grows of its own accord. You simply become more silent, more watchful, more meditative, and the light descends in you -- of its own accord. You need not go anywhere.

BY WATCHING AND WORKING
THE MASTER MAKES FOR HIMSELF AN ISLAND
WHICH THE FLOOD CANNOT OVERWHELM.

Your watchfulness becomes an island, a citadel, which no passion, no lust, no greed, no anger, can possess. With that island, for the first time you become an integrated individual.

For the first time you become a human being.

This human being is absolutely needed today, this new human being -- homo novus.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Through a glass darkly

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL LIKE I KNOW THE ANSWERS. WHY DO I STILL ALLOW THE QUESTIONS
TO BECOME PROBLEMS?

Savita, there are not answers, there is only *the* answer. And that answer is not of the mind, that answer cannot be of the mind. Mind is a multiplicity. Mind has answers and answers, but not *the* answer.

That answer is a state of no-mind. It is not verbal. You can know it but you cannot reduce it to knowledge. You can know it, but you cannot say it. It is known in the innermost recesses of your being. It is light that simply illuminates your interiority.

It is not an answer to any particular question. It is the end of all questioning, it refers to no question at all. It simply dissolves all the questions and a state is left without any question...that's the answer. Unless that is known, nothing is known.

Hence, you may feel that you know the answers, but still questions will go on popping up, still questions will go on torturing you. Still questions are bound to arise because the root is not cut yet. New leaves will be sprouting, new branches will be arising.

The root is cut only when you disconnect yourself from the mind, when you become so aware, so watchful that you can see the mind as separate from you. When all identity with the mind is dropped, when you are a watcher on the hills and the mind is left deep down in the darkness of the valleys, when you are on the sunlit peaks, just a pure witness, seeing, watching, but not getting identified with anything -- good or bad, sinner or saint, this or that -- in that witnessing all questions dissolve. The mind melts, evaporates. You are left as a pure being, just a pure existence -- a breathing, a beating of the heart, utterly in the moment, no past, no future, hence no present either.

Unless that state arrives you will feel many times that you know the answers, but each answer will only create new questions. Each answer will trigger new chains of questions in you. You can read, you can study, you can think, but you will get more and more in the mire

of the mind, more entangled, more entrapped. Slip out of the mind!

Hence, I am not giving you answers, I am trying to point out *the* answer. You cannot use the plural for it because it is one. It is a state of utter silence, peace, no-thought. Buddha calls it right mindfulness -- *sammasati*. And he says that those who are rightly mindful, alert, aware, the truth comes to them of its own accord. You need not go anywhere, it comes. You need not even seek and search, because how can you seek and search? Out of your ignorance, whatsoever you do will bring more ignorance. Out of your ignorance, wherever you go you will go astray. Out of your confusion, how can you find clarity? Out of your confusion you will become more and more confused -- in search of clarity.

Hence Buddha says: The master watches, the master is clear. *Aes dhammo sanantano* -- this is the law, the ultimate, eternal, inexhaustible law.

To be silent is to have the answer. To be silent is to be without questions...and the root is cut, then no leaves arrive anymore.

Savita, you say, "I feel like I know the answers."

That is only an illusion. And the mind is very clever in creating new illusions. The mind is very deceptive: it can deceive you in knowledge too. It can deceive you in everything! It can even make you believe that you are enlightened, that you are a buddha already. Beware! The only enemy is the mind; there is no other enemy.

The old scriptures talk about the mind. They have a special name for it -- they call it the Devil. The Devil is not somebody outside you; it is your own mind that goes on tempting you, that goes on cheating you, deceiving you, that goes on creating new illusions in you. Beware, watch the mind! And in watching, questions disappear -- not that they are answered, let me repeat it again.

The buddha knows no answers -- not that he has come to the conclusion of all questions, no, not at all. On the contrary, he has no questions anymore. Because he has no questions anymore, his whole being has become the answer.

Savita, that moment is possible.

That's my whole work here. I am not here to give you more information; that you can get anywhere. Thousands of universities exist, thousands of libraries exist. Information you can get anywhere, you can become knowledgeable anywhere. My effort is to make you unlearn whatsoever you have learned up to now, to make you innocent so that you can start functioning from a state of not-knowing. So that you don't have any answers, so that you act spontaneously, not out of the past and out of the conclusions already arrived at. So that you don't have any ready-made formula for anything...so that you are like a small child mirroring reality.

And when you are silent, no knowledge clamoring inside you, your perception is clear -- no dust on the mirror...you reflect that which is. And out of that reflection whatever action arises is virtue.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU WANT US TO BE INDIVIDUALS, BUT DURING WORK IN THE ASHRAM WE
HAVE TO BE VERY DISCIPLINED. DISCIPLINE AND INDIVIDUALISM -- ARE
THEY NOT DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE?

Sudarshan, I would like you to be individuals, but not individualists. And there is a great

difference. The individualist is not an individual yet. The individualist who believes in individualism is only an egoist. And to be an egoist is not to be an individual. Just the contrary: the individual has no ego, and the ego has no individuality.

The ego is such an ordinary phenomenon -- everybody has it! There is nothing special about it, there is nothing unique about it. Everybody has the ego. It is *so* common! The uncommon thing is egolessness.

Only an egoless consciousness attains to individuality. And by individuality I simply mean the literal meaning of the word: individual means indivisible, individual means integrated; individual means one who is not many, who is not a crowd, who is not multipyschic; one who has attained to unity, one who has become a crystallized being. Gurdjieff uses the word 'crystallization' for individuality. But the basic requirement for crystallization is to drop the ego, because ego is a false entity. It won't allow you to be real, it won't allow you to be authentically real. It won't allow you to grow. It is false, it is a deception, it is an illusion. You are not separate from existence, but the ego goes on pretending separation.

And the other word that you have used in the question also has to be understood: discipline. Discipline does not mean anything imposed upon you. Nothing is imposed in this commune. If you enter this commune it is at your own choice. The doors are open -- you can leave any moment. In fact, entry is difficult and we make every possible effort to help you to leave. Nobody is hindered from leaving, although every possible effort is made to hinder you from entering. Entry is very difficult.

If you choose to become part of this commune it is your decision -- your readiness to commit yourself, to be involved.

Out of this decision a discipline arises. You can choose to get out of the commune, but once you are in the commune it means that you have taken a responsibility. And it is only through responsibility that one grows. By fulfilling one's responsibility totally, growth becomes possible.

There are a few people here, only a few, who go on trying to deceive the commune. They are simply befooling themselves; nobody is befooled! They don't want to work, they try to avoid it in every possible way. They find excuses, they even fall ill just to avoid work. But this is so stupid! You have entered the commune to work upon yourself. You have entered the commune to make a concentrated effort to become an integrated individual. You have entered the commune for your spiritual growth, for enlightenment. And if you avoid...and that seems to be the real question behind the apparent question.

You say, Sudarshan, "Individualism and discipline -- are they not diametrically opposite?"

They are not! An individual is always a disciplined phenomenon. One who is not disciplined is not an individual; he is just a chaos, he is many fragments. All those fragments are functioning separately, even in opposition to each other. That's how people are ordinarily: one part of the mind going to the south, another part going to the north; one part saying one thing, another part opposing it. You know it! I am simply stating a fact -- you can observe it. One part says "Do this." Another part immediately says "No!" Something says "Yes," and something immediately destroys it by saying "No."

This is your situation! You are an individual in such a situation, when you cannot even say a total yes or a total no? Your no is always halfhearted and your yes too -- and you think you are an individual?

An individual means one who can function as a totality, as an organic unity. How are you

going to become an organic unity? It can only be through conscious discipline.

That's what Buddha is saying again and again: perseverance, effort, a conscious, deliberate effort to grow -- and total effort, not lukewarm. You have to boil at a hundred degrees. Yes, sometimes it is painful, but it all depends on you, on how you interpret it. If you really want to grow it is not painful -- it is tremendously pleasant. Each step deeper into discipline brings more and more joy, because it gives you more and more soul, being.

Discipline means readiness to learn; hence the word 'disciple', they come from the same root. Who is a disciple? -- one who bows down, surrenders, and is ready to learn. And what is discipline? -- the readiness, the openness, the vulnerability, to learn.

Entering into this commune you are entering into a buddhfield. It is a surrender, it is a trust! I am here to make you individuals, but you will have to pass through many many devices. Many fires you will have to pass through, many tests. Only then, slowly slowly, will you be welded into one unity. And you have remained a multiplicity for so long, for so many lives, that unless concentrated effort is made, unless you are attacked from every nook and corner, unless your sleep is broken in every possible way, you are shaken and shocked, the individual is not going to be born.

The work that is happening in the commune is not really what it appears from the surface. It is something else -- it is a device! We have to use devices.

Somebody comes to me and wants to become part of the commune, and I say to him, "Go to Deeksha." Deeksha is my device! I have given her total power -- and I have given her total power because she is so loving, so soft, so caring. She wounds people, but she heals also. By one hand she hammers, by the other she consoles. She is a device.

And when I say to you, "Go and work with Deeksha," and she shouts at you and in every possible way she provokes you, it is discipline to watch -- not to act in your old ways, as you have always acted. And she is so motherly that it is very simple to react to her as you have been reacting to your own parents. It is very simple that she will create a reaction in you that your mother creates in you. Mothers are intolerable creatures -- and Deeksha is a perfect mother!

I know, Sudarshan, it is difficult -- but growth is difficult. Many more devices are going to be created. You will be sent to many dimensions. No corner of your being has to be left undeveloped, otherwise you will become lopsided.

And the first principle of discipline is surrender. Apparently it looks contradictory, because that's what you have been told: that if you surrender, then you are no longer an individual. And I say to you, if you cannot surrender you are not an individual. Only an individual can surrender. Surrender is such a great phenomenon, only a man of great will can surrender. It is the ultimate in will. To drop your will is bound to be the ultimate in will. To put yourself aside, absolutely aside, and to say to something such a total yes -- which your mind resists, your old habits resist....

And sometimes you *are* right -- and that's where the whole beauty lies. You are right, and still you have to surrender to something which does not appear at all right logically.

Deeksha is crazy! You may be far more intellectual, far more rational -- but you have to surrender to Deeksha. Her craziness is her quality -- that's why I have chosen her. I have got many more rational people: I could have chosen a Ph.D. who would have convinced you that he is right. But when you are convinced and you follow, it is not surrender. When you are not convinced at all, you see the apparent stupidity of a certain thing, and still you surrender, that is a great step, a great step of getting out of your past.

This commune is a lab, this commune is an alchemical process. You come here as a

crowd and I have to weld you into unity. Much hammering is going to happen, and you will come out of this whole process as pure individuals.

Discipline is the way to create individuality. But remember: to be an individual is not to be an individualist. Individualism is an ego trip. And the people who believe in individualism are not individuals, remember -- remember well. Deep down they know they are not individuals, hence they create a facade of philosophy, of logic, of argument, because deep down they don't feel they are individuals. They pretend on the outside that they are individuals -- they believe in individualism. Believing in individualism is not becoming an individual. Belief is always false.

When you *are* an individual you need not believe in individualism. When it is a truth of your being, belief is not needed. Belief is needed only to cover things: you don't know about God and you believe in God. The believer is an atheist. He may be a Christian, a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, it doesn't matter: a believer is an atheist. He does not know about God, and still he believes. That means he is even trying to deceive God! He is a hypocrite, he is a parrot. Parrotlike he goes on repeating what the scriptures say, what others say. And parrots can repeat beautifully, without understanding a thing, without knowing a thing, mechanically.

A Negro walked into a pet store in Harlem, wanting to buy a good talking parrot. The proprietor told him that they had a wide selection of parrots, so what sort did he want?

The Negro asked to see a fifty-dollar parrot. "Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" he called as soon as the parrot appeared. The parrot said nothing.

"I wanna parrot that talks good," he said. "Show me a good one."

So the proprietor brought out a two-hundred-dollar parrot: "Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" No answer.

"You gotta better parrot than this?" asked the Negro.

The proprietor said yes, and led the Negro behind the counter, to where the thousand-dollar parrot, beautifully plumaged with sparkling beady eyes, clearly a very special parrot, sat proudly in a luxurious cage.

"Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" came from the Negro, but the parrot didn't even look up.

"Man, this your best parrot?" asked the Negro, "because I wanna a good talker and this one looks dumb."

The proprietor took him to the back of the shop where in a special polished brass cage the size of a small room sat the pride of the proprietor's collection -- a five-thousand-dollar parrot. The parrot, dressed in a silk smoking jacket and sitting on a quilted perch, was smoking a pipe and reading the FINANCIAL TIMES.

"Polly wanna a cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" the Negro yelled.

The parrot sniffed and looked at him over his gold-rimmed spectacles with aristocratic disdain.

"Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" the Negro yelled again.

"Polly wanna cracker?" said the parrot in an impeccable Oxford accent. "Nigger wanna watermelon?"

The believer is a parrot. The believer knows nothing. The believer is an atheist in disguise. He is trying to befool himself, the world and even God.

The man who believes in individualism is not an individual. The man who is really an

individual need not believe -- he knows it, so what is the point of believing? Belief is always needed in ignorance, and individualism is a belief. To be an individual is an experience! Individualism is very cheap, but to be an individual needs arduous discipline. It needs great perseverance, work, watchfulness. It comes only out of years of effort in awareness, in meditation.

And whatsoever is happening here in this commune, Sudarshan, is nothing but different ways to introduce you to meditation. In the kitchen, in the carpentry shop, in the soap workshop, in the boutique -- whatsoever is happening, apparently it looks as if it is the same ordinary thing as happens everywhere else. It is not. If you go and see the carpenters working, of course they go on working like any other carpenters anywhere else -- but with a different quality. That quality cannot be seen. You will have to become a participant, only then will you slowly feel it. That quality is of trust, love.

My sannyasins are here because they love me, for no other reason. They are simply here with me to *be* here with me. For the sake of being here with me they are ready to do anything. But whatsoever they are doing is only the outer part. You will see the body of the work but you will not be able to see the spirit of the work. For that you will have to become a participant.

And, Sudarshan, it seems that you are still a spectator. Maybe you are working in the commune, but still you have not become a participant -- otherwise such a question would have been impossible.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY AM I FEELING I AM MISSING SOMETHING? THAT I SHOULD BE
SOMETHING ELSE? PLEASE HELP ME LET GO OF THIS GARBAGE.

Dhyana Yogi, if it is garbage, if you really understand that it is garbage, then there is no question of helping you drop it. Knowing it as garbage is dropping it!

But it seems that you have heard me say that it is garbage. It has become a belief in you; it is not your own knowing, it is not your own experience. You are still clinging to it.

Deep down you still think it is precious, it is not garbage. Deep down you still think these are diamonds not pebbles. Deep down somewhere you still believe it is a treasure to be protected and guarded.

Don't start believing me, because that will make no difference. You were believing in Mohammed, or you were believing in Christ, or in Buddha, and then you come and you start believing in me. That is not a revolution, that is not conversion. You simply change the object of your belief, but the belief remains -- the same believing mind. You believe in Jesus, but Jesus speaks the language which is now two thousand years old. You cannot make much sense out of it; the context is lost in which it was relevant. I speak the language of the twentieth century. You can make sense out of it, so you withdraw your belief from Jesus and you start believing in me. This is very simple and cheap.

I am not saying believe in me. I am saying drop all believing and start *seeing*, because belief will remain a blindness -- start seeing! Is it really garbage that you are carrying? Is it *your* understanding that it is garbage? Then you will not ask how to drop it. Nobody asks how to drop garbage. The problem arises only because deep down you know yourself that it is gold. And somebody says that it is garbage and says it very convincingly, and you cannot

argue, and he silences you. And the man has such authenticity, such integrity, that in his presence you simply become overflowed with *his* being. You simply start saying, "Yes, it is garbage." But deep down you still know it is not garbage, it is gold! Hence the problem arises: how to drop it?

If you understand on your own that it is garbage, you will never ask how to drop it. Seeing it as garbage *is* dropping it, knowing it as garbage is dropping it! The garbage is not clinging to you -- *you* are clinging to it. The garbage cares nothing about you, the garbage is not interested in you. If you drop it, it is not going to make much fuss about it -- "Why are you dropping me?" It will not say a single word, it will not create any problem for you. It will not go to the court. You need not have a divorce! If you drop it, the garbage will be really more happy than it is now. It will be finished with you, it will be free from you. It must be getting tired of you. It is *you* who are clinging to it. Why are you clinging to it? Why does one cling to something? -- because deep down one goes on believing it is precious.

Dhyana Yogi, you say, "Why am I feeling I am missing something?"

Because from your very childhood you have been told that in yourself, intrinsically, you are worthless. As you are you have no value. The value has to be attained, the worth has to be proved. From your very childhood you have been taught this millions of times. The parents, the teachers, the priests, the politicians, they are all in a secret conspiracy to destroy the child. And the best way to destroy a child is to destroy his trust in himself.

To destroy the trust in the child you have to prove to the child that worth is not a given phenomenon, that it has to be achieved in life and you can miss it. Unless you work, unless you are very ambitious, unless you struggle with others.... It is a tooth and nail fight and you have to cut each other's throats to achieve it. You are being conditioned to be violent, ambitious, full of desires: to have more money, to have more power, to have more prestige. Because you have been told that intrinsically you don't have any worth, this problem has arisen.

And I say that you are intrinsically worthy, that you are born as buddhas. Unaware you are, utterly oblivious of the reality of your own being, but you *are* hidden gods. What I am saying is so totally different from what has been told to you, that a problem has arisen. I say you are buddhas -- right now you are buddhas! -- but the whole training and teaching, conditioning is: How can you be a buddha right now? Tomorrow maybe, one day certainly, in some future life it is going to happen...but right now? It seems impossible.

You have believed too much in your parents, in your teachers, in your politicians, in your priests, and whatsoever they have told you, you have collected it. It *is* garbage, but you have carried the garbage for so long that suddenly to drop it seems impossible -- so long you have remained attached to it, so long you have thought it beautiful, precious, nourishing. Now I say: It is all nonsense! Drop it, and just be a buddha from this very moment! It is not a question of attaining, it is only a question of becoming aware. It is only a question of becoming conscious, alert, awake, not a question of achievement.

So you listen to me: one part of your mind says, "Yes, the Master must be right!" One part of you simply nods yes, because what is being said is a simple truth of life. But all your training is against it. When you are close to me you start feeling it is true. When you go away from me the mind jumps back upon you -- with vengeance. And of course it is very powerful. The mind is so powerful, that's why it destroys your intelligence.

Intelligence has nothing to do with the mind; intelligence has something to do with the heart. It is the quality of the heart. Intellectuality is the quality of the head. The intellectual is not necessarily an intelligent person and the intelligent person is not necessarily an

intellectual.

Your intellect is full of garbage -- and I am trying to wake up your intelligence. And the whole society has tried to make you unaware of your intelligence. The society is against your intelligence. It wants you to be mediocre, because only mediocre people can be good slaves. It wants you to be unintelligent and stupid, because only stupid people can be dominated.

And stupid people are obedient, stupid people are never rebellious, and stupid people simply vegetate. They don't make any effort to live their lives at the optimum. They don't try to burn their torch of life from both ends simultaneously. They don't have intensity. Stupidity is obedient, and obedience creates stupidity.

A rather simple dude rode into town in the middle of the day stark naked. The sheriff called him over and said, "Jake, what are you doing riding into town with no clothes on?" "Well, sheriff," said Jake, "it is a long story. I was riding into town to get some provisions for my pa, when I came across this lady on the side of the road who asked me for some help. Now my daddy always told me to help gentle lady folk, so I got off my horse and helped her carry her picnic basket down to the river. Then I helped her lay out her blanket, and helped her with everything she asked me to do. Then she said, 'How about taking your boots off, cowboy?' So I did, sheriff, and then she said, 'How about taking your clothes off, cowboy?' And I said, 'Sure thing, Ma'am.' And she was there on that rug, naked as the day she was born. Then she lay back and said, 'Go to town cowboy!'...and so here I am, sheriff."

Obedience is a form of stupidity -- and the society wants you to be stupid. Stupid people are good people. They remain always with the status quo, they never go against it. Even if they see the rottenness of things, they simply close their eyes, or they are always ready to accept any stupid explanation.

For example, this country has been poor for centuries, starving, suffering. But because people are religious, obedient, stupid, they have been given any kind of explanation and they have accepted it. Some believe that God has made them poor because poverty is something very pious. They worship poverty; in India poverty is worshipped. If you renounce your riches and you become a naked fakir, millions of people will think you are a great sage. You may be simply stupid, but just because you have renounced riches you are a great sage. I have seen many stupid sages.

Now it is a contradiction in terms -- how can a stupid person be a sage? A sage has to be wise! But it is very difficult in this world to be wise and be worshipped. Wise people are to be murdered, crucified, poisoned. Stupid people are worshipped. Stupid people simply follow whatever the society says. Whatsoever the society wants them to do, they simply do it. So a few people have been worshipping poverty.

Gandhi used to call poor people *daridra narayana* -- "the poor are divine." Poverty is divine! The poor people are gods! If this is true then who would not like to be poor? If poor people are gods, who would not like to be a god?

And then there are other explanations: that you are poor because in your past lives you have committed sins. Those explanations have been invented for those people who don't believe in God. The Jainas, the Buddhists, they don't believe in God so you cannot give the first explanation to them. They need another explanation: the theory of karma. But the purpose is the same! If you have committed sins in your past life, then it is better to be finished with the karma. Go through poverty, and go through poverty without any resistance. If you create any resistance, you will again be creating bad karma and you will suffer in your

future life. Enough, after all, is enough! Now be finished with the whole thing -- suffer at this moment contentedly. So people have become cows and buffaloes; they are suffering contentedly, no resistance, no rebellion.

The society wants you to be stupid, not intelligent. Intelligence is dangerous. Intelligence means you will start thinking on your own, you will start looking around on your own. You will not believe in the scriptures; you will believe only in your own experience.

Dhyana Yogi, please don't believe in what I say.

Experiment, meditate, experience -- unless it becomes your own understanding, nothing is going to help.

You ask me, "Why am I feeling that I am missing something?"

...Because you have been told always that you have to find something. Now you are not finding it, so the feeling arises that you are missing. And I am telling you, you have never lost it in the first place! Please stop trying to find it, stop seeking and searching. You have it already! Whatsoever is needed, you have it already. Just look within and you will find infinite treasures, inexhaustible treasures of joy, love, ecstasy.

Nothing is being missed if you look in, but if you go on searching outside you will feel more and more frustrated. And as you grow older, of course, you will feel that your life is slipping out of your hands and you have not found it yet. And the whole irony is that you have not lost it in the first place. It has always been within you...it is this moment within you.

But don't believe me. I am not here to create believers, I am here to help you experience. The moment it becomes your experience, it liberates. Truth liberates, says Jesus -- not belief but truth.

But my truth cannot be your truth; my truth will be your belief. Only *your* truth can be true to you. Truth certainly liberates, but let me add that the truth has to be your truth. Nobody else's truth can liberate you. Somebody else's truth will become only an imprisonment.

Dhyana Yogi, you are not missing anything. Nobody is missing. In the nature of things we cannot miss it. We are part of God and God is part of us. There is no way, no possible way to miss it. How can you escape from yourself? Where? Wherever you go you will remain yourself. Even in hell you will remain yourself, because you cannot escape from yourself, you cannot escape from God.

It is there waiting, patiently waiting for you to look in.

You say, "...that I should be something else?"

That has been told to you again and again: "Be somebody! Look at Gautam Buddha, at Krishna, at Christ. Be a Buddha, be a Krishna, be a Christ!" Then certainly you will die in misery, in anguish, frustrated -- utterly frustrated, crying and weeping -- because you *cannot* be a Buddha. You are not meant to be a Buddha! You cannot be a Christ, you cannot be a Krishna. You can only be yourself.

A great Hassid master, Zusiya, was dying. People had gathered -- disciples, sympathizers. Somebody asked, an old man, "Zusiya, when you are facing God -- and soon you will be facing God because you are dying -- will you be able to say to him that you followed Moses absolutely, truthfully?"

Zusiya opened his eyes, and these were his last words. He said, "Stop talking nonsense! God is not going to ask me, 'Zusiya, why were you not a Moses?' He will ask me, 'Zusiya, why were you not a Zusiya?'"

You have to be just yourself and nobody else. And in fact that's what buddhahood means: to be yourself. That is what christ-consciousness means: just to be yourself. Buddha was not an imitation of somebody else. Don't you think there were many many great men who had preceded him? He must have been told, "Be a Krishna! Be a Parshvanath! Be an Adinatha!" He must have heard beautiful stories, mythologies. He must have read the PURANAS, ancient stories about the great men, Rama, Krishna, Parasuram. He must have heard all that, he must have received the heritage. But he never tried to be somebody. He wanted to be himself, he wanted to know who he is. He never became an imitator; that's why one day he became awakened.

Jesus never tried to be Abraham, Moses, Ezekiel. Jesus simply tried to be himself. That was his crime, that's why he was crucified. The same people who crucified Jesus would have worshipped him if he had simply been an imitator, a carbon copy of Moses. If he had been just a gramophone record repeating the Ten Commandments, the Jews would have worshipped him. But they had to crucify the man -- he was just himself.

The rotten society, the crowd, the mob mind, cannot tolerate individuals. It is impossible for them to tolerate a Socrates. Do you know what the charge was against Socrates? Exactly the same thing is said about me! This was the crime of Socrates, that he used to corrupt the minds of the youth. That's exactly what *my* enemies say: that I am corrupting people's minds, particularly the minds of the youth.

Socrates was corrupting the minds of the youth? He was trying to awaken their intelligence, but the society became afraid. If so many people become so authentic, true, then the vested interests are in danger. Then you cannot drive people like cattle. And that's what priests enjoy, and the politicians too.

There is a conspiracy between the priest and the politician to exploit people, to dominate people, to oppress people. And the fundamental is: never allow them to become intelligent. Give them substitutes. What is the substitute for intelligence? -- intellectuality. Give them education; send them to the school, to the college, to the university, so they become intellectuals.

Have you ever heard of universities creating intelligence? They create intellectuals, they create scholars, they create people who know the scriptures -- to the very word they can repeat the scriptures -- but they don't create intelligent people. They serve society; the educational system is invented by this rotten society to serve its own purposes. It is not there to help you, it is there to keep you in bondage.

Dhyana Yogi, I cannot help you let go of this garbage, I can only help you to be more conscious. And if you are conscious the garbage will be dropped of its own accord. One day suddenly you will find it disappearing...suddenly disappearing. As consciousness deepens, all garbage disappears -- just as you bring light in and darkness disperses.

Buddha says: Become more aware and the light will start pouring in...*aes dhammo sanantano*.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I OFTEN READ THE 'HYMN TO LOVE' IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS IS EXACTLY YOUR MESSAGE. ALSO, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT IT NEVER ACTUALLY USES THE WORD 'GOD'. I CAN FIND NOTHING TO CONTRADICT YOUR BASIC MESSAGE IN THIS LOVELY POEM. ON THE OTHER

HAND, IT SEEMS TO BE EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IN YOUR DISCOURSES. AM I RIGHT?

YOU HAVE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE THAT IT WOULD BE REALLY NICE TO HEAR YOU SAY SOME OR ALL OF IT, ESPECIALLY AS I FEEL YOU WILL SOON STOP TALKING PUBLICLY ALTOGETHER. HERE IS A COPY OF THE HYMN.

Premartha, the message of all the buddhas is always the same because the truth is one. Expressions may differ, different languages may be used, but that which is indicated towards is the same.

Millions of fingers can point to the same moon. Fingers are bound to be different -- my finger is different from the finger of Jesus or Buddha or Moses or Abraham -- but the moon is the same. And this hymn is a beautiful finger pointing to the moon. It is the very essence of all the teachings of all the buddhas of all the ages -- past, present, and future too.

THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND ANGELS, AND HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM BECOME AS SOUNDING BRASS OR A TINKLING CYMBAL. AND THOUGH I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES, AND ALL KNOWLEDGE; AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS, AND HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING. AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR, AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED, AND HAVE NOT LOVE, IT PROFITETH ME NOTHING.

LOVE SUFFERETH LONG, AND IS KIND; LOVE ENVIETH NOT; LOVE VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP, DOTH NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY, SEEKETH NOT HER OWN, IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED, THINKETH NO EVIL; REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH; BEARETH ALL THINGS, BELIEVETH ALL THINGS, HOPETH ALL THINGS, ENDURETH ALL THINGS.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH: BUT WHETHER THERE BE PROPHECIES, THEY SHALL FAIL; WHETHER THERE BE TONGUES, THEY SHALL CEASE; WHETHER THERE BE KNOWLEDGE, IT SHALL VANISH AWAY. FOR WE KNOW IN PART, AND WE PROPHECY IN PART. BUT WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT IS COME THEN THAT WHICH IS PART SHALL BE DONE AWAY. WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I SPAKE AS A CHILD, I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD, I THOUGHT AS A CHILD; BUT WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS. FOR NOW WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY; BUT THEN FACE-TO-FACE. NOW I KNOW IN PART, BUT THEN SHALL I KNOW EVEN AS ALSO I AM KNOWN. AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF ALL THESE IS LOVE.

These are the essential qualities of a religious person. This is my message -- this is *the* message!

The language is old, and because it is old it has a beauty of its own, because the older the language is, the more poetry it has. As we have become more and more scientific our language has also become more and more scientific.

As the hymn is two thousand years old, it has something of primitive innocence in it, the childlike quality of wonder, of being surprised at the mysterious. But, Premartha, you are perfectly right: there is nothing in it which contradicts me, and there is nothing in it which I would like to contradict either. Whosoever said it must have been an awakened one.

But don't go on simply repeating it. It is beautiful to repeat, it is beautiful to sing it, but not enough. Practice it, let it become the very flavor of your life. Let it be dissolved into your blood, into your bones, into your marrow. Let it surround you like an invisible aura. Don't go on simply repeating it. It is beautiful -- and that is the danger. You can become so charmed,

so hypnotized by its beauty, that you may go on repeating it your whole life. And the more you repeat, the more beautiful it will look...because these ancient messages have tremendous power and many layers of meaning.

But don't go into the linguistic or philosophical analysis of it. It is a prayer! -- and a prayer is not something to be said but something to be felt. A prayer is not something to be read but something to be lived. Live it!

It is true: AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF ALL THESE IS LOVE.

You can think about love, you can have beautiful flights of imagination about love, you can have beautiful dreams about love, but that is not going to help. What is going to help is, you have to become love. Love has to become your essential core. Everything else has to be sacrificed to love, everything else has to become part of your loving life.

Then only will this prayer be true for you. And then it will not be Christian, then it will not belong to the New Testament. It will be something that is part of your heart; you will breathe it. And whosoever will come close to you will have a little glimpse of it. A little light will be shed on everybody's path...if you live it.

Scriptures can be understood only if first they are practiced. People do just the opposite: they read the scripture and they try to understand it. Intellectually it is not difficult to understand those scriptures, they are simple. People become very proficient, very efficient, in repeating the scriptures -- and they end with that. They remain parrots.

And what can you understand about it? Intellectually whatsoever you understand will not be right, because it will reflect *your* state of mind, not the state of the mind who uttered these words.

A retired cattle rancher, aged sixty-five, who had sold his ranch and come to New York to see the sights, checked into a midtown hotel.

Once upstairs, he made himself comfortable and relaxed on the bed. While he was resting, he saw the door slowly open, and there standing before him was a curvaceous blonde attired only in a sheer negligee.

"Oh," she apologized when she saw the old fellow, "I must be in the wrong room."

"No," he corrected, "you are in the right room, but you are about forty years too late!"

The interpretation is always going to be yours. You can read Jesus, you can read Buddha, but who is going to interpret it? *You* will interpret it. And what is your understanding? What light have you got? Those beautiful sayings will remain just beautiful sayings, beautiful nothings. Yes, good poetry, but poetry cannot liberate you unless it becomes your own experience, unless you can become a witness to the scriptures.

"Your continual unfaithfulness proves you are an absolute rotter," stormed the outraged wife who had just caught her husband for the seventh time in a sportive romp with another woman.

"Quite the contrary!" came the cool reply. "It merely proves that I am too good to be true."

Your interpretations will always reflect you. When you look in the mirror you will be looking at your face, you will be looking at yourself. You can't see the mirror, you can only see your face reflected in it. You will be able to see the mirror only when you have lost your face, when you have lost your head, when you are not. When you have become a nothing, a

nobody, then stand before a mirror and you will see the mirror and its mirroring and you will not be mirrored in it, you will not be reflected in it. You will not be present there. Before you become an absence, going before the mirror is of no use.

And that's what people go on doing: reading the Bible, the Koran, THE DHAMMAPADA, they read themselves.

The worried mother was lecturing her teenage daughter on the subject of sex morality. "Of course I realize you may be tempted while you are out on a date. If you are, dear, please ask yourself this all-important question: is an hour of pleasure worth an entire life of humiliation?"

"Gosh, mother," asked the daughter, "how do you make it last an hour?"

Remember always, you cannot understand Jesus, Moses, Zarathustra. Your face will come in it too much.

A newly wed patient was complaining to his doctor about his marital relations. It seems the first time he makes love to his spouse it is just wonderful, but the second time, he is perspired and sweaty.

The medicine man decided to consult the wife. "Isn't it odd," the medico asks the missus when she arrives, "that it is just wonderful the first time and the second time he is all perspired and sweaty?"

"Why should it be odd?" she smirks. "The first time it is in January and the second time it is July!"

You cannot go directly into the sayings of the buddhas. First you will have to go inside yourself. The basic encounter has to be with your own originality, and then all the buddhas will become clear to you. And then one thing more starts happening: then Jesus and Buddha and Moses and Mohammed are not saying different things -- they are saying the same things.

Unless a person becomes a witness to the ultimate truth himself, he will go on thinking that Buddha is saying one thing and Jesus is saying something contrary; that Buddhism is against Hinduism, that Hinduism is against Jainism, that Jainism is against Mohammedanism. Unless you witness the truth you will go on believing these three hundred religions, and you will be part of the quarrel, the conflict, the antagonism that goes on between these religions continuously. The day you see the truth of your own being, all these three hundred religions simply disappear, evaporate.

Once -- just like Premartha -- a Christian missionary went to see a Zen master. He wanted to convert the Zen master, so he had brought the Sermon on the Mount with him. He started reading the Sermon on the Mount: he had read only the first two or three sentences, and the Zen master said, "Stop! Whosoever said it was a buddha!"

The missionary was surprised. He said, "But these are the words of Jesus!"

The master said, "It doesn't matter what the name of the buddha is, but whosoever said this was a buddha. He had arrived."

And I say this to you because I know too. Once you have tasted, you will know. In whatsoever form the truth comes you will immediately recognize it. But first become a witness.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ONLY ONE STEP?

Digambara, yes, in fact, not even one...because we are not to go anywhere. We are already in God! I say "only one step" just to console you, because without any steps you will be too puzzled. I reduce it to the minimum, only one step, so that something remains for you to *do*, because you understand only the language of doing. You are a doer! If I say, "Nothing has to be done, not even a single step has to be taken," you will be at a loss how to make any head or tail of it.

The truth is, not even a single step is needed. Sitting silently doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself. But that may be too much. Your doer mind may simply ignore it or may think it is all nonsense. How can you achieve God without doing anything? Yes, a shortcut the mind can understand; that's why I say, "a single step." That is the shortest -- it cannot be reduced to less than that.

A *single* step! That is just to make you understand that doing is nonessential. To attain to being, doing is absolutely nonessential. When you are agreed and convinced that only one step is needed, then I will whisper in your ear, "Not even one -- you are already there!"

Rabiya, a great Sufi mystic, was passing.... It was the street she used to pass every day on her way to the marketplace, because in the marketplace she would go every day and shout the truth that she had attained. And for many days she had been watching a mystic, a well-known mystic, Hassan, sitting before the door of the mosque and praying to God, "God, open the door! Please open the door! Let me in!"

Rabiya could not tolerate it that day. Hassan was crying, tears were rolling down, and he was shouting again and again, "Open the door! Let me in! Why don't you listen? Why don't you hear my prayers?"

Every day she had laughed, whenever she had heard Hassan she had laughed, but it was too much today. Tears...and Hassan was *really* crying, weeping, crying his heart out. She went, she shook Hassan, and said, "Stop all this nonsense! The door is open -- in fact you are already in!"

Hassan looked at Rabiya, and that moment became a moment of revelation. Looking into the eyes of Rabiya, he bowed down, touched her feet, and said, "You came in time; otherwise I would have called my whole life! For years I have been doing this -- where have you been before? And I know you pass this street every day. You must have seen me crying, praying."

Rabiya said, "Yes, but truth can only be said at a certain moment, in a certain space, in a certain context. I was waiting for the right, ripe moment. Today it has arrived; hence I came close to you. Yesterday if I had told you, you would have felt irritated; you may have even become angry. You may have reacted antagonistically; you may have told me, 'You have disturbed my prayer!' -- and it is not right to disturb anybody's prayer."

Even the king is not allowed to disturb the prayer of a beggar. Even if a criminal, a murderer, is praying in Mohammedan countries, the police have to wait till he finishes his prayer, only then can he be caught. Prayer should not be disturbed.

Rabiya said, "I had wanted to tell you this, that 'Hassan, don't be a fool, the door is open -- in fact, you are already in!' But I had to wait for the right moment."

Digambara, I say "only one step" -- and even that seems to be unbelievable to you, hence the question.

You ask me, "Beloved Master, only one step?"

Not even one, Digambara. But the right moment has not come yet, at least for you. When it comes I will whisper in your ear, "You are already in. Not even a single step is needed" -- because we are not going outside. Steps are needed to go outside, steps are not needed to go in.

It is like a man dreaming, and in his dreams he has gone far far away. Will he need a long journey to come back home? He is already home, he is sleeping in his home...but he may be in Timbuktu in his dream. All that is needed is that he has to be shaken up.

As Rabiya shook Hassan, Digambara, one day I will shake you up! You just need cold water to be poured on you -- really cold water, ice-cold, so in shock you open your eyes. Do you think you will ask me, "How to go back home -- because I am in Timbuktu?" No, you will not ask, if you see that you are already in your home, had fallen asleep and dreamt about Timbuktu. You had never gone there.

You have not gone out of God! You cannot, it is impossible, because only God exists. Where can we go, *where* can we go? There is no place where God is not. We are always in him and he is always in us. But that needs an awakening.

Not even one step -- that is just to bring you closer to truth. Slowly slowly, you have to be persuaded. One thousand steps are reduced to one step, and then I will take that step away from you too. But that needs a right moment. Ultimate truths can be said only in a right, ripe situation.

That moment will also come.

Just be ready to receive it, welcome it....

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #7

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THE FOOL IS CARELESS.
BUT THE MASTER GUARDS HIS WATCHING.
IT IS HIS MOST PRECIOUS TREASURE.

HE NEVER GIVES IN TO DESIRE.
HE MEDITATES.
AND IN THE STRENGTH OF HIS RESOLVE
HE DISCOVERS TRUE HAPPINESS.

HE OVERCOMES DESIRE --
AND FROM THE TOWER OF WISDOM
HE LOOKS DOWN WITH DISPASSION
UPON THE SORROWING CROWD.
FROM THE MOUNTAINTOP
HE LOOKS DOWN ON THOSE
WHO LIVE CLOSE TO THE GROUND.

MINDFUL AMONG THE MINDLESS,
AWAKE WHILE OTHERS DREAM,
SWIFT AS THE RACE HORSE
HE OUTSTRIPS THE FIELD.

BY WATCHING
INDRA BECAME KING OF THE GODS.
HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO WATCH,
HOW FOOLISH TO SLEEP.

THE BHIKKHU WHO GUARDS HIS MIND
AND FEARS THE WAYWARDNESS OF HIS THOUGHTS
BURNS THROUGH EVERY BOND
WITH THE FIRE OF HIS VIGILANCE.

THE BHIKKHU WHO GUARDS HIS MIND
AND FEARS HIS OWN CONFUSION
CANNOT FALL.
HE HAS FOUND THE WAY TO PEACE.

Life is three-dimensional, and man is free to choose. The freedom that man has is both a curse and a blessing. He can choose to rise, he can choose to fall. He can choose the way of darkness or he can choose the way of light.

No other being has the freedom to choose. Their lives are predetermined. Because they are predetermined they cannot go astray -- that's the beauty of it. But because it is predetermined they are mechanical -- that's what is ugly about it.

Man is not yet a being in the true sense. He is only a becoming, he is on the way. He is searching, seeking, groping; he is not yet crystallized. That's why he does not know who he is -- because he is *not* yet; how can he know who he is? Before knowing, being has to happen. And the being is possible only if you choose rightly, consciously, with full awareness.

Jean-Paul Sartre is right when he says that man is a project, that man creates himself by his own effort, that man is born only as an opportunity, as a possibility, not as an actuality. He has to *become* actual -- and there is every possibility that he may miss the target. Millions of people miss the target; it is very rarely that a person has found his being. When a person finds his being, he is a buddha.

But the basic requirement is: choose your life with awareness. You have to choose anyway -- whether you choose with awareness or not makes no difference, choice has to be made. You are not free in the sense that if you don't want to choose you will be allowed not to. You are not free not to choose -- even not choosing will be a choosing.

The millions who miss, they miss because they don't choose. They simply wait; they go on hoping that something is going to happen. Nothing ever happens that way. You have to create the context, the space, for something valuable to happen to you, for something essential to happen to you.

There are two schools of philosophers in the world. One believes that man is born as an essence: the essentialist school. It says that man is already born ready-made. This is the idea of all the fatalists. The other school is that of those who call themselves existentialists. They believe that man is born not as an essence but only as an existence.

And what is the difference? The essence is predetermined; you bring it with your life, you bring it as a blueprint. You have only to unfold it; you are already made. There is no choice for you to make yourself, to create yourself. That is a very uncreative standpoint; that reduces man to a machine.

The other school believes that man is born only as an existence. The essence has to be created; it is not already there. You have to create yourself, you have to find ways and means to become, to be. You have to become a womb to your own being, you have to give birth to yourself. The physical birth is not the true birth; you will have to be born again.

Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Unless you are born again, you will not enter into the kingdom of my God." What does he mean? Is Nicodemus to die first physically? No. Jesus means something totally different: he has to die as an ego, he has to die as a personality. He has to die as a past. He has to die as mind. Only when you die as mind are you born as a being.

In the East we have called the buddhas the twice-born -- *dwij*. Other people are only once-born; a buddha is twice-born. The first gift of life is through the parents; the second gift you have to give to yourself.

You can choose between these three dimensions. If you choose one dimension you will

attain a certain integrity, but because it is one-dimensional it will not be total and it will not be whole. The first dimension is the dimension of science, of the objective world, of objects, things, the other. The second dimension is of aesthetics: the world of music, poetry, painting, sculpture, the world of imagination. And the third dimension is that of religion -- subjective, inner.

Science and religion are polar opposites: science is extrovert, religion is introvert. And between the two is the world of aesthetics. It is the bridge; it is both and neither. The world of aesthetics, the world of the artist, is in a way objective -- only in a way. He paints, and then a painting is born as an object. It is also subjective, because before he can paint he has to create the painting in his inwardness, in his subjectivity. Before a poet can sing his song, he sings it in his innermost recesses of being. It is sung there first, only then does it move into the outer world.

It is scientific in the sense that art creates objects, and it is religious in the sense that whatsoever art creates is first envisioned in one's own inner being. It is the bridge between science and religion. Religion is absolute inwardness. It is moving into your innermost core, it is subjectivity.

These are the three dimensions.

If you become a scientist and lose contact with aesthetics and religion, you will be a one-dimensional man. You will be only one third; you will not be whole. You may attain to a certain integrity that you will see in a man like Albert Einstein -- a certain individuality, a beauty, a truth, but only partial.

You can choose to be an artist: you can be a Picasso, a Van Gogh, a Beethoven, a Rabindranath, but then too...you will be a little better because aesthetics is the world of in-between, the world of twilight. You will have something of religion in you. Each poet has something of religion in him -- he may be aware of it, he may not be aware of it, but no poet can be without some flavor of religion. It is impossible. Even the most atheistic artist is bound to have some kind of religiousness. Without it he will not be a genius. Without it he will remain only a technician, a craftsman, but not an artist.

Even a man like Jean-Paul Sartre -- who is determinedly an atheist, who will never concede that he is religious -- even he is in some way religious. He has created great novels, and those novels and the characters of those novels have great interiority. That interiority has been *lived* by this man, otherwise he could not write about it. That interiority is experienced.

And the man that moves into aesthetics is bound to have some scientific qualities around him too. He will be more logical than the religious person, more object-oriented than the religious person -- less object-oriented than the scientist of course, less logical than the scientist, but more logical than the religious person. He will be in a more balanced state.

It is better to move in the world of art because somehow it has something of all the three dimensions -- but only something, still it is not total.

The religious man is again one-dimensional, just as the scientist is. Albert Einstein is one-dimensional, so is Gautama the Buddha. And because the East has become one-dimensionally religious it has suffered much. And now the West is suffering much, and the cause is one-dimensionality. The West is bankrupt as far as the inner world is concerned and the East is bankrupt as far as the outer world is concerned.

The East is not accidentally poor and starving. It has chosen to be that way. It has denied science; it has even denied the world of objective reality. It says the world is illusory. If the world is illusory, how can you create a science? The very first requirement is missing. You cannot create a science out of *maya*, illusion. How can you create a science out of something

which is not, which does not even exist? If you deny the world, you have denied the dimension of science altogether.

That is the reason why the East is poor and starving. And unless the Eastern genius understands this, we can go on importing science from the West but it will not get roots into our beings. If our approach remains the same as it has been for five thousand years, science will only be something foreign. That's how it is.

In India you can find a scientist, world famous in his field of work, and still living a very unscientific life. He may be consulting the palmist and the astrologer. He may be going to take a bath in the Ganges, so his sins of many many lives are washed away. He may still be believing in a thousand and one things which are simply superstitious -- and still he is a scientist! Science remains something peripheral; his soul still remains rooted in the ancient past of the East, which is unscientific.

The East has suffered much because of one-dimensionality. And now the West is suffering again for the same reason: one-dimensionality. The West has chosen to be scientific at the cost of being religious. Now God is denied, the soul is denied. Man is reduced first to an animal and now to a machine. Man loses all glory, all grandeur. Man loses all hope, all future. The moment man loses his interiority he loses depth, he becomes superficial. The Western man is rich as far as things are concerned, but is very poor as far as soul is concerned -- inwardly poor, outwardly rich.

This is the state of affairs right now.

And between these two a few artists exist who have something of both the dimensions. But even the artist is not satisfied, because he is something of both but he is neither a scientist nor a religious person -- just having a few glimpses of both the worlds. He remains in a kind of limbo; he never settles, he remains a vagabond. He moves like a shuttle between these two worlds. He does not contribute much: because he is not a scientist he cannot contribute scientifically and he is not religious so he cannot contribute religiously. At the most his art remains decorative; at the most it can make life a little more beautiful, a little more comfortable, convenient. But that is not much.

I propose the fourth way. The true man will be all three simultaneously: he will be a scientist, an artist, and religious. And I call the fourth man the spiritual man. That's where I differ from Albert Einstein and Gautam Buddha and Picasso -- from them all. You must remember my differences.

Buddha is one-dimensional -- tremendously beautiful! As far as his own inner world is concerned he is the greatest master, the master of the inner, unsurpassable, but he remains one-dimensional. He attains to immense peace, silence, bliss, but does not contribute to the world in any objective way.

Albert Einstein contributes to the world in a very objective way, but cannot contribute anything of the inner -- hence his contribution becomes a curse. He suffered his whole life because he was the man who proposed that atom bombs should be made. He had written a letter to the American president: "Now it is time -- unless atom bombs are made the war can go on for years and years and will be very destructive. Just making the atom bombs, the very threat of it, will stop the war."

But once the power -- any kind of power -- reaches into the hands of the politicians, you cannot control them, you cannot prevent them from using it. The politician is the most stupid kind of person -- monkeyish, power-mad.

Once the atom bomb was in the hands of the American politicians it had to be dropped somewhere. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, were bound to happen. And when they happened it was a

wound, a great wound, for Albert Einstein. He repented his whole life.

In the last moments, when somebody asked him, "Would you like to become a scientist again if God gives you an opportunity to be born in the world again?"

He said, "No, certainly no, absolutely no! I would like rather to be a plumber than to be a physicist, a scientist. Enough is enough! I have not been a blessing to the world, I have been a curse."

He enriched the outer world certainly, but without inner growth, the outer growth creates a lopsidedness. You possess many things, but you don't possess yourself. You have all that can make you happy but you are not happy, because happiness cannot be derived from your possessions. Happiness is an inner welling-up; it is an awakening of your own energies. It is an awakening of your soul.

Buddha contributed tremendously to the subjective dimension. He is a master par excellence. Whatsoever he says is absolutely true, but it is one-dimensional -- never forget it.

My effort here is to create the fourth way: a man who joins all these three dimensions of life into himself, who becomes a trinity, a *trimurti*, who has all these three faces of God to him. Who has as much of a logical mind as is needed by science and who is also as poetic as is needed by aesthetics, and who is also as meditative and watchful as is proposed by the buddhas.

The fourth man is the hope of the world. The fourth way is the only possibility if man is to survive. If man is still to exist on this earth, we have to find a great synthesis between these three dimensions. And if all these three dimensions are meeting, merging, melting into one, of course that synthesis is the fourth.

I am speaking on Buddha, on Mahavira, on Jesus, on Patanjali, on Lao Tzu, and many more. But always remember that all these people are one-dimensional. I want to enrich your life through their teachings, but I don't end with them. I would like you to go a little deeper into other dimensions too.

Hence the new commune is going to be a meeting place of East and West, of the subjective and the objective. In the new commune we are going to have scientists, artists, poets, painters, singers, musicians, meditators, yogis, mystics -- all kinds of people pouring their energies into one great river. And that's how I would like the whole world to be.

Buddha is to be incorporated in it, that's why I am speaking on him. And, of course, the third dimension, the religious, is one of the most important, *the* most important dimension. Without it everything is soulless.

Today's sutras:

THE FOOL IS CARELESS.
BUT THE MASTER GUARDS HIS WATCHING.
IT IS HIS MOST PRECIOUS TREASURE.

Buddha calls a man foolish, not because he is ignorant, not because he is not knowledgeable. According to Buddha, a man is a fool if he is unconscious, if he behaves unconsciously, if he lives in sleep, if he is a somnambulist. If he goes on behaving without any mindfulness, then he is a fool. The word has a special meaning, remember: unconsciousness, unawareness, unmindfulness -- that's Buddha's definition of the fool.

He moves in life like driftwood, at the mercy of the winds. He does not know who he is, he does not know from where he comes, he does not know to where he is going. He is

accidental; he simply lives by accident. He has no conscious, deliberate search for being, for truth, for reality. He follows the crowd; he remains a part of the mob psychology. He is not an individual. He has no authentic intelligence of his own; he simply follows others. The parents have said something, the teachers, the priests, the politicians, and he goes on following all kinds of advice. He has no idea why he is here, for what, and what he is doing, and why. He never raises such questions.

These questions are very uncomfortable to him. They create anxiety in him; he avoids these questions. He simply believes in the answers that are handed over to him; he never doubts those answers. Not that he has attained to trust -- no, he has no trust either -- but he simply represses his doubt because doubt creates discomfort.

He remains a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Christian. He never inquires and he never risks anything for his inquiry. He never goes into exploration. He is not an adventurer, his life is not an adventure. He is stuck, he is dormant, stagnant. You cannot separate him from his crowd; he is like a sheep. Buddha calls him the fool.

The fool can be very knowledgeable -- in fact almost always he is. He can be a pundit, a scholar, a great professor -- that's how he hides his foolishness. By gathering knowledge on the circumference he hides the ignorance that exists at the center.

There are two types of people: one, very knowledgeable people -- knowledgeable, but they know nothing. They have a kind of ignorant knowledge. And there is the other category: the people who are not knowledgeable -- but they know. They have a kind of knowing ignorance.

When Buddha uses the word 'fool', he is not talking about the second category -- because Buddha himself is not very knowledgeable, neither is Jesus, nor is Mohammed. They are innocent people, simple people, but their simplicity is such, their innocence is such, their childlike quality is such, that they have been able to penetrate into the innermost core of their beings. They have been able to know *their* truth; they have been able to reach the very core of their existence. They *know*, but they are not knowledgeable. Their knowing is not through scriptures. Their knowing has happened through watchfulness. Remember the source: real knowing comes through meditation, awareness, consciousness, mindfulness, watchfulness, witnessing. And unreal knowledge comes through scriptures. You can learn the unreal knowledge very easily and you can brag about it, but you will remain a fool -- a learned fool, but a fool all the same.

If you really want to know you will have to drop all your knowledge, you will have to unlearn it. You will have to become ignorant again, like a small child, with wondering eyes, with alertness. You will be able to know not only your own being but also the being that exists in the world...the being that exists in the trees and the birds and the animals and the rocks and the stars. If you are able to know yourself, you will be able to know all that is. God is another name for all that is.

THE FOOL IS CARELESS. By "carelessness" Buddha means he behaves unconsciously. He does not know what he is doing. He simply goes on doing things because he cannot remain unoccupied; he wants constant occupation. He cannot remain alone; he wants constant company. He cannot remain unengaged even for a single moment, because whenever he is unengaged, unoccupied, alone, he starts facing himself -- and he is very afraid of that.

He does not want to go into the abyss of his own being. All that he knows is meaningless there. All that he knows, he cannot carry it there. All his knowledge, all his efficiency, all his scriptures, all his theories, are utterly futile in the inner world. He clings to the outer because there he is somebody. In the inner world he is a nobody.

Just watch people! In fact it is the greatest entertainment: stand by the side of the road and just watch people. What are they doing? Why are they doing it? And then watch yourself -- what are *you* doing? and why?

A man picks up a young woman in a hotel lobby and goes to her apartment with her. They both undress, but then she says, "First chase me! I want to be inflamed, excited!"

He chases her for two hours, but cannot catch her and leaves in disgust.

The next night he sees her pick up another victim in the same lobby and he sneaks up on the fire-escape to watch the new sucker's discomfiture through the window. As he watches the bare legs flashing by under the partly-drawn window shade, he says to himself out loud, "Ah, brother, get a load of that!"

"You said it!" breathes a man's voice in his ear, "but you should have seen the sonofabitch that was here last night!"

Just watch people -- what are they doing? Chasing shadows, chasing things which they don't need, trying to make great effort to attain something which once attained they will not know what to do with. That's how people are running after money, after political power. Once you have it you don't know what to do with it.

A woman was saying to another woman, "Are you not worried about your husband? He continuously goes on chasing women, any woman -- and you know it!"

And the other woman laughed. She said, "There is nothing to worry about: his chasing women is like dogs chasing cars."

The other woman said, "I don't understand. What do you mean, dogs chasing cars?"

She said, "Yes, dogs chasing cars -- once they have caught one they don't know what to do with the car, and that's how my husband is. He will chase a woman, he will catch hold of her. Then he does not know what to do with her. I know him! That's why I am not worried."

This is the situation. Somebody wants to be very famous, and he will waste his whole life in becoming famous and then he will not know what to do with it. In fact, once you become very famous you want to become unfamous again, because it is such a weight. You cannot relax. You cannot go anywhere without being watched by the crowds. You have no privacy anymore, you cannot live any personal life. Everybody is looking, watching, investigating your life. You cannot laugh, you cannot talk with ease...everything becomes difficult.

Just a few days ago Jimmy Carter said that if Kennedy stands against him in the presidential election he will "whip his ass." Now he is being condemned all over the world for using that word. You cannot even use an innocent word. Now he must be feeling very repentant for what he has done. He has committed a crime.

You don't have a private life when you are famous -- when you are a president of a country, a Nobel Prize winner, you are a public thing. You are always on show, in the show-window; you always have to keep dressed up. You cannot make a simple gesture in freedom.

People have money...and then they don't know what to do with it.

The accidental man is foolish. The wise man moves deliberately, takes each step consciously. His life is a constant inquiry for truth. He does not go astray. He remains alert in every one of his acts -- not because of others. He remains alert because it is only by being alert that he will become integrated, that he will become crystallized.

THE FOOL IS CARELESS. The wise man cares -- he cares about himself, he cares about his life, and he cares about others too. He cares about everything, because he values his life. He knows that it is very precious, that it is a God-given opportunity to grow, that it has not to be lost in a kind of drunkenness.

A reformed prostitute has joined the Salvation Army and is giving testimony on a street corner. "I used to lie in the arms of men," she confesses, "white men, black men, Chinamen. But now I lie in the arms of Jesus."

"That's right, sister," cries a drunk in the back row, "fuck 'em all!"

Just watch people and watch yourself, and you will be surprised how unconscious, how drunk we are. How careless! We don't listen to what is said, we don't see what we see. Our eyes are clouded, our minds confused, our beings have no clarity. We are not perceptive, we are not sensitive.

We go on uttering things which we don't mean, and then we suffer for them. We go on saying things which we never wanted to say. We go on doing things -- even while we are doing them we know that we don't want to do these things, still we go on doing them. Some unconscious force goes on driving us. Sometimes we even decide not to do a certain thing, not to say a certain thing -- still we do it, even against our own decisions. We don't have any resolution, we don't have any resolve, we don't have any will.

She knew that these were to be her last few hours on this earth, so she called her husband to her side and in a halting voice told him her last request.

"I know," she said, "that you and mother have never gotten along. But would you as a special favor to me, ride to the cemetery in the same car with her?"

"Alright," replied the unhappy husband. "But it will spoil my whole day."

This is not really a joke -- this happens every day. You say things which you should have known are not right to say. But you know only later on, when the harm is done. Unconscious utterings.

Now, this man may have been crying and saying to his wife, "Without you it will be impossible to live. I will always remain empty without you, a part of my soul will die with you..." and things like that. But now, in this moment, he has forgotten all.

THE FOOL IS CARELESS. BUT THE MASTER GUARDS HIS WATCHING. IT IS HIS MOST PRECIOUS TREASURE. The fool remains a slave -- a slave of the instincts, a slave of unconscious desires, a slave of whims, a slave of the society in which he is born, a slave of the fashions -- a slave of anything that happens around him. He simply picks it up. If the neighbor is buying a new car, he has to buy a new car too. He does not need it. If the neighbor has purchased a house in the hills, he has to purchase one. It may be difficult and hard to manage for the money. He may have to borrow, it may take years for him to pay, but he *has* to purchase it. His ego is hurt. People are living imitatively, very carelessly.

Among the Eskimos there is a tradition, a very beautiful tradition, that each year, the first day of the year, every family looks in the house for what is unnecessary and what is necessary -- they sort things out. And only what is absolutely necessary is saved; all that is unnecessary is given as gifts to people.

And you will be surprised to know that the Eskimo's home is the cleanest home in the world, has a purity about it -- no garbage, nothing accumulates. Spacious -- small but

spacious; only that much which is necessary, absolutely necessary....

Just think of all the things that you go on accumulating: are they really necessary? do you really need them? Or is it just because people are accumulating that you also become accumulative?

The watchful man becomes the master of his life. He lives it according to *his* light, not according to others' lives. He lives it according to his own needs. And remember, your needs are not many. If you are wise, watchful, you will have a very very contented life, and very simple, and with small things.

But if you are imitative, then your life will become very complex, unnecessarily complex. And I am not giving you particular directions about what you should have and what you should not have. I am simply saying go on watching...whatsoever is necessary for you, have it; and whatsoever is not necessary for you, forget about it. This is the way of a sannyasin.

I am not for renouncing things, but I am certainly for renouncing unnecessary garbage. And it is not only that you collect unnecessary things -- you desire unnecessary things, and you never meditate whether those things are really necessary. Are they going to help in any way? Are they going to make you more happy, more blissful?

Before you start desiring a thing, think it over thrice...and you will be surprised. Out of a hundred of your desires, ninety-nine are absolutely useless. They simply keep you occupied; that is their only function. They keep you away from yourself; that is their only utility. They don't allow you time, space to be with yourself. They are dangerous. It is because of these unnecessary things that you will waste your life, and you will die a bankrupt.

...THE MASTER GUARDS HIS WATCHING.

I have heard:

The husband and wife are being driven crazy by the continued presence of the wife's brother, who came to spend the weekend but is still there six months later. They decide that the wife will cook a chicken and the husband will pretend it is overdone. They will put the matter to the brother-in-law. If he says the chicken is good, the husband will throw him out; if he says the chicken is bad the wife will throw him out. It can't fail!

The scene is set up as planned, with much pretended shouting and recrimination, while the brother-in-law silently stows away his food. Suddenly the husband and wife stop shouting and turn to him.

"Harry," says the husband, "what do *you* think?"

"Me?" says Harry, biting into the chicken leg. "I think I am staying another three months."

Must have been a very watchful man. Must have been very careful, alert. He is not caught in the trap. The trap was certainly very subtle. Unless he was very alert, it was bound to trap him. He does not give any opinion. He simply states a fact, that "I am going to stay three more months."

Live watchfully and you will not be trapped. Live unconsciously and on each step you are trapped; your life becomes more and more imprisoned. And nobody is responsible except you.

BUT THE MASTER GUARDS HIS WATCHING. IT IS HIS MOST PRECIOUS TREASURE. Whatsoever he does, he does with total awareness. Whatsoever you do, you do almost mechanically. You will have to de-automatize yourself. That's what meditation is all about: the process of de-automatization.

You have become automatic. You go on driving the car, smoking the cigarette, talking to

the friend, and thinking a thousand and one thoughts inside. Most accidents happen because of this. More men are dying every year in car, train, airplane and similar accidents than die in war. Adolf Hitler may not have killed as many people as are being killed every year by the mechanical behavior of man around the earth.

But what can you do? That's your whole way of life, that's how you live. You eat -- you simply go on stuffing, you don't pay any attention to what you are eating. You make love to your wife or your husband -- you don't even see the face of the woman. You have become very insensitive; you just go on moving through empty gestures, with no significance. They can't have any significance unless you are fully alert.

It is the light of awareness that makes things precious, extraordinary. Then small things are no longer small. When a man with alertness, sensitivity, love, touches an ordinary pebble on the seashore, that pebble becomes a kohinoor. And if you touch a kohinoor in your unconscious state, it is just an ordinary pebble -- not even that. Your life will have as much depth and as much meaning as you have awareness.

Now people are asking all over the world, "What is the meaning of life?" Of course the meaning is lost, because you have lost the way to find the meaning -- and the way is awareness. **IT IS HIS MOST PRECIOUS TREASURE.**

HE NEVER GIVES IN TO DESIRE.

What does Buddha mean by "desire"? Desire means your whole mind. Desire means not to be herenow. Desire means moving somewhere in the future which is not yet. Desire means a thousand and one ways of escaping from the present. Desire is equivalent to mind. In Buddha's terminology, desire is mind.

And desire is time too. When I say desire is time too, I don't mean the clock time, I mean the psychological time. How do you create future in your mind? -- by desiring. You want to do something tomorrow, you have created the tomorrow; otherwise the tomorrow is nowhere yet, it has not come. But you want to do something tomorrow, and because you want to do something tomorrow you have created a psychological tomorrow.

And people are creating years ahead, lives ahead. They are even thinking about what to do after life, after death. They are even preparing for that! And these people are thought to be religious; they are not religious at all. Desire takes you away from the now-here, and now-here is the only reality.

Hence Buddha says: **HE NEVER GIVES IN TO DESIRE.** He never moves into the future, he lives in the present. To live in the future is to live a false life, a pseudo life.

A fashionable actress refuses a young man who begs for her favors, on the grounds that he is Jewish, and laughs at his offer of one hundred thousand francs. She tells him that to show him how little she cares for his money he can make love to her for as long as it takes the hundred thousand francs to burn.

He comes back the next day with the money, lays ten bills out in a line with the ends just overlapping, lights the first one and leaps into bed with her. As the last bill burns away, she pushes him off her.

"Well, I have had you," he says triumphantly.

"Yes," she smiles, "and your hundred thousand francs are burnt to ashes."

"What does it matter?" he says, lighting a cigarette. "They were counterfeit."

The man who lives in the future, lives a counterfeit life. He does not really live, he only pretends to live. He hopes to live, he desires to live, but he never lives. And the tomorrow never comes, it is always today. And whatsoever comes is always now and here, and he does not know how to live now-here; he knows only how to escape from now-here. The way to escape is called "desire," *tanha* -- that is Buddha's word for what is an escape from the present, from the real into the unreal.

The man who desires is an escapist.

Now, this is very strange, that meditators are thought to be escapist. That is utter nonsense. Only the meditator is not an escapist -- everybody else is. Meditation means getting out of desire, getting out of thoughts, getting out of mind. Meditation means relaxing in the moment, in the present. Meditation is the *only* thing in the world which is not escapist, although it is thought to be the most escapist thing. People who condemn meditation always condemn it with the argument that it is escape, escaping from life. They are simply talking nonsense; they don't understand what they are saying.

Meditation is not escaping from life: it is escaping *into* life. Mind is escaping from life, desire is escaping from life.

HE NEVER GIVES IN TO DESIRE....

HE MEDITATES.

He brings himself again and again to the present. Again and again the mind starts functioning and he brings it back to the present. Slowly slowly, it starts happening: the window opens and for the first time you see the sky as it is. And for the first time you feel the wind and the rain and the sun, in their immediacy, because *you* become meditative. You start touching life. Then life is no longer a word but a tangible reality; then love is no longer a word but an overflowing energy. Then blessing is no longer just a desire, a hope -- you feel it, you have it, you *are* it.

HE MEDITATES.... Buddha is not for prayer, he is for meditation, because prayer is again somehow a kind of desiring. When you pray, you desire. Prayer is always for the future; prayer means you are asking for something. You may not be asking for money, you may be asking for God himself, but it is the same. Ask, and you have moved away. Meditation is a state of nonasking, nonquestioning, nonthinking. Prayer is still part of thinking -- a beautiful thinking, but thinking is thinking; a beautiful prison, but a prison is still a prison.

And the mind who prays is greedy, and the mind who prays goes through no transformation. It remains the same mind. And the prayer is born out of the same mind; it cannot have a very different quality. How can you pray for something which is different from you? -- it will be *your* prayer. It will reflect your mind, it will come out of your mind, it will sprout out of your mind. How can it take you beyond the mind? Prayer cannot take you beyond the mind. Only meditation can take you beyond the mind.

Meditation is a state of no-mind. Prayer is a state of religious mind, but mind is there. And when it has the beautiful garment of religiousness around it, it becomes even more dangerous.

A little boy on a picnic strays away from his family, and suddenly realizes that he is lost and night is falling. Becoming frightened after wandering aimlessly for some time, and shouting for his parents but receiving no answer, he kneels down and prays with uplifted

hands. "Dear Lord," he says, "please help me to find my daddy and mommy, and I won't hit my little sister anymore, honest I won't!"

As he kneels praying, a bird flies over and drops a load of shit into his outstretched palm. The little boy examines it and turns his eyes back to heaven.

"Oh please, Lord," he begs, "don't hand me that shit. I really and truly am lost!"

Your prayer is *your* prayer; it is part of you, an extension of you. It cannot help you to surpass yourself. Meditation is the only way to surpass oneself, the only way to transcend oneself.

And what is meditation? It does not mean meditating upon something; the English word is misleading. In English there is no word adequate enough to translate Buddha's word *sammasati*. It has been translated as meditation, as right mindfulness, as awareness, as consciousness, alertness, watchfulness, witnessing -- but there is not really a single word which has the quality of *sammasati*.

Sammasati means: consciousness is, but without any content. There is no thought, no desire, nothing is stirred in you. You are not contemplating about God or about great things...nature and its beauty, the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, and their immensely significant statements. You are not contemplating! You are not concentrating on any special object either. You are not chanting a mantra, because those are all things of the mind, those are all contents of the mind. You are not doing anything! The mind is utterly empty, and you are simply there in that emptiness. A kind of presence, a pure presence, with nowhere to go -- utterly relaxed into oneself, at rest, at home. That is the meaning of Buddha's meditation.

And nobody else has ever reached such a beautiful expression about meditation as Buddha. Many people have attained, but nobody has been so expressive, so capable of conveying the message, as the Buddha. HE NEVER GIVES IN TO DESIRE. HE MEDITATES.

AND IN THE STRENGTH OF HIS RESOLVE
HE DISCOVERS TRUE HAPPINESS.

Bliss is true happiness. What you call happiness is just misery in disguise. What you call happiness is nothing but entertainment, pleasure. It is momentary -- it cannot be true. Truth has to have one quality, and the quality is of eternity. If something is true it is eternal; if it is untrue it is momentary.

True happiness is found only when the mind completely ceases functioning. It does not come from the outside. It wells up within your own being, it starts overflowing you. You become luminous. You become a fountain of bliss.

HE OVERCOMES DESIRE --
AND FROM THE TOWER OF WISDOM
HE LOOKS DOWN WITH DISPASSION
UPON THE SORROWING CROWD.
FROM THE MOUNTAINTOP
HE LOOKS DOWN ON THOSE
WHO LIVE CLOSE TO THE GROUND.

As someone becomes a buddha -- desire overcome, mind overcome, time overcome, the ego transcended -- he is no longer part of this earth. He still lives on the earth, but his soul

soars so high that from the sunlit tops of his being he can see the sorrowing crowd in the dark valleys of life, stumbling, drunken, fighting, ambitious, greedy, angry, violent...a sheer wastage of great opportunities. Great compassion arises in his being. His whole passion passes through dispassion and becomes compassion.

Passion means using the other as a means -- and that is the fundamental of immorality. To use somebody as a means is the most immoral act in the world, because each person is an end unto himself. To use him as a means is to exploit. And that's what we call love: the husband using the wife, the wife using the husband; the children using their parents, and the parents later on using their children -- that's what we call love!

It is not love. It is a strategy of the mind; it is poison coated with sugar. This love is really disgusting. That's why you see the whole world in such disgust. This love is sickening. It has sickened the whole soul of humanity because it is not love at all. It is passion, lust, using the other as a means.

As you start meditating you move to the second stage, dispassion -- love disappears. You come into a neutral phase; just as you change gears in the car, and each time you change gear, the gear first has to move through neutral, so passion moves through a neutral phase -- it becomes dispassion. Love disappears. For the time being, in the interval, the man who is moving towards buddhahood becomes utterly cold, dispassionate.

And then the third stage is reached. When he has attained buddhahood, he has found bliss and the inexhaustible fountains of bliss -- *aes dhammo sanantano* -- when he has found the principle of eternity, when he has found the inexhaustible treasure of life, he starts overflowing. Love comes back -- in fact, love comes for the first time. It is compassion. Now he showers his compassion on each and everybody; whosoever comes to him, he shares his bliss with him, he shares his way, he shares his insight.

MINDFUL AMONG THE MINDLESS,
AWAKE WHILE OTHERS DREAM,
SWIFT AS THE RACE HORSE
HE OUTSTRIPS THE FIELD.

And when you have become established in meditation and compassion you no longer fall a victim of sleep and dream. You remain awake -- even while asleep. And then your life becomes a straight arrow, moves with tremendous speed, with the speed of light, towards the goal. You become, for the first time, being.

SWIFT AS THE RACE HORSE HE OUTSTRIPS THE FIELD. MINDFUL AMONG THE MINDLESS, AWAKE WHILE OTHERS DREAM. That is the difference between Buddha and others. Others are only dreaming, not really living; hoping to live some day, preparing to live, but not living. And that day never comes -- before that day comes death.

A buddha is awake. Even while he is asleep he does not dream. When desires disappear, dreams disappear too. Dreams are desires translated into the language of sleep. A buddha sleeps with absolute alertness. The light goes on burning within him. The body needs rest, hence the body sleeps, but he needs no rest -- the energy is inexhaustible. There, at the center of his being, a small light goes on burning. The whole circumference is fast asleep, but that light is alert, awake.

We are asleep even while we are awake: he is awake even while he is asleep.

BY WATCHING
INDRA BECAME KING OF THE GODS.

HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO WATCH,
HOW FOOLISH TO SLEEP.

THE BHIKKHU WHO GUARDS HIS MIND
AND FEARS THE WAYWARDNESS OF HIS THOUGHTS
BURNS THROUGH EVERY BOND
WITH THE FIRE OF HIS VIGILANCE.

'Bhikkhu' is Buddha's word for sannyasin. 'Sannyasin' is my word for the bhikkhu. I have not chosen Buddha's word -- for a certain reason. Bhikkhu literally means beggar.

Buddha renounced his kingdom and became a beggar. Of course, even while he is a beggar, he walks like an emperor; of course, he is far more graceful than he ever was before, and far richer than he ever was before. But because he renounced the kingdom, people started calling him a bhikkhu, a beggar. And, slowly slowly, the name was adopted by his followers too.

I don't want you to be beggars, I want you to be masters. Hence I have chosen the word 'sannyasin'. A sannyasin means one who knows how to live rightly. It is not renunciation; on the contrary, it is rejoicing, it is celebration.

THE BHIKKHU WHO GUARDS HIS MIND AND FEARS THE WAYWARDNESS OF HIS THOUGHTS
BURNS THROUGH EVERY BOND WITH THE FIRE OF HIS VIGILANCE.

Yes, meditation is fire -- it burns your thoughts, your desires, your memories; it burns the past and the future. It burns your mind and the ego. It takes away all that you think that you are. It is a death and a rebirth, a crucifixion and a resurrection. You are born anew. You lose your own identity totally, and you attain to a new vision of life.

That vision of life is what is meant by god, dhamma, tao, logos. You can choose your name for it because it has no name of its own. In fact it is not expressible at all; it can only be indicated, hinted at.

THE BHIKKHU WHO GUARDS HIS MIND
AND FEARS HIS OWN CONFUSION
CANNOT FALL.
HE HAS FOUND THE WAY TO PEACE.

Mind is confusion. Thoughts and thoughts -- thousands of thoughts clamoring, clashing, fighting with each other, fighting for your attention. Thousands of thoughts pulling you into thousands of directions. It is a miracle how you go on keeping yourself together. Somehow you manage this togetherness -- it is only somehow, it is only a facade. Deep behind it there is a clamoring crowd, a civil war, a continuous civil war. Thoughts fighting with each other, thoughts wanting you to fulfill them. It is a great confusion, what you call your mind.

But if you are aware that the mind *is* confusion, and you don't get identified with the mind, you will never fall. You will become fallproof! The mind will become impotent. And because you will be watching continuously, your energies will slowly be withdrawn, away from the mind; it will not be nourished any more.

And once the mind dies, you are born as a no-mind. That birth is enlightenment. That birth brings you for the first time to the land of peace, the lotus paradise. It brings you to the world of bliss, benediction. Otherwise you remain in hell. Right now you are in hell. But if you resolve, if you decide, if you choose consciousness, *right now* you can take a jump, a leap from hell into heaven.

It is up to you: you can choose hell, you can choose heaven. Hell is cheap. Heaven needs great effort, perseverance, resolve. Hell means you can remain unconscious, you can remain as you are. Heaven means you have to rise above yourself, you have to transcend. You have to move from the valley towards the peaks.

And those peaks are yours, but you have to pay for them. Climbing to those peaks is arduous effort. Be watchful, be meditative, and one day you will find yourself on the sunlit peaks. That is liberation, moksha. That is nirvana -- cessation of the ego and the birth of God.

You are entitled to be gods. If you are not, only you are responsible and nobody else. Listen to the Buddha. Don't only listen to the Buddha -- act, be committed to the life of consciousness, get involved.

But let me remind you again: this is only one dimension of life -- immensely rich, but still one dimension. You will have to do something more. I am giving you a more arduous task than Buddha did. Buddha gave you one dimension; I want you to have all three dimensions, and a synthesis.

A new man is needed on the earth. The old is rotten and finished, it has no future, it can't survive. It has come to the very end of its tether. It is on the deathbed. Unless a new man is born -- East and West meeting, all three dimensions together -- humanity is doomed.

This experiment that I am doing here is just to create the first specimen of the new man. You are participating in a great experiment of tremendous import. Feel blessed. Feel fortunate. You may not be aware of what you are participating in, but you *may* create history! It all depends on how committed, how involved you become with me and with my experiment.

This is the greatest synthesis possible, that has ever been tried....
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #8

Chapter title: The beginning of a new phase

28 June 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,

I NEVER DID GET TURNED ON BY CLASSICAL MUSIC, AND ART GALLERIES BORED ME SILLY. SO, IS IT POSSIBLE TO GO FROM THE FIRST LAYER, THE HEAD, TO THE THIRD LAYER, THE CENTER, AND SORT OF BYPASS ALL THIS AESTHETIC GARBAGE?

Nirgun, yes, it is true: in the name of aesthetics, there is much garbage. But when I use the word 'aesthetics' I don't mean the garbage collected in the museums and art galleries.

When I use the word 'aesthetics' I mean a quality in you. It has nothing to do with objects -- paintings, music, poetry -- it has something to do with a quality in your being, a sensitivity, a love for beauty, a sensitivity for the texture and taste of things, for the eternal dance that goes on all around, an awareness of it, a silence to hear this cuckoo calling from the distance....

It is not garbage: it is the very core of existence.

But I can understand that you must be getting bored with the so-called classical music and paintings collected in the art galleries. And you must be a little bit puzzled why people go on talking so much about all this nonsense.

Aesthetics is just an artistic approach towards life, a poetic vision. Seeing colors so totally that each tree becomes a painting, that each cloud brings the presence of God, that colors are more colorful, that you don't go on ignoring the radiance of things, that you remain alert, aware, loving, that you remain receptive, welcoming, open. That's what I mean by the aesthetic attitude, the aesthetic approach.

Music has to be in your heart, your very being has to be musical, it has to become a harmony. A man can exist as a chaos or as a cosmos. Music is the way from chaos to cosmos. A man can exist as a disorder, a discord, just noise, a market place, or a man can exist as a temple, a sacred silence, where celestial music is heard on its own, uncreated music is heard on its own.

The Zen people call it the sound of one hand clapping. In India, for centuries mystics have been talking about *anahat nad* -- the unstruck sound. It is there in your very being; you need not go anywhere to listen to it. It is the ancientmost music, and the latest too. It is both the oldest and the newest. And it is the music of your own being, the hum of your own existence. And if you can't hear it, you are deaf.

And there is no way, Nirgun, to bypass it. Museums you can bypass, art galleries you can bypass -- in fact, you should bypass them. You need not be worried about art and art criticism -- forget all about it. But you have to become an artist of life itself.

I say Buddha is a poet, although he never composed a single poem. Still I insist that he is one of the greatest poets who has ever lived. He was not a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Kalidas, a Rabindranath -- no, not at all. But still I say: Shakespeare, Milton, Kalidas, Rabindranath, are nothing compared to *his* poetry. His life was his poetry -- the way he walked, the way he looked at things....

Just the other night I came across one of the most beautiful statements of Saint Teresa of Avila. She says: All that you need is to look. Her whole message is contained in this simple statement: All that you need is to look. The capacity to look -- and you will find God. The capacity to hear -- and you will find his music. The capacity to touch -- and every texture becomes his texture. Touch the rock and you find God.

It is not a question of objects of art: it is a question of an inner approach, a vision -- of seeing things artistically. And, Nirgun, you *have* that quality! In fact, because of that quality you were bored by classical music and you were bored by galleries -- because in an unconscious way, in a groping way, you feel something far superior inside you. But you are not yet fully aware of it.

Bypass the art galleries and you will not be losing anything. But you cannot bypass the aesthetic layer of your being: you have to go through it. Otherwise you will always remain impoverished; something will be missing, something of immense value. Your enlightenment will never be total. A part of your being will remain unenlightened; a corner of your soul will remain dark -- and that corner will remain heavy on you. One has to become totally enlightened. Nothing should be bypassed, no shortcuts are to be invented. One has to move very naturally through all the layers, because all those layers are opportunities to grow.

Remember it: whenever I use the words 'music' or 'poetry' or 'painting' or 'sculpture', I have my own meaning.

When Helen Keller, the blind woman, came to India, she visited Jawaharlal Nehru. She was blind, deaf. She touched Nehru's face; with both her hands she felt Nehru's face, and she was immensely delighted. She expressed her great joy. She stated, "I have felt the same quality in Nehru's face as I felt when I touched beautiful Roman statues -- the same coolness and the same proportion and the same form."

Now this woman has a heart of a sculptor -- blind, deaf, but she has the genius of a great artist. Because she was deaf and blind, she had to find new ways to feel life. And sometimes curses prove blessings. She would touch water, she would feel its coolness, its flow, its life, its vibe. You will never feel it, because you can see the water; you can say, "What is there?" Because she could not see, she could only feel the texture of a rock...you can see and you will miss -- you will not feel the texture of it.

Sometimes it is tremendously significant to close your eyes and just touch the rock, and feel as if you are blind and you have only hands and you have to use the hands as your eyes. And you will be surprised -- you are in for a surprise. For the first time you will see that the

texture has its own dimension.

Because she had no eyes and no ears, her sense of smell was just at the optimum. She could feel the perfume of things, of people. She could discriminate between one tree and another tree just by the fragrance of it. She could even distinguish persons just by their smell.

Now she is as aesthetic as any Picasso, Dali, Van Gogh -- or even more so.

Nirgun, the aesthetic garbage is certainly there, because whatsoever man creates in his unconsciousness is bound to be garbage. The paintings of Picasso represent the mind of Picasso. Now this man seems to be insane somewhere deep down. In fact, his paintings are a way to remain sane; his paintings are cathartic. What you do in your Dynamic Meditation he is doing through his paintings: throwing out tensions, nightmares, all the ugliness that is in the mind. It has to be thrown out of the system, and it can be done through painting very easily.

Carl Gustav Jung used to tell his patients to paint. And many insane people have painted really beautiful paintings. But, certainly, those paintings *are* insane! How can an insane person paint a sane painting? It may have a certain beauty of its own -- the beauty of insanity -- it may have a certain proportion, a certain arrangement of colors, or it may even have a certain vision, but something of his insanity is bound to be lurking there around it. And Jung became aware, slowly slowly, that through painting insane people can be helped tremendously -- painting can become a therapy. And, certainly, he is right. If you can paint your nightmares, you will be getting free from them. It is an expression! Expression always brings freedom. Repression brings bondage, expression brings freedom. And this is one of the beautiful ways to express, to paint.

If you are afraid of death, tortured by the idea of death, if you have nightmares about death, and you can paint many paintings of death, you will get rid of those ideas. You have brought them to the conscious from the unconscious. Anything that is brought to the conscious from the unconscious, you become free of it.

But humanity has been doing just the opposite. We have been told for centuries to throw things from the conscious to the unconscious -- that's what repression is. Yes, in a way, you appear to have got free of them, but not really. In fact, they have gone deeper in you, they have sunk deeper in you. They will trouble you even more. Now they will control you from the unconscious and you will not even be aware of them.

The whole approach of psychoanalysis is against repression: bring all that is repressed in the unconscious to the conscious. It can be done in many ways. Psychoanalysis is the longest route; it takes three years, six years, even ten. Then too the analysis is never complete. There is not a single person in the whole world whose psychoanalysis is complete and finished.

It cannot be finished, because the process is slow. Twice a week or thrice a week you see your psychoanalyst; lying on the psychoanalyst's couch you throw out your garbage for one hour. He listens patiently -- at least he pretends that he is listening patiently. And because he is listening you go on bringing it out. He gives you encouragement, so you go on digging deeper and deeper, and you bring things from the unconscious to the conscious. His presence, his expertise, his name, his authority, make you courageous. You are not afraid of bringing things up which would scare you if you brought them up when you were alone -- because you would see yourself on the verge of going mad. But his authority and his presence...and that may be only in your belief, because he himself may be more insane than you are. But you can have just the belief that he knows that he will be able to help, that he is there, so you need not be afraid; you can go and dig deep into your unconscious.

The more you bring to the conscious, the more you are freed -- it is very unburdening. But once, twice or thrice a week you unburden, and the whole week you go on gathering again. The three hours' doing is undone; you remain the same. It becomes a vicious circle. In the society, in the family, you again accumulate repressions, and you go to the analyst and you express those suppressions. A little bit unburdened, you are back in the society -- the same society, the same people. You listen to the same priest, you read the same newspaper, you go to the same political rally. You remain a communist or you remain a Catholic. The same wife, the same husband, the same children, the same people to associate with.... Again repression happens.

This is a very temporary relief.

Many other ways are being found. Painting is one of the ways -- far more significant, because the unconscious knows the language of pictures and not the language of words. The unconscious expresses itself in pictures. That's why in your dreams your unconscious expresses itself more adequately. Hence the psychoanalyst wants to know about your dreams more and more. Dreams are a pictorial, primitive language, unsophisticated, more innocent. And that's exactly what happens when you paint.

Painting is bringing your dreams out into the light -- it can help tremendously. My own feeling is that if Picasso had been prevented from painting he would have gone mad. It was his painting that saved him -- although he was unaware that it was his painting that was saving him. But his painting has the quality of madness in it.

If you look at a Picasso painting and meditate over it you will feel dizzy, you will feel uneasy, you will feel tense, you will not feel relaxed. And if you live in a room where on all the walls are Picasso paintings, there is every danger that you will have nightmares, or you may go mad. Those paintings will provoke your insanity.

So, Nirgun, you can avoid the art galleries, you can bypass Picassos, but you cannot bypass the aesthetic layer of your being. You cannot bypass the aesthetic dimension; otherwise you will remain impoverished, lopsided, something will be missing in you. And I would not like anything to be missing in my sannyasins. They have to be as scientific as possible. I don't mean -- again remember -- that you have to become a physicist or a chemist or a biologist or a physiologist. I don't mean that! When I say you have to be a scientist, I mean you have to be scientific -- it is a metaphor. Always remember: I am talking in metaphors and similes and parables.

You have to be scientific. To approach the world, the objective world, rightly, the only way is science. If the Bible says that the earth is not round but flat, don't believe in it -- be scientific. The earth is round and not flat. The Bible has no right to say anything about something objective. The Bible is a religious book; it has its own dimension. Don't confuse these dimensions.

Because of this confusion there has arisen a great conflict between science and religion. There is no need at all. Science has its own realm, its own territory. First the priests started interfering with science; now, the whole story is again being repeated in the opposite order. Now scientists are trying to interfere in the world of religion.

Don't ask a scientist whether God exists or not -- that is none of his business. What does he know about God? That is not his dimension. And whatsoever he says about God is stupid; whatsoever he says is going to be wrong.

It is like asking a great doctor about poetry -- he may be a great doctor, a great physician, but asking him about poetry just because he is a great physician is foolish. Or asking a great poet about your illness because he is a great poet...you can see the stupidity of it. You will

not go to a great poet to be diagnosed just because he is a great poet. You will go to a doctor -- he may not be a poet at all.

The scientist has no right to say anything about the interiority of humanity -- that is not his world. But now he is interfering. He is doing the same wrong that the priests have been doing for centuries.

Galileo was called by the pope, forced in his old age to apologize because he had said that it is not the sun that goes round the earth, but the earth that goes round the sun. Now, it is against the Bible. The priests were very much annoyed: "How can you deny the Bible? Who are you?" In his old age -- he was seventy, ill, bed-ridden -- he was forced to go to the court, he was forced to kneel down before the pope, and he was asked to apologize.

He must have been a man of humor, he must have had a great sense of humor. He said, "Yes, sir, I apologize. I declare that the Bible is right, that the earth does not go round the sun but the sun goes round the earth. Are you satisfied, sir?"

And they were all happy. They said, "We are satisfied."

And then Galileo laughed. He said, "But whatsoever I say, it makes no difference -- the earth goes round the sun. My statements, what do they mean? What can they do? What can I do? My saying it won't help -- the earth won't listen. But I apologize, I am wrong and the Bible is right. But remember well: the earth goes round the sun -- it has no obligation to fulfill my desire. I would like it to go according to the Bible and according to you, but I am helpless, utterly helpless."

The Bible has many unscientific statements, the Vedas have many unscientific statements. All old scriptures have many unscientific statements, for a certain reason: because in those days there was no science as a separate phenomenon. The religious scripture was the only scripture available. So it used to collect everything; whatever knowledge was available was collected in the scripture. It contains art, it contains mathematics, it contains geography, it contains history, it contains science -- it contains everything that was available. And the knowledge was so small that it could be contained in a single scripture.

But now, centuries have passed, man has grown, has come of age. Now, science has its own world. We should drop all that is scientific from the religious scriptures -- they have nothing to do with it. Neither does science have anything to do with religious scriptures or the religious dimension. But this is how stupid minds go on quarreling.

I would like you to be scientific -- as far as the world is concerned, be scientific. As far as your inner reality is concerned, be religious. And there is a world between the two, the world of in-between, the twilight world, where the objective and the subjective meet. That is the world of aesthetics. About that, be an artist, be a poet, be a musician.

All these dimensions fulfilled and you will become spiritual; all these dimensions enriched will make you the fourth man, the spiritual man. My sannyasins have to be the fourth -- integrated, whole. Nothing has to be bypassed, Nirgun. Everything has to be lived, loved, experienced. Everything has to be absorbed, so that you become as rich as it is possible to become.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WILL YOU SAY SOMETHING MORE ABOUT RELAXATION? I AM AWARE OF A

TENSION DEEP AT THE CORE OF ME AND SUSPECT THAT I HAVE PROBABLY NEVER BEEN TOTALLY RELAXED.

WHEN YOU SAID THE OTHER DAY THAT TO RELAX IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX PHENOMENA POSSIBLE, I GLIMPSED A RICH TAPESTRY IN WHICH THE THREADS OF RELAXATION AND LET-GO WERE DEEPLY INTERWOVEN WITH TRUST, AND THEN LOVE CAME INTO IT, AND ACCEPTANCE, GOING WITH THE FLOW, UNION AND ECSTASY....

Anurag, total relaxation is the ultimate. That's the moment when one becomes a buddha. That is the moment of realization, enlightenment, christ-consciousness. You cannot be totally relaxed right now. At the innermost core a tension will persist.

But start relaxing. Start from the circumference -- that's where we are, and we can start only from where we are. Relax the circumference of your being -- relax your body, relax your behavior, relax your acts. Walk in a relaxed way, eat in a relaxed way, talk, listen in a relaxed way. Slow down every process. Don't be in a hurry and don't be in haste. Move as if all eternity is available to you -- in fact, it *is* available to you. We are here from the beginning and we are going to be here to the very end, if there is a beginning and there is an end. In fact, there is no beginning and no end. We have always been here and we will be here always. Forms go on changing, but not the substance; garments go on changing, but not the soul.

Tension means hurry, fear, doubt. Tension means a constant effort to protect, to be secure, to be safe. Tension means preparing for the tomorrow now, or for the afterlife -- afraid tomorrow you will not be able to face the reality, so be prepared. Tension means the past that you have not lived really but only somehow bypassed; it hangs, it is a hangover, it surrounds you.

Remember one very fundamental thing about life: any experience that has not been lived will hang around you, will persist: "Finish me! Live me! Complete me!" There is an intrinsic quality in every experience that it tends and wants to be finished, completed. Once completed, it evaporates; incomplete, it persists, it tortures you, it haunts you, it attracts your attention. It says, "What are you going to do about me? I am still incomplete -- fulfill me!"

Your whole past hangs around you with nothing completed -- because nothing has been lived really, everything somehow bypassed, partially lived, only so-so, in a lukewarm way. There has been no intensity, no passion. You have been moving like a somnambulist, a sleepwalker. So that past hangs, and the future creates fear. And between the past and the future is crushed your present, the only reality.

You will have to relax from the circumference. The first step in relaxing is the body. Remember as many times as possible to look in the body, whether you are carrying some tension in the body somewhere -- at the neck, in the head, in the legs. Relax it consciously. Just go to that part of the body, and persuade that part, say to it lovingly "Relax!"

And you will be surprised that if you approach any part of your body, it listens, it follows you -- it is *your* body! With closed eyes, go inside the body from the toe to the head searching for any place where there is a tension. And then talk to that part as you talk to a friend; let there be a dialogue between you and your body. Tell it to relax, and tell it, "There is nothing to fear. Don't be afraid. I am here to take care -- you can relax." Slowly slowly, you will learn the knack of it. Then the body becomes relaxed.

Then take another step, a little deeper; tell the mind to relax. And if the body listens, mind also listens, but you cannot start with the mind -- you have to start from the beginning. You cannot start from the middle. Many people start with the mind and they fail; they fail because

they start from a wrong place. Everything should be done in the right order.

If you become capable of relaxing the body voluntarily, then you will be able to help your mind relax voluntarily. Mind is a more complex phenomenon. Once you have become confident that the body listens to you, you will have a new trust in yourself. Now even the mind can listen to you. It will take a little longer with the mind, but it happens.

When the mind is relaxed, then start relaxing your heart, the world of your feelings, emotions -- which is even more complex, more subtle. But now you will be moving with trust, with great trust in yourself. Now you will know it is possible. If it is possible with the body and possible with the mind, it is possible with the heart too. And then only, when you have gone through these three steps, can you take the fourth. Now you can go to the innermost core of your being, which is beyond body, mind, heart: the very center of your existence. And you will be able to relax it too.

And that relaxation certainly brings the greatest joy possible, the ultimate in ecstasy, acceptance. You will be full of bliss and rejoicing. Your life will have the quality of dance to it.

The whole of existence is dancing, except man. The whole of existence is in a very relaxed movement; movement there is, certainly, but it is utterly relaxed. Trees are growing and birds are chirping and rivers are flowing, stars are moving: everything is going in a very relaxed way. No hurry, no haste, no worry, and no waste. Except man. Man has fallen a victim of his mind.

Man can rise above gods and fall below animals. Man has a great spectrum. From the lowest to the highest, man is a ladder.

Anurag, start from the body, and then go, slowly slowly, deeper. And don't start with anything else unless you have first solved the primary. If your body is tense, don't start with the mind. Wait. Work on the body. And just small things are of immense help.

You walk at a certain pace; that has become habitual, automatic. Now try to walk slowly. Buddha used to say to his disciples, "Walk very slowly, and take each step very consciously." If you take each step very consciously, you are bound to walk slowly. If you are running, hurrying, you will forget to remember. Hence Buddha walks very slowly.

Just try walking very slowly, and you will be surprised -- a new quality of awareness starts happening in the body. Eat slowly, and you will be surprised -- there is great relaxation. Do everything slowly...just to change the old pattern, just to come out of old habits.

First the body has to become utterly relaxed, like a small child, then only start with the mind. Move scientifically: first the simplest, then the complex, then the more complex. And then only can you relax at the ultimate core.

You ask me, Anurag, "Will you say something more about relaxation? I am aware of a tension deep in the core of me and suspect that I have probably never been totally relaxed."

That is the situation of every human being. It is good that you are aware -- millions are unaware of it. You are blessed that you are aware, because if you are aware then something can be done. If you are not aware, then nothing is possible. Awareness is the beginning of transformation.

And you say, "When you said the other day that to relax is one of the most complex phenomena possible, I glimpsed a rich tapestry in which the threads of relaxation and let-go were deeply interwoven with trust, and then love came into it, and acceptance, going with the flow, union and ecstasy...."

Yes, Anurag, relaxation is one of the most complex phenomena -- very rich, multidimensional. All these things are part of it: let-go, trust, surrender, love, acceptance,

going with the flow, union with existence, egolessness, ecstasy. All these are part of it, and all these start happening if you learn the ways of relaxation.

Your so-called religions have made you very tense, because they have created guilt in you. My effort here is to help you get rid of all guilt and all fear. I would like to tell you: there is no hell and no heaven. So don't be afraid of hell and don't be greedy for heaven. All that exists is *this* moment. You can make this moment a hell or a heaven -- that certainly is possible -- but there is no heaven or hell somewhere else. Hell is when you are all tense, and heaven is when you are all relaxed. Total relaxation is paradise.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
EVERY TIME YOU HAVE SPOKEN ON A MASTER, I HAVE FELT YOU TO BE IN LOVE WITH THAT MASTER AND YOU FLOWING THROUGH HIS SUTRAS. IN THIS SERIES THOUGH, I FEEL YOU STANDING APART FROM THE BUDDHA AND NOT REALLY IN LOVE WITH HIS WORK.
IS SOMETHING CHANGING OR AM I IMAGINING THINGS?

Nishant, you are not imagining things. With me, you will have to be always on the move -- things will be changing. As you grow up I will be telling you things which I could not tell you before. It is not that my love for Buddha is less -- my love cannot be less or more; my love is just love, it is a quality, it has no quantitative dimension to it. It can never be less or more -- it simply is.

I love Buddha, I love Jesus, I love Zarathustra, I love Lao Tzu, I love Patanjali -- BECAUSE I love...because I love you, because I love the trees, because I love the birds. My love is not less.

And you are perfectly right that I am standing apart -- I will be standing apart more and more in the future. I am preparing for the new phase. The work has to take a quantum leap, and much preparation is needed. The work has to take on a totally different quality now. Now I have people with me of great trust, of love, people who are committed and surrendered.

In the beginning I was talking to the masses. It was a totally different kind of work: I was in search of disciples. Talking to the masses I was using their language; talking to the masses was talking to a primary class. You can't go very deep; you have to talk superficially. You have to look to whom you are talking.

Then, slowly slowly, a few people started turning from students to disciples. Then my approach changed. It was now possible to communicate on higher levels. Then disciples started changing into sannyasins -- they started becoming committed, they started becoming involved with me, with my destiny. My life became their life, my being became their being. Now communication took a jump: it became communion.

Now I have got enough sannyasins...the work will have to move deeper.

I was talking about Buddha before, and I was talking as if I was simply allowing him to flow through me. Now this is not going to be the case. This series is the beginning of a new phase.

Nishant, you have suspected rightly. Now I will have to make it clear what the points are in which I differ from Buddha, from Jesus, from Krishna. I have to make it very clear where I differ from them.

Twenty-five centuries have passed since Buddha. Much has happened since then -- much

water has flowed down the Ganges. *Everything* has changed! If Buddha comes into the world he will not be able to recognize that it is the same world that he had left.

I belong to *this* century. In these twenty-five centuries many new things have been added. For example, Buddha knew nothing about science -- he could not. I am not saying that he should have known -- he could not! It was impossible. Albert Einstein had not happened yet. Buddha was not aware of many things of which we are aware, I am aware. I have to incorporate all those things. Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx and Albert Einstein and many more have to be incorporated. Religion has to become more and more rich every day.

I will have to make it clear where I differ. I will have to make clear what MORE I am trying to add to the religious heritage. I will not be just a vehicle anymore. That phase is complete. It was needed up to now, because I wanted...the people who loved Buddha, I wanted to approach them; the people who loved Mahavira, I wanted to approach them; the people who loved Jesus, I wanted to approach them.

Humanity is divided: a few are with Jesus, a few are with Buddha, a few are with Krishna...and so on and so forth. There are no free human beings available. I had to pick and choose from different sects, from different communities, from different religions. The only way was: to speak the way Buddha spoke, then only would a few Buddhists become involved with me; otherwise it would have been impossible for them, they would not have understood me. Now they have become involved with me it is going to be a totally different matter. Now their love has arisen for me, it is easy for me to say where I differ from Buddha and they will be able to understand. It won't create any trouble for them, it will not be confusing to them.

But remember, my love is not less because I am standing apart: my love is the same. My love is not going to change; it is not something that can change. But more and more it will happen: I will stand apart and separate.

Now I have got my own people. And I have to make it very clear where I differ, where I am trying to give something new, something more; where I am trying to enrich the heritage, where I am contributing. And sometimes I will have to criticize too -- but I love so much that I can criticize.

Sometimes I am going to criticize Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus. Not that I don't love them -- I love them, otherwise why should I speak on them? Even if I criticize them, that means my love is so much that I will take even that trouble, to criticize them.

Buddha has given much to humanity, but humanity is an on-going process. And everything that happens to humanity brings its advantages and also brings its disadvantages.

In this world, nothing can remain absolutely pure. When it rains the water is pure. The moment it touches the earth...in fact even before that: the moment it enters into the atmosphere, the polluted air starts contaminating it. The earth is surrounded by a thick layer of air; when the water enters into this layer of air, it starts becoming polluted. And when it falls on the earth it becomes muddy, it becomes dirty. Still it is water, but it is no longer pure.

That's what happens to every truth. When Buddha uttered something, it was absolutely pure. The moment it was heard by people it became impure. When it was recorded -- and remember it was recorded after many years, after three hundred years...now can you imagine that people can record after three hundred years exactly the same thing that Buddha said? It is impossible! People *are* people; they will automatically destroy it, distort it -- they will give their own colors to it.

The day Buddha died, his followers were divided into thirty-six schools -- immediately! Thirty-six interpretations. Nobody was agreeing on what he said, or even if they were agreeing about the words, they were not agreeing about the meaning that was given to the

words.

I am reminded:

In the last year of his life, Sigmund Freud called all his disciples -- the important ones, the chief ones. He was feeling death coming close by, he must have heard the first steps of death, and he wanted to have a last gathering.

They were sitting at the table, nearabout thirty people from all over the world -- all the chief disciples -- and they started arguing about something that Freud had said a few days before. Freud was there! He was the host, but they completely forgot about Freud. They became so involved in the argument: somebody was saying one thing, and somebody else was saying something else, and somebody else was contradicting both. And they were arguing about what Freud really meant.... And Freud watched, listened, and then shouted, "Stop all this nonsense! Do you think I am dead? I am here, present -- why don't you ask me what my meaning was? And if you can do this to me while I am alive, what are you going to do when I am dead? You don't bother to ask me, and you have wasted one hour in arguing with each other, fighting, getting irritated, annoyed, shouting at each other...and the master is present!"

And Freud is not an enlightened man. If this can happen to an unenlightened person, what about the Buddha who speaks from the highest peaks of existence? The moment he utters something, it is no longer the same as it was in his heart. When it is heard, it is no longer the same as it was uttered. When it is interpreted, it is totally something else.

Many times I will criticize. Many times I will tell you about all the advantages and all the disadvantages that have happened. Buddha is the purest religious dimension, the purest possible, but how can I avoid saying that he is a one-dimensional man? If I don't say it, it will be untrue. If I don't say it, my love for truth is not total then. I have to say it, that he is one-dimensional -- the purest in his dimension, but he lacks the other dimensions.

He has no appreciation of beauty, not at all. He has no appreciation of music, not at all. He has no appreciation of love, not at all. The aesthetic dimension is missing, he has bypassed it. And he has no scientific approach; he cannot have -- science was not yet developed enough. He is one-dimensional purity, but one-dimensional.

And because he is one-dimensional, this whole country has remained one-dimensional. Buddha is one-dimensional, Mahavira is one-dimensional, Patanjali is one-dimensional. All the great religious masters of this country were religious people. They reached to the purest religious experience, and they tried to convert the whole country to their vision. But the disadvantage was that the country became poor. Without science no country can ever become rich. The country became outwardly ugly, starving, ill. Without science and technology, no country can be outwardly beautiful, healthy, affluent.

Now, I cannot avoid mentioning it -- that will not be true, and that will not be right either. That will be deceiving you! That will be a crime against humanity. It is time that somebody should have the guts to say it! Nobody in the whole world is doing it, and the time is ripe that somebody should shout and say that Buddha, Mahavira, Patanjali, Lao Tzu, are immensely beautiful people, and they have contributed much -- humanity would not have been what it is without them -- they are our very soul, that is absolutely true, but there is a disadvantage because they are all one-dimensional. Other dimensions have remained paralyzed, crippled. And now the time has come: other dimensions have to be fulfilled too.

I would like this country to become rich, scientific, technological, healthy, well nourished

-- not only this country but the whole of humanity. And I don't see that it is against religion. On the contrary: the more rich a country is, the more religious it can become -- because richness gives you opportunity, richness gives you facility, richness gives you time and space and energy, to move inwards. If you don't move, that's your responsibility. Nothing is wrong in being rich. If a rich person is not religious, he is simply mediocre, stupid; it is nothing against richness: it is simply an indication that he is foolish.

If a rich person is not religious, I call him stupid; and if a poor person is religious, I call him intelligent, really intelligent. Rare intelligence is needed for the poor man to become religious. When a Kabir becomes religious he shows more intelligence than Buddha himself -- because it is impossible, almost impossible to become religious when you are poor. When you have not known what riches are, how can you get beyond them? One can go beyond a certain thing only when it has been experienced; it is only through experience that one surpasses and transcends. If somebody transcends without experiencing something, that simply means that he has such intelligence that he learns from others' experiences; he need not go into all those things on his own.

Kabir must have looked at the rich people and seen the futility of it all. Hence he dropped that ambition, that desire. Buddha was the son of a king; he lived richly, and through experience he came to understand that all is futile and all is vanity. He came through his own experience: Kabir came by watching others' experiences. Certainly, Kabir needs more intelligence.

Poor persons can become religious, but poor societies cannot become religious. Rich persons may avoid religion, but rich societies cannot avoid religion.

Now, this new dimension has to be added. Religion need not worship poverty. Religion need not console poor people by saying false things to them, by consoling them, by giving them invented theories of past lives and future lives and fate, etcetera. The whole earth is now capable of becoming affluent. Science has released so much power -- but it has to be used rightly!

Hence I am not in favor of the Western approach. The West is missing the soul, the very soul -- it is only a body. And the danger is that the stupid politicians in the East are going to imitate the West.

Now, every country wants to create atomic energy -- even India. Poor countries like India or Pakistan, they want to create atomic bombs. Why? People are poor and starving.

Just a few days ago, India launched a satellite, Bhaskar, into the sky, to study.... Industries don't have electricity; five days in a week, industries are being closed. You don't have electricity, but you launch a satellite to study the possibilities of the sky -- competition, foolish competition.

Now there are five hundred man-made satellites going round the earth. One of them, the American Skylab, is going to fall because it has gone out of control. It can create great danger. Poona is on its way; from Bombay to Poona, and from Poona up to Kannada, somewhere it will fall. And it will not fall in one piece in one place -- at least five hundred pieces, and each piece will be like a bomb. It can fall on an atomic generator and can destroy the whole earth.

And all those five hundred satellites, sooner or later, are going to go out of control. If the American satellite can go out of control, what about the Indian? Just two years ago, India launched its first satellite. Now it is functioning almost like an Indian -- the name of the satellite was Aryabhata -- now it goes on giving wrong information. It is a nuisance! You cannot believe it. In the beginning they used to believe it, but then they found that it was

giving absolutely wrong information. How like the Indian mind! How representative! Now they want to get rid of it, they want it to shut up, but it won't...it continues to send information. You cannot shut it up.

Poor countries imitating the West -- the whole thing is so foolish. The poor countries certainly need more scientific understanding, but they don't need sophisticated scientific instruments -- that is not their need.

And now science has released enough energy for the whole earth to be transformed into a paradise.

Buddha has contributed immensely, but as a side effect he has been one of the causes of India's poverty. I cannot ignore that fact. I have to state it. I have not stated it up to now, but now I have my own people who will understand.

Mahavira has contributed tremendously to India's spiritual enrichment, but the by-product of his teachings has been slavery for one thousand years; because of his teaching of nonviolence, India became one of the most cowardly countries in the world.

Now, Krishna is right in saying to leave everything to God -- in the religious dimension that's how things should be: trust God. But not in the scientific dimension -- there is a totally different mechanism that functions: doubt, not trust. Trust is the foundation of the religious world, doubt the foundation of the scientific world.

Krishna is perfectly right when he says to Arjuna, "Trust God! Surrender to God. Trust that whatsoever he is doing is right." Now, what has been the side effect? The side effect has been: "If you are poor, trust God; if you are ill, trust God. Whatsoever he is doing is right." This is the side effect. In the religious dimension it is perfectly right, but when you bring it to the scientific dimension it becomes absolutely wrong.

Now I have to say it. And I know I am going to suffer much because of these statements, because in India people are not accustomed to hearing any criticism of Krishna, Mahavira or Buddha -- no, not at all.

First I will make it clear to you where I differ. And soon I will start criticizing the side effects too.

Nishant, wait a little more, because I have to tell you the whole truth -- the whole truth as it is, whatsoever the consequences. I will appreciate whatsoever is worth appreciating and I will condemn whatsoever needs to be condemned.

India's poverty, slavery, long long suffering, cannot simply be tolerated, ignored. And Krishna, Mahavira and Buddha cannot be forgiven -- they are responsible. If they are to be praised for what they have contributed to the spiritual, they have to be criticized too because they have been the root cause of India's fall.

And now the time has come when everything should be put right. And it is not only a question of India: it is a question of the whole world. Just as Indian fools can imitate the West, there are Western fools who can imitate India, and can go on committing the same kind of mistakes that India has committed in the past.

We have to put things absolutely clear. We have to be very very dispassionate. That's why, Nishant, you are feeling there is a certain difference -- there is. You are not imagining things. My work is going into a new phase, I am entering into a new phase. Before the new commune happens, I am preparing for it....

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY AM I TIRED OF SEX?

Sandhan, sex is tiring -- and that's why I say to you: Don't avoid it. Unless you know its stupidity you will not be able to get rid of it. Unless you know its sheer wastage, you will not be able to transcend it.

It is good that you have started feeling tired -- that is natural. Sex simply means energy being dissipated downwards. The energy has to move upwards, then it is nourishing. Then it opens inexhaustible treasures in you -- *aes dhammo sanantano*. But if you go on and on into sex like a maniac, soon you will find yourself utterly exhausted, wasted.

A newly married couple go to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon. When they arrive, they immediately check into a hotel and are not heard of for three days, no room service or anything. After a while the manager gets a bit worried, so he decides to check up on them.

He knocks on the door, hears a little scurrying in the room, and then a pale-looking man opens the door with just his shorts on. "We were worried," said the manager.

"Well, we just got married," replied the man.

"I understand," says the manager, "but you have one of the great wonders of the world...."

At that a tiny voice from the back of the room interrupts, "If you show that thing to me one more time, I will jump out of the window."

You don't get it! ...Three days continuously -- the woman is bound to jump out of the window.

Man can go on living stupidly only to a certain extent -- beyond that he has to become aware of what he is doing to himself. Sandhan, it is time now. There are far more important things in life than sex. Sex is not all. It is significant, but not all. If you remain trapped in it you will miss all the glories of life.

And I am not against sex, remember. That's why my teaching becomes a little contradictory. I am a paradox. I cannot help it because truth itself is a paradox. I am not against sex, because those who are against sex, they will always remain sexual. I am for sex, because if you go deep into it you will come out of it soon. The more consciously you go into it, the sooner you will come out of it. And the day when a person comes out of sex totally is a day of great blessing.

It is good that you are feeling tired. Now don't go to a physician for some medicine -- that won't help, or that may only postpone your tiredness a little bit more. If you are feeling tired that simply shows that you have come to the point from where you can jump out of it.

What is the point of remaining in it if you are feeling tired? Get out of it! And I am not saying repress it. When you are feeling much energy for it and you try to get out, there will be repression. But when you are exhausted and tired and you see the futility of it, you can come out of it without repression. And to come out of sex without repression is to be free of it.

Freedom from sex is a great experience. Freedom from sex makes your energies available for meditation, for samadhi.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #9

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AS THE FLETCHER WHITTLES
AND MAKES STRAIGHT HIS ARROWS,
SO THE MASTER DIRECTS
HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS.

LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER,
STRANDED ON THE SHORE,
THOUGHTS THRASH AND QUIVER.
FOR HOW CAN THEY SHAKE OFF DESIRE?

THEY TREMBLE, THEY ARE UNSTEADY,
THEY WANDER AT THEIR WILL.
IT IS GOOD TO CONTROL THEM.
AND TO MASTER THEM BRINGS HAPPINESS.

BUT HOW SUBTLE THEY ARE,
HOW ELUSIVE!
THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM,
AND BY RULING THEM TO FIND HAPPINESS.

WITH SINGLEMINDEDNESS
THE MASTER QUELLS HIS THOUGHTS.
HE ENDS THEIR WANDERING.
SEATED IN THE CAVE OF THE HEART,
HE FINDS FREEDOM.

Freedom is the goal of life. Without freedom, life has no meaning at all. By "freedom" is not meant any political, social or economic freedom. By "freedom" is meant freedom from time, freedom from mind, freedom from desire. The moment mind is no more, you are one with the universe, you are as vast as the universe itself.

It is the mind that is the barrier between you and the reality, and because of this barrier

you remain confined in a dark cell where no light ever reaches and where no joy can ever penetrate. You live in misery because you are not meant to live in such a small, confined space. Your being wants to expand to the very ultimate source of existence. Your being longs to be oceanic, and you have become a dewdrop. How can you be happy? How can you be blissful? Man lives in misery because man lives imprisoned.

And Gautama the Buddha says that *tanha* -- desire -- is the root cause of all our misery, because desire creates the mind. Desire means creating future, projecting yourself in the future, bringing tomorrow in. Bring the tomorrow in and the today disappears, you cannot see it anymore; your eyes are clouded by the tomorrow. Bring the tomorrow in and you will have to carry the load of all your yesterdays, because the tomorrow can only be there if the yesterdays go on nourishing it.

Each desire is born out of the past and each desire is projected in the future. The past and the future, they constitute your whole mind. Analyze the mind, dissect it, and you will find only two things: the past and the future. You will not find even an iota of the present, not even a single atom. And the present is the only reality, the only existence, the only dance there is.

The present can be found only when mind has ceased utterly. When the past no more overpowers you and the future no more possesses you, when you are disconnected from the memories and the imaginations, in that moment where are you? who are you? In that moment you are a nobody. And nobody can hurt you when you are a nobody, you cannot be wounded -- because the ego is very ready to receive wounds. The ego is almost seeking and searching to be wounded; it exists through wounds. Its whole existence depends on misery, pain.

When you are a nobody, anguish is impossible, anxiety simply unbelievable. When you are a nobody there is great silence, stillness, no noise inside. Past gone, future disappeared, what is there to create noise? And the silence that is heard is celestial, is sacred. For the first time, in those spaces of no-mind, you become aware of the eternal celebration that goes on and on. That's what the existence is made of.

Except man, the whole existence is blissful. Only man has fallen out of it, has gone astray. Only man can do it because only man has consciousness.

Now, consciousness has two possibilities: either it can become a bright light in you, so bright that even the sun will look pale compared to it... Buddha says it is as if a thousand suns have risen suddenly -- when you look within with no mind it is all light, eternal light. It is all joy, pure, uncontaminated, unpolluted. It is simple bliss, innocent. It is wonder. Its majesty is indescribable, its beauty inexpressible, and its benediction inexhaustible. *Aes dhammo sanantano*: so is the ultimate law.

If you can only put your mind aside you will become aware of the cosmic play. Then you are only energy, and the energy is always herenow, it never leaves the herenow. That is one possibility: if you become pure consciousness.

The other possibility is: you can become self-consciousness. Then you fall. Then you become a separate entity from the world. Then you become an island, defined, well defined. Then you are confined, because all definitions confine. Then you are in a prison cell, and the prison cell is dark, utterly dark. There is no light, no possibility of light. And the prison cell cripples you, paralyzes you.

Self-consciousness becomes a bondage; the self is the bondage. And just consciousness becomes freedom.

Drop the self and be conscious! That is the whole message -- the message of all the buddhas of all the ages, past, present, future. The essential core of the message is very

simple: drop the self, the ego, the mind, and be.

Just this moment when this silence pervades...who are you? A nobody, a nonentity. You don't have a name, you don't have a form. You are neither man nor woman, neither Hindu nor Mohammedan. You don't belong to any country, to any nation, to any race. You are not the body and you are not the mind.

Then what are you? In this silence, what is your taste? How does it taste to be? Just a peace, just a silence...and out of that peace and silence a great joy starts surfacing, welling up, for no reason at all. It is your spontaneous nature.

The art of putting the mind aside is the whole secret of religion, because as you put the mind aside your being explodes into a thousand and one colors. You become a rainbow, a lotus, a one-thousand-petaled lotus. Suddenly you open up, and then the whole beauty of existence -- which is infinite! -- is yours. Then all the stars in the sky are within you. Then even the sky is not your limit; you don't have any limits anymore.

Silence gives you a chance to melt, merge, disappear, evaporate. And when you are not, you are -- for the first time you are. When you are not, God is, nirvana is, enlightenment is. When you are not, all is found -- and when you are, all is lost.

Man has become a self-consciousness; that is his going astray, that is the original fall. All the religions talk about the original fall in some way or other, but the best story is contained in Christianity. The original fall is because man eats from the tree of knowledge. When you eat of the tree of knowledge, the fruits of knowledge, it creates self-consciousness.

The more knowledgeable you are, the more egoistic you are -- hence the ego of the scholars, pundits, *maulvis*. The ego becomes decorated with great knowledge, scriptures, systems of thought. But they don't make you innocent; they don't bring you the childlike quality of openness, of trust, of love, of playfulness. Trust, love, playfulness, wonder, all disappear when you become very knowledgeable.

And we are being taught to become knowledgeable. We are not taught to be innocent, we are not taught how to feel the wonder of existence. We are told the names of the flowers, but we are not taught how to dance around the flowers. We are told the names of the mountains, but we are not taught how to commune with the mountains, how to commune with the stars, how to commune with the trees, how to be in tune with existence.

Out of tune, how can you be happy? Out of tune you are bound to remain in anguish, in great misery, in pain. You can be happy only when you are dancing with the dance of the whole, when you are just a part of the dance, when you are just a part of this great orchestra, when you are not singing your song separately. Only then, in that melting, is man free.

That's what freedom is. It is not political, not economic, not social. Freedom is spiritual. The social, the economic, and the political freedom are freedoms only if they help people to be spiritually free. If they don't help people to become spiritually free, then they are pretenders. Then in the name of freedom man is made more and more a slave. Beautiful names become facades hiding ugly realities. If you are not spiritually free you are not free at all. Then all your freedoms are bogus, phony, pseudo. Then you have been duped. Then you have been given toys to play with.

Buddha is talking about the reality -- the real freedom. He calls it nirvana. The word 'nirvana' is very beautiful; it means cessation of self-consciousness, utter cessation of the self, the naked state of egolessness. It brings great ecstasies, great harvest; inexhaustible treasures it brings.

Hence Buddha goes on repeating again and again...two statements he repeats in THE DHAMMAPADA. One is: *aes dhammo sanantano*. This is the ultimate law of life: that you

disappear and you will find yourself. Very paradoxical -- that just by disappearing one finds. By dropping the self one becomes the ultimate self. By disappearing as a dewdrop one becomes the ocean.

And the other statement that he repeats again and again is: *aes dhammo visuddhya* -- such is the law of purity, of becoming innocent, pure. What is the law of purity? A simple law: become disidentified with the mind, don't think of yourself as a mind. Not that Buddha is against the mind, not that he does not want you to use it -- he wants you to use it, but not to be used by it. And usually the second is the case: the mind is using you. You have become a slave. The master has become the slave and the slave has become the master. Everything has gone topsy-turvy.

You are standing on your head! Now how can you walk, how can you move, how can you dance? Have you seen anybody dancing standing on his head? Your life will not be a life of movement anymore if you are standing on your head. Your life will be stagnant, it will become a dirty pool of water. You will start stinking soon. Standing on your head you are crippled, paralyzed.

If you just stand on your legs again -- a small change, a very small change, but it brings a radical revolution -- immediately you are capable of movement, and movement is life. Not to move is to die.

How do you define death? When a person cannot move in any possible way. He cannot breathe -- that is one kind of movement; he cannot see -- that is another kind of movement; he cannot walk, he cannot talk -- these are all kinds of movement, different dimensions of movement. Because all movement has ceased we say the man is dead.

The more movement you have, the more life, the livelier you are. Have multidimensional movement! But that is possible only if you stop standing on your head. You have to be put right.

The day you come to me you come in a topsy-turvy state. Initiation into sannyas means nothing except that I persuade you to stand on your feet and not to go on doing this *shirshasana* -- headstand -- your whole life.

Be natural, be part of nature. Don't brag. Don't go on puffing up your egos. We are tiny parts -- immensely beautiful if we function with the whole, but absolutely ugly if we function against it.

But you have been told by your societies to fight, to struggle, because life is a struggle for survival, because if you don't fight you will be defeated. And you have to be victorious, and you have to be famous. You have been given great ambitions and all those ambitions have become chains, all those ambitions are keeping you tethered. All those ambitions are the root cause of your mind; they create the mind.

Buddha's word 'tanha' contains all the meanings of desire, ambition, achievement. These are the nourishments of the mind. If you go on nourishing the mind you are poisoning yourself. And the mind will become bigger and bigger and you will become smaller and smaller. The mind becomes almost a cancerous growth.

Sannyas means an operation. Buddha transformed thousands of people through sannyas, through initiation. He was a great surgeon.

And once you become aware that you are the cause of your own misery, things start changing. You no longer help your own misery, you no longer feed it. And once you become aware that you are not your mind but a witness to it, you start rising above the mind, you are no longer tethered. You start growing wings, you start soaring higher and higher. Mind remains always groping in the dark valleys of life, but you can become an eagle, you can soar

high. You can be the master and then you can use the mind -- and very purposely it can be used.

These sutras are how to become the master of your mind. They contain the science of becoming the master.

The Buddha says:

AS THE FLETCHER WHITTLES
AND MAKES STRAIGHT HIS ARROWS,
SO THE MASTER DIRECTS
HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS.

Now meditate: are your thoughts directing you, or do you direct your thoughts? -- because much depends on that insight. Are you being dominated by your thoughts? Do they go on driving you hither and thither? Do they suggest to you, do they fascinate you, do they obsess you? Do they pull your strings and are you simply a slave? Or are *you* the master, and can you say to your thoughts "Stop!" and they have to stop -- can you put them on or off?

People never meditate over it because it makes them feel very humiliated. It shows them their impotence: they cannot even stop thoughts, their own thoughts.

There is a famous Tibetan parable:

A man served a master for many many years. The service was not pure; there was a motivation in it. He wanted some secret from the master. He had heard that the master has the secret -- the secret to do miracles. With this hidden desire he was serving the master day in, day out, but he was afraid to say anything. But the master was continuously watching his motivation.

One day the master asked, "It is better that you please speak your mind, because I am continuously seeing a motive in all your service that you do for me. It is not out of love, certainly not out of love. I don't see any love in it and I don't see any humility in it. It is a kind of bribery. So please, just tell me, what do you want?"

The man was waiting for this opportunity. He said, "I want the secret of doing miracles."

The master said, "Then why did you waste your time so long? You could have said it the very first day you had come. You tortured yourself and you tortured me too, because I don't like people around me who have motives. They are ugly to look at. They are basically greedy, and greed makes them ugly. The secret is simple -- why didn't you ask me the first day? This is the secret..."

He wrote down a small mantra on a piece of paper, just three lines maybe: "*Buddham sharanam gachchhami, sangham sharanam gachchhami, dhammam sharanam gachchhami* -- I go to the feet of the Buddha, I go to the feet of the Buddha's commune, I go to the feet of the dhamma, the ultimate law."

And the master told the man, "You take this small mantra with you, repeat it five times, just five times. It is a simple process. Just remember one condition: while you are repeating it, take a bath, close the door, sit silently -- and while you are repeating it, please don't remember monkeys."

The man said, "What nonsense are you talking about? Why should I remember monkeys in the first place? I have never remembered them my whole life!"

The master said, "That is up to you, but I have to tell you the condition. This is how the mantra was given to me, with this condition. If you have never remembered monkeys, so far so good. Now go home, and please never come back to me. You have the secret, you know

the condition. Fulfill the condition and you will have miraculous powers, and whatsoever you want to do you can do: you can fly in the sky, you can read people's thoughts, you can materialize things, and so on and so forth."

The man rushed home; he even forgot to thank the master. That's how greed functions: it does not know thankfulness, it does not know gratitude. Greed is absolutely unaware of gratitude; it never comes across it. Greed is a thief and thieves don't thank.

The man rushed, but he was very much puzzled: even on the way to his home monkeys started appearing in his head. He saw many kinds of monkeys: small and big, and red-mouthed and black-mouthed, and he was very much puzzled -- "What is happening?" In fact he was not thinking of anything else but the monkeys. And they were becoming bigger and they were crowding all around.

He went home, he took a bath, but the monkeys were not leaving him. Now he was becoming suspicious that they were not going to leave him while he would be chanting the mantra. He had not even chanted the mantra yet, he was simply preparing. And when he closed his doors the room was full of monkeys. It was so crowded that he had no space for himself! He closed his eyes and there were monkeys, and he opened his eyes and there were monkeys. He could not believe what was happening! The whole night he tried. Again and again he would take a bath, and again and again he would try and fail, and fail utterly.

In the morning he went to the master, returned the mantra and said, "Keep this mantra with you. This is driving me mad! I don't want to do any miracles, but please help me to get rid of these monkeys!"

It is so impossible to get rid of a single thought! And if you want to get rid of it, it becomes even more difficult, because when you want to get rid of a thought it is a question -- a very decisive moment -- of who is the master: the mind or you? The mind will try in every possible way to prove that he is the master and not you.

The master has been a slave for centuries, and the slave has been the master for millions of lives. Now the slave cannot leave all his privileges, priorities, so easily. He is going to give you great resistance.

You try it! Today take a bath, close your doors, repeat this simple mantra: *Buddham sharanam gachchhami, sangham sharanam gachchhami, dhammam sharanam gachchhami* -- and don't let the monkeys come to you....

You are laughing at the poor man. You will be surprised: you are that man.

Sigmund Freud used to tell another story:

It happened once in a big hotel that a man came to stay. The manager was a little hesitant in giving him a room although there was an empty room. The man said, "Why are you hesitating so much?"

The man said, "The reason is, just below that room there is a politician staying, a very famous man and very powerful, a big gun. And he is annoyed by small things, so we have kept the room above him empty for three days since he has been here -- because if anybody walks some noise is created, if you move something some noise is created, and he becomes so irritated and so angry that he creates much fuss about it."

The stranger said, "Don't be worried! I will be very careful. Moreover, I am going to stay only overnight. I will be coming nearabout twelve in the night because I have much work to do in the town, and I will be leaving early in the morning, five o'clock. There is not much possibility that between twelve and five I will do anything which will irritate the great man.

At the most I will be asleep and dreaming, and I don't think my dreams will disturb him."

The manager was convinced: "If he is going to stay just for five hours there is no problem." He was allowed.

At twelve the man reached his room exhausted: the whole day's work, a thousand and one things clamoring in his head. He had completely forgotten the politician. He entered his room. He was so tired. He sat on his bed, took off one of his shoes and threw it in the corner of the room. Then suddenly the noise of the shoe reminded him that maybe the politician, the great leader, would get disturbed, may be awakened. So the other shoe he put down very silently.

After one hour the politician knocked on his door. He came out of his sleep, opened the door and said, "Have I done anything? -- because for one hour I have been asleep."

The politician was red with anger. He said; "Yes! Where is the other shoe? I cannot manage to sleep. That other shoe goes on hanging, a continuous question in my mind -- where has the other shoe gone? Is this man sleeping with one shoe on? One I know you have thrown, but what happened to the other one? I have tried in every possible way to get rid of the idea -- that this is not my concern. How am I concerned with his shoe? But the more I have tried to get rid of the idea the more I have become possessed by it. Now there is only one possible way to go to sleep: to come and wake you and ask you what happened. Unless I know I cannot sleep."

It is very difficult even to get rid of an absurd thought, utterly meaningless to you, of no purpose, something which is just accidental, none of your business. But still it can pursue you, it can haunt you, it can torture you. It can become such a powerful thing that it can drive you mad.

People don't look in. They know that it is better not to look in because it is very humiliating. To see oneself as a slave *is* humiliating. And the mind has been on the throne so long, it has become accustomed to being the master. And it is not the master.

You are born as a consciousness, not as a mind. Your innermost core is consciousness, not mind. Mind is nothing but accumulated thoughts, junk of the past. You are totally different from it.

Watching it, slowly slowly you will see the distance. A thought arises in you, watch it. Watch it without any judgment. Don't be for or against, simply look at it, see into it, just like a mirror reflecting it. And one thing will become certain: that it is separate from you. It comes and goes, and you abide forever. The reflection in the mirror is not the mirror. Many reflections come and go, the mirror remains. The mirror is only the capacity of mirroring. A thought is there -- anger, greed, jealousy -- some thought, some kind of thought is there. It is not you!

But our whole training, our whole conditioning, is basically wrong. Our languages are basically wrong because they give us wrong notions. When you see the thought of hunger arise in your mind you immediately say, "I am hungry," which is utter nonsense. You have never been hungry and you cannot be hungry, because consciousness has nothing to do with hunger, food, satiation. What is actually happening is: the body is hungry -- you are *aware* of it. You are simply reflecting the situation of the body.

To be exactly precise you should say, "I am aware that my body is hungry, I am seeing that my body needs food."

But every language says, "I am hungry, I am thirsty." I know it is simpler to say, "I am thirsty," than to say again and again, "I am aware that my body is thirsty."

One of the great Indian mystics visited America -- his name was Swami Ram. He used to speak of himself in the third person, he never used to use the word 'I'. He would only call himself Ram. He would say, "Ram is hungry. Ram is thirsty. Now Ram is feeling sleepy." It is a very strange way because we are not accustomed to it.

When he went to America for the first time, people could not understand him or would understand him only in a wrong way, misunderstand him. He would say, "Ram is hungry." They would look all around -- where is Ram? And then he would show them: "This body is Ram, this body is hungry."

And they would say, "Then why don't you simply say 'I am hungry'? Why go so roundabout, why go in circles? 'Ram is hungry.' Then we have to ask, 'Who is Ram?' Then you have to say, 'This body is Ram.'"

But Ram would say, "I cannot assert something which is not true. I cannot say 'I am hungry' because I am not."

Once it happened that he was sitting in a park, a public park, and a few people who had gathered around him were asking questions. One man asked, "We have heard about Krishna that when he used to play on his flute that people would forget their jobs and just rush towards him enchanted, as if possessed. What was his secret?"

Ram was only wearing one single cloth, he had just wrapped a blanket around himself. He threw the blanket -- rather than answering he created a situation. That's how great mystics work. He threw the blanket, he was utterly naked, and he ran away. All the people ran with him! Not only those who were surrounding him but others also who were standing here and there or who had come for a morning walk, and people who were sitting on the benches reading their newspapers, they threw their newspapers. A great crowd was following him, and he was laughing and giggling, and the whole crowd was following him.

And then he stood under a tree and he said, "Why are you following me? For what? I have not even played on the flute! And you had asked me why people used to become possessed by Krishna's flute."

Wherever something of the beyond happens, people become enchanted. "You are enchanted," he said. "And Ram has not done anything special. Ram has only become naked and has been running like a child in the morning sun."

Somebody who was not acquainted with his way of talking asked, "Who is this Ram?" And again he said, "This body is Ram, this mind is Ram, and I am a watcher just as you are a watcher. Just as you watched this body running naked in the morning sun, I was also watching. You are watching from without, I am watching from within. We are both watchers."

This is the way to become disidentified from the mind: be a watcher.

Buddha says: AS THE FLETCHER WHITTLES AND MAKES STRAIGHT HIS ARROWS, SO THE MASTER DIRECTS HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS. Then it will be possible and only then: when you have become an observer, when you have reduced your thoughts to observed objects, the content of the mind is no longer powerful. You have slipped out of its power, you are standing apart. You are a spectator, a witness. When you have become a witness, you will be able to direct your thoughts. Then thoughts can be used, then thoughts are beautiful.

The mind is the most sophisticated mechanism in the whole of existence, and the human mind more so than any other. It is the most evolved machine, it can be used for great things.

But you have to be the master, only then can you use it.

But the situation is such that the car is driving the driver.

The driver has become completely unaware of himself; maybe he is drunk. He is simply moving wherever the car is leading him. Now he is bound for a ditch, bound for an accident! And if your life is so full of accidents it is not an accident at all -- it has to be so.

You are following a machine. It is a biocomputer, your mind; beautiful if you can use it as a master, dangerous if it uses you. This is slavery. To be free of it is to know something of freedom.

And the first effort should be like the fletcher who makes his arrows straight.

Your minds are not in a state of harmony; your minds are in a mess, nothing is straight there. Everything has become a very complicated labyrinth, a riddle. You don't know what is what and which is which. You don't know what you are doing and why. And one moment one thought possesses you, another moment another thought possesses you, and both may be contradictory. So by one hand you make something and by the other hand you unmake it. Hence the utter failure of life, a sheer wastage of energy and time and opportunity.

Watch how contradictory your thoughts are. One part says yes, another part immediately says no, never misses the opportunity to say no. Now saying yes and no together is wasting your energy. Either say yes and be total, then your thought is straight; or say no and be total, then your thought is straight. But saying yes and no together, or alternately -- one moment yes, another moment no -- where are you going to reach? You take one step in one direction, another step in another direction. You will remain stuck in the same place, or at the most you will move in circles, But your life will not be a life of growth, you will not grow. You may certainly grow old but you will never grow up, you will never attain to maturity.

Straighten out your thoughts! It is almost a complete jungle in your mind -- all paths are lost. You don't know what is happening. You can't stop either, because it makes you frightened to stop. Everybody else is doing so much, everybody else is achieving, reaching, fulfilling their ambitions, how can you stop? You have to go on, and you have to go on with great speed and great gusto and enthusiasm. And you don't know where you are going, what the goal is. What do you really want to achieve in life? Money? And even if you achieve much money what will you do with it?

You can purchase more misery, of course, when you have more money; that's what you are going to do. You will go on purchasing the same things that you are purchasing now. Of course, you can purchase them in bigger quantities, that's all. You will live in bigger houses, but *you* will live; the house is not going to live it. If you are anxious in a small house you may be more anxious in a bigger house, because you will have more space to be anxious in. If you are ignorant, utterly ignorant of yourself, how is money going to help? How is being famous going to help? You may become a world-renowned person, but that will not change anything. Your inner darkness will remain the same; it may even become darker.

The first thing Buddha says is: ...THE MASTER DIRECTS HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS. He does not allow the thoughts to go into contradictory pathways. He does not allow one thought to be destroyed by another. He does not allow thoughts to direct him -- *he* is the director. He masters them; he uses them as beautiful implements, instruments. And then certainly he comes to fulfillment, because he knows where he is going and he knows what he is doing.

On each step of his journey he is perfectly aware of his whereabouts; he has a certain sense of direction. He does not go on running in all the directions simultaneously; he has a direction. Naturally he becomes integrated, he becomes a great power. Without attaining any

political power he becomes a great power. His power arises from his own being, it is his own. Nobody can take it away; it does not depend on anybody. Even death cannot take it away from him, even death is impotent.

But people are living in such an insane state. This state is insane! People feel offended when I say that the whole of humanity is insane, but what can I do? -- it is so. The fact has to be stated, howsoever painful it is. I am also pained by it, I feel sorry for humanity, but it has to be said: that the whole of humanity is mad. What you call normal human beings are not normal at all. They are normally mad, certainly; their madness is almost the same, hence they are normal. But they are not the norm, they are not the principle, they are not the criterion of health. The whole earth is a big madhouse.

Kahlil Gibran has a beautiful story:

One man becomes insane; he is put in an insane asylum. A friend comes to visit him. The friend is a professor, a professor of philosophy, has written many books, is a well-known scholar, is also a psychologist. The madman is sitting on a bench under a tree in the garden, surrounded by a big wall. The professor comes, sits by his side and asks him, "How are you feeling inside this place?"

The madman laughs. He says, "I am feeling so good -- as I have never felt before."

The professor is puzzled. He says, "Why? Why are you feeling so happy being in this madhouse?"

The madman says, "Madhouse? This you call a madhouse? I have left the madhouse outside -- this is the sanest place in the world! The madhouse is outside; this wall protects us from mad people. If ever you become tired of the mad people outside, you are always welcome here. Come in! It is very peaceful here -- nobody interferes in anybody's work. It is very silent here. Very few people are here, and I have never seen such sane people in my whole life -- they are all like me!"

That's his definition of sanity: he is sane and they are like him. The people who are outside are insane.

But the same criterion is followed by the people outside: you think yourself sane because you are exactly like your neighbors. But who knows? -- the neighbors may be insane too.

The whole history of humanity proves that this is an insane humanity; something is basically wrong with it. In three thousand years man has fought five thousand wars. Will you call this humanity sane? Everybody is greedy, jealous, possessive -- and you call this humanity sane? Everybody is at each other's throats -- and you call this humanity sane? Normal of course -- normal in the sense that they are all alike.

Once Mark Twain advertised, as a hoax, that he had lost a cat so black that it could not be seen by ordinary light, and he wanted it back. Nearly a thousand people contacted him claiming to have seen it.

Just look around, just observe people, and you will be surprised seeing the utterly insane state which is known as normal. What is normal? What is the definition of a normal human being?

He should be full of love, he should be full of bliss. He should be fearless. He should be joyous and ecstatic. He should be able to sing and laugh and dance. He should be able to enjoy the small things of life. He should be total in whatsoever he is doing. His thoughts will

be straight: if he says no he means no, if he says yes he means yes. He will not be diplomatic, he will not be political in that he says one thing, he means another, and will do a third thing. You cannot figure it out, you can never be sure what the political person is going to do. He has one face outside and another reality inside. He is double-faced, in a double bind. He smiles at you, he greets you -- and he hates you, he curses you inside. He is an enemy, yet he pretends to be a friend.

This is insanity! This hypocrisy is insanity, this split is insanity. This schizophrenic atmosphere is insane. It is not a healthy human being that we have been able to produce. We have failed up to now...and we have to do something very drastic now, otherwise humanity is doomed. Now the insane people have so much destructive power in their hands that one war more and humanity is finished and this planet is finished.

Something tremendously drastic is needed, a quantum leap is needed. But this is possible only through those people who listen to the buddhas.
...THE MASTER DIRECTS HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS.

LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER,
STRANDED ON THE SHORE,
THOUGHTS THRASH AND QUIVER.
FOR HOW CAN THEY SHAKE OFF DESIRE?

Thoughts cannot live out of desire, just as a fish cannot live out of the sea. Thoughts cannot live out of the sea of desire: thoughts are basically instruments of a desiring state. And we are continuously desiring, desiring this and that. We cannot stop thinking if we go on desiring. First the desire, the very root, has to be cut.

What is there to desire in life? Those who have known, those who have realized life, say there is nothing worth desiring in life. Live it! and live as wholly as possible, and live each moment to its uttermost. Squeeze it totally. But there is nothing to desire. Desire leads you astray because it leads you into the future.

Drink out of the present moment, because the present moment is the door to God. God has only one tense: the present. He knows no past and no future. If you also want to be part of God...and that's the only way to be sane, to be healthy. Only a religious person is sane and healthy. If you want to be part of God, you will have to learn to relax in the present moment.

Die to the past and die to the future, and live in the present. Don't allow yourself to move from the present, not even a single inch here and there; otherwise you will always go on missing the train.

And the mind is continuously running from one object to another, from one person to another. You have a wife, but the mind is running after other people's wives. You have children, but they never look so beautiful as other people's children. The grass is always greener on the other side of the hedge. Everybody else seems to be happier than you.

And then, of course, you logically deduce: "They have bigger houses, better children, a beautiful woman, more money, more power, more prestige, so these are the things I also need. Unless I have all these things, how can I be happy?" You make your happiness conditional. And the moment a man makes his happiness conditional he is doomed; he will remain unhappy his whole life.

Happiness is not conditional; nothing is needed to be happy. Only to be alive is needed -- and that you *are*, you already are. Only to be conscious is needed -- and that you already are. Hence the mystics and the buddhas say that bliss is our very nature. But the mind is a runner

and it keeps dragging you.

The sultan called for his eunuch. "I am in the mood," he said. "Go get me wife number 256."

So the eunuch ran out of the palace and into the harem. He ran through the garden, past the orchard, and up the steps. Soon he returned with wife 256. A bit later the sultan sent for the eunuch again and said, "I want more. Go get me wife 87." The eunuch ran and got her. Then the king wanted wife 68, and soon after, wife 92.

When he returned with wife number 92 the eunuch was panting heavily. Then he suddenly collapsed and died.

Moral: It is not the loving that kills you, it is the running around.

The mind is continuously running around. It never sits, it can't sit. Sitting seems to be death to it, and in a way it is. That's why Zen people say, if you can sit silently for a few hours every day, doing nothing, not even chanting a mantra, because that is again a running of the mind, the same mind.... It can sing pop songs, it can chant a religious mantra, it makes no difference. It wants some work, it wants activity, it wants occupation, it wants to run. Its life is in the running.

The Zen people say just sit, don't do anything. The most difficult thing in the world is just to sit doing nothing. But once you have got the knack of it.... If you go on sitting for a few months doing nothing for a few hours every day, slowly slowly, many things will happen. You will feel sleepy, you will dream. Many thoughts will crowd your mind, many things. The mind will say, "Why are you wasting your time? You could have earned a little money. At least you could have gone to a film, entertained yourself, or you could have relaxed and gossiped. You could have watched the TV or listened to the radio, or at least you could have read the newspaper you have not seen. Why are you wasting your time?"

Mind will give you a thousand and one arguments, but if you just go on listening without being bothered by the mind.... It will do all kinds of tricks: it will hallucinate, it will dream, it will become sleepy. It will do all that is possible to drag you out of just sitting. But if you go on, if you persevere, one day the sun rises.

One day it happens, you are not feeling sleepy, the mind has become tired of you, is fed up with you, has dropped the idea that you can be trapped, is simply finished with you! There is no sleep, no hallucination, no dream, no thought. You are simply sitting there doing nothing...and all is silence and all is peace and all is bliss. You have entered God, you have entered truth.

THEY TREMBLE, THEY ARE UNSTEADY,
THEY WANDER AT THEIR WILL.
IT IS GOOD TO CONTROL THEM.
AND TO MASTER THEM BRINGS HAPPINESS.

Watch, and you will see the trembling mind, the quivering thoughts chasing each other, running in every possible direction, consistent, inconsistent, meaningful, meaningless.

Just one day sit down in your room, close the doors, and start writing the thoughts that are happening to you. That will help you to become aware. Just go on writing whatsoever is happening. Don't edit, don't make them look consistent, beautiful. It is not to be shown to anybody, it is just for your observation. For fifteen minutes go on writing, then read it, and you will be puzzled: are you mad or something? What kind of things are going on in your

head? All kinds of things, so irrelevant that you cannot conceive any possible relationship with them. Anything leads to anything just accidentally.

The dog starts barking in the neighborhood and your mind starts functioning. You remember a dog you used to have in your childhood, and suddenly the mind jumps from the dog to a friend who was also known in the childhood...and from the friend to the school, and the teacher. And this way the mind goes on hopping, and you will land nobody knows where. And it was just started by the barking of the dog who knows nothing about you, who is not interested at all in you, but he triggered a process. You may reach anywhere! And each time it happens you will reach some other place.

Mind goes on jumping from one place to another, and mind has so much information that it can produce all kinds of worlds.

Watching it you will see the truth of Buddha's statement: **THEY TREMBLE, THEY ARE UNSTEADY, THEY WANDER AT THEIR WILL.** They don't listen to you, they have their own will. Each thought has its own will and insists on remaining itself. It does not want to be tinkered with, it does not want you to interfere. If you interfere, it resists, it protests. Every thought wants its own individuality. And these millions of thoughts in your head destroy your individuality, because they all claim their own individuality and they all claim to be autonomous and free. And if you say anything, they ask, "Who are you?" And each time they will show you your place, they will reduce you to nothing.

Unless they are controlled, Buddha says, there is no possibility of bliss happening to you. You will remain in a mess, you will remain a confusion.

Inmate: "I have a mad, insane desire to crush you in my arms."
Lady psychiatrist: "Now you are talking sense!"

It depends on you what you call sense and what you call nonsense. There are philosophers in the world who say all is nonsense, and there are philosophers in the world who say everything is sense, sensible. This is the most rational world, they say, very logical. It all depends on you what you call sense and what you think is sensible. It depends on your training, your upbringing, your conditioning, the way you have been hypnotized.

Now, eating meat is sensible if you have been brought up in a house where nobody ever thought of vegetarianism; even if they talked about it, they talked only to laugh at vegetarians: "These foolish people who think that by becoming vegetarians they are becoming religious." If you are born in a vegetarian house, in a vegetarian family, then the people who eat meat are monsters. They are not people at all; they are untouchable, they are not human beings, they are animals.

You yourself never know what is right, what is wrong; you know only according to what others have said to you. This is not a way which can lead you into sanity. You will have to become more aware, more alert, more watchful. You will have to decide on your own. You have lived a borrowed life. You will have to reflect -- you become a human being only when you start reflecting on things on your own. When you observe accurately, precisely, when you judge, when you value, when you weigh things and you start living according to your own consciousness more and more, you will attain to freedom. And freedom brings bliss.

Freedom means you have to control the mind, your so-called mind, which is not yours at all because it has been given to you by others, in fragments. A part of it belongs to your mother, another part to your father, another part to your uncle, and so on and so forth...to the priest, to the teacher, to the neighborhood boy.... You have gathered fragments from all over

the world -- from the books you have been reading and the films you have been seeing.

If you look into it you will be surprised -- you don't have any mind of your own. Everything is borrowed! How can you be authentic? You are just a piled-up phenomenon, fragments from so many different sources that they can never melt and become one. But one thing is not borrowed in you and that is your consciousness, that is your awareness. That you have brought with you, that is part of your inner core. Depend on it and never depend on the mind. Become independent of the mind and absolutely dependent on consciousness, and you are taking the greatest step of your life.

BUT HOW SUBTLE THEY ARE,
HOW ELUSIVE!
THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM,
AND BY RULING THEM TO FIND HAPPINESS.

It is not going to be an easy job. It is arduous, because the mind is very cunning and thoughts are very subtle.

One soldier is explaining transmigration of souls to another and tells him that if he is killed his body will decay on the battlefield and finally sink into the ground. In the spring a beautiful flower will come up on the spot.

"And that is me, is it?" asks the other soldier.

"No, wait a minute. Then a cow comes along and eats the flower and leaves behind a big pile of cowflop. Then I come strolling through the field with my girl, I see this cowflop and I tap it with my walking-stick and I say, 'Hello, Bill! Why, you ain't changed a bit!'"

Mind is very cunning -- it can always find its ways to remain the same. It can find new ways so that it can remain old. It can find new garments so it can hide behind them; it can find beautiful rationalizations.

Beware! Mind is not a simple phenomenon, it is complex, subtle, very elusive. If you try to catch hold of it you will be in difficulty. If you push it out through the front door, it will come from the back. If you want to control it and repress it, it will start functioning from your unconscious -- which is far more dangerous because it will control you still, although now you will be absolutely unaware of its control. The enemy is no longer visible, that's all, but the enemy is there. And when the enemy is invisible the enemy is more powerful.

...HOW SUBTLE THEY ARE, and HOW ELUSIVE! THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM.... So remember, they are not to be repressed, they are not to be caught. THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM, AND BY RULING THEM TO FIND HAPPINESS.

It is through stilling them that one becomes a ruler, not by ruling them that you quieten them. Remember that process: it looks similar, it is not. It is very very different, diametrically opposite in fact. You have to quieten them first, still them first.

And the way to still them is just to watch silently without judgment, without saying this is good, this is bad. The moment you say good and bad you have jumped into the mire. The mind has already caught you, you are already entrapped.

You simply watch! Your moral teachers don't allow you watching. You sit and just look...a thought of murdering somebody comes. Your mind is enjoying the thought of murdering somebody. This is one part. Another part of the mind says, "This is very bad, this is a sin. You should not even think such a thought, even to think it is a sin." This is another part of the mind. You become identified with the other part, the moral part. You say, "This is

my conscience." It is not your conscience: it has been put into you. It is the society controlling you from within; it is a strategy of the society to control you. You don't know what is right and what is wrong.

Be innocent! Just watch, watch both. One part of the mind is saying, "Murder that man -- he has insulted you!" Another part of the mind is saying, "This is bad, this is immoral. You will fall into hell, you will suffer in your next birth, you will be punished for it." Know well, the second is also mind, and there is no choice between two fragments of the mind. Watch both, enjoy both. See the contradiction of the mind -- don't get identified with any part.

Remember, the ego wants to be identified with the good part, the moral part. It feels beautiful: "I am against murder, look! I am not for it." You are just getting caught by another part of the mind. You are still a slave. Your sinners and your saints, both are slaves.

The really free man is free from both good and bad. He is beyond good and evil. He is just consciousness and nothing else. He simply observes. And if you can just observe without being identified, slowly slowly mind quietens down, and in that quietening is your power. One day when the mind is completely gone, has become totally still, you are the sovereign.

WITH SINGLEMINDEDNESS
THE MASTER QUELLS HIS THOUGHTS.
HE ENDS THEIR WANDERING.
SEATED IN THE CAVE OF THE HEART,
HE FINDS FREEDOM.

And when the mind is no more, where do you go? Suddenly, when the mind is no more, you enter into the heart. You slip out of the mind, out of the grip of the head. And then the heart, the cave of the heart, is your palace. The mind is a by-product of the society: the heart is an extension of God.

This is possible only if you work singlemindedly to still the mind, to be aware of the mind, to be utterly watchful, without any judgment and without any identification.
THE MASTER QUELLS HIS THOUGHTS. HE ENDS THEIR WANDERING. SEATED IN THE CAVE OF THE HEART, HE FINDS FREEDOM.

The head is a slavery, the heart the freedom. The head is a misery, the heart the ultimate bliss.
AES DHAMMO SANANTANO.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Neither this nor that

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND OTHER GODMEN?

Sunil Sethi, I am not a godman, I am simply God -- as you are, as trees are, as birds are, as rocks are. I don't belong to any category. 'Godman' is a category invented by journalists. I simply don't belong to any category. You don't belong to any category either. All categories are false. The deeper you go into yourself, the more and more you will find that you simply are -- neither this nor that. The seers of the Upanishads say: *neti, neti* -- neither this nor that. No category is applicable.

There is a beautiful story about Buddha:

He was sitting under a tree. One astrologer approached him -- he was very puzzled, because he saw the footprints of the Buddha on the wet sand and he could not believe his eyes. All the scriptures that he had been studying his whole life had been telling him about certain signs that exist in the feet of a man who rules the world -- a *chakravartin* -- a ruler of all the six continents, of the whole earth. And he saw in the footprints in the wet sand on the riverbank all the symbols so clearly that he could not believe his eyes! Either all his scriptures were wrong and he was wasting his life in astrology...otherwise, how was it possible on such a hot afternoon, in such a small, dirty village, a chakravartin would come and walk barefoot, on the burning hot sand?

He followed the footprints, just in search of the man to whom these footprints belonged. He found the Buddha sitting under a tree. He was even more puzzled. The face was that of a chakravartin -- the grace, the beauty, the power, the aura -- but the man was a beggar, with a begging bowl!

The astrologer touched the feet of the Buddha and asked him, "Who are you, sir? You have puzzled me. You should be a chakravartin, a world ruler. What are you doing here, sitting under this tree? Either all my astrology books are wrong, or I am hallucinating and you

are not really there."

Buddha said, "Your books are absolutely right -- but there is something which belongs to no category, not even to the category of a chakravartin. I am, but I am nobody in particular."

The astrologer said, "You are puzzling me more. How can you be without being anybody in particular? You must be a god who has come to visit the earth -- I can see it in your eyes!"

Buddha said, "I am not a god."

The astrologer said, "Then you must be a *gandharva* -- a celestial musician."

Buddha said, "No, I am not a *gandharva* either."

And the astrologer went on asking, "Then are you a king in disguise? Who are you? You can't be an animal, you can't be a tree, you can't be a rock -- who exactly are you?"

And the answer the Buddha gave is of immense importance to understand. He said, "I am just a buddha -- I am just awareness, and nothing else. I don't belong to any category. Every category is an identification and I don't have any identity."

Sunil Sethi, exactly the same is my answer: I don't belong to any category, and godman is a category. I am simply awareness. I am simply a watchfulness. And this is not something special; this is part of your innermost core, too. You are as divine as anybody else -- a Buddha, a Krishna, a Christ. You are as divine as anybody else. The highest and the lowest, all are divine, because only God exists.

This is the first thing to be remembered: that I don't belong to any category. Neither do you belong to any category. Are you a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Christian? Are you black or white? These are things which are outside -- you are not these things. Consciousness cannot be black and cannot be white; consciousness can't have any color. Are you rich or poor? Consciousness cannot be rich or poor either. Are you a man or a woman? Consciousness is neither a man nor a woman.

Consciousness is simply consciousness! To realize this is to declare, "*aham brahmasmi!*" -- I am God!" It is not a new category. When somebody declares "I am God!" it is not a new category, it is simply disappearing from all categories. That is exactly the meaning of the word 'God'.

When Mansoor says, "*ana'l haq!*" -- I am the truth!" he is saying the same thing. He is saying, "I am consciousness."

I have no claim to be a godman -- I am not.

The second thing: between me and the so-called godmen there are many differences. The most basic is that I am life-affirmative and they are life-negative. I love life; they hate life. I would like you to go deeper and deeper into life; they would like you to shrink back, withdraw. They are all for renunciation, I am all for rejoicing. To me "Rejoice!" is the only message. "Renounce!" is escaping. Renouncing is committing a slow suicide. Rejoice! and rejoice tremendously. Only then will you be able to know what God is all about.

At the optimum of your being, when the intensity is total, when you are not holding anything back, when you dance with abandon, when you sing so totally that the singer disappears in the singing...when you love so infinitely that there is no lover left behind, you simply become the energy called love, then you affirm life. And life IS God.

I am life-affirmative; your so-called godmen are life-negative. And because basically life can not be negated -- you *are* life, how can you negate it? -- they create hypocrisy. It is bound to happen. Your so-called godmen down the ages have been creating hypocrisy. They don't allow you to be authentic. They don't allow you to be natural -- how can they allow you to be authentic? They create a division in you.

They are the root cause of all schizophrenia, and the whole of humanity suffers from schizophrenia. The differences between one person's schizophrenia and another's are only of degrees. You are split! Who has done this wrong to you? Your so-called godmen, the so-called saints, the so-called mahatmas. They are at the very root of all your misery because their very teaching is "Deny nature! Fight nature! Go against the stream; push the river!" And you are part of nature, just a wave in the river -- how can you fight with nature? Fighting, you will be defeated. If you are a sincere person, you will go mad; if you are not yet mad, that will simply show that you are not a sincere person. You say one thing and you do another.

I have heard:

A sodomist was given a room in a hotel with another man, who, the room clerk assured him, was not averse to a bout, but that for form's sake he might put up a struggle. "But don't you pay any attention to him. You go ahead -- he likes it."

Next morning, the sodomist came down and the clerk asked him how he had fared. "It was quite easy," he answered. "He put up no struggle at all."

"My God!" said the clerk, "I put you in the wrong room. That was the archbishop!"

It is bound to happen. Hypocrisy is a natural by-product of all your pseudo godmen. And they can only be pseudo! If someone has realized God, he is not a godman -- he is simply God! Why 'godman'? And he knows that not only is he God but everybody is God. When he says "I am God," he is not using the word in a comparative sense. He is not saying, "I am holier than thou." He is simply saying, "I am what you are, but I am aware and you are not aware yet." The difference is not in our qualities, in our beings, but only in our consciousness. You have the same treasure that I have, but I have stumbled upon it and you are still seeking and groping. Sooner or later you will find it. If you go on seeking, it is bound to be found -- because it is there. How long can you go on missing? Even in the deepest darkness, if you search for it you are bound to find it.

When I say I am God, I am simply declaring that the whole of humanity is divine. I am simply declaring that all human beings are divine; I am simply declaring that all that exists is divine. A godman, a so-called godman, declares that he is God and you are sinners. He creates a new kind of superiority, a new hierarchy. And his whole trade secret is to make you feel guilty. And the more guilty you feel, the more you are in his grip.

How to make you feel guilty? Just condemn natural things and it will start happening. Condemn sex -- you will have sexual desires arising and you will feel guilty. Condemn food...condemn everything that is a natural inclination in you.

The wife-swapping party is raided by the crusading minister, who plans to put an end to these goings-on. When he rings the bell, the man of the house arrives and does not seem a bit embarrassed.

The minister says, "I was told you had a party here tonight."

"We do," says the man. "We are playing guessing games right now. The women are blindfolded trying to guess the men's names by feeling their pricks. You ought to come on in, Reverend, your name has been guessed eight times already!"

The whole priesthood down the ages has proved only one thing: that you cannot fight against nature. Although there is a way to surpass it -- but the way does not go against it; it goes through it.

That is my first and most fundamental difference: I affirm life as it is. That does not mean that there is no growth possible beyond life -- there is immense possibility of growth -- but all growth has to be founded on a deep, passionate love of life. It is only through experiencing life that transcendence happens.

I would like you to go beyond sex, but I don't condemn sex. Sex is a natural desire, and is good in its own place. But one should not stop with it; it is only a beginning, a glimpse -- a glimpse of the beyond. In deep sexual orgasm, you become aware for the first time of something which is not of the ego, of something which is not of the mind, of something which is not of time. In deep orgasm, mind, time, all disappear; the whole world stops for a moment. For a moment you are no longer part of the material world; you are just a pure space.

But this is only a glimpse -- and at great cost. You should move ahead. You should seek and search for ways and means so that this glimpse becomes your very state. That's what I call realization, enlightenment. An enlightened person is in a state of orgasmic joy twenty-four hours a day. What the sexual person attains only once in a while, with great effort, the spiritual man attains without any effort and without any wastage. The spiritual man simply lives there; on those ultimate peaks is his abode. You only see those peaks from thousands of miles away.

I am not against sex, because sex is the first window into spiritual existence. I am not against food, because I am not against any enjoyment. There are all kinds of experiences that you will come across through enjoying things -- food, love, music, dance, nature...it is only through enjoying all these things that you will, slowly slowly, become aware of the invisible.

It is because of this that the Upanishads say: *annam brahma* -- food is God. A tremendously significant statement: food, and God? made synonymous? -- *annam Brahma*. Food is God? What are they saying? These people knew, they knew what they were saying -- the taste of food is the taste of God. The taste of any joy is the taste of God -- howsoever far away, howsoever much a reflection.

The moon reflected in the lake is still a reflection of the moon, although you will not find it in the lake. If you jump in the lake you will only disturb the reflection and you will not find the moon there. The reflection is not the moon, the reflection reflects the moon. And if you are a little intelligent you will not jump into the lake, you will look up into the sky where the real moon is.

God is reflected when you enjoy food. God is reflected when you enjoy sex. God is reflected in a thousand and one lakes of life. Take the key from the reflection; take the indication, the clue, and start moving to the original.

That's my fundamental difference. I am not against life or anything that life implies -- neither sex nor food, neither the body nor bodily pleasures. I am not averse to comfort, I am not against luxuries either.

Just the other day there was a question. Somebody has asked -- he must be a newcomer and an Indian -- he has asked, "Are you not a hypocrite? Why do you live in luxury?" He does not know the meaning of the word 'hypocrite'. I may be the only person in the world who is not a hypocrite.

A hypocrite is one who says one thing and does another. A hypocrite is one whose inner and outer lives are different -- not only different but diametrically opposite. I am not against luxury, so why should I be a hypocrite? I am not against comfort -- I am not a masochist, that's all. I don't believe in torturing myself or anybody else. I don't believe in torture.

I would like the whole earth to live in luxury. Certainly, I know that today that is not the

case. The whole earth is not even getting the minimum necessities of life. But I am not going to torture myself just because of that, because that is not going to help them either. If there are one thousand people in misery, there will be one thousand and one people in misery -- that's all.

I don't believe in misery. And I am not living a double life. My life is very simple -- simple in the sense that it has a kind of integrity. I am doing what I am saying. I believe in luxury; to me, religion is the highest form of luxury. If I cannot make everybody live in luxury, at least I can manage to live in it myself. Otherwise people will say to me, "Physician, first heal thyself."

But these so-called godmen, they all live in luxury and they are all against luxury. These are hypocrites! They talk about poverty and the spirituality of poverty, and they all live in luxury -- they are hypocrites.

I hate poverty! I don't respect poverty, I don't appreciate poverty. It is out of stupidity that people are poor; it is out of superstitious minds that people are poor. People need not be poor. It is because of thousands of years of teaching that poverty has something spiritual in it that people are poor.

A very famous German thinker, Count Keyserling, came to India. He wrote a diary while he was traveling in India. In his diary he notes many significant things. One thing he wrote was, "I became aware, visiting India, about two things. One: that to be poor is to be spiritual; and the other: that to be ill, starved, ugly, is to be holy."

I am not teaching these things. I would like my whole commune to live in as much comfort as possible. The commune has to become a model -- a model for the whole world. My sannyasins are to live in every possible joy: physical, psychological, spiritual. The joys of the body and the joys of the mind and the joys of the spirit -- all have to be lived in such a harmony that the fourth man is born out of that harmony.

That's why I say: Be scientific, be aesthetic, and be religious. Out of these three dimensions, out of the meeting of these three rivers, the fourth will be created. And the fourth is my way.

Any kind of unnatural approach towards life creates complexities, creates pathologies. It does not make people sane; it drives them insane.

Patient in psychiatrist's office: "Doctor, you have got to help me. I keep dreaming about food, continually dreaming about food."

Doctor: "Don't you ever dream about girls?"

Patient: "Yes, but I keep pouring ketchup over them."

Now, if you make somebody feel guilty about his food -- that's what so-called religious people are doing -- then he will start dreaming about food. And to eat is healthy, nourishing, good; to dream about it is ugly and pathological. Dreaming about food simply says that you are somehow depriving your body of what it needs.

Who dreams about food? Only a person who represses his desire for food. You can try it: fast for one day and then see what happens.... The whole day you will think about food; from everywhere the mind will come again and again to the idea of food. And in the night you are bound to dream about food.

Repress sex and you will dream about sex. Repress anything and you start becoming pathological. A really healthy man has no dreams -- he has nothing to dream about. He lives each moment totally; he never represses anything. Hence his unconscious remains utterly

empty and clean. Repress, and your unconscious becomes cluttered with unnecessary furniture. And in dreams you are bound to face your unconscious. You have to face it; in deep sleep you have to pass through it. It creates a turmoil throughout your whole life.

I am life-affirmative. I am in tremendous love with life, and that's my teaching. The so-called godmen are all against life; they are creating a pathological humanity.

Secondly, they are all otherworldly; I am this-worldly. Not that I don't believe in the other world -- there is no question of believing in it; I know it is -- but one need not worry about it. Worrying is not going to help. The other world is going to be born out of this world. Make this life beautiful, live this life as sensitively as possible, and the other will be born out of it. It will be far more beautiful than this if you can make this beautiful.

Buddha says just in the first sutras that if this life is beautiful, the other is going to be even more beautiful. But if you think of the other life, if you project about the other life, if you dream about the other life, life after death, you will make this life so ugly, so ill at ease, that the other will become more ugly.

You need not think of the tomorrow, the today is enough unto itself. Live this day with such joy and ecstasy...from where is the tomorrow going to come? It will be born out of this ecstasy, it will be more ecstatic. And then you have the key -- the key that unlocks all the doors of life.

Live the moment! I believe in the moment. Those godmen, they talk about the other life, life after death, heaven and hell -- all that is absolutely unnecessary. People are already much too puzzled; don't puzzle them any more.

My teaching is very simple, to the point: live moment to moment, dying to the past, not projecting any future...enjoying the silence, the joy, the beauty, of this moment. And out of this, that will be born. It comes of its own accord. As Buddha says: Just as the shadow follows you, the future follows you. If your present is ugly, the future is going to be hell; if your present is beautiful, the future is going to be paradise.

Thirdly, up to now, these so-called godmen have been dividing humanity into Hindus and Christians and Mohammedans and Jainas and Sikhs and Parsis...there are three hundred religions on the earth and at least three thousand sects within those three hundred religions. These godmen have been creating hatred amongst people. They talk about love, but they create the context in which only war happens. Religions have been fighting with each other, destroying each other, murdering each other, butchering each other. More blood has been shed in the name of religion than in the name of anything else. Not even politics is so criminal as your so-called religions.

Now, all your godmen are either Hindus or Mohammedans or Christians. I am neither a Hindu nor a Christian -- I am nobody. And I help people to become nobodies. I help people to become unburdened of all this nonsense. It is enough to *be* -- there is no need to be a Mohammedan or a Hindu or a Christian. There is no need to go to any temple, mosque or church. The whole existence is their temple, and the trees are continuously in worship, and the clouds are in prayer, and the mountains are in meditation...just start looking around.

Look rightly! Look without belief in your eyes, look without prejudices, and you will find God. You cannot miss him because he is everywhere! He is not like a target that you can miss; hit anywhere and you will find him, because he is everywhere. It is impossible to miss him. All that you need is an innocent heart. But a Hindu cannot be innocent, a Mohammedan cannot be innocent. He is full of garbage: full of theories, theologies, full of borrowed knowledge -- that's what I call garbage.

I am not saying that Mohammed is not right, I am not saying that Buddha is not right;

otherwise, why should I speak on Buddha, on Mohammed, on Christ? They *are* true, but their truth cannot be your truth -- you will have to find it on your own. Truth cannot be borrowed, truth is untransferable; it never becomes part of your heritage. You have to seek and search on your own; it has always to be individual.

My truth is my truth. It's my experience. I can talk about it, I can sing songs in its praise, I can dance it. I can show you my ecstasy -- but still, that which has been experienced remains unexpressed. No scripture has been able to express it. All scriptures are efforts to express, but all efforts have failed: truth is inexpressible.

The scriptures simply show the compassion of the people who attained, but they don't prove that the compassion has succeeded in expressing the truth.

Rabindranath was dying and somebody said to him, "You should be happy and glad and thankful to God -- you are the greatest poet the earth has ever known. You have written six thousand poems; nobody else has done that. Even Shelley, who is thought to be the greatest poet in the West, has written only two thousand songs. You are thrice great!"

But tears started rolling down from Rabindranath's eyes. The man was puzzled; he could not figure out why Rabindranath was crying. He said, "Why are you crying? Feel thankful to God! He has fulfilled your life. You have attained all that one aspires to attain."

Rabindranath said, "I have not attained anything! Those six thousand songs are proof of my failure." Listen attentively. Rabindranath says, "Those six thousand songs are proofs of my failure. I was trying to say something, but I have not been able to say it. Each time I tried, I failed. I tried again and again and again, six thousand times I tried, and I have failed. The song that I had come to sing is still unsung. I am taking it with me."

That is the case with a Buddha, a Mohammed, a Zarathustra -- with all those who have known. You cannot be a believer *and* religious together. If you want to be religious, you have to drop all beliefs. That is my third basic difference.

I teach you to be religious, but not believers. You have to be inquirers, explorers. You cannot take things for granted: because so many people say it, then it must be true. Truth has to become your own experience -- you have to be a witness to it. And the moment you are a witness to it, you will not be able to say that you are a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian. These are all philosophies, guesswork, theologies, logic, calculation, cleverness -- but the experience is missing.

My whole approach is existential, experiential. I am not giving you any dogma; I am not trying to give you a certain doctrine. On the contrary, I am trying to take all doctrines away. I would like you to be utterly empty of doctrines and beliefs and prejudices.

In that emptiness you are God -- as much as I am, as much as Buddha is. That emptiness opens the doors to your divinity.

I am not a godman. I am as ordinary as you are, as everybody else is; as ordinary or as extraordinary -- it means the same. I am not superior to anybody and I am not inferior to anybody. Nobody is superior and nobody is inferior. We belong to one reality -- how can we be inferior and superior?

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THERE IS A QUESTION I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET AN ANSWER TO. IT

IS A STUPID QUESTION AND YET I FEEL THAT I WANT SO MUCH TO KNOW THE ANSWER.

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CREATION, WHY LIFE EXISTS, WHY EVERYTHING EXISTS? I DON'T BELIEVE IN ACCIDENTS.

Prem Patrick, the question is certainly stupid, you are absolutely right about it. And the question is not answerable. Anybody who answers it will only create a few more questions in you. You have not been able to get any answer because there is none. Life is a mystery -- hence this question cannot be answered. You cannot ask "Why?" If the "Why?" is answered, life is no longer a mystery.

That's the whole effort of science: to destroy the mystery of life. And the way is to find the answer to every why. And science believes -- of course, arrogantly and ignorantly -- that one day it will be able to answer all whys. It is not possible. Even if we answer all whys, the ultimate why will remain: Why does life exist at all? What is the meaning of existence? What is the purpose of all this? This question is ultimate -- it cannot be answered.

If somebody gives you an answer, that will simply create another question. If somebody says...for example, these answers have been given -- a few people believe that God created the world because he wanted to help humanity. Now, what kind of answer is this? He created humanity to help humanity. What was the need to create? A few others say God created the world because he was feeling very lonely. If God too feels very lonely, then there is no possibility of anybody ever becoming a buddha.

And suddenly God started feeling lonely -- what was he doing before he created the world? For eternity he had remained alone...then suddenly one day, one morning, he went crazy, or what? Suddenly he started feeling lonely after breakfast! And what need was there to create the whole world? Just one woman would have been enough!

And now how is he feeling today? Too crowded? Too much in the marketplace? Must be planning to destroy the world soon. What kind of God are you talking about? Is your God a person who can feel lonely?

These are foolish answers to foolish questions.

Then there are a few people who say it is God's play -- his *leela*. Can't he sit silently? And what kind of play is this? Adolf Hitler and Mussolini and Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Nadirshah...God's play? Millions of people are being massacred and it is God's play? Six million Jews killed by Adolf Hitler and God is playing a game? Why can't he play golf? or chess? Why torture people? So much misery in the world, and these fools go on saying it is God's play? Children are being born paralyzed, blind, deaf, dumb...God's play? What kind of God is this? Either he is nuts or he is not God at all, at least not godly. Must be very evil.

Now, these answers don't help -- they create more questions. Patrick, I can only say this much: that life has no purpose, cannot have any purpose.

All purposes are within life. Yes, a car has a purpose; it can take you from one place to another. And food has a purpose; it can nourish you, it can keep you alive. A house has a purpose; it can give you shelter when it rains and when it is hot. And clothes have a purpose.... All purposes are within life, but life itself cannot have any purpose because it is not a means to some end. A car is a means, a house is a means.

Life has no goal, life is not going anywhere. Life is simply here! It has never been created -- forget that idea of creation. That creates many stupid questions in the mind. It has never been created, it has always been here, and it will always be here -- in different forms, in

different ways, the dance will continue. It is eternal. *Aes dhammo sanantano* -- so is the ultimate law.

There is no purpose -- that's the beauty of life! If there were some purpose, then life would not be so beautiful. Then there would be a motivation, then it would be businesslike, then it would be very serious. Look at the roses and the lotuses and the lilies -- what purpose? The lotus in the early morning sun opening up, and the cuckoo starts calling...what purpose? Is it not intrinsically beautiful? Does everything need a purpose outside itself?

Life is intrinsically beautiful. It has no extrinsic purpose, it is not purposive. It is just like the song of a bird in the dark of the night, or the sound of water, or the sound of the wind passing through the pine trees....

Man is goal-oriented because your mind is goal-oriented. It creates questions like this: "What is the goal of life?" There must be some goal. But if somebody says, "This is the goal of life," then you will ask, "What is the goal of this goal? Why should we attain it? What purpose is it going to serve?" And then somebody says, "This is the goal of this goal." The same question arises again, and you fall into a regress, ad infinitum.

You ask me, "Can you tell us what is the purpose of creation?"

The world has never been created. The word 'creation' is not right. It has always been here, it is eternal. There is no creator. God is not the creator of the world: God is the very creative energy of existence -- creativity rather than a creator. He is not the poet but the poetry, not the dancer but the dance, not the flower but the fragrance.

You ask me, "Why does life exist?"

These questions look very philosophical, and can torture you very much, but are absurd. It is like asking, "What is the taste of the color green?" Now, it is irrelevant. The color green has no taste; color and taste are not related at all. "Why does life exist?" Just look at the words: 'life' and 'existence' mean the same thing; it is a tautology. If you are asking: Why is life life? then it will be clear to you. But when you ask, "Why does life exist?" the language deceives you.

You are asking: Why is life life? You are asking: Why is a rose a rose? Would you be satisfied if the rose were a marigold? Then you would ask: Why is a marigold a marigold? How are you going to be satisfied?

If life does not exist, will you be satisfied? Just conceive of yourself without body, without mind, a ghost, asking the question: Why doesn't life exist? What happened to life? Why did it disappear? The same question will persist and persecute you.

Life is a mystery. There is no why, no purpose, no reason. It is simply here. Take it or leave it, but it is simply here. And when it is here, why not take it? Why waste your time in philosophizing? Why not dance and sing and love and meditate? Why not go deeper and deeper into this thing called "life"? Maybe at the ultimate core you will know the answer. But the answer comes in such a way that it cannot be expressed. It is like the dumb man's taste of sugar. It is sweet -- he *knows* that it is sweet, but he cannot say it.

The buddhas know but they cannot say. And the idiots know not and they go on saying, and they go on giving you answers. Idiots are very clever in that way -- in finding, fabricating, manufacturing answers. Ask any question and they will answer you.

When Gautama the Buddha used to move in his country from one place to another, a few of his disciples would go ahead of him and declare in the town: "Buddha is coming, but please don't ask these eleven questions." And one of those eleven questions was: Why does life exist? and another was: Who created the world? In those eleven questions the whole of

philosophy is contained. In fact, if you drop those eleven questions nothing remains to ask.

Buddha used to say these are useless questions. They are not answerable -- not because nobody knows the answer. They are not answerable in the very nature of things.

One great philosopher, Maulingaputta, came to Buddha, and he started asking questions...questions after questions. Must have been an incarnation of Patrick! Buddha listened silently for half an hour. Maulingaputta started feeling a little embarrassed because he was not answering, he was simply sitting there smiling, as if nothing had happened, and he had asked such important questions, such significant questions.

Finally Buddha said, "Do you really want to know the answer?"

Maulingaputta said, "Otherwise why should I have come to you? I have traveled at least one thousand miles to see you." And remember, in those days, one thousand miles was really one thousand miles! It was not hopping in a plane and reaching within minutes or within hours. One thousand miles was one thousand miles. It was with great longing, with great hope that he had come. He was tired, weary from the journey, and he must have followed Buddha because Buddha himself was traveling continuously. He must have reached one place and people said, "Yes, he was here three months ago. He has gone to the north" -- so he must have traveled north.

Slowly slowly, he was coming closer and closer and then the day came, the great day, when people said, "Just yesterday morning he left; he must have reached only the next village. If you rush, if you run, you may be able to catch him." And then one day he caught up with him, and he was so joyous he forgot all his arduous journey and he started asking all the questions he had planned all the way along, and Buddha smiled and sat there and asked, "Do you really want to have the answer?"

Maulingaputta said, "Then why have I traveled so long? It has been a long suffering -- it seems I have been traveling my whole life, and you are asking, 'Do you really want the answer?'"

Buddha said, "I am asking again: Do you really want the answer? Say yes or no, because much will depend on it."

Maulingaputta said, "Yes!"

Then Buddha said, "For two years sit silently by my side -- no asking, no questions, no talking. Just sit silently by my side for two years. And after two years you can ask whatsoever you want to ask, and I promise you I will answer it."

A disciple, a great disciple of Buddha, Manjushree, who was sitting underneath another tree, started laughing so loudly, started almost rolling on the ground. Maulingaputta said, "What has happened to this man? Out of the blue, you are talking to me, you have not said a single word to him, nobody has said anything to him -- is he telling jokes to himself?"

Buddha said, "You go and ask him."

He asked Manjushree. Manjushree said, "Sir, if you really want to ask the question, ask right now -- this is his way of deceiving people. He deceived me. I used to be a foolish philosopher just like you. His answer was the same when I came; you have traveled one thousand miles, I had traveled two thousand."

Manjushree certainly was a great philosopher, more well-known in the country. He had thousands of disciples. When he had come he had come with one thousand disciples -- a great philosopher coming with his following.

"And Buddha said, 'Sit silently for two years.' And I sat silently for two years, but then I could not ask a single question. Those days of silence...slowly slowly, all questions withered

away. And one thing I will tell you: he keeps his promise, he is a man of his word. After exactly two years -- I had completely forgotten, lost track of time, because who bothers to remember? As silence deepened I lost track of all time.

"When two years passed, I was not even aware of it. I was enjoying the silence and his presence. I was drinking out of him. It was so incredible! In fact, deep down in my heart I never wanted those two years to be finished, because once they were finished he would say, 'Now give your place to somebody else to sit by my side, you move away a little. Now you are capable of being alone, you don't need me so much.' Just as the mother moves the child when he can eat and digest and no longer needs to be fed on the breast. So," Manjushree said, "I was simply hoping that he would forget all about those two years, but he remembered -- exactly after two years he asked, 'Manjushree, now you can ask your questions.' I looked within; there was no question and no questioner either -- a total silence. I laughed, he laughed, he patted my back and said, 'Now, move away.'

"So, Maulingaputta, that's why I started laughing, because now he is playing the same trick again. And this poor Maulingaputta will sit for two years silently and will be lost forever, will never be able to ask a single question. So I insist, Maulingaputta, if you really want to ask, ASK NOW!"

But Buddha said, "My conditions have to be fulfilled."

And, Patrick, the same is my answer to you: fulfill my condition -- meditate, sit silently, just be here, and all questions will disappear. I am not interested in answering you, I am interested in dissolving your questions. And when all questions disappear, the questioner also disappears -- it cannot exist without questions. When there is no question and no questioner, what bliss, what ecstasy! You cannot imagine, you cannot dream, you cannot comprehend right now. Then the whole mystery of life opens up, mysteries upon mysteries...there is no end to it.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE HEARD MANY SPIRITUAL SAINTS IN MY LIFE -- WHY DO THEY ALL
SPEAK A VERY DIFFICULT LANGUAGE?

Kamla Kant, they have to, because they know nothing. If they speak simple language as I am speaking to you, the day-to-day language, they will not be able to hide their ignorance. Behind the camouflage of big words they can hide their ignorance; that is one of the trade secrets. And people are so foolish that if they can't understand what is being said to them, they think it must be something great.

The incomprehensible looks to them as if it is something profound. The comprehensible seems to be superficial. Hence, down the ages your so-called saints have been using very complicated, complex, difficult language, using big words, using dead languages, so nobody understands. Latin, Sanskrit, Arabic -- that's what is being used by your so-called saints.

When you hear them you can't figure it out, what it is all about, and, naturally, you cannot say, "I don't understand your language" -- that is humiliating. So you start nodding your head, "Yes, it is true." They are hiding their ignorance, you are hiding your ignorance -- this is a mutual conspiracy. You know it perfectly well.

When you go to the physician, he writes the prescription in Latin or Greek. Why can't he

write in simple English or Hindi or Marathi? If he writes in simple English that you understand, you will think him a fool, because he is writing such things -- how can such simple things help your great complex disease? And if he writes in simple language, you are not going to give the chemist fifty rupees for it; you will go to the marketplace and purchase the same things for two rupees.

The physician writes the prescription in such a language...and it is always illegible. Even if you go back again to the doctor to ask what he has written, he will be in difficulty.

I have heard that Mulla Nasruddin was using a prescription from a doctor for many things: he has used it as a ticket in a train, because the conductor could not read it; he used it in the moviehouse, because the ticket-checker could not read it -- he used it in many many ways. He used it as a pass to see a certain minister. He told me, "For two months this prescription has been such a help -- wherever I want to enter and whatsoever I want to do, I just present this prescription because they cannot read it and they cannot admit that they cannot read it. They simply allow me, they have to allow me."

This is a well-known secret, that saints who are bogus are bound to use very difficult language; otherwise, you will be able to see that they are as ignorant as you are, or sometimes even more ignorant than you are. They create a great camouflage, a facade, of big words from dead languages. They quote scriptures, high-sounding words, and you are simply at a loss as to what to do. Either accept your ignorance and ask them what they are saying, or simply say that it must be something very profound -- how can a man like you, a sinner, ignorant, unknowledgeable, irreligious, understand it?

A preacher was asked to conduct a revival in a small southern town. There being no hotel, he was housed with one of the church sisters, a young widow. After the revival, taking his leave, he said to the hostess, "Sister Jones, never in all my ecclesiastical career have I encountered such an abundant, satisfying and abiding manifestation of thorough, complete, and delightful exemplification of gratitude, graciousness, appreciativeness and hospitality as you have demonstrated."

Sister Jones smiled, simpered, and answered, "Parson, I don't know what all those big words mean, but want to say that you are a real world beater, a strong repeater, and that you do it neater, sweeter and more completer with less peter than any other person I ever had here!"

You can use very complex language, but you cannot deceive those who know -- you can only deceive those who don't know. If you read Hegel's books you will come across sentences which go on running for pages. By the time you reach the end of the sentence, you have already forgotten the beginning. It is almost impossible to make any sense out of it. Hence, when Hegel was alive, he was thought to be the greatest philosopher who had ever lived on the earth. But as people went into his books more closely -- scholars worked and thrashed it out and figured things out -- it was found that he was not saying anything very special. Much was absolute nonsense -- but with great words.

Great words attract people, big words fascinate people, hypnotize people.

You ask me, "Why do they all speak a very difficult language?"

...Otherwise, who is going to listen to them? For what?

A farmer with two lazy sons, once ordered them to clean out the crapperhole. They simply dug a new one and moved the shit-house a few feet over. One night the old man had a call of nature and ran out back along the well-worn path, falling into the pit. Up to his neck in shit, he began hollering, "Fire! Fire!"

People came running, pulled him out, and cleaned him off, then asked why he had yelled "Fire!"

"Do you think anyone would have come if I hollered 'Shit!'?"

The reason why they use difficult language is simple; otherwise, who is going to come? They can't talk like me -- I am simply using the language that you use. I am simply talking to you! This is not a sermon, just a dialogue between friends, gossiping -- it is not a gospel.

And you can use simple words, day-to-day words only if you really have something to convey, otherwise not. If you don't have anything to convey, then you will have to use big words out of necessity.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE NOT ALL THE PRIESTS THE WORST ENEMIES OF GOD?

Deepesh, not all the priests, but just the few -- the pope, the shankaracharyas. These are the people who are the enemies of God; otherwise, poor priests are simply trying somehow to make their bread and butter. They have nothing to do with God -- they are not friends, they are not enemies. They don't have any time for God. It is just a profession, and a poor profession at that. The poor priest doesn't get more money than the lowest clerk, and he runs the whole day from one temple to another, from one house to another -- he is almost a beggar! No, he is not the enemy of God. He just doesn't know any other way to earn his bread, particularly in India.

In India, priests are brahmins, and brahmins are the poorest people. They don't know anything else, and they can't do anything else -- the traditional mind won't allow them. They can't be cobblers, they can't be carpenters, they can't be sweepers.... The brahmins down the ages have lived on only one thing: praying to gods. But if you simply go on praying to God, you will die, you will starve. Money is not going to shower on you from the skies; it has never happened. So you have to use your praying capacity, your scriptural knowledge, as a profession.

But the poor priest is not the enemy or anything. He does not know anything about God, he is not really interested in God at all.

I remember:

A priest used to live just behind my house when I was a child. I used to torture him with great questions: "Does God exist? Is the soul immortal? What is the philosophy of karma?" One day he said to me, "You please don't bother me. I tell you the truth: I don't know anything. And you are a kind of nuisance! Nobody asks me these questions -- I am a simple priest. People just ask me to do *puja* -- worship -- so I go, and they pay me two rupees, three rupees, per day. Somehow I am managing. I have three children, an old father, mother, wife, and also I have to pretend that I am living perfectly well, because that's how a brahmin should pretend. He is the high caste, so I have to pretend that everything is going well.

"And then after the whole day's work when I come home, you are sitting here! I have earned

only three rupees in the whole day, and we are almost starving. Now, who bothers whether God exists or not! And I don't know at all. I only know how to worship, and I can worship any god -- just give me the money."

So please, Deepesh, don't think that all the priests...not all the priests, only a few cunning ones are against God. They are worshippers of the Devil, they are the reason that very few people have been able to become buddhas. But the other priests, ninety-nine percent of them, are just poor people not knowing what to do. Traditionally, just knowing one thing, they can beg. But they are high caste, so they beg with a method. That method is their ritual for worship.

A man sees signs on the highway saying ONE MILE TO GRANDMA'S CAT-HOUSE. Overcome by curiosity and surprise that anyone should have the nerve to advertise so plainly, he goes in.

An old lady admits him and snaps, "Two dollars, please, and you can go right through the door ahead of you at the end of the hall."

He pays, goes through the door, which slams shut behind him, and finds himself out in the yard, which is full of wooden boxes with wire fronts, inside of which are some mangy cats. Overhead is a small hand-lettered sign: "You have now been screwed by grandma. Please do not tell the secret -- I am just an old lady trying to make ends meet."

Enough for today.