
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

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Chapter #1

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THIRTY-SIX STREAMS ARE RUSHING TOWARD YOU!
DESIRE AND PLEASURE AND LUST....
PLAY IN YOUR IMAGINATION WITH THEM
AND THEY WILL SWEEP YOU AWAY.

POWERFUL STREAMS!
THEY FLOW EVERYWHERE.

STRONG WINE!
IF YOU SEE IT SPRING UP,
TAKE CARE!
PULL IT OUT BY THE ROOTS.

PLEASURES FLOW EVERYWHERE.
YOU FLOAT UPON THEM

AND ARE CARRIED FROM LIFE TO LIFE.

LIKE A HUNTED HARE YOU RUN,
THE PURSUER OF DESIRE PURSUED,
HARRIED FROM LIFE TO LIFE.

O SEEKER!
GIVE UP DESIRE.
SHAKE OFF YOUR CHAINS.

YOU HAVE COME OUT OF THE HOLLOW
INTO THE CLEARING.
THE CLEARING IS EMPTY.
WHY DO YOU RUSH BACK INTO THE HOLLOW?

DESIRE IS A HOLLOW
AND PEOPLE SAY, "LOOK!
HE WAS FREE.
BUT NOW HE GIVES UP HIS FREEDOM."

Gautama the Buddha's whole religion can be reduced to a single word. That word is freedom. That is his essential message, his very fragrance. Nobody else has raised freedom so high. It is the ultimate value in Buddha's vision, the *SUMMUM BONUM*; there is nothing higher than that.

And it seems very fundamental to understand why Buddha emphasizes freedom so much. Neither God is emphasized nor heaven is emphasized nor love is emphasized, but only freedom. There is a reason for it: all that is valuable becomes possible only in the climate of freedom. Love also grows only in the soil of freedom; without freedom, love cannot grow. Without freedom, what grows in the name of love is nothing but lust. Without freedom there is no God. Without freedom what you think to be God is only your imagination, your fear, your greed. There is no heaven without freedom: freedom is heaven. And if you think there is some heaven without freedom, then that heaven has no worth, no reality. It is your fancy, it is your dream.

All great values of life grow in the climate of freedom; hence freedom is the most fundamental value and also the highest pinnacle. If you want to understand Buddha you will have to taste something of the freedom he is talking about.

His freedom is not of the outside. It is not social, it is not political, it is not economic. His freedom is spiritual. By "freedom" he means a state of consciousness unhindered by any desire, unchained to any desire, unimprisoned by any greed, by any lust for more. By "freedom" he means a consciousness without mind, a state of no-mind. It is utterly empty, because if there is something, that will hinder freedom; hence its utter emptiness.

This word 'emptiness' -- *SHUNYATA* -- has been very much misunderstood by people, because the word has a connotation of negativity. Whenever we hear the word 'empty' we think of something negative. In Buddha's language, emptiness is not negative; emptiness is absolutely positive, more positive than your so-called fullness, because emptiness is full of freedom; everything else has been removed. It is spacious; all boundaries have been dropped. It is unbounded -- and only in an unbounded space, freedom is possible. His emptiness is not ordinary emptiness; it is not only absence of something, it is a presence of something

invisible.

For example, when you empty your room: as you remove the furniture and the paintings and the things inside, the room becomes empty on the one hand because there is no more any furniture, no more paintings, no more things, nothing is left inside; but on the other hand, something invisible starts filling it. That invisibleness is "roominess," spaciousness; the room becomes bigger. As you remove the things, the room is becoming bigger and bigger. When everything is removed, even the walls, then the room is as big as the whole sky.

That's the whole process of meditation: removing everything; removing yourself so totally that nothing is left behind -- not even you. In that utter silence is freedom. In this utter stillness grows the one-thousand-petaled lotus of freedom. And great fragrance is released: the fragrance of peace, compassion, love, bliss. Or if you want to choose the word 'God' you can choose it. It is not Buddha's word, but there is no harm in choosing it.

Meditate over these beautiful sutras:

THIRTY-SIX STREAMS ARE RUSHING TOWARD YOU!

"Thirty-six" is only a Buddhist metaphor; it stands for "many." Many streams are rushing towards you. Each moment you are surrounded by a thousand and one desires, and they are all pulling you in different directions. You are a victim and you are falling apart.

A young man entered an hotel. He saw a very beautiful woman sitting alone in the corner drinking coffee. She was so beautiful and so attractive, the young man could not resist the temptation. He went close to her and asked her, "Can I join you?"

The woman looked at him for a few seconds and said, "Do you think I am falling apart?"

But that's exactly the case: everybody is falling apart, even that woman. If I had been in the place of that young man I would have said, "Yes. You need to be glued together."

Everybody is falling apart. You are not one; you have become many many fragments, and all the fragments are going in different directions. That's why there is so much misery in your being, because when your parts, which are essentially your intrinsic parts, are being pulled in different directions you feel the pain of it. That's what misery is: the pain of falling into different directions simultaneously, rushing into different directions simultaneously. That is what creates craziness, insanity.

Buddha says: **THIRTY-SIX STREAMS ARE RUSHING TOWARD YOU!** Beware! Not only one but many streams are rushing toward you. And if you don't take care, if you are not alert, you will be possessed by them. If you remain unconscious, if you remain sleepy, you will be defeated by those streams. Those streams are not basically enemies to you. They are pure energy, and energy is always neutral. But when you are asleep those same streams are dangerous; when you are awake, those same streams become great creative energies for you. They are rushing towards buddhas too, but in the hand of a buddha, dust turns into gold. The touch of awareness is alchemical. In **YOUR** hands, even if by chance you come across gold, it turns into dust. You are so asleep, you impart your sleepiness to whatsoever comes to you.

Those thirty-six streams he is talking about are gifts of existence, gifts of great energy. It is coming from everywhere. Now, it depends on you whether you can transform those energies into a synthesis, whether you can transform those energies into an integrated whole, whether you can create an orchestra out of all those energies. Then you become a song, you create great music. Your life becomes a melody.

But if you cannot transform those energies, then you will be a victim and you will be

divided into so many parts. You will lose all integrity. You will become a crowd; you will not be an individual anymore.

THIRTY-SIX STREAMS ARE RUSHING TOWARD YOU!

DESIRE AND PLEASURE AND LUST....

And so on, so forth. What is desire? Desire means greed for more. It is unfulfillable. It is impossible to fulfill the greed for more because that "more" has no limitation. "More" simply means an unlimited phenomenon. You have ten thousand rupees, you want one hundred thousand rupees. One day you get one hundred thousand rupees -- now you want more. You want more and more and more. Whatsoever you get, the distance between you and your goal will remain the same; it is never reduced, not even by a single inch.

That's why beggars are beggars, obviously, but emperors are also beggars. Both are still hankering for more. What is the difference? No difference as far as the quality of their consciousness is concerned. Of course, the beggar does not possess much and the emperor possesses much, but that is not the point. The distance between the beggar's possessions and what he wants and the emperor's possessions and what he wants is exactly the same. One is a poor beggar, the other is a rich beggar; that much difference you can make. But both are beggars all the same.

To be in the grip of "more" is to be really eccentric, off-center. If you can't see it then you are not intelligent at all. It is such a simple phenomenon that just a little intelligence is needed to see it. In your whole life you have been trying and it is not that you have always failed; it only LOOKS as if you have always failed. You have succeeded many times, but each time you succeed, your desire for more is projected again and you remain in the same position: miserable, unhappy, frustrated. If you DON'T get what you want, you will be frustrated; if you GET what you want, you will be frustrated. It seems frustration is the destiny, the absolute destiny, of the unconscious man.

A psychiatrist was going around a mental hospital. He saw one man beating himself, pulling his hair, looking very suicidal. He was kept in a cell -- he was dangerous. He asked the superintendent, "What happened to this man?"

The superintendent said, "He loved a woman, he loved her very much, but he could not get her. She married somebody else. Since then he has been in this state. He wants to commit suicide, he does not want to live. He says there is no meaning in life: 'My meaning was in that woman. If I could not get that woman, that means my life is finished!'"

Feeling sorry for the man -- he was young and beautiful -- they moved ahead. They saw another cell and another man was inside it, and he was even more ferocious, very murderous.

The psychiatrist asked, "What has happened to this man?"

The superintendent said, "This is the man who married that same woman! Since he has married her he wants to kill her, and if he cannot kill her then he wants to kill anybody instead, but he wants to kill and destroy. He wants to kill the whole world! That woman drove him mad."

One is mad because he could not get her, the other is mad because he COULD get her. This is the whole history of every human being, more or less. It may not be so extreme, so you don't see it, but the differences are only in degrees. The man in the grip of desire is bound to become insane.

And Buddha says: PLEASURE.... Pleasure means that you think the body is the only source of happiness. That is sheer stupidity. The body's pleasures are very momentary; they are not real pleasures. But everybody is caught in the net of the body. We are born as bodies, but we need not die as bodies. If we die as bodies, our whole life was a sheer wastage. You have to grow up.

And remember: growing old is not growing up. Everybody grows old, but very few people, very rare people grow up. One who really grows up becomes a buddha. Growing up means you start becoming alert about bodily pleasures -- that they are momentary and they can change into their opposite very easily.

For example, you love eating and you can go on eating too much. Then it becomes a pain. It was pleasure in the beginning, but there is a limit to that pleasure. It is said of Nero that he used to have four physicians always with him. Even when he was going into war those four physicians used to accompany him. When Nero would eat, their whole work was to help him to vomit so that he could eat again. He used to love eating so much that he would eat twenty times, twenty-five times per day. You will call him mad -- and he was mad.

Now, what is the pleasure of eating? Maybe just a little pleasure of taste.... On your tongue there are little buds which experience taste. They can be operated on very easily and then you will not feel anything at all. Then the whole pleasure of eating disappears. That's what happens when you are in fever: your buds become dull, insensitive, so you eat but you don't feel any taste. People are living for eating; there are very few people who eat to live. Millions are living only to eat.

Humanity can be divided into two types of mad people: one type is obsessed with food, another type is obsessed with sex. And there is a deep relation between the two. The person who is obsessed with sex will not bother much about food and the person who is repressive of sex will become obsessed with food.

Whenever a country is repressive of sex it becomes very obsessed with food. That's what has happened in this country: for centuries it has been repressive of sex. That's why Indians have been very inventive about food -- new sweets, thousands of sweets. The world is completely unaware of all those sweets! And their food is so spicy.... When a foreigner comes he cannot eat it; he cannot see how people can eat it. It is burning hot! Why so much spicy food? It is repression of sex! If your sex is not repressed you will not eat such spicy food.

Just the other day I received two letters, one from a Western sannyasin, Mudita. She says, "Beloved Master, listening to you I feel great joy, but then suddenly I become horny." She must have been brought up with Victorian ideas, with Victorian education -- outmoded thoughts.

And another letter has come from Rekha, an Indian sannyasin. She says, "Listening to you, suddenly I had a great desire to eat spicy food." Now, she is an Indian! An Indian woman cannot recognize even in herself that she is feeling horny -- that is impossible. The whole desire has to move towards spicy food. But both are the same, there is no difference.

Food and sex have one thing in common. Food is needed for the individual's survival; without food you will not survive. And sex is needed for the species' survival; without sex the species will disappear.

Another phenomenon: the person who is living a natural life will neither be obsessed with sex nor will be obsessed with food. He will not be obsessed at all. But religions don't allow that: you have to be obsessed with something or other. If you are not obsessed you will not go to the temples and the mosques and to the churches and to the synagogues. That is the very

secret of their trade. This whole business of religion goes on and on with no sign of ever stopping, for the simple reason that YOU go on being obsessed with something or other.

The person who is obsessed with sex will be less selfish; the person who is obsessed with food will be more selfish, for the simple reason that food means YOUR survival and sex means survival of the species. It is better to be sexual and to be after sexual pleasures than to live just to eat.

This country has become very selfish for the simple reason that sex has been completely denied; BRAHMACHARYA -- celibacy -- has been propounded down the ages as one of the greatest values. And the ultimate result has been that everybody has become obsessed with food. Whenever people are obsessed with food they become selfish -- obviously, because they are no longer interested in the species.

Immanuel Kant, one of the great thinkers of the world, says: This to me is the fundamental criterion of all morality: that any principle, if followed, destroys humanity. It is immoral. Now, what will Immanuel Kant say about brahmacharya? If brahmacharya is followed by the whole humanity it will destroy humanity. It will be a suicidal phenomenon. According to Immanuel Kant, brahmacharya is immoral -- more immoral than stealing, more immoral than dishonesty, more immoral than breaking your promise, more immoral than anything.

And I agree with Immanuel Kant, rather than with the whole Indian tradition. The criterion is this: you should think what will be the result if the principle is followed by everybody. It will be suicidal -- it will be global suicide. There will be nobody left to be celibate anymore.

And the same is true about the so-called old escapist sannyas -- renunciation; that too is immoral. If everybody follows the escapist idea and drops out and escapes to the Himalayas, the whole humanity will die.

In fact, your so-called mahatmas and saints live because you are in the world and you go on supporting them. If you are not in the world -- if you are also in the Himalayas, following your saints and mahatmas -- they will be at a loss. Who will feed them? Who will support them? They will have to commit suicide with their followers -- and the Himalayas is a really beautiful site if you want to commit suicide, the best place in the world. If you could not live beautifully, at least you can die in a beautiful place. Your mahatmas are supported by the worldly people -- and still they go on condemning the world. It is an immoral act. Escapism is an immoral act.

I agree with Immanuel Kant; his criterion has something really valuable about it.

Pleasure means either the pleasure of the tongue, food -- which is very childish -- or the pleasure of sex, which is also very childish because you are not just the body, you are more than that.

Rise from pleasures to happiness. Happiness is psychological, pleasure is physiological. Listening to great music or reading great poetry or watching a sunset or just enjoying a morning walk and the wind passing through the pines and the music that it creates, the sound of running water -- it thrills you. Although it comes through the body, it reaches deeper -- deeper than food or sex. It is more fulfilling. But that, too, is not the end because anything that is psychological is bound to be momentary.

Beyond happiness is bliss which is of the spirit, which is a timeless phenomenon. You go beyond time, you go beyond mind and body both. Then you know who you are. Then you function from your center. For the first time you are not eccentric. You become centered, you are not off-center. For the first time you have roots in your being, and those roots connect you

with God, with the whole. You become holy only when you are blissful. But pleasure prevents you; it prevents you at the lowest.

I am not against pleasure, remember. I am not against anything. Everything has to be used as a stepping-stone for the ultimate peak. The body IS beautiful and enjoying your food is good. Just don't be obsessed by it. But if your saints are continuously condemning it, you will be obsessed by it.

Obsession is created by your so-called saints. Whatsoever they condemn becomes your obsession. In fact, the more they condemn, the more attractive it becomes, the more magnetic it becomes.

I am not against sex, but I would like you to go beyond it. Use it as a stepping-stone, use it as a ladder. It is beautiful in itself, but it is not the end, only the beginning. Don't stop at the first chapter of your life; it has much more, much more hidden value that has to be discovered.

... AND LUST. Lust is even far below pleasure. Pleasure at least respects the other. If you love a woman, you love her company, or a man... you respect the other. But in lust you don't have any respect; you simply use the other. Lust is even more degraded than pleasure; it is falling below humanity. You are simply using the other as a means.

When you make love to a woman without any respect towards her, what you really are doing is nothing more than masturbation. You are using the woman only to deceive yourself. There is no connection between you and her. When you go to a prostitute, that is not pleasure; that is lust. You are paying. Love cannot be purchased; only bodies can be purchased.

And remember, when you purchase a body it is a dead body; the soul is not there. The woman is somehow tolerating you because she needs money. She hates you from her very guts; she would like to kill you. But she is pretending to be very loving, very affectionate, because she is being paid for it. With her closed eyes she thinks of other things; she simply tolerates you. You are using her as a means, and she is using you as a means. She wants the money, you want the body; it is a mutual exploitation.

Lloyd went to visit his favorite lady of the evening. He rang the bell and found there was no answer. Then he put on his glasses and read a note that was pinned to the door: "On vacation. Do it yourself."

It is not more than that. It is a mutual masturbatory practice -- ugly. It is not even pleasure.

Buddha says: All these streams are rushing towards you -- DESIRE AND PLEASURE AND LUST....

PLAY IN YOUR IMAGINATION WITH THEM
AND THEY WILL SWEEP YOU AWAY.

And you are all full of imagination. Making love to your wife you are not making love to her; you may be thinking of Sophia Loren or Lollobrigida, and she may be thinking of somebody else. Both are pretending. Their imagination is somewhere else. If you could look into the minds of people who are making love you would be surprised.... It is very rare to find only two persons in a single bed; you will find a crowd. At least four are absolutely certain. It

is always group sex, because their minds are fancying, fantasizing.

Even grown-up people -- so-called grown-up people -- are living in imagination. Not only children live in imagination; even old people live in imagination. People go on playing with toys, they never wake up. Their imagination continues to keep them asleep.

Once again we enter that handy vehicle, the time capsule, and journey back through the sexy sixties, the nifty fifties, the fighting forties, the dirty thirties, and on into the roaring twenties where we stop, hat askew and shirt-tails flying from that fast and breezy trip. We are at that point in time when the transplanting of monkey glands and other such operations for the restoration of male vigor were in vogue.

Surgery for the restoration of youth had just been performed on a seventy-year-old man who had hoped that, as a result, his chromosomes would henceforth be bouncing off the ceiling. As he came out from under the influence of the ether he began to weep bitterly.

Mrs. Bernstein, the attending nurse, bent over him.

"Mister, it is not necessary for you to feel worried," she said kindly. "The operation was a big success. Take my word, when you leave here you will feel twenty years younger. Maybe more, who knows?"

But the poor old man only continued to wail, the tears coursing down his cheeks and losing themselves in his long white whiskers.

"Please don't cry," pleaded Mrs. Bernstein. "The pain will soon go away."

"Who is crying from pain?" sobbed the patient. "I am afraid I will be late for school."

Just look deep down inside yourself and you will find the child intact; it has not grown up. The ordinary mental age of every human being is not more than twelve. Physiologically you may be eighty; psychologically you are hanging around twelve. Hence, once in a while, you start behaving like a child -- in spite of yourself. If you are pushed and pulled too much you forget that you are a grown-up person. The child is sitting there, covered by many experiences, but those experiences have not been digested; covered by much knowledge, but that knowledge has not become your wisdom because it has not been achieved through awareness. You have been collecting and accumulating it in your sleep, so you have accumulated much rubbish alongside. Yes, once in a while you may have picked up a diamond too, not knowing that it is a diamond -- just another colored stone.

PLAY IN YOUR IMAGINATION WITH THEM AND THEY WILL SWEEP YOU AWAY. If you allow desire and pleasure and lust and greed and anger and jealousy and possessiveness and violence and all these rushing streams towards you, they will sweep you away. Don't play with them in your imagination; that is strengthening them, that is getting under their sway.

And the miracle is that everybody can understand everybody else's imagination, except his own. When somebody falls in love with somebody else you say, "How foolish!" Everybody thinks they have gone crazy. "Look at the face of that woman. She looks like a Picasso painting! And why is this man crazy about her? What does he see in her?" And when YOU fall in love, then it is totally different. She is a Cleopatra! Nobody else will agree with you; it is your imagination. And the same goes on and on in different layers, in different dimensions.

The nonsense that is written in your religious scriptures is absolutely right; it is scientific. The nonsense that is written in others' scriptures is so clearly nonsense; there can be no question about it, no doubt about it. Hindus can see all kinds of stupidities in the Bible, and

Christians see all kinds of stupidities in Hindu scriptures. But this seems to be really a miracle: that no Hindu will see in his own scriptures anything wrong; everything is scientific. And not only does he think it is scientific, he tries to prove it.

Once a Hindu monk was brought to me. He came with many followers. One of his followers said, "He is a very great scholar; he has written many books. And his whole effort in his life has been to prove that Hinduism is the only scientific religion of the world."

I said, "Can he give any example?"

He said, "You can ask anything and he will say why it is scientific."

I asked him, "Why do Hindus cut all their hair but keep a small bunch -- the CHOTI -- on the top of their heads?"

He said, "Simple! Have you ever looked at big buildings? They keep there an iron rod." I could not see the point immediately.

He said, "It is to protect the building from electricity. Hindus discovered it long ago: if you keep a choti -- a little bunch of hair -- standing up on your head, it saves you, protects you from electricity."

Now, what nonsense he is talking! But he is known as a great mahatma because he is helping your egos; he is proving that your religion is scientific. He had come to see me with all his disciples. They were all wearing wooden shoes, wooden CHAPPALS -- KHARHAON -- and making great noise. The way Hindus have been using those wooden shoes for centuries.... It is really difficult because you have to hold them on with your toes, between your toes. It is heavy.

I asked him, "Why this? What science is there?"

He said, "It keeps one celibate. The pressure of it is such that it keeps one's sexual glands nonfunctioning." Great, just great!

So I said, "Then India need not bother about population. Just give wooden shoes to everybody and let them all grow chotis so electricity does not affect them, sexuality does not affect them. They will all be saints. Such simple formulas!"

But Hindus think he is doing a great service to Hinduism. That's how it is with all the religions. Your imagination is truth; others' truth is only imagination.

A rabbi and a priest were discussing the differences between the Old Testament and the New. It was the priest's contention that the New Testament gave more proof of divine cooperation because of all its purported miracles.

"Remember," argued the priest, "our Lord walked on water, he raised the dead, he fed hundreds of people with a few loaves of bread and some little fishes, he changed water into wine, and he ascended bodily into heaven."

"So what does that prove?" insisted the rabbi. "The Old Testament includes such miracles as parting the Red Sea, making the sun stand still, Moses ascending bodily to Mount Sinai to talk personally with God and to receive the Decalogue from the very hands of the Almighty."

The priest nodded. "I believe in those miracles too," he acknowledged. "But be honest about it -- do you really think your miracles have as much substance as ours?"

The rabbi glared at him. "What is the matter with you?" he snapped crossly. "Can't you distinguish between fact and fiction?"

OUR fiction is a fact and YOUR fiction is fiction -- your fact too is fiction.

Beware of imagination. It can cloud your mind. It can destroy your capacity to see

clearly. Hence I say: Unless you drop being Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, you will not be able to see clearly. Your imagination has been contaminated for centuries. All your ideas and ideologies have to be put aside so that your eyes can face, can encounter truth as it is.

Imagination keeps you asleep. If you come out of your imagination you start waking up.

Gurdjieff used to say to his disciples that the most important thing is to remember in a dream that "This is a dream." But how to do it? It seems almost impossible. How to remember in a dream that "This is a dream"? But if you practice the Gurdjieffian method, one day you can remember it.

The method is simple. You have to go on remembering the whole day, whatsoever you see, that "This is a dream." Walking on the street, "This is a dream"; the dog barking, "This is a dream." Go on remembering the whole day, "This is a dream, this is a dream...." It takes three to nine months for the idea to sink into your heart. Then one day, suddenly, in your dream you remember and you say, "This is a dream!" -- and that is a moment of great illumination. Immediately, the dream disappears. The moment you say it is a dream, it disappears and you are awake, fully awake, in the middle of the night.

Of course, these trees and the people on the road are not a dream so they don't disappear. You can go on saying, "This is a dream." That was just a method to practice. But when you really remember in a dream that "This is a dream," the dream disappears. The dream can exist only if believed; the dream disappears if you don't believe in it. Our imagination is intoxicating.

Lend an ear to this exchange of dialogue, circa 1936, when Dr. William Goldman was professor of English at Brandeis University.

It was Graduation Day, and the father of one of the students had celebrated, not wisely, but all too well. He was in the parking lot adjacent to the university campus, peering owlishly at the cars, when Dr. Goldman appeared.

"Say, mister," called the weaving celebrant. "Is my car the one on the left or on the right?"

"Yours is the car on the right, sir," replied the professor. "The car on the left is a subjective phenomenon."

It does not exist -- just a subjective phenomenon. That's exactly the meaning of the Indian word MAYA: a subjective phenomenon, it does not exist. But if you believe, it exists. It depends on you. You can make it almost function as real. And there are many things which don't exist, but you are believing in them and for you they are realities. And you are surrounded by fictions -- religious, spiritual, metaphysical. There are so many fictions surrounding you -- and you have to wake up from all these.

POWERFUL STREAMS! Buddha says.

They are everywhere....

THEY FLOW EVERYWHERE.

These streams are powerful, and your sleep is so deep. It seems very difficult to wake up -- but you can wake up. My own observation is that these streams are powerful only in the proportion that you are asleep. If you become less sleepy they are less powerful. If you become fully awake, their power disappears totally.

A drunk was passing a bus intersection when a large Saint Bernard brushed against him and knocked him down. An instant later a foreign sports car skidded around the corner and inflicted more damage.

A bystander helped the poor fellow up and said, "Are you hurt?" "Well," he answered, "the dog did not hurt so much, but that tin can tied to his tail nearly killed me."

Now, when you are not in your senses you go on seeing things which are not there at all or you go on projecting things. The world becomes a screen and you live in a private world. That's exactly the meaning of the word 'idiot': to live in a private world, to live in a subjective phenomenon. That's the meaning of 'idiot'.

After each drink at the local pub, Murphy took a small, furry kitten from his pocket, put it on the counter and stared at it. Finally the barman could no longer contain his curiosity and asked Murphy what he was up to.

"Well, you see, it is this way," said Murphy. "So long as I can see one kitten it is alright. But when I see two of them I have to do something."

"Like what?"

"I pick up the two of them, put them in my pocket, and go home," said the Irishman.

If you are intoxicated you will see the same world but in a different way. Your imagination will get mixed with it. You will not be able to make any distinction between what is fiction and what is fact. You will not have any power of discrimination. That's exactly what makes these streams so powerful. **THEY FLOW EVERYWHERE.**

**STRONG WINE!
IF YOU SEE IT SPRING UP,
TAKE CARE!
PULL IT OUT BY THE ROOTS.**

So whenever you see some imagination arising in you, be alert. Don't let it grow, don't let it become a big tree. It will be far more difficult then for you to get rid of it because you may become attached to it; you may have invested many things in it; you may have started liking its company; you may feel unsheltered without it. It is better to cut it from the very roots in the very beginning. The moment you see it arising in you, take care, beware -- beware means be aware -- **PULL IT OUT BY THE ROOTS.**

People go on changing. They don't pull out things by their roots; they substitute one fiction with another fiction. That may give you a relief for the moment, but it does not transform your life. Somebody is running after money, then he stops running after money; he starts running after power. Then he stops running after power and starts running after God or meditation or enlightenment. But he goes on running after something or other. He goes on substituting a new fiction for the old; the old functions no more. He has seen it is fictitious, but he has not yet got the point that one has to uproot **ALL** imagination in one's being.

Lovebirds are supposed to be so devoted to one another that if one dies the other dies of a broken heart. A woman who owned a very cute pair had a fire in the house and one of the lovebirds was suffocated. Right away the other bird began to pine. The woman wondered if

there was not some way to keep it alive so she put a mirror in the cage.

The lovebird let out a joyous coo and cuddled up against the mirror, and lived for two years. It then died -- of a broken mirror.

One can postpone -- but don't go on postponing. Your life is very precious. If one lovebird dies it is better to come to your senses rather than replace it by a mirror or by something else.

PLEASURES FLOW EVERYWHERE.
YOU FLOAT UPON THEM
AND ARE CARRIED FROM LIFE TO LIFE.

Watch out. It is a risky phenomenon to remain too much attached to your pleasures, to your imagination, because this is how you have been going from one life to another. The seed cause of birth and death is desire, imagination, hankering for more. And remember, you are feeling so discontented in life because of your imagination. The more imaginative you are, the more discontented you will feel.

Poets are very discontented people, so are painters, for the simple reason that they can imagine very well. They can imagine such a beautiful world that this world, in comparison, starts looking like hell. Ordinary people are not so discontented for the simple reason that they don't have that much imagination. This world seems to be good enough for them.

When imagination simply disappears from you, this world -- this very world -- is the lotus paradise. It is because of your imagination that you go on condemning this world. And remember, your imagination will be with you even if you are taken by the back door into heaven. You will condemn it, you will find faults. You will find a thousand and one things which should not be. You will find loopholes, flaws. Even in paradise you are going to be miserable. And a man without imagination, without desire, even in hell will find paradise. It is not outside you that paradise or hell exist; they exist inside you.

If your mind is unclouded, if you can see clearly, then everywhere you will find bliss showering. Each moment you will find paradise descending in you. Each moment you will find yourself surrounded by God. You need not go to Kaaba, you need not go to Kashi, you need not go anywhere. God is coming to you in thirty-six streams, but because you are asleep that which could have been a blessing becomes a curse. Be aware and transform your curses into blessings. Just by being aware the transformation happens on its own accord.

LIKE A HUNTED HARE YOU RUN,
THE PURSUER OF DESIRE PURSUED,
HARRIED FROM LIFE TO LIFE.

You think you are the pursuer, you think you are the hunter; that is not true. You think you are the possessor; that is not true. The possessor is really the possessed: your things start possessing you. You watch, and you will see the fact in your own life. Your things start possessing you. You don't use them -- they start using you. And you are not a hunter... in fact you are hunted by your desires; those are the real hunters. And you are running, pursuing shadows which you will never find. And who is pushing you from the back? Who is making you run? The real power is in the hands of your desire, imagination, in your unconsciousness.

O SEEKER!

GIVE UP DESIRE.
SHAKE OFF YOUR CHAINS.

One day Miss Tilly saw her big tomcat corner a cockroach in the kitchen. He was about to kill the bug when it addressed Miss Tilly: "Have your cat spare my life and I will grant you three wishes."

"A million dollars?" asked the spinster.

"Granted!" said the roach, producing the money.

"I want to be young and beautiful!"

"You got it!" And she was.

"Now," said Tilly, "turn my tomcat into a tall, handsome prince lying next to me in bed!" It was done.

"I am so happy!" she exclaimed.

"I am glad," said the prince beside her. "But aren't you sorry now you had me fixed?"

Even if your desires are fulfilled, something or other will be missing.

O SEEKER! GIVE UP DESIRE. SHAKE OFF YOUR CHAINS. The more you desire, the more you become imprisoned. People are imprisoned in things, people are imprisoned by wives and husbands, people are imprisoned by their power. People are creating so many prisons -- prisons within prisons, boxes within boxes -- and still they want to be happy, they want to be joyous. How can you be joyous? Your life is suffocating! And nobody else is responsible except you.

The kindly rebbetzyn asked, "Tell me, my good man, why do you drink all that whisky?"
"Madam," replied the good man, "what else should I do with it?"

You don't know what else you can do with your life. You know only how to create prisons. You know only how to create more misery. You have become really skillful! For centuries, for lives together, you have done only one thing: creating chains, creating misery, creating pain for yourself and for others. You are sadomasochistic; that is your whole art. Either you will torture others or you will torture yourself, but you will torture. You don't know that life can be a dance, a celebration. You can't know it till you drop your desiring.

Desire exists like a cloud of smoke around you; you can't see anything. And you go on giving more fuel, you go on creating more and more smoke around yourself. Your eyes are burning, your eyes are full of tears, you can't see, but still you think what you are doing is going to help you one day attain all the joys of life. What you are doing to yourself is only going to give you more pain, more misery, more suffering.

YOU HAVE COME OUT OF THE HOLLOW
INTO THE CLEARING.
THE CLEARING IS EMPTY.
WHY DO YOU RUSH BACK INTO THE HOLLOW?

Once in a while, it happens to you too; that you come out of your black hole -- the black hole of desiring -- into the clearing. Once in a while you can see.

Right now many of you can see that yes... a deep yes arises in you. You know perfectly well that you have been creating your misery, and you don't want.... It is just that you have become very skillful in the art; you don't know what else to do so you go on doing it. Without

doing it you feel very empty -- and you are very afraid of being empty.

For centuries emptiness has been condemned. Emptiness is beautiful. And the foolish people have been telling you, "The empty mind is the Devil's workshop." The empty mind is God's workshop! The OCCUPIED mind is the Devil's workshop.

But one has to be truly empty. Just being lazy does not mean that you are empty; not doing anything does not mean that you are empty. Thousands of thoughts are clamoring inside. You may be lazy on the outside, but inside much work is going on. Many walls are being created, new prisons are being prepared, so that when you get fed up with the old you can enter into the new. Old chains may break any time so you are creating new chains in case the old chains break; then you will feel very empty.

Once in a while it happens naturally -- because it is your very nature to be free. So once in a while, in spite of you... seeing a sunset, suddenly you forget all your desires. You forget all lust, all hankering for pleasure. The sunset is so beautiful, so overwhelming, that you forget the past and the future; only the present remains. You are so one with the moment, there is no observer and no observed. The observer becomes the observed. You are not separate from the sunset.

You are bridged; in such a communion you come into a clearing, and because of the clearing you feel joyous. But again you are back into the black hole for the simple reason that coming out into the clearing you need courage to remain in the empty sky.

That's what I call sannyas.

This courage I call sannyas -- not escaping but coming into the clearing, seeing the sky unclouded, listening to the songs of the birds without distorting. And then again and again you are becoming more and more attuned with the emptiness and the joy of being empty. And slowly slowly, you see that emptiness is not just emptiness; it is fullness, but a fullness of which you have never been aware, a fullness of which you have never tasted. So in the beginning it looks empty; in the end it is full, totally full, overflowingly full. It is full of peace, it is full of silence, it is full of light.

YOU HAVE COME OUT OF THE HOLLOW INTO THE CLEARING. Sometimes while meditating it happens, sometimes while listening to music it happens, sometimes while dancing it happens, sometimes while just sitting doing nothing it happens. That's what meditation is all about: allowing these moments to come more and more, welcoming these moments, cherishing these moments, so that you become easily capable of coming out of the black hole. And as you become accustomed to the clearing and the beauty of it and the blessing of it, you move less and less into the black hole. One day, suddenly you abandon the black hole; it is no more your home. The clearing becomes your home, clarity becomes your home. That is the day of great rejoicing.

DESIRE IS A HOLLOW
AND PEOPLE SAY, "LOOK!
HE WAS FREE.
BUT NOW HE GIVES UP HIS FREEDOM."

I can see it happening in you. Many times I see a certain person coming into the clearing and then moving again into the black hole.

This is what is happening to Somendra. He was coming into the clearing, he had tasted something of the clearing, but then the very experience of the clearing made him egoistic. It gave him a certain pious egoism. He started feeling special; hence, just the other day he was asking for recognition. He used to sit here in the third row; he wanted to sit in the first row.

Now he has disappeared from the third row. He sits somewhere in the back, and there too he sits not facing towards me; his BACK is towards me! Moving into the black hole again!

And this is happening to many people. Many people come into the clearing and then so easily they move into the black hole. In a way it seems logical, because they have lived in the black hole so long. The new experience is new and threatening and the black hole starts claiming them again and again.

This is happening to Turiya. She was coming into a clearing, and now moving into a black hole -- on her own accord. And the beauty of the whole thing is that when people start coming into the clearing they don't thank me at all. They don't write letters to me saying, "Thank you, Beloved Master." But when they start moving into the black hole they write great letters to me: "Why are you doing it to me? Why are you taking it away?" They had never thanked me. In the first place I had not given it to them, so how can I take it away? These things are not given or taken away.

These things, you have to understand, happen from your very center. And you have to learn one very fundamental rule: that when they happen there will be every possibility of moving back to the old pattern. You are so familiar with it, so accustomed to it -- you have lived in it for so long; it seems so safe, secure, cozy, warm. And the clearing seems to be cold, vast, empty, insecure. But in the clearing is real security because in the clearing is eternity. That black hole is only your mind, a small mind. But with the small mind you are familiar.

You have to learn to love the unfamiliar, the unknown, and one day finally, the unknowable. Then you move into the mysterious more and more. Only then can you say one day, "I know nothing" -- because existence is not knowable; it is a mystery, not to be solved. It is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived, to be loved, to be shared.

DESIRE IS A HOLLOW AND PEOPLE SAY, "LOOK! HE WAS FREE. BUT NOW HE GIVES UP HIS FREEDOM." And you are ready to give up your freedom -- you are ready to give up anything. You are so ready to give up your freedom -- for any toy. You don't know the value of freedom.

When the daughter of an aristocratic French family announces her engagement to a black man, Big Sam, her parents decide they must try to stop the marriage.

They call Big Sam in and tell him that their daughter is used to every luxury and has to have the finest, largest house in Paris to live in. The black man draws himself up and announces, "When Big Sam loves, Big Sam buys," and off he goes.

Sure enough, he buys the biggest and best house in Paris.

So the parents call him in again and tell him that their daughter longs for the largest, brightest diamond in all of France.

"When Big Sam loves, Big Sam gets," says the groom-to-be, and off he goes, returning with the biggest, brightest diamond the parents have ever seen.

In the last-ditch attempt to stop the marriage, the girl's father goes to see him privately, and tells him that to make their daughter happy he absolutely must have a prick that is twelve inches long.

The black man answers firmly, "When Big Sam loves, Big Sam cuts."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #2

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CANNOT THE PRIESTS HELP HUMANITY IN SOME WAY OR OTHER?

Veeresh, they have been helping humanity for centuries; hence this miserable state of things. They have helped a lot to create as many lies as possible -- lies which appear comfortable. But in the end, lies are lies. Maybe for the time being they give you a feeling of warmth, coziness, security, but only for the moment. Sooner or later you are in a far darker state, far colder than ever.

Priests have been inventing down the ages strategies for you to remain as you are. You don't want to change; you simply want comfortable lies to be handed over to you so that you can go on living the way you are. To change oneself needs courage. Priests help you to remain cowards. You are afraid of death. Priests go on consoling you, "Don't be worried. Your soul is eternal." And you don't have any idea of the soul at all.

George Gurdjieff used to say that it is very rare to come across a person who has a soul. Others are only empty; there is nothing inside. Yes, there is a potential to create the soul in everyone, but it is not an actuality. You can be a soul, you can become part of eternity, you can be immortal, but that is only a possibility. Much work -- hard work, arduous work -- will be needed to make it a reality, to realize it.

But priests have been telling you for centuries that you already have a soul. Only the body dies and the soul continues on its eternal pilgrimage. It consoles you. It keeps you, in a certain sense, together. You don't become too scared of death. In fact, it would be better if you WERE too scared of death. That very fear might start an inquiry in you. That very shock might trigger a process of transformation in you.

Buddha used to send his disciples to see the dead bodies being burned, to meditate there, to go on watching the flames consuming a body. And then in the end nothing is left, only a few bones and ashes. This was his usual procedure -- for the new sannyasins to be sent to watch the burning bodies, for three months at least, so that they can feel the reality of death, so that the reality of death sinks deep into their hearts. Only that can wake you up.

But the priests are helping, by giving you tranquilizers, to keep you asleep as comfortably as possible. That has been their service and we have paid them enough for their service. They are as ignorant as you are, as unaware as you are. They are in the same situation as you are: they also need consolation. They look into scriptures for their consolation. They go on reading the scriptures, continuously repeating the same scripture again and again, because that's how one gets autohypnotized. The Christian priest goes on reading the same Bible again and again, and the Hindu priest goes on reciting the Gita again and again. Every day, every morning he recites the same scripture. It becomes mechanical. It becomes like a gramophone record. He goes on repeating. It becomes part of his memory with no meaning, no significance. He is just like a parrot. But it gives consolation. Repeating again and again certain truths hypnotizes you.

Krishna says: When the body dies, the soul does not die. You can burn the body, but the fire cannot consume the soul. NA HANYATE HANYAMANE SHAREERE -- you can kill the body, but you cannot kill the spirit, you cannot kill the soul, because no arrow can reach to it, no sword can cut it. NAINAM CHHINDANTI SHASTRANI, NAINAM DAHATI PAVAKAH -- neither any weapon can cut me nor fire burn me. Go on repeating it again and again and again, year in, year out; you become autohypnotized. You start believing it, although you have not created any soul in you yet.

Krishna is right: the soul is eternal -- but in the first place you have to have it. It is not there. Soul means consciousness, soul means integratedness. Soul means that you know through your own experience that you are not the body and not the mind. It arises only through witnessing the bodymind mechanism; it is not created by repetition. Repetition is hypnosis. It is experienced just the other way: you have to become dehypnotized, you have to become unconditioned. You have to forget all the scriptures and all the priests and you have to look into yourself. Howsoever fearful it is, you have to encounter your interiority.

The priests help you to remain on the circumference. They seem to be great friends, but in the final reckoning they are the greatest enemies. It is not Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong who are the real enemies of religion. The real enemies are the priests, the popes, the shankaracharyas, and so on, so forth. They don't know what they are doing. How can they help you? They simply go on repeating tradition, handing over to you conventions -- ancient conventions, but dead.

You ask me, Veeresh, "Cannot the priests help humanity in some way or other?"

Yes, they can help... if they disappear! We no more need them. Man has come of age. All these consolations are not needed. We need people, rebellious people, not conventional priests. We need buddhas, awakened people to wake you up. We need buddhas, not these priests who go on giving you new toys to play with. And they have created beautiful toys, no doubt about it. They are very clever, cunning. Centuries of experience is behind them, how to exploit humanity, how to exploit humanity's weaknesses.

But remember: they don't differ from you in any way as far as consciousness is concerned. Maybe they know more than you know, their information is more than yours. That is a quantitative difference; it is not a difference that MAKES a difference. Some qualitative difference is needed.

And being led by blind people is dangerous. They have destroyed the whole beauty of human beings, they have destroyed the freedom of human beings. They have destroyed all that is valuable. They have left you just deserted, empty, meaningless. It is felt all over the world. Why are people feeling so empty and meaningless? Who has done this to them? Centuries of priesthoods, of different religions, have been giving them false consolations. All

those false consolations are no longer applicable. Man has become more adult. It is good to give children toys to play with, but when somebody comes of age and you go on giving him toys to play with, he will start feeling life is meaningless. He needs something more; he needs something more real.

Beware of being led by blind people!

A young woman, hardly more than a girl, went to see the local rabbi. "You don't know me," she began with a catch in her throat, "but I just had to speak to somebody. You see, I have no mother or father and I don't know much about worldly matters."

"You don't have to say another word," said the rabbi. "I understand perfectly. It is a man, isn't it?"

"Yes, and he is always trying to kiss me. Kiss, kiss, kiss -- that's all he ever thinks of."

You must be firm," said the rabbi sternly. "That kind of man you don't need. Just tell him you don't allow such kinds of goings-on."

As she left, the rabbi said, "Come back in a week and let me know how you are making out."

Sure enough, the girl returned a week later, but this time she was even more disturbed than before.

"What is the matter now?" asked the rabbi.

"I stopped him from all that kissing," said the unhappy young lady, "but now -- well, I don't know how to put it...."

"Put, put!" urged the rabbi. "With me you got nothing to be ashamed of."

"He's trying to -- er -- touch me with his hands," she stammered in embarrassment.

The rabbi rose from his chair in righteous anger. "You tell that no-goodnik he should keep his dirty hands to himself!" barked the rabbi. "What kind of a way is that to treat a decent Jewish girl? Tell him to stop at once, you hear?"

But when she visited the rabbi again she was almost in tears. "I did everything you said," moaned the girl, "but now he insists he wants to sleep with me."

"What!" yelled the outraged rabbi. "I never heard of such chutzpah in my whole life. You go right home and the next time you see him I want you to throw that bum out of the house. You understand? I am ordering you! Throw him out!"

A few days later she visited the rabbi once more. Her eyes were red from weeping and her face was a picture of misery.

"Did you do like I ordered?" demanded the rabbi.

She nodded, and, still sobbing, she said through her tears, "Now he wants a divorce!"

Your priests are as unconscious as you are, or even more. They are not even aware of the situation man is passing through. They go on handing out old recipes which are no more relevant. They go on giving you great advice which may have been useful sometime in the past but is utterly out of context in the present situation.

You don't need more priests and their help. You need a few awakened people in the world. You need more meditators -- not mediators. The priests have been mediators between you and God. You need more meditators, people who go deeper into their being, people who become centered, people who know the inner silence, the virgin silence and the tremendous beauty of it. They will help humanity, and they will not help humanity directly either. Their very presence will radiate new vibes which can transform.

A real person always helps people indirectly. He is not aggressive. He does not command

you, "Do this, don't do that." He does not destroy your freedom in any way. He simply lives his life in the light that he has found within himself. And being with him, something transpires between you and him.

A real master is never a priest. And I have never heard about a priest who was a real master. If you are a master you cease to be a priest, and if you are a priest it is impossible for you to be a master. The priest belongs to a certain ideology -- Hindu, Christian, Mohammedan. The master belongs to no ideology. He is more conscious, not more knowledgeable. He has more being, not more knowledge. He has more soul, not a bigger memory. He may not know the scriptures -- because he himself IS the scripture! And you will not find him in the temples and the mosques and the churches.

I have heard about a very religious Negro who wanted to go to the church, but there was only one church in his neighborhood and that belonged to white people.

The priest was a kindly man -- as priests are supposed to be. When the Negro knocked on the door one day, the priest came out. The priest was in an embarrassing situation -- whether to say yes to him or no. To say yes was dangerous because the whole congregation will be against it. It was the white people's church and no black person had been allowed; that was a tacit agreement. But how to say no to this simple man whose eyes were full of tears and who said, "I want to come in and I want to pray to Jesus Christ"?

But priests are cunning people. Howsoever kind they may appear on the surface, deep down they are cunning. If they are not cunning they will not be in the profession of the priests at all, because that profession is far worse than any other profession. Even prostitutes are better than priests! At least they sell only their bodies, and priests are selling even their souls.

The priest immediately invented some strategy. He said, "Good, you can come, but not right now. First purify yourself, only then your prayer will be heard."

That was a tricky strategy. No white man was ever asked to purify himself first, and then enter into the church. And who is going to decide when the man is pure enough? That will be up to the priest and he can always go on saying, "You are not pure enough yet."

The Negro went back. He was really in a deep love affair with God; he cried and wept, and he tried in every possible way not to do anything wrong, to avoid anything that may make him impure. For three weeks he remained in isolation, fasting, praying. And after three weeks God appeared to him: his desire was fulfilled.

After that experience he went to the church. The priest was very much afraid -- this man was coming again, and he had such a beautiful aura around him that the priest was very much afraid to say, "You are not pure yet." His purity was shining; it was like a sun rising on the horizon. It was so clearly there that to deny it would be a sin, and the priest was afraid.

The man came very close to the door, just near the steps, stood there, laughed loudly, turned back and went home. The priest was very much puzzled why he did this. He ran after him, got hold of him and said, "Why did you do this? Don't you want to come in the church?"

He said, "No, I don't want to come in the church. I had just come to see you and the church once more, because last night God appeared and I asked him -- when he himself was there I asked him, 'Can I enter into the church? Am I pure enough now?' God said, 'You are pure, more pure than anybody else who goes into the church, more pure than the priest himself. But please, don't go into the church. They won't allow you in. I know it from my own experience because for years I have been trying to go into that church and they don't allow me. If they don't allow ME into the church, how can they allow you? You drop the whole idea. I have dropped it myself!'"

Your churches, your temples are empty. They are graves of religion. Religion no more flowers there. Yes, when a Jesus is alive there is a great flowering, when Buddha is alive there is a great flowering, but not in a Buddhist temple, not in a Christian church.

Priests are the people who take advantage of the awakened ones. Once the awakened person goes, leaves his body, the priests jump upon his doctrine, start making a great business out of it, start making interpretations according to themselves.

Christianity has nothing to do with Christ, remember, and Buddhism has nothing to do with Buddha, and Jainism has nothing to do with Mahavira. It is a strange thing, but it has been happening consistently. No religion has anything to do with the original source. In fact, Christians are more destructive to Christ's message than anybody else, and the priests are the leaders of the Christians. They don't have any relationship with Christ -- they can't have. They are afraid of Christ. They must be afraid deep down that if sometime they come across Christ and he asks, "What have you done to my message?" how are they going to answer it?

I have heard:

Once the phone rang in the pope's room in the Vatican. There was nobody else there so the pope himself took the call. It was from New York, and the archpriest from New York was trembling, his voice was trembling. He said, "Look! Listen! Believe me -- one man has come into the church and he looks exactly like Jesus Christ. What am I supposed to do now?"

The pope pondered over it for a few moments and then said, "Look busy!"

What else to do?

Priests have dominated humanity. They are the politicians of the inner world, just as politicians are the priests of the outer world. And there is a conspiracy between the priests and the politicians, a mutual understanding, a division: "You rule man in his subjectivity and we will rule man from his outside." They have exploited, oppressed. They have destroyed much.

And, Veeresh, you ask me, "Cannot the priests help humanity in some way or other?"

The only way that I can conceive is that because they are no longer needed, they should disappear. That will be their greatest service to humanity.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL AN URGE FOR ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND HAVE HAD A DISCIPLINED, CLASSICAL TRAINING IN WESTERN MUSIC. OFTEN I FEEL THIS TRAINING IMPRISONS SPONTANEOUS CREATIVITY AND I HAVE FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO PRACTICE REGULARLY LATELY. I AM NOT SURE ANYMORE WHAT THE QUALITIES OF TRUE ART ARE AND BY WHICH PROCESS THE ARTIST PRODUCES AND DELIVERS AUTHENTIC ART. HOW CAN I FEEL THE ARTIST IN ME?

Barbara Limberger, the paradox of art is that first you have to learn its discipline and then you have to forget it totally. If you don't know its ABC you will not be able to move very deep into it. But if you know only its technique and you go on practicing the technique your whole life you may become very skillful technically, but you will remain a technician; you

will never become an artist.

In Zen they say, if you want to be a painter, for twelve years learn how to paint and then for twelve years forget all about painting. Just completely forget -- it has nothing to do with you. For twelve years meditate, chop wood, carry water from the well. Do anything, but not painting.

And then one day you will be able to paint. Twenty-four years training: twelve years training in learning the technique and twelve years training in forgetting the technique. And then you can paint. Now the technique has become just a part of you; it is no longer technical knowledge, it has become part of your blood and bones and marrow. Now you can be spontaneous. It will not hinder you, it will not imprison you.

That's exactly MY experience too.

Now don't go on practicing. Forget all about classical music. Do other kinds of things: gardening, sculpture, painting, but forget about classical music, as if it does not exist at all. For a few years let it remain deep down in your being so that it becomes digested. It is no longer a technique then. Then one day a sudden urge will take possession of you -- and then start playing again. And when you play again, don't be bothered too much about the technique, otherwise you will never be spontaneous.

Be a little innovative -- that's what creativity is. Innovate new ways, new means. Try something new that nobody has ever done. The greatest creativity happens in people whose training is of some other discipline.

For example, if a mathematician starts playing music he will bring something new to the world of music. If a musician becomes a mathematician he will bring something new to the world of mathematics. All great creativity happens through people who move from one discipline to another. It is like crossbreeding. And children that come out of crossbreeding are far healthier, far more beautiful.

That's why in every country for centuries, marriages between brothers and sisters have been prohibited; there is a reason in it. A marriage is better if it is between people who are very distantly related or not related at all as far as blood is concerned. It will be good if people from one race marry into another race. And if some day we discover people on some other planet, the best way will be a crossbreeding between earth and the other planet. Then newer kinds, newer people will be coming into existence.

The prohibition, the taboo against brother/sister relationship, their marriage, is significant, scientifically significant. But it has not been worked out into detail to its extreme, to its logical extreme. The logical extreme is that no Indian should marry another Indian, no German should marry another German. The best thing is that a German marries an Indian, an Indian marries a Japanese, a Japanese marries a Negro, a Negro marries an American, a Jew marries a Christian, a Christian marries a Hindu, a Hindu marries a Mohammedan. That will be the best thing. That will raise the consciousness of the whole planet. It will give better children, more alert, more alive, richer in every possible way.

But we are so foolish that we can do anything, we can accept anything. Then what am I saying...?

Chauncey, a handsome, almost pretty young man, was speaking earnestly with his mother.

"Mumsie, the time has come -- it really has -- when we must have a heart-to-heart talk about my relationship with Myron. To be quite candid about it, our relationship has blossomed into -- how shall I say it without sounding indelicate? -- well, into something beautiful and good

and even holy. The truth is, Mumsie dear, I love Myron and Myron loves me in return. We want to be married as soon as possible and we both hope you will give us your blessings."

"But Chauncey," the mother protested, "do you realize what you are saying? Can you honestly expect me to condone such a marriage? What will people say? What will our friends and neighbors think?"

"Ah, Mumsie, you are going to be dreary -- I can feel it in my bones. And after we have been such good pals, too. I never would have believed it of you -- of all people. I could just cry!"

"But, son, you can't go against convention like this!"

"Alright, Mumsie, let us have it right out in the open like civilized persons. Exactly and precisely what possible objection could you or anyone else have to Myron and me becoming husband and husband?"

"You know perfectly well why I object: he is Jewish!"

She is not objecting to a homosexual marriage; she is objecting because he is Jewish. People are so much against each other. They have been conditioned for this antagonism for so long that they have forgotten completely that we are all human beings, that we belong to the same earth, to the same planet.

The greater the distance between the wife and the husband, the better will be the by-product of the marriage.

And the same happens in music, in painting, in mathematics, in physics, in chemistry: a kind of crossbreeding. Whenever a person moves from one discipline to another discipline he brings the flavor of his discipline, although that discipline cannot be practiced. What can you do with your music when you go into physics? You have to forget all about it, but it remains in the background. It has become part of you; it is going to affect whatsoever you do. Physics is so far away, but if you have been disciplined in music, sooner or later you will find theories, hypotheses, which somehow have the color and the fragrance of music. You may start feeling that the world is a harmony -- not a chaos but a cosmos. You may start feeling, searching into deeper realms of physics, that existence is an orchestra. Now, that is not possible for one who has not known anything of music.

If a dancer moves into music he will bring something new, he will contribute something new to music.

My suggestion is that people should go on moving from one discipline into another discipline. When you become accustomed to one discipline, when you become imprisoned with the technique, just slip out of it into another discipline. It is a good idea, a great idea to go on moving from one discipline into another. You will find yourself becoming more and more creative.

One thing has to be remembered: if you are really creative you may not become famous. A really creative person takes time to become famous because he has to create the values -- new values, new criteria, only then can he be judged. He has to wait at least fifty years; by that time he is dead. Only then people start appreciating him. If you want fame, then forget all about creativity. Then just practice and practice, and just go on doing the thing that you are doing more skillfully, more technically perfectly, and you will be famous -- because people understand it; it is already accepted.

Whenever you bring something new into the world you are bound to be rejected. The world never forgives a person who brings anything new to the world. The creative person is bound to be punished by the world, remember it. The world appreciates the uncreative but skillful person, the technically perfect person, because technical perfection simply means

perfection of the past. And everybody understands the past, everybody has been educated to understand it. To bring something new into the world means nobody will be able to appreciate it. It is so new that there are not any criteria against which it can be valued. No methods are still in existence which can help people to understand it. It will take at least fifty years or more; the artist will be dead. By that time people will start appreciating it.

Vincent van Gogh was not appreciated in his day. Not even a single painting was ever sold. Now each of his paintings is sold for millions of dollars -- and people were not ready even to accept those paintings as gifts from Vincent van Gogh -- the same paintings. He had given them to friends, to anybody who was ready to hang them in their room. Nobody was ready to hang his pictures in their rooms because people were worried. Others would ask, "Have you gone mad or something? What kind of painting is this?"

Vincent van Gogh had his own world. He has brought a new vision. It took many many decades; slowly slowly, humanity started feeling that something was there. Humanity is slow and lethargic; it lags behind time. And the creative person is always ahead of his time, hence the gap.

So, Barbara, if you really want to be creative you will have to accept that you can't be famous, you can't be well-known. If you really want to be creative, then you have to learn the simple phenomenon: art for art's sake, for no other motive. Then enjoy whatsoever you are doing. If you can find a few friends to enjoy it, good; if nobody is there to enjoy, then enjoy it alone. If YOU are enjoying it, that is enough. If you feel fulfilled through it, that is enough.

You ask me, "I am not sure anymore what the qualities of true art are."

True art means: if it helps you to become silent, still, joyous; if it gives you a celebration; if it makes you dance -- whether anybody participates with you or not is irrelevant; if it becomes a bridge between you and God -- that is true art. If it becomes a meditation, that is true art. If you become absorbed in it, so utterly absorbed that the ego disappears, that is true art.

True art comes very close to religion. So don't be worried what true art is. If you rejoice in doing it, if you feel lost in doing it, if you feel overwhelmed with joy and peace in doing it, it is true art. And don't be bothered what critics say. Critics don't know anything about art. In fact, the people who cannot become artists become critics. If you cannot participate in a running race, if you cannot be an Olympic runner, at least you can stand by the side of the road and throw stones at other runners; that you can do easily.

That's what critics go on doing. They can't be participants, they can't create anything.

I have heard about a Sufi mystic who loved painting, and all the critics of his time were against him. Everybody would come and show him, "This is wrong, that is wrong."

He became tired of these people, so one day, in front of his house he hung all his paintings and he invited all the critics and told them to come with brushes, with colors, so that they can correct his paintings, because they have criticized enough; now the time has come to correct.

Not a single critic turned up. It is easy to criticize, it is difficult to correct. And since then critics stopped coming and stopped criticizing his paintings. He did the right thing.

People who don't know how to create become critics. So don't be worried about them. The decisive thing is your inner feeling, inner glow, inner warmth. If making music gives you a feeling of warmth, joy arises in you, ego disappears, then it becomes a bridge between you and God. And art can be the most prayerful thing, the most meditative thing possible. If you

can be in any art, music, painting, sculpture, dance, if any art can take a grip of your being, that's the best way to pray, the best way to meditate. Then you don't need any other meditation; that is your meditation. That will lead you slowly slowly, step by step, into God. So this is my criterion: if it leads you towards God, it is true art, it is authentic art.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Sargamo, I totally agree with Tristan Bernard, the French-Jewish writer, who was once asked the same question. He was asked what he thought of life after death. He replied, "With regard to the climate, I would prefer heaven, but with regard to the company I would give preference to hell."

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT TO DO WITH THE PERSISTENCE OF UNBLISSFUL, SEEMINGLY INFINITE RESISTANCE?

Amit Prem, accept it, don't resist it. Don't resist the resistance. That's what you are doing. The first resistance is not the problem at all; the second resistance creates the problem. You are resisting your resistance. Your misery is unnecessarily multiplied. You drop the second resistance and you will be surprised: if you drop the second, the first will evaporate on its own accord.

Jesus says: Resist not evil. A very strange statement... no other awakened person has given such a rebellious statement. Christian priests, missionaries, don't talk about it at all. They talk about other things, but they don't talk about this strange statement: Resist not evil. It seems very illogical, irreligious. Evil has to be resisted -- and Jesus says: Resist not evil. Why?

There is a secret in it. If you resist evil, you give energy to it. Every resistance gives energy to the thing resisted. "Don't resist evil" means if you don't resist it, it will drop on its own accord because you will not be nourishing it by your energy; you are disconnected immediately.

Amit Prem, you say, "What to do with the persistence of unblissful, seemingly infinite resistance?"

Nothing has to be done. If you do anything you will create this resistance more and more; that's how you have made it infinite. It is not infinite. Only God is infinite, nothing else. How can your resistance be infinite? But you are making it infinite because you are pouring your energy into it. You are trying to resist it, fight it, repress it in subtle ways -- so it comes up again and again.

My suggestion is: Accept it, and then see what happens. Whatsoever happens is good. In the beginning you may be afraid in accepting it. In the beginning you will think, "If I accept it then I will have to follow it." No, that is not the truth. If you totally accept it you will see it dying immediately -- you have cut the very roots. That's what Jesus means. He wants to destroy evil totally; hence he says: Resist not evil. If you resist you will go on feeding it.

The first resistance is never the problem, the second resistance is. And you cannot do

anything about the first; you can do something only about the second, because that is yours. What can be done? If resistance is there it is there -- welcome it, accept it. But you are doing that in many ways.

Amit Prem goes on writing letters to me: "I feel very sad, I feel very miserable, depressed. I suffer from an inferiority complex." When I was reading his letter in which he talks about his suffering from an inferiority complex I was reminded about a politician who was going through psychoanalysis....

After three years of great psychoanalytic work, the psychoanalyst one day welcomed him beaming with joy, and he said, "Come in. I have found everything. Now there is no need for any psychoanalysis anymore. Your problem is solved!"

The politician was also happy. He said, "What solution have you found?"

And the psychoanalyst said, "You are not suffering from an inferiority complex -- you simply ARE inferior, so there is no problem!"

This is acceptance. Amit Prem, you simply ARE inferior -- accept it! You suffer from an inferiority complex because there is a great desire to be superior. That desire for superiority creates in its wake the suffering of an inferiority complex. Accept it.

I am inferior -- look at me! You can't be more inferior than me. I am so ordinary! I cannot do any miracle, I cannot walk on water. I must be suffering from an inferiority complex -- because Jesus walked on water. You see how ordinary I am! But I am so blissful because I go on saying, "So what?" I can't walk on water, that's true. I don't make a problem out of it. You can make a problem out of anything.

I have heard:

When Moses was coming from Egypt and the enemies were following on his heels and they came close to the sea, now there was a problem: What to do? The sea was a barrier and the enemy was closing in. They were coming closer and closer every moment.

And then suddenly a miracle happened: the sea became divided into two parts. Huge columns of water on both the sides and a small pathway....

Moses looked at the sky and said, "My God, only one thing I have to ask you. Why is it always me who has to be the first? Now I have to enter into this danger! Why do I have to be the first always?"

You can even complain about your miracles -- and I don't complain even about my ordinariness.

Golda Meir, the ex-prime minister of Israel, used to say again and again, "I cannot forgive Moses. For forty years he led our people in the desert, and he found Israel -- the only place where there is no oil! I cannot forgive this man. And he passed many places which had oil."

Amit Prem, simply accept the way you are. You can't be anybody else. Because you are trying to be somebody else, that creates the trouble.

He goes on writing to me, "I want to be an insider in the ashram, and I remain on the periphery." So what is wrong with being on the periphery? I am not even on the periphery! You are at least on the periphery. Wherever you are, enjoy it. If you become accustomed to creating misery for yourself, even if you are at the very center you will be suffering. You will

say, "God, why do I have to be at the center always and to carry the whole responsibility?"

I say, I am not at the center because I carry no responsibility at all. You will not find a more irresponsible person in the whole world than I am. I have no responsibility at all. Even on the periphery you have some responsibilities. Even the guards sitting on the gate have some responsibility.

Learn to enjoy wherever you are and whatsoever you are. Don't make much fuss about it. If there is resistance it is natural, because this whole process is of surrender. Sannyas is surrender. Resistance is natural. So accept it, and through acceptance it will die a natural death.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU AGAINST THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT?

Shakti, I am not against women, I am all for them. But the liberation movement is something ugly -- and I know the responsibility is on the male chauvinists. They have been doing so much harm to women down the ages that now the woman wants to take revenge. But whenever you start taking revenge you become destructive. The movement is still in a destructive phase; it has not become creative. And I am against destructiveness.

It is of no use to go on looking at past wounds. It is of no use to take revenge because of the past. One should learn to forgive and forget. Yes, it was wrong -- accept it. Whatsoever has been done to women down the ages was absolutely wrong. Man HAS exploited them. Man has been very brutal, very animalistic. Man has reduced women to slaves; even more than that, he has reduced them to things, to possessions. But what is the point of taking revenge? Then you become the pursuer and man becomes the pursued. Then another kind of chauvinism begins to take form and shape. Then the female chauvinist is born. And this is not going to put things right. Then the women will start doing harm to men, and sooner or later they will take revenge. Where is this going to stop? It is a vicious circle.

And my feeling is that instead of men stopping it, it is far easier for women to stop it, to come out of the vicious circle -- because they are more loving, more compassionate. Man is more aggressive, more violent. I don't have much hope from men, I hope much from women. Hence I am not in favor of the aggressive attitude and approach of the Women's Lib movement.

Mrs. Farid presented herself at the gate of heaven and knocked with trembling hand. "Madam," said Father Abraham, peering suspiciously through a peephole, "from whence did you come?"

"From Flatbush I came," replied Mrs. Farid with embarrassment, as great beads of perspiration spangled her spiritual brow.

"Never mind, my daughter," replied the patriarch compassionately. "Eternity is a long time; you can live that down."

"Mister, I got something to confess," she went on, obviously worried.

"In our religion we don't have confessions."

"But this is different. If you will take a look in your records, you will see that maybe I don't belong here. I -- I -- well -- I poisoned my husband and I chopped up my brother-in-law. Not only that, I..."

Father Abraham suddenly grew stern. "Your aggressive behavior does indeed present a problem, madam. Were you a member of the Women's Liberation movement?"

"No."

The gates of pearl and alabaster swung open upon their golden hinges, making the most ravishing music, and the patriarch bowed low.

"Enter into thy eternal rest."

But Mrs. Farid hesitated. "The poisoning, the chopping, the... the...." she stammered.

"Of no consequence, I assure you. We are not going to be hard on a lady who did not belong to the Women's Lib. Take a harp."

"But I applied for membership. They would not let me in."

"Take two harps."

Don't be worried, Shakti. There are many women here who have belonged to the Women's Lib movement. But as they have come closer to me, their attitudes have changed, their approach has changed. Life's problems can only be solved by love, they cannot be solved by any violent approach.

Men and women are different worlds; hence it is difficult to understand each other. And the past has been full of misunderstandings, but that is not necessarily to be so in the future. We can learn a lesson from the past, and the only lesson is that man and woman have to become more understanding of each other and more accepting of each other's differences. Those differences are valuable, they need not create any conflict; in fact, they are the causes of attraction between them. If all the differences between men and women disappear, if they have the same kind of psychology, love will also disappear because the polarity will not be there. Man and woman are like negative and positive poles of electricity: they are pulled towards each other magnetically; they are opposite poles. Hence, conflict is natural. But through understanding, through compassion, through love, through looking into the other's world and trying to be sympathetic to it, all the problems can be solved. There is no need to create more conflict -- enough is enough.

Man needs as much liberation as woman. Both need liberation -- liberation from the mind. They should cooperate with each other and help each other to be liberated from the mind. That will be a true liberation movement.

That's what sannyas is all about.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU GOD THE CREATOR?

Sudheer, do you think I am mad?

For almost a year, Grandpa Sulzberg had been a constant embarrassment to his family. He would mount a soap box on street corners in his neighborhood and proclaim himself the messiah. Then he would proceed to harangue the amused crowds that gathered, hurling fierce warnings and injunctions, reminding them of the dire consequences of their evil ways. In his long white robe which he had fashioned from a bedsheet, and his flowing, silvery beard, he did indeed look like a biblical patriarch.

Old Sulzberg's delusion gradually worsened, and finally his sons and daughters and grown grandchildren held a conference and reluctantly agreed to send him to an institution.

There, they hoped, with proper treatment, he might regain his sanity and then return home.

At the Cedars of Lebanon Home for the Mentally Disturbed, the "messiah" got along famously with his fellow patients. Until, that is, he made the mistake of exhorting them to abandon their godless ways.

"I am Moses reincarnated," he thundered like a prophet of old. "I am the messiah!"

"Oh yeah?" yelled one of the patients. "Who said so?"

"I will tell you who said so," yelled Mr. Sulzberg-turned-messiah. "God said so!"

And from the outer circle of patients an indignant voice rang out: "I did not!"

Enough for today.

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Chapter #3

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IT IS NOT IRON THAT IMPRISONS YOU
NOR ROPE NOR WOOD,
BUT THE PLEASURE YOU TAKE IN GOLD AND JEWELS,
IN SONS AND WIVES.

SOFT FETTERS,
YET THEY HOLD YOU DOWN.
CAN YOU SNAP THEM?

THERE ARE THOSE WHO CAN,
WHO SURRENDER THE WORLD,
FORSAKE DESIRE, AND FOLLOW THE WAY.

O SLAVE OF DESIRE,
FLOAT UPON THE STREAM.
LITTLE SPIDER, STICK TO YOUR WEB.
OR ELSE ABANDON YOUR SORROWS FOR THE WAY.

ABANDON YESTERDAY, AND TOMORROW,
AND TODAY.
CROSS OVER TO THE FARTHER SHORE,
BEYOND LIFE AND DEATH.

DO YOUR THOUGHTS TROUBLE YOU?
DOES PASSION DISTURB YOU?
BEWARE OF THIRSTINESS
LEST YOUR WISHES BECOME DESIRES
AND DESIRE BINDS YOU.

The most fundamental message of Gautama the Buddha is not God, is not soul... it is freedom: freedom absolute, total, unconditional. He does not want to give you an ideology, because every ideology creates its own slavery. He does not want to give you a religion, because religion binds you. That's exactly the meaning of the English word 'religion' -- that which binds you together. Religion is a bondage, very subtle, so subtle that unless you are very aware you will not be able to see it. He does not want to give you a philosophy of life, because any philosophy given by somebody else is going to fetter you. You have to live according to your own light, not according to somebody else's light.

The whole world is full of slaves for the simple reason that everybody is living according to somebody else. Somebody is living according to Jesus, somebody is living according to Mahavira, somebody is living according to Krishna, somebody is living even according to Buddha.

Buddha says: Be a light unto yourself. Unless you create a light within your own being you will remain a slave, you will be dominated. And there are crafty priests, cunning, very clever, very worldly; and they know, they are very experienced in creating new bondages for you. If you escape from one prison, they immediately create another. They are very clever with words. They go on interpreting words in such subtle ways that you will never be able to understand how these words of the buddhas are being manipulated, distorted. Words that were meant to give you freedom have been made into chains.

But man is very unaware; hence he goes on remaining a victim -- a victim of all kinds of psychological exploitation.

Buddha teaches you freedom as the ultimate goal, the SUMMUM BONUM, the highest good. There is nothing higher than freedom. Every other value is a by-product of freedom; they follow freedom as a consequence.

Jesus says: First seek ye the kingdom of God, then all else shall be added unto you. Buddha will not say that. He will say: First seek ye total and absolute freedom, and then all else shall be added unto you. If you seek God you are again seeking a new prison, maybe better than the old, maybe made of gold, very precious -- but a prison is a prison all the same. Whether your chains are made of iron or gold, it makes no difference at all. In fact, if the chains are made of gold it will be more difficult to come out of them because you will become attached. You will think those chains are not chains but ornaments. You will protect them, you will guard them -- somebody may steal them away from you!

Freedom is the fragrance of Buddha's whole message. No other enlightened person has emphasized freedom so much. Why did Buddha emphasize freedom so much? -- for the simple reason that he had seen all other ideals being changed into imprisonments. He had seen all beautiful philosophies poisoned by the priests. Beware of the priests!

Buddha is not a priest, neither is Jesus, nor is Mahavira. No enlightened person is a priest. The priest lives on the words of the enlightened people and goes on exploiting the unenlightened. He certainly is clever but not wise, knowledgeable but not enlightened. He succeeds in manipulating you because you are unconscious.

Hence, the second thing Buddha emphasizes is meditation, awareness. Freedom can come only through being more and more aware. By freedom he does not mean any social phenomenon or any political change. There are people... I have come across books written by communists, Marxists, socialists, who try to prove that Buddha's freedom means communism, socialism, that his freedom means a social revolution, a political revolution. That is utter nonsense! Buddha has nothing to do with the outside world; his concern is your interiority. He wants to change your unconsciousness into consciousness, he wants to change your darkness into light, he wants to change your death into deathlessness.

He is really doing the work of the seers of the Upanishads who have been praying to God, "ASATO MA SADGAMAYA. O God, O Lord, take us away from the false, from the untrue, to the truth. TAMASO MA JYOTIRGAMAYA. O God, O Lord, take us away from darkness into light. MRITYOR MA AMRITAMGAMAYA. O God, O Lord, take us away from death to eternal life." But they were praying to God.

Buddha says: No prayer is going to help. Unless YOU do something, your prayer is impotent. There is no need to pray, but there is great need to meditate. His religion is not a religion of prayer. His religion is very scientific in the sense that he does not presuppose any belief. You need not believe in God, you need not believe in afterlife. He says when you can experience, then why believe? All beliefs ultimately reduce you to slaves.

Buddha is against all kinds of beliefs AND disbeliefs. He is an agnostic. He says remain open; if you believe you become closed. The Hindu is closed, the Mohammedan is closed, the Christian is closed: they have already concluded. They have already accepted a certain belief as true without experiencing it. This is dishonesty! And these people are thought to be religious people. They are not even authentic, they are not even honest -- what to say about their religiousness? From the very beginning they are dishonest; belief makes you dishonest.

The very process of belief is believing in something that you have not experienced on your own. How can you believe if you are sincere? If your search for truth is authentic you cannot believe; you cannot disbelieve either. You cannot say God is, you cannot say God is not. You can only say, "I don't know and I am searching and I am seeking and I am experimenting and I am trying to experience."

That is the way of meditation.

Prayer requires belief as a presupposition; without belief there is no possibility of prayer. To whom will you pray? To whom will you address your prayers? -- to some God which you have accepted because it has been told to you from your very childhood, you have been hypnotized.

Every belief is nothing but hypnosis. One is hypnotized as being a Hindu, another is hypnotized as being a Mohammedan; both are living in a kind of deep sleep. Hypnosis means sleep; the very word means sleep. You have been given so much poison, slowly slowly, through belief that you have fallen asleep. You are no longer aware what you are doing, why you are doing. Why are you going to the temple? Why are you bowing down to a stone statue? Why are you reciting something meaningless? Why are you going to Kaaba or Kashi or Girnar? For what? There IS something a priori. You already believe that is what religion is, without experiencing, without inquiring.

This is the way of the coward, this is the way of the zombie.

Meditation requires courage. It requires the basic integrity, sincerity, respect towards your own being. At least don't deceive yourself.

Buddha says: Let your own experience decide. If this is understood you are bound to move towards meditation instead of prayer. Then meditation will bring a prayer of its own --

a prayerfulness, rather. You will not be praying but you will be in prayer, because more and more you will become silent, more and more you will become still. More and more you will experience the presence, the mysterious presence that overwhelms everything, penetrates everything. You may like to call it God, you may not like to call it God; it doesn't matter what you call it. You may not like to call it anything; you may be silent about it, because that is the most appropriate thing to do. It cannot be put into any words; no words are adequate enough to express it.

But Buddha has not been listened to. Humanity has remained in its old, zombielike, sleepy way. It has remained hypnotized, unconscious.

Howard Rabinowitz, a huge, granite-fisted, supertough young fellow, was drinking a whisky in a bar when he heard the announcement of the Six-Day War on the radio. Filled with excitement and Jewish fervor, he rushed to the airport and took the first available flight to Israel where he was immediately inducted into the army.

But his reception at the military base was rather cool. He was not exactly avoided by the Israeli soldiers, but neither did they go out of their way to welcome him.

"Listen, what's with you guys?" he complained to his sergeant. "Here I come halfway around the world to help you out and I'm practically ignored. What must an American do to get accepted in this army?"

The sergeant eyed the muscular young giant, glanced around somewhat furtively so that he might not be overheard, and then, in a voice that was almost a whisper, he said, "Confidentially and off the record, if you really want to be one of us, there are three things you must do."

"Name them," said Rabinowitz.

"First," explained the sergeant, "You must drink down a whole quart of our strongest Mount Carmel wine without stopping for a breath. Second, you must kill an Arab army officer. Third, you must make love to an Israeli beauty."

So Howard Rabinowitz chug-a-lugged a whole quart of Mount Carmel wine without stopping.

"Now," he demanded, "where can I find an Arab officer?"

"Right across the Suez Canal," said the sergeant. "I'm afraid you'll have to swim both ways -- that is, if you're still alive."

"I'll be alive," promised the American as he lurched off. "Hell, I was the roughest, toughest, biggest guy on the East Side. What's a little adventure like this?"

A few hours later he returned, soaking wet from his return swim, his clothes torn and his face scratched and bloody.

"Okay, I took care of that Arab officer," he roared. "Now, where's that Israeli beauty you want killed?"

That's exactly the situation of humanity. You don't know who you are, you don't know what you are doing, you don't know WHY you are doing it in the first place. You don't know, even if you succeed, what is the point of it all. But still you go on doing something. It keeps you engaged and keeps you unaware of your unawareness.

All your occupations are basically nothing but an effort to remain unaware of your unawareness -- because it hurts. It hurts to know that "I am a zombie," it hurts to know that "I am a slave." So you go on bragging about your slavery as if it is something very precious and valuable. You go on bragging about your being Indian or Pakistani or Israeli or German or

American. You go on bragging about your being Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, Jaina -- and you don't know you are bragging about your prisons!

It is as if two prisoners are talking: "My prison is better than your prison. Look at the flag! My prison has the best flag in the world, the highest pole. And never say a word against my prison; otherwise you will suffer for it, you will have to pay for it."

MY nation, MY country, MY church, MY religion is higher than your religion, is higher than your church, is greater than your nation -- and we are bragging about our prisons. This is utterly stupid. But why do we go on doing it? -- because that is the only way to save our faces.

If we try to see the point, that all these are prisons, how can we avoid knowing that we are a prisoner -- not of one prison but of many prisons, prisons within prisons? And that will destroy our ego. It helps our egos very much that "We are a great nation," that "Our history is full of bravery," that "We have created the greatest warriors"... or greatest saints, or whatsoever it is. "We have created the most religious society in the world," or the most democratic society or the most communist society. This helps us to protect our egos. We find in every way methods and means, devices and strategies so that our ego remains intact.

And the ego is the most false phenomenon in existence; there is nothing more false than the ego. It has no substance. It is a balloon full of hot air -- or maybe there is no balloon, only hot air! But we are living according to the dictates of this false god, the ego. And there are priests who go on helping us, who go on giving us new strategies, new interpretations. As times change, priests are ready to give us new interpretations.

A small boy in the Sunday school was very much puzzled when the priest said that God made everything. The boy looked puzzled, almost a question mark in his eyes.

The priest asked him, "What is the matter, Johnny? You look very puzzled."

Johnny said, "Yes. You say everything -- do you really mean EVERYTHING? Then where is the reference that God made railway trains? I have never come across it."

And the priest said, "Yes, you must have overlooked it. There is a reference. It is said in the Bible that God made all creeping things; it includes the railway train!"

And it is not only that they are deceiving small children; they do the same to you.

"Rabbi," said the worried father, "I wish you would speak to my son. Here he is, bar mitzvah age, and all he ever thinks about is baseball."

The rabbi sighed to himself. "With so many delinquent children getting into trouble," he thought, "this is indeed a minor problem."

"I am sorry to disappoint you," he said, suppressing a desire to show his annoyance, "but I cannot scold your son for something we Jews have been practicing for thousands of years. In fact, there are several references to baseball in the Bible."

"Are you serious?" demanded the father incredulously. "What are they?"

"Well, for example, you will recall that Eve stole first and Adam stole second; Gideon rattled the pitchers; Goliath was put out by David; and the prodigal son made a home run!"

Priests are the most cunning people in the world.

In Baltimore, at the turn of the century, an itinerant MAGGID, or preacher, looking for all the world like a prophet of old, with his majestic white beard and flowing, snow-white robe,

was invited to speak at the Sanhedrin Temple. The synagogue's regular rabbi was somewhat apprehensive about the old man's ultra-orthodox views, but he had come highly recommended. The rabbi's fears, as it turned out, were justified. The maggid harangued the congregation with a scorching sermon that would have done credit to a Bible-thumping, fundamentalist Baptist preacher. As the venerable patriarch brought his sermon to a close he shouted, "And I say unto you, the Day of Judgment is at hand, and unless you have lived in strict accordance with the law as handed down to us by Moses himself, there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth!"

An old lady in the front row, frightened half out of her wits, cried out, "But, Rebbe, I have no teeth!"

"My good woman," thundered the righteous maggid, "teeth will be provided!"

Buddha is not a priest, he is not a prophet either; he is a totally different kind of person. He is an awakened being, he has come to know himself. He is not an incarnation of God -- he has no claims like that. He is not a special messenger of God; he has no ego like that. He does not claim that "I am the only begotten Son." All this looks absurd if you think of Buddha. He is very simple and yet his message is the most practical, most scientific, most penetrating.

He says, "I was as unconscious as you are; now I have become conscious and all my fears and sorrows have disappeared. One day I was like you, one day you can be like me; there is no qualitative difference between us. I am awakened, you are asleep; that is the only difference. I am not extraordinary, I am just as ordinary as you are. The only thing that has happened to me is that I have opened my eyes and you are still keeping them closed. Open them and see for yourself!"

The sutras:

IT IS NOT IRON THAT IMPRISONS YOU
NOR ROPE, NOR WOOD,
BUT THE PLEASURE YOU TAKE IN GOLD AND JEWELS,
IN SONS AND WIVES.

IT IS NOT IRON THAT IMPRISONS YOU... your prison is not that gross, it is very subtle. It is not so visible, it is very invisible. It is transparent. It is not that you remain in the prison; on the contrary, the prison surrounds you, wherever you go it moves with you. It is something in your mind, not something around your body. It is something in your very approach towards life.

He says: IT IS NOT IRON THAT IMPRISONS YOU NOR ROPE NOR WOOD, BUT THE PLEASURE YOU TAKE IN GOLD AND JEWELS....

Now one thing very significant has to be remembered: this sutra has been misinterpreted for centuries. Twenty-five centuries of misinterpretation are there. For the first time I am telling you that it does not mean what Buddhists have been saying that it means. They think it means that gold and jewels have to be renounced; it does not mean that -- it is so clear -- BUT THE PLEASURE YOU TAKE IN GOLD AND JEWELS.... It is not the gold that binds you but the PLEASURE that you take in it. If you don't take pleasure in it you can live in a palace and you are as free as anybody who lives in a cave in the Himalayas. If you take pleasure in your cave in the Himalayas you are as unfree as anybody who lives in a palace. The question is psychological.

And one thing more: why do you take pleasure in the palace, in gold, in jewels, in

diamonds? They all decorate your ego. Your ego is empty in itself, it is nonexistential. You have to continuously go on pouring things into it so it goes on giving you the sense that it is something substantial. It is constantly demanding, "Give me this, give me that." It goes on demanding. It exists in the demand, it exists in the desire.

It is just like when you are on a bicycle: you have to peddle it continuously. If you stop peddling, maybe for a few feet the bicycle may move out of the past momentum, but then it is bound to fall. Ego is just like a bicycle: you have to continuously peddle. If you stop peddling it falls then and there, flat on the ground.

So if you have a palace it will demand a bigger palace and it will take great pleasure in the palace. It will brag about it, it will feel very puffed up. If you are a president of a country, it feels very puffed up. If you become famous, respectable, it becomes very puffed up. And the ways of the ego are very subtle. It moves in your unconsciousness, in the darkest layers of your being. It can take pleasure in gold, it can take pleasure in RENOUNCING gold, but it is the same thing.

I know many so-called saints who go on bragging still after thirty or forty years. Forty years before they had renounced the world and they still go on saying that "We renounced so much money, so much gold." Still they go on talking about it! Forty years have passed, but they are still taking the pleasure.

You see the point? You can take pleasure when you HAVE gold, you can take pleasure when you RENOUNCE gold. In fact, when you have gold you can't take so much pleasure as when you renounce it. Why? -- because millions of other people have gold, it is nothing very special. But when you renounce you are a rare person: your ego becomes more extraordinary, holier-than-thou, superior.

I know one person who was a homeopathic doctor. Now, you know about homeopathic doctors -- they somehow manage to live. Very rarely I had seen any patients visiting him. Yes, a few people used to come -- they used to come to read the newspapers! In fact, that's how I started going to his dispensary -- to read the newspapers and to have a little chitchat, and then we became friends. He was always talking about his troubles and he was very much worried.

And then one day I heard that he had renounced the world; he became a saint. After three years I met him in Calcutta. He was worshipped, and people were telling me that he had MILLIONS of rupees that he renounced. I said, "Don't be stupid -- I know this man! He had only three hundred and sixty rupees in the bank!" Now they have become millions!

When you renounce you can go on increasing your amount; nobody can prevent you and nobody can check on it -- no auditing is possible. You can go on spreading the rumor how much you have renounced.

When I saw him, I asked him, "Doctor...."

He said, "I am no longer a doctor."

I said, "You are still the same. I know perfectly well that you had three hundred and sixty rupees in the post office! What millions are you talking about? You should say simply that you have renounced three hundred and sixty rupees!"

He looked at me and he said, "Don't talk so loudly. You will destroy my whole reputation!"

The reputation depends on how much he has left, so when he moves from one town to another, the amount that he has renounced increases. It has been going on that way. This is not something new; this has happened before, too.

Even in Buddha's life story, Buddhists have written that he renounced so many golden chariots and so many elephants and so many horses and so many palaces. That is all nonsense, because he was not the son of a very great emperor or anything. The kingdom that he belonged to, Kapilvatu, was such a small place that it has almost disappeared from the earth, not even a trace.... All those palaces have not left any ruins. There were no palaces, and it was such a small village that to keep so many golden chariots there and so many elephants and horses would have been impossible. But the people who were writing the story had to go on making it look bigger and bigger.

There was great competition between the Jainas and the Buddhists because Mahavira and Buddha were contemporaries. So you can look in the scriptures.... Jainas write, "So many horses, so many elephants, so many chariots," and the next Buddhist scripture makes a bigger claim. Then comes another Jaina scripture which makes a bigger claim than the Buddhist scripture -- and this went on for hundreds of years, until now it appears as if Mahavira and Buddha were great emperors, as if they dominated the whole of India.

The truth is that in Buddha's time in India there were two thousand kingdoms. Two thousand kingdoms? -- that means each kingdom could not have been more than a district, at the most, and the father of Buddha was not more than a deputy collector or maybe a collector... or, if you insist, a commissioner, but nothing more than that.

People take pleasure in gold, so much so that when they renounce it, still the pleasure lingers; one goes on thinking of it. Ego can fulfill itself either by having more money or by renouncing more money, but it always needs money and it always needs more. Remember it.

Buddha says: BUT THE PLEASURE YOU TAKE IN GOLD AND JEWELS... that is the real imprisonment; that creates your bondage -- not the gold, not the jewels. What can they do? How can they bind you?

I have lived in poor huts, they can't bind you; I have lived in palaces, they can't bind you. I have lived as a poor man -- poverty cannot bind you; I have lived as a rich man -- richness cannot bind you. Those things are on the outside. If you start taking pleasure in them, a certain gratification, then the bondage starts. If you take pleasure... IN SONS AND WIVES. That too has been misinterpreted: Renounce your wives and renounce your sons.

There is no need to renounce anything; just understand.

MY interpretation of Buddha is that renunciation is not the point; UNDERSTANDING is the point. And if through understanding, something drops from your life, it is not renounced by you; it has simply fallen like a dead leaf from a tree. You cannot claim any credit for it.

Just look into your relationships with your wife, with your son, with your husband, and see the fragility of it all. It has no substance in it. It is all poetry and fiction, it is not a fact.

Just a few days ago a man came to me and he said, "I would like to become a sannyasin, but my wife says she will kill herself!"

I said, "Let us try, for a change, because I have never seen anybody.... I have one hundred thousand sannyasins all over the world. No wife has yet killed herself, no husband has yet committed suicide, although many have said that."

People take these things very seriously. Your wife or your husband may say, "I cannot live without you" -- and she was living without you perfectly well before! Just a few days before she was not even aware of you and she was living perfectly well -- in fact, she was better than she is now! But she says she cannot live without you, and you believe it because it nourishes your ego.

Mrs. Goldfarb stood weeping at her husband's grave when a courtly stranger approached her.

"Madam, I regret the unfortunate circumstances under which I say this," he began in a respectful manner, "but I must tell you I have fallen in love with you at first sight."

"Loafer! Bum!" cried Mrs. Goldfarb indignantly, aghast at this monumental impertinence.

"Get out of my sight this instant or I will call a policeman! Is this a time to talk about love?"

"I assure you, madam, that I did not intend to reveal my feelings at this sad time," the gentle stranger explained, "but I was simply overwhelmed by your exquisite beauty!"

"Listen," said Mrs. Goldfarb, "you should see me when I haven't been crying!"

In a single moment things change. In this world, all your relationships are just made of the stuff poetry is made of; they are not even prose, they are fictions. People are living in fictions, and they go on painting, repainting their fictions; they go on keeping the fiction alive.

Mrs. Saperstein had just sent the children off to school when the phone rang.

"Is your husband's name Philip Saperstein?" asked a sepulchral voice at the other end of the line.

"What else?" replied the lady.

"This is the coroner's office. I am sorry to tell you this, but we have a traffic death here. We found your telephone number in his pocket. Would you please come down here to the morgue and identify the body?"

Mrs. Saperstein arrived within half an hour and an attendant escorted her to a figure covered with a white sheet. The attendant then lifted a corner of the sheet and uncovered the victim's face.

"Was this man your husband?" he asked.

Mrs Saperstein eyes widened. "Ai-ai-ai! How did you -- yes, that is my husband -- ever get your sheets so white?"

Don't believe in fictions. Your wife, your husband, your children, your parents, all are beautiful fictions. And I am not saying to renounce them; I am saying, simply, understand the fictitiousness of them all. Live wherever you are, but don't get identified with these imagined roles. Act, but don't get identified with your acting role.

That's exactly what Buddha means:

SOFT FETTERS,
YET THEY HOLD YOU DOWN.
CAN YOU SNAP THEM?

They are not very strong fetters, very soft, but CAN YOU SNAP THEM? You cannot snap them if you are not conscious; and if you are conscious you need not snap them -- they are no longer there. You simply see the point that in this world we come alone, we live alone and we go alone. Yes, we play many games -- games of being a husband or a wife, being a friend or an enemy.

We play many games because we have to fill the time with something, or else we have to "kill time," as they say, by playing cards, by chess.... And these are all the same kinds of things, nothing more serious. You have seen playing cards -- kings and queens -- and when you are playing cards they become very real. You can fight, people have even killed each

other; just in playing cards they became so serious!

We become so much identified because we are not conscious at all. It is consciousness that helps you to become unidentifed.

Then you can go on playing all kinds of games -- I am not against games. Play them as artfully as you can. Let your life be fun! I don't want you to be serious, I don't want you to have long faces. Enough of that! Religious people have suffered much; there is no need. You can laugh and you can enjoy, but remember one thing: that all is just a game. Death will come and the curtain falls and the game disappears and the play is finished.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO CAN,
WHO SURRENDER THE WORLD,
FORSAKE DESIRE, AND FOLLOW THE WAY.

Who are those who can snap out of these identities? They are the courageous people, the meditators: the people who try to bring awareness to their life, to their acts, to their thoughts, to their feelings.

Buddha's persistent effort was one: to make you aware in everything that you are doing. If you are walking, walk with awareness. If you are eating, eat with awareness. Don't simply go on stuffing yourself in a mechanical way. De-automatize yourself. Don't be a machine, be a man.

And then you will be surprised to know that desires start fleeing away from you and the way opens.

Moe and Ike, aged ninety and ninety-two respectively, had been widowers for many many years. Both were healthy and handsome-looking despite their years. The Florida climate agreed with them, and many lovely widows were still after them despite their age.

One day Moe said to Ike, "Ike, I'm really lonely. It's been years since I lost my Becky and I've never remarried. But I think now is the time and I'm willing to take another chance at marriage -- even at my age."

"It sounds like a good idea," said Moe. "In fact, maybe I, too, should take a new wife."

Soon thereafter, Moe and Ike both married lovely ladies -- eighty-nine and ninety respectively -- and they both went on honeymoons.

A few days later, Moe and Ike met on the boardwalk.

"Well," asked Moe, "how was your honeymoon?"

"To tell you the truth, Moe, I couldn't consummate our marriage."

"Well," said Moe, "to tell you the truth, I didn't even think of it!"

But even at the age of ninety, people want to continue to play the old, childish games. Children can be forgiven. They need to play, they need to get identified, they need to go astray, they need to commit errors, mistakes, because that is the only way to learn and to mature. But even in old age, people behave as if they have not grown up at all.

Remember, you grow only in the proportion that you become aware. You grow only in the proportion that you become unidentifed with all the games that life makes available for you.

O SLAVE OF DESIRE,
FLOAT UPON THE STREAM.
LITTLE SPIDER, STICK TO YOUR WEB.

OR ELSE ABANDON YOUR SORROWS FOR THE WAY.

Buddha calls people who are just slaves of their desires... they are nothing but driftwood, victims of blind forces. They don't know their destiny, they don't know any meaning. They are just accidental; they don't experience any intrinsic significance in life. From one game they move to another game. Their whole life is a series of keeping themselves occupied somehow so that they don't become aware of the fact that they have wasted a great opportunity of growing up, of coming home, of becoming a conscious being, of becoming that which they were MEANT to be. They go on missing.

LITTLE SPIDER, Buddha says, STICK TO YOUR WEB.

It is your OWN creation. The world in which you live is your own creation, just like the spider creates its web out of itself and then is caught in the web and cannot leave it. You project your world out of your own mind, you project thousands of desires. That's how you create the web and then you are caught in it. Somebody is caught in the desire for money, somebody is caught in the desire for power, somebody is caught in the desire for renunciation, somebody is caught in the desire for paradise -- all desires!

A real man of understanding has no desire. He lives in the moment and whatsoever is available, he enjoys it to its totality. He squeezes each moment, he drinks each moment! He eats whatsoever is available. He sleeps, but he is total in whatsoever he is doing.

A Zen monk, Rinzai, was asked, "What is your meditation?"

He said, "When I feel hungry I eat and when I feel sleepy I sleep, that's all. I have no other meditation."

He is a real follower of Buddha! But you will miss the point if you are not told that when he says, "When I feel hungry I eat," he eats with total awareness.

In fact, a man who lives in awareness also sleeps in awareness.

Krishna, in the Gita, says: The real seeker is awake even while others are fast asleep. When it is night for others it is still day for him. Something deep inside him remains constantly alert.

That which is a night for everybody else is not a night for the one who is aware, who is alert, who is meditative, who is balanced, who lives in equilibrium, who lives in silence. Something deep inside him keeps awake. The body sleeps, the mind sleeps, but the soul is always alert. It is never tired so it need not sleep at all. It is awareness itself; it is made of awareness.

LITTLE SPIDER, STICK TO YOUR WEB.

Hilda and Herman were spending a quiet evening at home. That is to say, Herman was quietly engrossed in a book, but Hilda was in a talkative mood.

"Honey," she began, "if I should die before you do, will you promise me something important?"

"Yeah," grunted Herman, without lifting his eyes from the page he was reading.

"Promise me you'll always keep my grave green."

"Aw, don't be so morbid," he replied. "What's the use of talking about dying? You look pretty healthy to me."

He buried his nose in the book, completely absorbed once more, hoping he would not again be distracted.

"Well, yes, I feel healthy, dear," Hilda interrupted again after a minute of blessed silence, "but I want to be sure my final resting place won't be neglected. You might want to remarry or something, and forget all about me."

"Look, Hilda, I'll remember you forever. Stop shopping around for an undertaker and let me read!"

This time he was rewarded with three whole minutes of peace and quiet, when his wife again took up the thread of conversation exactly where it had broken off.

"I'd hate to be forgotten by my own husband. I suppose it is because I'm so sensitive -- because I have so much emotion. Darling, are you positive that you'll keep my grave green?"

"Yeah, I'm positive," he growled, his eyes glued to the page.

"Well, that's a great consolation. Only, I'd like for you to say it with more feeling.... Precious, are you absolutely, positively sure you'll keep my...."

"Hilda," shouted the pestered man, casting his book aside, "I will keep that damn grave of yours green if I have to paint it myself!"

First we create these relationships -- wife and husband... and then they start hankering for children, great desire for children arises... and it goes on and on. Then they want their children to get married; then they want their children to have children. This is an unending process. They go on and on thinking that this is going to fulfill them; if this is not going to fulfill them, then something else.... Your whole life is wasted.

And I am not saying don't love or don't have a wife or don't have a husband or don't have children. What I am saying is that the most essential thing should be looked at first. First be aware, be meditative, and then if you feel like having a little fun, enjoying a little misery, you are welcome! Get married, have children and children's children, but don't forget your awareness because only that is going with you. Only your awareness will pass through the fires of death; everything else will be left behind.

And one thing very important, Buddha says: **OR ELSE ABANDON YOUR SORROWS FOR THE WAY.**

People find it very difficult to abandon their sorrows. It looks, on the surface, somehow not right. Why should people hesitate to abandon their sorrows for the way?

A real master never asks you anything except to sacrifice your sorrows. He wants you to give your sorrows to him, nothing else. But it is the most difficult thing to abandon your sorrows because you have lived with them for so long, you are so friendly with them, and to live with the familiar sorrows feels so cozy, so warm -- old friends, and to abandon them.... And suddenly all your walls will disappear and you will be under the open sky because your walls consist of nothing but your sorrows. Your prison will disappear! -- and you have lived in the prison for so long, for so many lives that it has become your home.

I know many prisoners. Whenever they are released from the prison, within three or four months they are back; they will do something and they will be back in the prison. I used to visit prisons and I asked a few people who were coming again and again back to the prison, "What is the matter?"

They said, "When we leave the prison it feels as if we are leaving our home! We have lived in here so long and all our friends are here." One man said, "Not only my friends but my whole family is here! Outside I am just a stranger and I start feeling homesick, so I have to do something and come back."

Once a person is imprisoned it is very rare that he will not come back again. He will come back again because the prison gives some security, some safety. You need not bother, you

need not worry about tomorrow. At the right time the food will be provided, at the right time you will go to bed, at the right time you will be awakened in the morning. Life is so disciplined -- like a monastery!

In fact, monasteries and prisons are not very different, just the names are different. Monasteries are a little harder, that's all! Prisons are a little more human. And modern prisons, particularly in the developed countries, are far superior to the monasteries. It is better to be in a prison than to be in a monastery.

I have heard about a Trappist monastery. A man entered and he was told by the abbot, "Remember, our rule is that you can speak only once in six years." So for six years he was silent, boiling within.

After six years the abbot called him and asked him, "Have you something to say?"

He said, "Yes. The bed is too hard. I need another bed."

The abbot said, "Okay, that will be done. You can go."

For six years again he was boiling. Six years afterwards the abbot called him and said, "Have you something to say?"

He said, "Yes" -- he was really angry. He said, "The people who were bringing the new bed broke the glass of the window and it is too cold."

The abbot said, "Well, it will be mended. You go back."

For six years again he was boiling within. He was called and the abbot said, "Have you something to say?"

He was just going to say it and the abbot said, "Wait! For eighteen years you have done nothing but complain and complain. You get out of the monastery! You are not meant to be a monk. You want to live a soft and easy life."

Jails are far better, and modern jails are really worth living in, with color television and everything!

Man has been improving continuously for centuries. He has improved his prisons very well. He has become very sophisticated, cultured, civilized. And this is nothing but just painting the prison walls, making them beautiful. And now suddenly a buddha comes and says to you, "Come out in the open. Abandon your miseries, your sorrows." You cannot abandon your miseries and sorrows so easily.

That's why people who leave the world, renounce the world, create new miseries of their own. If there is nobody else to create misery for them -- if you don't have a wife to create it, if you don't have a husband to create it, if there is nobody to support you in your misery -- you will create it yourself. People are sleeping on beds of thorns... now, no wife prepares it, they themselves work hard on it! People are fasting, almost killing themselves. Now, nobody is doing it to them, that is their own idea.

The ascetics are self-destructive; they are suicidal people, masochistic, perverted, but they are worshipped. They are worshipped because they create their own misery! You worship people as saints, as mahatmas, if they create their own misery. They should be entered into mental asylums, they should be treated! They need medical care. They are not mahatmas, they are simply masochists. They have renounced the world, but they cannot renounce misery so they start creating their own misery. And when a person creates misery for himself, you all respect him. You have been told that this is something great; he is sacrificing his life for God.

God is not a sadist. He does not enjoy your miseries and your sorrows. Don't be foolish, don't be stupid! But the reason is that people cannot abandon their miseries. They can

renounce the gold and the palaces and the money and the power, they can renounce everything, but when it comes to renouncing the miseries, this becomes the most difficult thing they encounter, because miseries have been with you so long that you don't know any other style of living. The only style that you have become accustomed to is sorrow.

That's why your saints are so ugly, so sad, so serious. And the more serious and the more sad they are, the more they are worshipped, so their ego is again nourished. When their ego is nourished they torture themselves more; you worship them still more, then they torture themselves still more. This becomes a vicious circle.

ABANDON YESTERDAY, AND TOMORROW,
AND TODAY.
CROSS OVER TO THE FARTHER SHORE,
BEYOND LIFE AND DEATH.

If you really want to reach to the ultimate, to the deathless, to the timeless, you will have to abandon yesterday. That which is gone is gone forever. Don't look back and don't look ahead. That which is not yet is not yet. Don't look for the tomorrow.

And people are so foolish: they are not only looking for tomorrow, they are looking for life after death; they are even thinking of heavenly pleasures. They are rejoicing in the idea that there will be the eternal possibility of enjoying the same foolish things that they have renounced here. Strange logic! Here they say, "Don't drink alcohol, it is irreligious." But in BAHIST, in the Mohammedan paradise, there are rivers, streams, waterfalls of alcohol! There you can drink as much as you want, you can swim in alcohol, you can dive deep in alcohol -- and you don't have to pay anything for it!

Here they say, "The woman is the door to hell"; particularly Hindu scriptures say, "The woman is the door to hell." And what is happening in heaven? Beautiful women, continuously dancing! How did these women enter there? And they are doors to hell.... Your gods must have all reached hell long ago! Here, renounce the woman and then you will be rewarded with beautiful women in heaven. And do you know? -- those women never grow old. In the Hindu paradise, nothing is told about the men, whether they grow old or not, but it is absolutely certain that women are stuck at the age of sixteen, they cannot grow beyond that. That is the Hindu idea: sixteen is the climax of beauty, according to the Hindu idea. And ideas differ....

In the Mohammedan paradise, even beautiful boys are available, not only girls, because homosexuality was very much prevalent in the days when the Koran was being written. And of course, saints will not be satisfied only with girls, they will need beautiful boys too.

Louis Jourdan, the French movie star, was in the United States seeking a good literary script for his next film. He happened to run into Budd Schulberg, the American author and playwright.

"There is a new book out called PRECOCIOUS PAULA," Schulberg suggested tentatively.

"It would give you a great co-starring role."

"I nevair hear of zis book," said Jourdan.

"It is something like Nabokov's novel, LOLITA," explained Schulberg.

"And what ees zis LOLITA about?"

"Well, frankly, it is about a middle-aged man who falls in love with a twelve-year-old."

The Frenchman gave him a blank look. "I do not undairstan," he said. "A twelve-year-old what?"

Man, woman, animal -- what? The Frenchman has his own ideas. I don't know what happens in the French paradise -- it must be worth visiting! Not worth living in, but worth visiting. You will see all kinds of sexual perversions.

Two professors were talking, one French, another American, about how many positions there are for making love.

The Frenchman said, "One hundred and twelve," and the American said, "One hundred and thirteen."

The Frenchman said, "You surprise me, because we French are the experts. You start telling me what those one hundred and thirteen positions are."

And the American said, "First, the woman lying down on her back and the man on top of her."

The Frenchman said, "Wait! Yes, there are one hundred and thirteen. I never thought of that!"

It must be worth visiting, the French paradise! And what to say about the French hell? That may be even worth living in! You will find great company, and on each step a surprise.

And these are the people... all over the world they have been thinking of the same joys in a far bigger way in paradise -- the same joys they are condemning here! This is not renunciation; this is just repression.

Real renunciation comes out of understanding. It is not renunciation at all. The real renunciation is not renunciation at all, it is pure understanding. You see the point, and all that is stupid and all that is false disappears, and you start living your ordinary life with more awareness.

ABANDON YESTERDAY, abandon TOMORROW, abandon TODAY. Buddha says: Abandon time -- past, future, present, abandon everything. Forget about time; that's the way to enter into a timeless space within yourself. That is meditation. CROSS OVER TO THE FARTHER SHORE, BEYOND LIFE AND DEATH.

DO YOUR THOUGHTS TROUBLE YOU?

If they trouble you, then something immediately is needed. If your thoughts trouble you that means you have not yet been able to disidentify yourself from your mind.

DOES PASSION DISTURB YOU?

If it disturbs you that means you are still identified with the body. You think, "I am the body," then passion disturbs you. If you think, "I am the mind," then thoughts disturb you.

BEWARE OF THIRSTINESS....

This word 'thirstiness' is a translation of a Buddhist word TANHA. Tanha has many more dimensions than thirstiness; thirstiness is a literal translation. Tanha means desire, desire for more, unending desire, endless desire. The more you get, the more you want. It is like throwing fuel in a fire. That is called tanha, and tanha is the root cause of your misery.

BEWARE OF THIRSTINESS LEST YOUR WISHES BECOME DESIRES.... Beware,

because desires don't arise suddenly. First they are just wishes, then slowly they condense and become desires. And once they become desires it is more difficult to become aware; you can become aware more easily when they are just wishes. Destroy the seed rather than wait for the whole tree to grow and then to cut it; it will be unnecessary work.

... LEST YOUR WISHES BECOME DESIRES
AND DESIRE BINDS YOU.

Desire is our imprisonment. The man who wants nothing, who is absolutely contented as he is, is free of all bondage. He has attained to ultimate freedom, nirvana -- and that is the goal of life. And it is only by attaining that freedom that you will know the significance of being, the song of being, the celebration of being. Your life will become a continuous bliss, and not only that YOU will be blissful, you will be able to bless others too. The whole existence will be blessed by you, by your very presence.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #4

Chapter title: Transcendence -- the true therapy

24 February 1980 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU SPEAK ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE BUDDHAS, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
TRANSCENDENCE, AS THE ESSENCE OF THE WORK HAPPENING HERE IN THE
BUDDHAFIELD. WHAT IS THE UNIQUENESS OF THIS THIRD PSYCHOLOGY? IS
THERE A PSYCHOTHERAPY OF TRANSCENDENCE?

Amitabh, Sigmund Freud introduced psychoanalysis into the world. It is rooted in analyzing the mind. It is confined to the mind. It does not step out of the mind, not even an inch. On the contrary, it goes deeper into the mind, into the hidden layers of the mind, into the unconscious, to find out ways and means so that the mind of man can at least be normal. The goal of Freudian psychoanalysis is not very great.

The goal is to keep people normal. But normality is not enough. Just to be normal is not of any significance. It means the normal routine of life and your capacity to cope with it. It

does not give you meaning, it does not give you significance. It does not give you insight into the reality of things. It does not take you beyond time, beyond death. It is at the most a helpful device for those who have gone so abnormal that they have become incapable of coping with their daily life -- they cannot live with people, they cannot work, they have become shattered. Psychotherapy provides them a certain togetherness -- not integrity, mind you, but only a certain togetherness. It binds them into a bundle. They remain still fragmentary. Nothing becomes crystallized in them, no soul is born. They don't become blissful, they are only less unhappy, less miserable.

Psychology helps them to accept the misery. It helps them to accept that this is all that life can give to you, so don't ask for more. In a way, it is dangerous to their inner growth, because the inner growth happens only when there is a divine discontent. When you are absolutely unsatisfied with things as they are, only then do you go in the search, only then do you start rising higher, only then do you make efforts to pull yourself out of the mud.

Jung went a little further into the unconscious. He went into the collective unconscious. This is getting more and more into muddy water, and this is not going to help.

Assagioli moved to the other extreme. Seeing the failure of psychoanalysis he invented psychosynthesis. But it is rooted in the same idea. Instead of analysis he emphasizes synthesis.

The psychology of the buddhas is neither analysis nor synthesis; it is transcendence, it is going beyond the mind. It is not work within the mind, it is work that takes you outside the mind. That's exactly the meaning of the English word 'ecstasy' -- to stand out.

When you are capable of standing out of your own mind, when you are capable of creating a distance between your mind and your being, then you have taken the first step of the psychology of the buddhas. And a miracle happens: when you are standing out of the mind all the problems of the mind disappear, because mind itself disappears; it loses its grip over you.

Psychoanalysis is like pruning leaves of the tree, but new leaves will be coming up. It is not cutting off the roots. And psychosynthesis is sticking the fallen leaves back onto the tree again -- gluing them back to the tree. That is not going to give them life either. They will look simply ugly; they will not be alive, they will not be green, they will not be part of the tree -- but glued, somehow.

The psychology of the buddhas cuts the very roots of the tree which create all kinds of neuroses, psychoses, which create the fragmentary man, the mechanical man, the robotlike man. And the way is simple....

Psychoanalysis takes years, and still the man remains the same. It is renovating the old structure, patching up here and there, whitewashing the old house. But it is the same house, nothing has radically changed. It has not transformed the consciousness of the man.

The psychology of the buddhas does not work within the mind. It has no interest in analyzing or synthesizing. It simply helps you to get out of the mind so that you can have a look from the outside. And that very look is a transformation. The moment you can look at your mind as an object you become detached from it, you become disidentified from it; a distance is created, and roots are cut.

Why are roots cut in this way? -- because it is you who goes on feeding the mind. If you are identified you feed the mind; if you are not identified you stop feeding it. It drops dead on its own accord.

There is a beautiful story. I love it very much....

One day Buddha is passing by a forest. It is a hot summer day and he is feeling very thirsty. He says to Ananda, his chief disciple, "Ananda, you go back. Just three, four miles back we passed a small stream of water. You bring a little water -- take my begging bowl. I am feeling very thirsty and tired." He had become old.

Ananda goes back, but by the time he reaches the stream, a few bullock carts have just passed through the stream and they have made the whole stream muddy. Dead leaves which had settled into the bed have risen up; it is no longer possible to drink this water -- it is too dirty. He comes back empty-handed, and he says, "You will have to wait a little. I will go ahead. I have heard that just two, three miles ahead there is a big river. I will bring water from there."

But Buddha insists. He says, "You go back and bring water from the same stream."

Ananda could not understand the insistence, but if the master says so, the disciple has to follow. Seeing the absurdity of it -- that again he will have to walk three, four miles, and he knows that water is not worth drinking -- he goes.

When he is going, Buddha says, "And don't come back if the water is still dirty. If it is dirty, you simply sit on the bank silently. Don't do anything, don't get into the stream. Sit on the bank silently and watch. Sooner or later the water will be clear again, and then you fill the bowl and come back."

Ananda goes there. Buddha is right: the water is almost clear, the leaves have moved, the dust has settled. But it is not absolutely clear yet, so he sits on the bank just watching the river flow by. Slowly slowly, it becomes crystal-clear. Then he comes dancing. Then he understands why Buddha was so insistent. There was a certain message in it for him, and he understood the message. He gave the water to Buddha, and he thanked Buddha, touched his feet.

Buddha says, "What are you doing? I should thank you that you have brought water for me."

Ananda says, "Now I can understand. First I was angry; I didn't show it, but I was angry because it was absurd to go back. But now I understand the message. This is what I actually needed in this moment. The same is the case with my mind -- sitting on the bank of that small stream, I became aware that the same is the case with my mind. If I jump into the stream I will make it dirty again. If I jump into the mind more noise is created, more problems start coming up, surfacing. Sitting by the side I learned the technique.

"Now I will be sitting by the side of my mind too, watching it with all its dirtiness and problems and old leaves and hurts and wounds, memories, desires. Unconcerned I will sit on the bank and wait for the moment when everything is clear."

And it happens on its own accord, because the moment you sit on the bank of your mind you are no longer giving energy to it. This is real meditation. Meditation is the art of transcendence.

Freud talks about analysis, Assagioli about synthesis. Buddhas have always talked about meditation, awareness.

You ask me, Amitabh, "What is the uniqueness of this third psychology?"

Meditation, awareness, watchfulness, witnessing -- that is the uniqueness. No psychoanalyst is needed. You can do it on your own; in fact, you have to do it on your own. No guidelines are needed, it is such a simple process -- simple if you do it; if you don't do it, it looks very complicated. Even the word 'meditation' scares many people. They think it something very difficult, arduous. Yes, if you don't do it it is difficult and arduous. It is like

swimming. It is very difficult if you don't know how to swim, but if you know, you know it is so simple a process. Nothing can be more simple than swimming. It is not an art at all; it is so spontaneous and so natural.

Be more aware of your mind. And in being aware of your mind you will become aware of the fact that you are not the mind, and that is the beginning of the revolution. You have started flowing higher and higher. You are no longer tethered to the mind. Mind functions like a rock and keeps you. It keeps you within the field of gravitation. The moment you are no longer attached to the mind, you enter the buddhafield. When gravitation loses its power over you, you enter into the buddhafield. Entering the buddhafield means entering into the world of levitation. You start floating upwards. Mind goes on dragging you downwards.

So it is not a question of analyzing or synthesizing. It is simply a question of becoming aware. That's why in the East we have not developed any psychotherapy like Freudian or Jungian or Adlerian -- and there are so many in the market now. We have not developed a single psychotherapy because we know psychotherapies can't heal. They may help you to accept your wounds, but they can't heal. Healing comes when you are no longer attached to the mind. When you are disconnected from the mind, unidentified, absolutely untethered, when the bondage is finished, then healing happens.

Transcendence is true therapy, and it is not only psychotherapy. It is not only a phenomenon limited to your psychology, it is far more than that. It is spiritual. It heals you in your very being. Mind is only your circumference, not your center.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL LIKE I HAVE JUMPED INTO AN OCEAN KNOWING NOTHING OF ITS WATERS. I SEE YOU AS THE LIFEGUARD. MY FEAR IS THAT I AM A TERRIBLE SWIMMER AND THERE ARE SO MANY OF US OUT HERE, YOU WON'T SEE OR KNOW WHEN I AM DROWNING.

My whole effort here is to help you drown, because the moment you disappear, God appears. To be drowned is to reach the other shore.

Yes, you are right, Mradula. If I was trying to take everybody to the other shore, it would be really difficult: one lifeguard and one hundred thousand people to be taken to the other shore. It will be really tiring and almost impossible, unmanageable. Then every possibility is that you will drown the lifeguard!

But the beauty of my work is that it is not a question of going to the other shore. If you are drowned, in that very drowning you have reached the other shore. So I need not remember everybody, his name, face -- there is no need for me to be bothered with all that. My whole concern is to push you into the water, and then the water takes care. And really it is a deep ocean, and there is no possibility of anybody ever crossing it -- so whether you are a terrible swimmer or not does not matter. If you are a terrible swimmer that is better, you will drown sooner than others! Those who can swim a little longer will remain a little longer in misery because they will be saving themselves.

There are people here who are good swimmers, but they are the unfortunate ones. The really fortunate ones are those who don't know even the ABC of swimming, so the moment I push them in the water they are gone down! And that is the way to reach the other shore -- because only your ego drowns; you cannot. Only your ego dies; you cannot. You were never

born and you will never die. No ocean can destroy you. No power can destroy you. No fire can consume you. That's why I go on pushing you without any worry about you -- whether you know swimming or not, whether you will be able to reach the other shore or not. I talk about the other shore so that I can persuade you to jump into the ocean. Once you have jumped I forget all about you! I have to persuade others too!

So, Mradula, don't be worried. You are fortunate that you are not a good swimmer. Soon you will be drowned. And the moment you are gone, that is the greatest moment of your life, because in that very death is resurrection.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY UNDERSTANDING SOMETHING IN MEDITATION?
HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT IT, AND WHAT PART OF ONESELF IS INVOLVED IN
THE UNDERSTANDING?

Nigel, meditation and understanding are synonymous. So when I say "understand in meditation," I am simply saying to be silent, quiet, cool, and see. You are not to do anything else, you have to be just silent, cool and calm, and see. And understanding arises on its own accord. It is the fragrance of being silent.

Misunderstanding arises because your mind is very cloudy, noisy. Your mind never allows you to see that which is, never allows you to hear that which is said to you. Buddhas come and go but you remain the same. Yes, you become Christians and you become Buddhists, and you become Hindus, but you don't change. These are your strategies to escape change, to avoid the awakened ones.

You ask me, "What do you mean by understanding something in meditation?"

It is not a great problem. Meditation IS understanding. You are trying to figure it out intellectually, and that is not possible. You are trying to think about it, what it is all about. Whatsoever conclusion you arrive at will be wrong.

It is not a question of thinking what is meant by it. Meditate, and experience. It is something to be experienced.

You say, "How does one go about it...?"

One does not go at all about it, otherwise you will go about and about. The word 'about' means around, and you will go around and around in circles. Don't make it an intellectual question; it is an existential approach. But the very word 'understanding' has misled you, because by 'understanding' we always think 'intellectual understanding'. That is not so. There is nothing like intellectual understanding. Intellectual understanding is pseudo. It is misunderstanding pretending to be understanding. The word 'understand' is beautiful.

When you are in meditation everything stands under you, you are so above it. That's the meaning of understanding. Everything is there far below you, so you can see... like a bird's-eye view. You can see the whole from your altitude. Intellect cannot see it; it is on the same plane. Understanding happens only when the problem is on one plane and you are on a higher plane. If you are also on the same plane, understanding is not possible. You will misunderstand only. And that is one of the greatest problems to be encountered by every seeker.

Jesus says again and again to his disciples, "If you have ears, hear; if you have eyes, see." He was not talking to blind people or deaf people, he was just talking to people like you. But

why does he go on insisting? -- for the simple reason that hearing is not listening, and seeing is not true seeing. You see one thing and you understand something else. Your mind immediately distorts it. Your mind is upside down. It makes a mess of everything. It is in confusion, and you look through that confusion, so the whole world looks confused.

Old Nugent loved his cat, Tommy, so dearly he tried to teach it to talk. "If I can get Tommy to converse with me," he reasoned, "I won't have to bother with ordinary humans at all."

First he tried a diet of canned salmon, then one of canaries. Tommy liked both -- but he didn't learn to talk. Then one day Nugent had two extremely talkative parrots cooked in butter and served to Tommy with asparagus and french fries. Tommy licked the plate clean, and then -- wonder of wonders -- suddenly turned to his master and shouted, "Look out!"

Nugent didn't move. The ceiling caved in and buried the old man under a mass of debris. Tommy shook his head and said, "Eight years he spends getting me to talk, and then the dummy doesn't listen!"

You go thousands of miles to listen to a master and then "... the dummy doesn't listen."

The mind cannot, it is impossible for the mind to listen; it is not in a state of receptivity. The mind is aggressive, it jumps to conclusions so fast, so quickly that it misses the whole point. In fact, it has already concluded, it is simply waiting for its conclusion to be proved right.

Nigel, please don't try to understand; rather try to meditate. You must be new here. Dance, sing, meditate, let the mind settle a little bit. Let this stream of the mind, which is full of dead leaves and dirt, settle down a little. Let it become clean and clear, transparently clear; only then will you be able to understand what I am saying. Then it is so simple. I am not talking very complicated philosophy -- it is not philosophy at all -- I am simply indicating towards certain truths which I have experienced, and you can experience any moment you decide to experience. But it has to be a journey.

You say, "How does one go about it, and what part of oneself is involved in the understanding?"

It is not a question of any part being involved in it. Your totality is involved.

Meditation is not of the body, not of the mind, not of the soul. Meditation simply means your body, your mind, your soul, all functioning in such a harmony, in such wholeness, humming beautifully; they are in a melody... one. Your whole being -- body, mind, soul, are all involved in meditation. That's why my effort here is to start every meditation with the body. That is something new.

In the ancient days people tried to start meditation directly in your innermost core. That is a difficult process. You don't know anything about your inner center; how can you start your journey from somewhere where you have never been? You can start your journey only from where you already are. You are in the body, hence my emphasis is on dancing, singing, breathing -- so you can start from the body. When the body starts becoming meditative.... And don't be puzzled by my use of the word 'meditative' for the body. Yes, the body becomes meditative. When it is in a deep dance, when it is functioning perfectly, undividedly, as a whole, it has a meditative quality about it, a certain grace, a beauty.

Then move inwards, then start watching the mind. Then the mind starts settling down. And when the mind has also settled, has become one with the body, then turn towards the center -- a one-hundred-and-eighty degree turn -- and a great peace will descend on you. It

will pulsate from your soul to the body, from the body to the soul. In that pulsation you will be one.

So don't ask what part of oneself is involved in the understanding. Your totality is involved. And only when your totality is involved, there is understanding. Your body knows about it, your mind knows about it, your soul knows about it. Then you start functioning in unison, in unity. Otherwise the body says one thing, the mind says another, and the soul goes on in its own way. And you are always moving into different directions simultaneously. Your body is hungry, your mind is full of lust, and you are trying to be meditative. That's why I am not in favor of fasting -- unless it is done purely for health purposes, as a dieting for reducing weight, or maybe once in a while just for purifying, so the whole stomach is left for one day to rest, so the whole digestive system can sometimes get a holiday. Otherwise, it is continuously working and working and working -- it too gets tired.

Now scientists say even machines get tired. They call it metal-fatigue, just like mental fatigue. Even metal needs rest, and your stomach is not made of metal, remember. It is not even made of plastic. It is made of fragile material, very fragile material. But it works your whole life. It is good sometimes to give it a holiday. Even God had to rest one day -- after six days work he rested for one day. Even God gets tired.

So sometimes, just out of kindness for the poor stomach, who works for you continuously, fasting is okay. But I don't suggest it -- that it is going to be helpful in meditation. When you are hungry your body wants you to go to the fridge.

I am against repressing your sex, because if you repress sex, whenever you will sit silently your mind will start fantasizing about sex. When you are occupied with other things the mind goes on fantasizing like an undercurrent, but when you are not doing anything it comes into the light. It starts demanding, it creates beautiful fantasies: alluring beauties surround you. How can you meditate?

In fact, the old traditions have created all kinds of barriers to meditation, and then they say, "Meditation is very difficult." Meditation is not difficult; meditation is a simple process, a natural process. But if you create unnecessary hindrances, then you make it something like a hurdle race. You create barriers: you put rocks on the way... you hang rocks around your neck, you keep yourself chained, imprisoned, locked from within and the key thrown out.... Then of course it becomes more and more difficult, more and more impossible.

My effort here is to make meditation a natural phenomenon. Give to the body what is the body's need, and give to the mind what is the mind's need. And then you will be surprised, they become very friendly. And when you tell the body, "Now for one hour allow me to sit silently," the body says, "Okay. You have been doing so much for me, you have been so respectful towards me, I can do at least this much for you."

And when you say to the mind, "Please, keep yourself silent for a few minutes. Let me have a little rest," the mind will understand you. If you have not been repressing, if you have honored the mind, respected the mind, if you have not condemned it, then the mind will also become silent.

I am saying this from my own experience. Respect the body, respect the mind, so that they respect you. Create a friendliness. They are yours; don't be antagonistic. All the old traditions teach you to be antagonistic to the body and the mind; they create enmity, and through enmity you cannot move into meditation. Then the mind will disturb you more when you are meditating than at any other time. Then the body will become restless -- more in meditation than at any other time. It will take revenge, it won't allow you to sit silently. It will create so many problems for you.

If you have tried to sit silently for a few minutes you will know. Imaginary things will start happening. You will think that some ant is creeping on your leg, and when you look there is no ant. Strange... When you were sitting with closed eyes you felt absolutely that it was there, creeping, coming, coming, coming... and when you open your eyes there is no ant, nothing. It was just the body playing tricks with you. You have been playing tricks with the body. You have been deceiving the body in many ways, so now the body is deceiving you. When the body wants to go to sleep you force it to sit in a cinema hall. The body says, "Okay. When the right opportunity arises I will see to it." So when you sit in meditation the body starts creating problems for you. Suddenly you start feeling your back needs scratching... and you are surprised because it never happens ordinarily.

One woman brought for me a plastic hand with a battery attached to it, to scratch your back. I said, "But why have you brought this to me?"

She said, "You must be sitting in meditation... Whenever I sit in meditation the only problem is my back starts... I feel so much like I have to scratch it, and I cannot reach it. So I have purchased this hand. This is very handy! You put it on and it can scratch anywhere. So I was just thinking that you must be sitting in meditation... you will need this!"

I said, "I never sit in meditation. I AM in meditation, so I don't need to sit. Whatsoever I am doing I am in meditation. If my back needs scratching I will scratch it meditatively. What is wrong in scratching your own back? You are not scratching somebody else's back."

Just take care of the body and the body will repay you tremendously. Take care of your mind and the mind will be helpful. Create friendship, and meditation comes easily. Rather than trying to understand... because understanding is not possible before meditation, only MISunderstanding.

A man walked into a pub one night and sat down at the bar to drink a beer.

While he was engaged in conversation with the man on the stool beside him, a monkey clambered down one of the bar posts, stopped at his glass and pissed in his beer.

The man noticed it too late.

"Hey!" he exclaimed. "Did you see that? That monkey just pissed in my beer!"

"Well, no use tellin' me about it," said his neighbor. "Tell the barkeeper -- he owns this place."

The man called the barkeeper over.

"Hey!" he said. "Do you know that while I was talking with this gentleman a monkey came over and pissed in my beer?"

"Nothin' to do with me," said the landlord. "Go and have a word with the pianist over there -- it is his monkey!"

The man walked over with his pint mug, tapped the pianist on the shoulder and said, "Hey, do you know your monkey has just pissed in my beer?"

"No," said the pianist, "but if you sing the words, I will play it."

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS NOT EGO A PART OF DIVINE PLAY? WHO AM I TO DROP IT?

Vedant Bharti... so please don't drop it!

The venerable old rabbi, known throughout the land for his wisdom, lay in a coma, very near

death. On either side of his bed hovered his most worshipful disciples.

"Rebbenyu," pleaded the spokesman for the grieving congregants, "please do not leave us without a final word of wisdom. Speak to us for the last time, dear Rabbi." For a few moments there was no response, and the weeping visitors feared he had passed on to his well-earned reward. But suddenly the rabbi's lips moved ever so slightly. They bent over him to hear his final words.

"Life is a cup of tea," he whispered in a faint voice.

The disciples looked at each other in perplexity. What did he mean? What great secret of life was hidden in that mystic statement? For the better part of an hour they exchanged opinions, analyzing the sentence from every conceivable standpoint, but they could not decipher the deeper meaning.

"We must ask him before it is too late," said the leader. Once again, he leaned over the still figure of the revered sage. "Rabbi, Rabbi," he called out urgently, "we implore you to explain. Why is life a cup of tea?"

With his last spark of energy, the rabbi lifted his palms and croaked, "Alright, so life is not a cup of tea."

Vedant Bharti, you say, "Is not ego a part of divine play? Who am I to drop it?"

If you are enjoying the divine play, please don't drop it. And there is one fear also: somebody may pick it up. It is better you keep yours. One to one is more than enough; somebody will have two if you drop it.

And do you understand what is meant by divine play? If you understand it, then where is the ego? If you understand it is all divine play, the ego has disappeared. The ego exists only when you take life seriously. Ego is a very serious phenomenon -- false, but serious. If life is a divine play, if you have come to this great wisdom, then where is the ego? Then you are just playing a part, you need not be identified with it. You are acting only. You need not become your acting. Ego simply means you become identified with your part, so much so that you forget that you are separate, you forget that you are consciousness. You become lost in the acting itself, you become it -- that's what ego is.

Ego is not something that you have to drop. Ego is only a misunderstanding. You don't drop misunderstandings, you simply understand and the misunderstanding is no more there. You don't drop darkness, you simply bring light in and it is not found at all. Not that first you bring light in, then you catch hold of darkness and throw it out of the house -- there is no need. If you are really aware that it is a divine play, that means light has been brought in. Then you cannot ask the second thing.

If it is your understanding that life is a divine play, then you cannot ask, "Who am I to drop it?" Then you are not, you disappear. There is no dropper and nothing to be dropped.

But the first part of your question is not your understanding. So please, if you have dropped it, put it back, because there are so many foolish people, somebody may pick it up.

An angry mother dragged her nine-year-old son to the doctor's office and asked, "Is a nine-year-old boy able to perform an appendix operation?"

The doctor barked impatiently, "Of course not!"

The mother said to the kid, "So, was I right? Put it back!"

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
LISTENING TO YOU, A DESIRE ARISES FOR AWARENESS; BUT IS NOT THIS
VERY DESIRE ANTITHETICAL TO AWARENESS?

Prem Sunderam, if listening to me a desire arises for awareness, then you have missed the point. Listening to me you will become aware. If you are rightly listening, then awareness will happen through listening. If you are not listening, then a desire will arise to be aware. Desire means tomorrow you will be aware -- you want to be aware tomorrow. And if you are really listening to me, who bothers about tomorrow? This moment is all that is -- you ARE aware.

See right now....

This is awareness: the birds chirping, the silence, three thousand people lost into one organic, oceanic unity, as if there is nobody. This is awareness, and the taste of it will transform you. And then wherever you want to be aware you can be aware. It is something that is happening in you. Listening to me is only a device.

I am not here preaching to you; this is only a meditative device. Just as you are doing other meditations, this is also a meditation in which I participate with you so that your minds can become engaged with me, and your hearts can slip deep into your very core.

Sunderam, if a desire arises for meditation, for awareness, then you have missed the whole point, because desire is a barrier. Either be aware right now -- either now or never! You can't say "Tomorrow...." The moment you say tomorrow you have postponed it forever.

Yes, a desire is antithetical to awareness. Listening to me, understand that a desire is antithetical to awareness. Desirelessness is awareness. Seeing that desirelessness is awareness, how can you desire awareness? When, sitting with me each morning, you become silent, what is happening? There is no desire to be silent -- that's what is happening. Because there is no desire to be silent you are simply silent, and then that silence will go on surrounding you for the whole day.

And if you see the point then there is no need for any special situation for you to be aware in. You can be aware anywhere. In the very marketplace you can suddenly become aware. It is not a question of desiring; it is becoming aware suddenly. Any moment shake yourself a little, wake yourself a little.

Two drunks were riding a roller coaster when one turned to the other and said, "We may be making good time, but I've a feeling that we're on the wrong bus."

If you are postponing for tomorrow you are on the wrong bus; you are drunk; you are unconscious.

A policeman appeared in court as a witness against Max Loeb, arrested for being drunk in public.

"How do you know the defendant was intoxicated?" inquired the magistrate.

"No doubt about it at all," said the officer. "When I saw him, he was dropping a penny in a parking meter. Then he looked up at the big clock on the City Hall building and moaned, 'My God, I have gained eleven pounds!'"

Just a little consciousness.... And it can happen only now. God knows only one time, now, and only one place -- here. He knows no past, no future, he knows only the present. If

you want to have any communion with reality you have to be aware right now.

Wife: "How did you happen to hit a telephone pole?"

Drunk: "I hit it in self-defense."

Just watch your life, what you are doing to yourself.

The fireman was pulling the drunk out of the burning bed. "You fool," he shouted, "that will teach you to smoke in bed!"

The drunk answered, "I was not smoking in bed -- it was on fire when I lay down."

So shake yourself. Don't say tomorrow. Whenever you remember, whenever you remember me, whenever you remember Buddha, whenever you remember Jesus, just shake yourself. Wake up! See all around -- the people, the trees, the birds. Be silent, available to existence, in a deep deep let-go... and awareness, slowly slowly, will go on penetrating deeper and deeper into you.

Mulla Nasruddin was saying to me:

"I am the sensitive type -- a poet. When I see a beautiful woman I want to cry... or write a poem... or jump on her!"

"I was at a party in my hotel and I met this really great girl, and we drank champagne. I managed to get her up to my room. I locked the door and took off my glasses -- showed her no mercy! And I winked... and she winked. And I took off my shirt... and she took off her shirt. I took off my pants... and she took off her pants -- and I lunged at her. Then I realized I had been looking into a mirror. I was taking glass out of my legs for weeks. I must say I was the best I ever had!"

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU AN ANTI-SEMITE?

Levin, me? An anti-Semite? You must be crazy!

Louie Feldman -- a traveling salesman -- caught the last train out of Grand Central Station, but in his haste he forgot to pack his toiletry set.

The following morning he arose bright and early and made his way to the lavatory at the end of the car. Inside he walked up to a washbasin that was not in use.

"Excuse me," said Louie to a man who was bent over the basin next to his, "I forgot to pack all my stuff last night. Mind if I use your soap?"

The stranger gave him a searching look, hesitated momentarily, and then shrugged. "Okay, help yourself."

Louie murmured his thanks, washed, and again turned to the man. "Mind if I borrow your towel?"

"No, I guess not."

Louie dried himself, dropped the wet towel to the floor and inspected his face in the mirror. "I could use a shave," he commented. "Would it be alright with you if I use your razor?"

"Certainly," agreed the man in a courteous voice.

"How you fixed for shaving cream?"

Wordlessly, the man handed Louie his tube of shaving cream.

"You got a fresh blade? I hate to use one that somebody else already used. Can't be too careful, you know."

Louie was given a fresh blade. His shave completed, he turned to the stranger once more.

"You wouldn't happen to have a comb handy, would you?"

The man's patience had stretched dangerously near the breaking point, but he managed a wan smile and gave Louie his comb.

Louie inspected it closely. "You should really keep this comb a little cleaner," he admonished as he proceeded to wash it. He then combed his hair and again addressed his benefactor whose mouth was now drawn in a thin, tight line.

"Now, if you don't mind, I will have a little talcum powder, some after-shave lotion, some toothpaste and a toothbrush."

"By God, I never heard of such damn nerve in my life!" snarled the outraged stranger. "Hell, no! Nobody in the whole world can use my toothbrush."

He slammed his belongings into their leather case and stalked to the door, muttering, "I gotta draw the line some place!"

"Anti-Semite!" yelled Louie.

Enough for today.

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Chapter #5

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QUIETEN YOUR MIND.
REFLECT.
WATCH.

NOTHING BINDS YOU.
YOU ARE FREE.

YOU ARE STRONG.
YOU HAVE COME TO THE END.
FREE FROM PASSION AND DESIRE,
YOU HAVE STRIPPED THE THORNS FROM THE STEM.

THIS IS YOUR LAST BODY.

YOU ARE WISE.
YOU ARE FREE FROM DESIRE
AND YOU UNDERSTAND WORDS
AND THE STITCHING TOGETHER OF WORDS.
AND YOU WANT NOTHING.

"VICTORY IS MINE,
KNOWLEDGE IS MINE,
AND ALL PURITY,
ALL SURRENDER.

"I WANT NOTHING.
I AM FREE.
I HAVE FOUND MY WAY.
WHOM SHALL I CALL TEACHER?"

THE GIFT OF TRUTH IS BEYOND GIVING.
THE TASTE BEYOND SWEETNESS,
THE JOY BEYOND JOY.

THE END OF DESIRE IS THE END OF SORROW.

The whole philosophy of Gautama the Buddha is contained in the first sutra. It is of uttermost importance. It is not only to be intellectually understood, it has to be lived; only then will you be able to understand it.

QUIETEN YOUR MIND.

Buddha does not preach any belief -- belief in God, heaven or hell. His whole emphasis is on creating a silent space within you. You are already full of knowledge; more knowledge you don't need. You need more innocence. You need an innocence like a small child. You need more wonder, more awe, more clarity.

And all these come to you when the mind is silent. When the mind is silent you are in communion with existence; when the mind is noisy you are disconnected. Your own noise functions like a wall around you. Silence is the bridge; knowledge, noise, is a barrier. And all knowledge creates noise in you. The more you know, the more you become indoctrinated, the more you are full of rubbish, junk.

You need a spacious being within you, utterly empty, so empty that even YOU are not there, so silent that even the idea of 'I' has disappeared. Then there is no barrier between you and existence. You fall in harmony. You become part of this tremendous celebration that goes on and on. You dance with the stars, you dance with the wind, you dance with the clouds. Your whole being becomes a dance, a song. You burst forth into thousands of flowers. But a silent being is a must; in a noisy being, nothing is possible. The noisy mind is impotent; it is not fertile, it is not creative. The silent mind is the right soil for your being to grow -- to grow to its ultimate heights and depths.

Hence the first sutra: QUIETEN YOUR MIND.

One sometimes feels surprised the way Buddha starts. The way Buddha approaches

reality is so unique. It is utterly revolutionary, radical. One would have thought he would start with a prayer to God -- but there is no God. In Buddha's vision God has no place. God is the invention of the ignorant people.

For Buddha there is no God as a person; there is no creator because the creation is eternal. Yes, there is creativity, but no creator. There is godliness, but no God. The whole existence is overflowing with godliness, but God is not a person so you cannot pray to him.

Remember, prayer is impossible with Buddha. Prayer presupposes a God, a personal God who can favor you if you praise him, who can be very unfavorable to you if you annoy him. This is childish -- the whole approach is childish; it is not religious at all.

Buddha begins in a very scientific way. Rather than talking about God he talks about you and about your reality. As you are, you are nothing but noise. Look within and you will see the facticity of Buddha: you are just noise; not even a moment of silence happens to you. Hence your doors and windows remain closed. You are surrounded by your own garbage that you go on creating and accumulating, thinking that it is great treasure.

QUIETEN YOUR MIND.... And the statement is very significant, because the moment the mind is quiet the mind disappears. A quiet mind means a no-mind. A quiet mind is not anymore a mind at all. Negatively you can call it a no-mind. That's what Zen people have done, that's what mystics like Kabir, Nanak, have done. They call it AMANI -- a state of no-mind. But you can use a positive term also. Mahayana Buddhists call this state BODHICHITTA -- the universal Mind. Mind with a capital M, mind you, not YOUR mind, not MY mind, but simply THE Mind: the oceanic Mind, the Mind of the whole.

Both are good. If you love positive ways of saying things you can call it bodhichitta -- the Mind of the Buddha, the universal Mind. Or, if you love to be more accurate, then the negative way of saying it is far more correct; then call it no-mind, because as noise disappears, mind disappears. Just as when your disease disappears, health is left behind -- not that now you have a healthy disease. Disease is never healthy and mind is never silent. Disease is disease and mind is noise. When there is no disease then there is health; when there is no noise then there is no-mind.

But a new experience arises in your innermost core: the experience of a silent music, a soundless sound. The mystics have called it ANAHAT NAD, the soundless sound; or, as the Zen people say, the sound of one hand clapping. It is basically paradoxical; hence the expression, the sound of one hand clapping.

Buddha says: QUIETEN YOUR MIND. Really he is saying: Go beyond mind, drop the mind, be finished with it. And what is the way? How has it to be done?

REFLECT....

That is the first fundamental. Remember, by "reflect" he does not mean contemplate, think. No, by reflect he actually means reflect -- like a mirror. The mirror reflects; whatsoever comes in front of the mirror, it reflects it. It does not think about it, it does not contemplate it; it simply reflects. When it has moved, the reflection disappears.

This should be the fundamental: reflect things, and when they have disappeared, let them disappear. Don't go on carrying the past. Don't become a photo-plate; remember to remain a mirror. The photo-plate also reflects, but it becomes attached to the reflection, it becomes obsessed with the reflection. It clings to it, it becomes imprinted with it. The mirror remains clean; it is not imprinted by what it reflects. It does not become beautiful when a beautiful face is reflected; it does not become ugly.

So should be the seeker. When success comes, reflect; don't become attached to it. When failure comes, reflect; don't be disturbed by it. When you are in a palace, reflect the palace, and when you are in a hut, reflect the hut. Don't become attached either to the palace or to the hut. Let everything come and pass, and you simply be a mirror.

If you are a mirror you cannot carry the past with you, and if you don't carry the past you will remain fresh, you will remain young, you will remain in a continuous process of birth. Each moment you will be born anew. We become old... I am not talking about physiological age, I am talking about psychological age. We become very old for the simple reason that we collect the past.

You are still carrying something that happened thirty years ago. Somebody had insulted you and that wound is still there; you still hanker to take revenge. You were rich fifty years ago, you cannot forget that yet; or you were poor and you are still carrying that with you.

That's how you find the world full of miserly people. From where do they come? These are poor people who have become rich, but they are still clinging to their poverty. Only on the surface they have possessions, but deep down they are poor, very poor. They can't leave their poverty -- they can't depart from their past. They are carrying it; it has become a habit, it has become second nature to them. Hence the clinging to the money. They cannot spend, they cannot use their money.

I know a person who has at least ten buildings and earns a lot of money but lives in such a dirty house. All his buildings are beautiful, but those beautiful buildings have been rented and he lives in a dirty black hole. He has no wife, no children; he is alone.

The reason I became acquainted with him, was that whenever he would pass through the street where I used to live, at least from one furlong I would know that he was coming, because he used a bicycle so old that it must have been used by Adam and Eve! It made so much noise that I became interested in the man.

I inquired, "Who is this man?" and they said, "He is one of the richest men of the town. His bicycle has no brakes, but one thing is good about his bicycle: if you tell him to purchase a new one he says no, he can leave it anywhere -- nobody ever steals it! Who will steal it? Anybody stealing it... it will be known all over the city who has stolen it, it makes so much noise!"

I told a common friend that I would like to meet the man, and I asked him, "Why are you living in such misery when you can live beautifully, in a beautiful house? You have enough money, more than you need, and once you are dead there is nobody else for whom you are collecting all this."

He said, "I know it, but somehow I cannot spend. That is impossible. Once I get some money, the hardest thing for me is to spend it." Tears came into his eyes and he said, "I also feel, What am I doing to myself? But I lived in poverty -- my parents died when I was very young. I have been a beggar; slowly slowly I have earned money. I gambled, I did all kinds of things, and that poverty is still within me -- I am still an orphan. I am not a rich man -- I am the poorest in this town."

And I could see it in his eyes. This is what happens to people.

You just watch your mind and you will see a queue of past events going back, far back, to the age when you were three or four. And all that has become collected; it is heavy on you.

Buddha says: If you want to quieten the mind, the first thing is to learn the art of reflecting. Just reflect and move on. Yes, live in the moment, live totally. Reflect whatsoever

is and then let it move. Don't cling to it, so that you are again pure, again innocent, again available, again empty, ready to experience again.

It is because of your past that you cannot experience the present; your past distorts everything. It is because of your past that you go on desiring the future, because you don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past and you would like to have all the pleasures that you enjoyed in the past again and again in the future. So your future is nothing but a modified past: all the pains have been deleted and all the pleasures have been multiplied. And between your past and future is the small present -- which is real. Between two unrealities you are destroying that which is real. If you learn to reflect, then the past is irrelevant, the future is irrelevant; the only relevance is that of the present.

Be present to the present -- that is the meaning of reflecting.

And the second thing: to quieten the mind, Buddha says:

WATCH.

What will you do when you reflect? You are not a dead thing, you are not like a dead mirror. Be like a mirror, but you can't be dead -- you are alive. So what will you do?

WATCH.

You think, you imagine, but you never watch. Watching is a totally different process. It means you don't have any likes, any dislikes. You don't condemn anything, you don't appreciate either. You simply see and you are aware and you are alert -- not dead like a mirror. You are aware. You are watching what is happening.

You see a roseflower; you reflect it and you watch it. You don't say anything about the rose. You don't bring words between you and the rose because all those words are useless. When you are confronting a real rose why bring words in? Why destroy the reality of the rose by bringing interpretations of the past? You may be quoting great poets -- Shelley and Yeats -- but by quoting them you are bringing between you and the rose a barrier. Leave your eyes utterly empty -- but don't fall asleep. Watch, just look silently. Be a witness.

Watching means looking at things without any evaluation, neither saying it is good nor saying it is bad -- because nothing is good and nothing is bad. Things are simply what they are.

A rose is a rose and a thorn is a thorn; neither the thorn is bad nor the rose is good. If man disappears from the earth, roses will be there, thorns will be there, but there will be nobody to say that roses are good and thorns are bad. It is our mind that creates these values. And these go on changing.

Just a hundred years ago nobody would have ever thought to put a cactus in one's home. A cactus is all thorns. If you had brought a cactus into your home, people would have thought you were mad, something had gone wrong with you! But now to grow roses in your home is orthodox. The avant-garde people grow cactuses; they are the really cultured people. They keep cactus plants in their bedrooms too -- poisonous, dangerous, but the cactus is "in" and the rose is "out." Fashions change.

In this century, ugly things have become beautiful and beautiful things have become ugly. Picasso is valuable -- one of the ugliest painters the world has ever known! Just two hundred or three hundred years ago he would have been forced to live in a mental asylum if he had painted things like this. He would have been thought insane, utterly insane, because the world of Michelangelo is a totally different world; a different valuation existed. The world of Leonardo da Vinci is a totally different world.

Fashions go on changing. Every day man goes on changing. Nothing is, in fact, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. It all depends on you. Whatsoever you start thinking is good, beautiful, becomes good and beautiful. A Jaina monk moving naked is thought to be great by the Jainas, but others think it a little obscene. Many times problems arise.

Just a few days ago in a village, there was a riot because one Jaina monk entered in the town and the non-Jainas objected that a naked man walking inside the town.... "This is bad for our children and our wives and our daughters."

I am not against nudity, but I am also not in favor of Jaina monks moving naked. My reason is totally different; my reason is that they look so ugly. Unless you have a beautiful body you don't have the right to be naked. I can accept Mahavira moving naked. It is said that he had one of the most beautiful bodies -- and it seems so because all his statues are so beautiful. He must have had a very beautiful body, very proportionate. If he moved naked, that can be understood. To cover his beautiful body with clothes will not be right. But Jaina monks deliberately destroy their bodies. They are masochistic people: they cripple their bodies in many ways. They make them as ugly as they can, because the uglier your body is, the more respected you are. So they become caricatures. They are cartoons, not real people. It is better to cover them in beautiful clothes.

It depends what your criteria are, what your values are. But in reality, nothing is good and nothing is bad; things are simply what they are. If you witness then there is no question of choice. Then a choiceless awareness arises in you.

That's what J. Krishnamurti goes on saying; it is basically the message of Buddha. The followers of Krishnamurti think that he is teaching something very original. It has nothing original in it; it is essentially the message of Buddha. It is not J. Krishnamurti's invention. In a different sense it is original; it is original in the sense that it is his experience. He also knows it as much as Buddha knew, but it is not new -- not original in the sense of being new. It is original in the sense that it has originated in him. He is not repeating Buddha, that is true. He is not imitating Buddha, that is true. He is simply saying what HE has known. But whatsoever he has known is the same truth as Buddha's truth.

In fact, there are not two truths in the world, so all the awakened ones know the same truth again and again. Their language is different, their expression is different; it is bound to be so. Twenty-five centuries have passed since Buddha. How can I speak the same language? And how could Buddha have spoken the language that I speak? That is impossible. But as the followers of Krishnamurti go on claiming that his teaching is absolutely original, new -- that is utter nonsense. It is basically the same teaching as Buddha's: choiceless awareness. That is the meaning of "reflect" and "watch."

Be aware, but don't choose. If you choose, you lose watching. If you start clinging -- because the moment you choose you will start clinging -- then reflection is lost. And once you have fulfilled these two simple things -- reflection and watchfulness....

NOTHING BINDS YOU.
YOU ARE FREE.

These simple sutras are enough. If you can practice only these two things -- reflection and watchfulness -- nothing else is needed. You ARE free, nothing binds you. You are really freedom; nothing can ever bind you. All bondage is imaginary. You think you are in bondage; hence you are in bondage. It is your thought.

Harvey Pincus, the passionate playboy of Prospect Park, oblivious of human limitations, speeded up when he should have slowed down. To his surprise and dismay, he awoke three days later in Bellevue Hospital where he was placed on a strict diet of raw eggs and oysters with wheat germ, garnished with ginseng and soybean sprouts.

A week later, his physical desires returned and, after having been rebuffed by Bellevue nurses of various shapes, sizes, ages and national origins, he demanded to be released forthwith so that he might resume his "al fresco" prowling in the Prospect Park perimeter.

Pincus was soon confronted by Dr. Siegel, the hospital's staff psychiatrist. "Before we release you, you will have to take a Rohrschach test," explained the medic.

"What is that?" asked Pincus suspiciously.

"A kind of personality gauge. I will just show you some inkblots and you tell me what each one suggests to you."

"So go ahead and test."

Dr. Siegel handed him the first blot. "What does this bring to mind?"

"That's easy," replied Pincus instantly, his eyes lighting with pleasure. "It is a girl's hips."

"And this?" asked the psychiatrist, handing him another inkblot.

"A woman's breast. Very nice, too."

"Hmm -- how about this one?"

"Wow, Doctor, what a gorgeous pair of legs!"

Siegel had already reached an obvious conclusion about his patient's proclivities, but he continued with a half-dozen more inkblots just to make sure. When Pincus continued to respond as though all the "pictures" were sexual symbols, right up to the last blot, the doctor leaned back in his chair and rendered his diagnosis.

"My dear fellow," he began, somewhat severely, "in case nobody ever told you, you have an abnormal fixation on sex."

"What does that mean, if I may be so bold to inquire?"

"It means, sir," Siegel explained bluntly, "that you have a filthy mind."

"Well, look who's talking!" Pincus yelled, outraged. "YOU are showing me all those dirty pictures and I'VE got a filthy mind!"

What you are seeing in the world is not really there; it is your projection. What the world is like you will be able to see only when your mind has learned to be silent, to watch, to reflect. Then you will know that which is. Right now what you know is nothing but your own mind being projected on the screen of the world. Everything functions as a screen for you and you go on projecting your ideas; hence the insistence of Buddha on making the mind absolutely quiet.

When the mind is silent the projector stops, the screen becomes blank, and then for the first time you see the glory of existence. Then for the first time you become aware of the splendor and the blissfulness and the peace that surrounds everything. You become aware of godliness overflowing everywhere. Everything is known then in its authentic reality, undistorted by you.

The preacher was telling his congregation that there are over seven hundred different kinds of sin.

The next day he was besieged with mail and phone calls from people who wanted the list -- to make sure they were not missing anything.

If you talk about sin and you want people to stop, what they hear is totally different. They start feeling that they are missing something: "Seven hundred sins -- just think about it!" And you will also start feeling, "My God, how much I am missing! Seven hundred, and I have not even committed seven! I go on committing only a few, two or three again and again -- and there are seven hundred sins! What a wastage of life!" You don't even know the names of them.

The night clerk at the Hotel Algonquin was surprised to see a battered-looking man, wearing nothing but his undershorts, enter the lobby from the street. The stranger staggered to the desk and paused there, weaving groggily. "What can I do for you?" inquired the clerk. "I would like to be escorted to the third floor, room 302," said the near-naked man. "Room 302," repeated the clerk. He consulted the register. "I am sorry, sir, but that room is occupied by Mr. Oscar J. Levine of Toledo. It is pretty late to be rousing a guest!" "I know what time it is, well as you do," retorted the inebriated one. "Just show me to room 302 without any further con-ver... any further talk." "Well, what is your name?" "My name is Oscar J. Levine, and for your information I just fell outa the window!"

People are almost asleep, drunk with a thousand and one desires. There is nothing more intoxicating than desire. And it is not only one desire that is intoxicating you, there are many many desires -- seven hundred desires at least! And they are all intoxicating you, and they don't allow you to see that which is. You can't see that which is unless you stop desiring.

Desiring disappears on its own accord if you become silent, because in a silent mind no desire can grow. Desire can grow only in a clouded mind, clumsy and confused. Buddha says:

YOU ARE STRONG.
YOU HAVE COME TO THE END.
FREE FROM PASSION AND DESIRE,
YOU HAVE STRIPPED THE THORNS FROM THE STEM.
THIS IS YOUR LAST BODY.

If you can fulfill the requirement of being silent, reflecting, witnessing, then you are strong, you are no longer weak. The man who lives in desires always feels weak because thousands of desires are pulling him in different directions. He is almost falling apart. Somehow he is keeping himself together, managing, dragging. He is tired, but he does not know what else to do. Everybody else is doing the same. People are running after desires. Nobody seems to be fulfilled, nobody seems to reach anywhere, but what else to do? When everybody is running, you start running. It is a crowd psychology.

To be a sannyasin, to be a seeker of truth, means getting out of the world of crowd psychology, the mob mentality. Unless you become aware that the crowd is dragging you with itself and you step out of the power of the crowd, you will never be able to know what truth is, you will never become a buddha. And to be a buddha is your birthright.

YOU ARE STRONG... but your desires go on making you weak. Once you have become silent you will be able to see it. A silent state of your being is so strong that you know you have come to the very end, you have come to fulfillment. One comes to fulfillment not by achieving something in the outside world but by reaching to one's own innermost core: what Jesus calls the kingdom of God, what Buddha calls nirvana, what Mahavira calls moksha.

When you have reached to your innermost core suddenly you become aware that all that you have been desiring was useless and what you really needed, what was your real nourishment, has been waiting for you inside you. Your search has to be inner, not outer. You can become Alexander the Great, you can conquer the whole world, and yet you will die with empty hands. Don't be bothered with all that nonsense. Be a Buddha, not an Alexander!

Buddha means one who has seen his truth and is contented, utterly contented with it. **FREE FROM PASSION AND DESIRE, YOU HAVE STRIPPED THE THORNS FROM THE STEM. THIS IS YOUR LAST BODY.** If you can be free from passion and desire....

Passion is a state of fever, it is a hot state. We know only two states: either we are very hot -- that is passion -- or we are very cold -- that is anti-passion. If you love, you become very hot; if you hate, you become very cold. And exactly in the middle is the point where you should stop. That point is neither hot nor cold. It is transcendental to both, it is cool. And when you are really cool, silent, peaceful, mysteries open their doors for you. A feverish man, in a passionate state, is almost blind.

Feinberg came home from a business trip and his wife coolly informed him that she had been unfaithful during his absence.

"Who was it?" shouted Feinberg, "that rotten Goldberg?"

"No," his wife replied, "it was not Goldberg."

"Was it that crooked partner of mine -- that goniff, Levy?"

"No, not Levy."

"I know who it was -- it was that momzer, Shapiro!"

"No, it was not Shapiro, either."

Feinberg glowered at his wife. "What is the matter?" he barked. "None of my friends are good enough for you?"

People are living... not really living, just mechanically moving, victims of blind forces. When sex takes possession of you, you are not your own master. Or when greed takes possession, or anger, or jealousy, you are not your own master. You are being dragged. And it is very strange that you allow it to happen -- you don't feel insulted or humiliated! Each of your instincts makes you a slave. You not only tolerate this slavery; on the contrary, you enjoy it. On the contrary, you think this is what life is supposed to be. This is not life that you are living. It is biology, it is physiology, it is chemistry, but it is not life. To live under the influence of instincts is not to live at all.

Life begins only when you rise above your instincts. And the way to rise is: **REFLECT, WATCH,** and you will immediately know: **NOTHING BINDS YOU. YOU ARE FREE.** You are a master. In your watchfulness, slowly slowly, passions disappear, because a watchful person cannot be hot.

Desires are always leading you into the future. Desire means future; it can only happen tomorrow. So you go on looking at the tomorrow, and meanwhile the time is passing. And the tomorrow never comes; it can't come, in the very nature of things. So your whole life is just a waiting for nothing -- waiting for Godot! And Godot never comes. In fact, nobody knows who this Godot is.

But we go on waiting for something to happen some day, and we know that it has not happened to anybody. It didn't happen to your father, to your father's father. It has not happened to your neighbors. You can look around people's faces: it has not happened. You don't see the glow, you don't see in their eyes contentment, you don't see joy. You see only a

desperate effort to achieve something which they are not really aware of, what exactly it is and whether it is possible or not. But they go on running in hot pursuit -- and they go on destroying their life.

"Grandma, how long have you and grandpa been married?" asked the romantic young granddaughter.

"Forty-nine years," replied the old lady.

"Ah, what a beautiful life you must have had," sighed the girl. "And I will bet you never even thought of a divorce."

"Well," said grandma, "divorce, no -- murder, yes!"

Just ask the old people what they have attained, what they have been doing. And if they are true and authentic, if they are sincere, they will tell you nothing but that "Life has been a tale told by an idiot, full of fury and noise, signifying nothing. And now comes death, and all is finished." But to a meditator, death is not the end but the beginning of a new life.

Buddha says: THIS IS YOUR LAST BODY. If you have quietened the mind, if you have become free from desire and passion: THIS IS YOUR LAST BODY. Now you will be born into a bodiless existence. Now you will be part of the invisible life, the eternal life which knows no birth, no death.

The body is a limitation, the body confines you. You are unlimited consciousness, but your body forces you into a small, dark hole. You live in a dark hole, in a dark cave. Of course, it is going to be miserable. You are vast and somehow you have been forced to live in a small space. Nobody has done it to you; you yourself go on doing it. Each time you die, you die with desires. Those desires bring you back into new wombs. Those desires give you another body.

If you can die without desires, then there is no longer any birth. When there is no birth there is no old age, no death. And when there is no birth there is no time. You go beyond time. You live in eternity, you become divine. That's what Buddha means by godliness -- BHAGAVATA.

YOU ARE WISE.

Through silence you become wise, not through learning, not by becoming more informed but by becoming absolutely silent. YOU ARE WISE... otherwise you will know only words -- hollow words, meaningless words. Yes, you can accumulate much knowledge. You can know the Vedas and the Koran and the Bible and the Gita and you can repeat them, but you will not understand anything. More is the possibility that you will misunderstand. From where will you get the right perspective to understand them? With all your passions and desires and all your confusion and clouded mind, how are you going to understand the Upanishads, the Koran? Impossible. They come from people who had gone beyond the body. Unless YOU go beyond the body you will not understand them. You can understand only that which you have experienced.

But the knowledgeable people not only deceive others, they start deceiving themselves -- maybe not knowingly, not deliberately. If you go on deceiving others your whole life, pretending that you know, slowly slowly you start believing in your own pretensions. You forget that you don't know; you don't want to remember it. Who wants to know that "I am ignorant"? Everybody wants to feel that he knows.

Ask anybody about God and it is very rare to find a person who will say to you, "I don't know." Very rare... almost impossible. Many will say, "Yes, God is, God exists." And they are ready to fight, to argue, to kill you or be killed, for something that they know not, not at all. And there are a few who will say, "No, there is no God." But it is very rare to find a person who will say, "I don't know" -- and that is the real religious person.

The agnostic is the real religious person -- neither the theist nor the atheist. One believes without knowing, one disbelieves without knowing; both are deceiving. But I am not doubting their sincerity. They may be thinking... they may be absolutely convinced that they know. And then you ask other questions about God and then they have to invent answers, because basically they have accepted that they know.

Ask them how many heads God has, and they will tell you three or four, and they will make much out of nonsense. They will say that God has four heads because there are four directions and he has to look in all directions, or three because there are three dimensions and he has to look into all dimensions. How many hands has he? And some say he has one thousand hands because he has to work so much and he is so alone, and he has to create the world and manage the whole show all alone. One thousand hands... two hands are not enough. Do you think one thousand hands will be enough to manage this vast universe? Do you think four heads will be enough to see everywhere?

But people go on inventing answers. You ask the question and they invent -- they have to invent because they cannot accept one thing, that they don't know.

A blonde took her dog to the vet who advised her to buy some Nair to remove the excess hair around the Schnauzer's eyes and ears.

The blonde entered a pharmacy and asked for the hair remover. "Use it full strength for leg hair," said the druggist, "but dilute it one half for the underarms." "Ah," said the girl, "but I want to use it on my Schnauzer." "In that case," said the pharmacist, "you better use one quarter strength and I wouldn't ride a Honda for a couple of weeks."

The knowledgeable person cannot ask, "What is this Schnauzer?" That shows his ignorance and he cannot show that. Sometimes knowledgeable people commit such stupidities that no ignorant person can ever commit, because the ignorant person can always ask what it is -- "I don't know." But the knowledgeable person finds it impossible. He cannot say these three words: "I don't know." If you can say, "I don't know," you have taken one of the greatest steps towards real knowing, towards wisdom.

Buddha says: When mind is empty, silent, you are wise. By wisdom he does not mean knowledgeable; by wisdom he means innocence. Knowledge comes from the outside, wisdom arises within. Knowledge creates noise, wisdom brings more and more silence. The wise person slowly slowly becomes utterly silent. Even if he speaks, his words carry the flavor of silence, the music of silence.

By wisdom he means spontaneity, childlike spontaneity, eyes full of wonder. When your eyes are full of wonder you can see the beauty that surrounds you. When your eyes are full of knowledge you can't see the beauty because you have explanations for everything -- and explanations help you only to explain things away, nothing else.

But knowledgeable people have been doing good business. They have dominated humanity too long; that is their joy.

"I've got a problem, Doc," the new patient began.

"We all have problems," replied the doctor, smiling his assurance.

"My problem is this, Doc: I get migraine headaches every time I think of my wife. I break out in a rash every time I think of my job. I get cold sweats every time I think of my bank account. Talk about problems! Boy, have I got them!"

"Every problem has its answer, of course, and I understand this one perfectly," said the psychiatrist, nodding. "You will need a hundred sessions on the couch, at twenty-five dollars per session."

The patient gulped. "Well, Doc," he said after a painful pause, "that solves your problem. Now, how about mine?"

The knowledgeable people are doing good business. The priests, the professors, the pundits, the scholars, the theologians, they have been doing good business. Without knowing a thing about God, without knowing a thing about themselves even, they go on talking about great problems and great solutions. They talk about metaphysics, about philosophy. They have ready-made answers for everything.

Beware of these people! And they are all around, in the churches, in the mosques, in the temples, in the universities; you will find them everywhere. Beware of them. They are the people who will not allow humanity to ever become wise because once humanity becomes wise their profession is finished.

YOU ARE WISE.
YOU ARE FREE FROM DESIRE
AND YOU UNDERSTAND WORDS
AND THE STITCHING TOGETHER OF WORDS.
AND YOU WANT NOTHING.

Buddha says: When you are wise... not knowledgeable, not well informed, but when meditation has released your inner fragrance, when your inner consciousness has become a fully open lotus, then you will be able to understand words -- the words of the buddhas -- not before that. Don't waste your time with the Gita and the Koran and the Gurugrantha -- unless you become meditative.

Once you know your own being, in deep silence you have encountered yourself, then, of course, scriptures are tremendously beautiful. Then you will be able to understand because you will be standing in the same position, you will be having the same vision. Now scriptures will become your witnesses, they will witness for you. When you have known something on your own, reading in the Gita or in the Koran suddenly you will come across a sentence that will say exactly the same that you have experienced, and suddenly now the meaning is revealed.

Meaning has to come first to you through experience; only then can you understand words -- particularly the words of buddhas. In the ordinary world we don't understand even the words of those who are not enlightened. You can see it happening everywhere. Talk to your wife and you will understand; you both speak the same language, but there is no conversation possible. You say one thing, she understands another. You try to explain it to her, she goes even farther away. She tried to explain something to you and you jump to some other conclusion. It seems conversation is impossible. Both are in a state of madness. Both are so full of their own ideas that before the other has said anything they have already concluded what he means.

Nobody is listening to anybody else. Even when somebody is silent and pretending to listen to you, he is not listening. He is thinking a thousand and one things. While you are talking, he is preparing, so when you stop he starts saying something to you.

Passing Beth Yisroel Synagogue in Staten Island, in the wee hours of the morning, a drunk noticed a sign that read: RING THE BELL FOR THE SHAMMES. He did just that, and a sleepy-eyed old man came to the door.

"What do you want at this hour?" the shammes demanded crossly.

The drunk looked the old man over for a full twenty seconds and then retorted, "I want to know why you can't ring that silly bell yourself!"

People are bound to understand according to their minds.

Tannenbaum the tailor had saved up his money for years so that he could fulfill a longtime dream -- to take a Caribbean cruise. But he had not reckoned with seasickness. On the second day out from port, the captain noticed him, green-faced, hanging on the ship's rail.

"Sorry, sir," said the captain politely, "but you can't be sick here."

"No?" said Tannenbaum. "Watch!"

Rabbi Longbleibt of Far Rockaway had a well-deserved reputation for being long-winded. On this Sabbath, he was in especially good form. His topic for the day was "Prophets of the Bible."

"Now then," he added, after speaking for half an hour, "we have disposed of the major prophets. Next we come to the minor prophets. To what place, my dear friends, shall we assign them?"

From a seat in the rear of the temple, a bored-looking stranger arose. He waved an explanatory hand at the seat he had just vacated and said, "One of them can have my place!"

It is impossible to understand even the people who are just like you. What to say about buddhas? They speak from sunlit peaks and you live in dark valleys. By the time their words reach you they are no longer the same. By the time you hear them, great interpretation has happened. Your mind has colored them in its own color.

Buddha says: Now YOU ARE WISE. YOU ARE FREE FROM DESIRE. That is the sign of wisdom: freedom from desire. Only fools desire. Wise people live and live joyously, but without desire. Either you can desire or you can live, you can't do both. If you desire, you postpone living; if you live, who bothers about desiring? Today is enough unto itself.

... AND YOU UNDERSTAND WORDS AND THE STITCHING TOGETHER OF WORDS.

This is a very beautiful sutra. Buddha says: The words of the awakened ones have to be understood in a special way because they are stitched in a special way. Between two words there is silence; that is the stitching. You have to read between the lines. If you can just understand the lines you will miss the whole point. You have to read between the lines. You have to read between the words. You have to read the silences, the pauses. Hence it is more easy to understand a living buddha than to understand a dead one, because with a living buddha you can experience his pauses, his periods, when between two words suddenly there is a gap, the interval, which is far more pregnant than the words themselves.

... AND THE STITCHING TOGETHER OF WORDS.

AND YOU WANT NOTHING. Once you have become silent and you have understood the words of the awakened ones, what is there to want? You have already got it. You have got the inexhaustible

treasure. You have become a king.

"VICTORY IS MINE,
KNOWLEDGE IS MINE,
AND ALL PURITY,
ALL SURRENDER."

In silence, everything is yours: victory -- victory for which you have been struggling your whole life, maybe many lives, is suddenly yours. And without any fight it is yours because it has been yours from the very beginning. You simply never looked within. You are not a beggar, nobody is; everybody is born an emperor. But look within. If you look without you are a beggar. In fact, to look without means to become a beggar, and to look within means to become an emperor.

"VICTORY IS MINE, KNOWLEDGE IS MINE...." And now a totally different kind of knowledge happens to you. It is not coming from the outside; it is arising from your very depth, it is welling up within you. It is not borrowed; it is authentically yours.

"... AND ALL PURITY...."

Silence is virgin. The most innocent and the purest experience of life is to know a deep silence when everything stops. Time stops, space disappears, ego is nowhere to be found. Not a single thought on the mind, just silence from end to end. This is purity.

By "purity" Buddha does not mean any moral purity. Moral purity is never real purity. It is calculated, it is greed. It is greed for the other world, it is greed for heavenly pleasures.

There are three persons in the world, three categories. First, the sinners: they have chosen to be immoral. Second, the saints: they have chosen to be moral. But both are half, nobody is whole. The sinner is half, the saint is half. The sinners are attracted towards the saints, the sinners go and bow down to the saints. And the saints are continuously thinking in their minds that maybe they are missing; maybe the sinners are enjoying life.

I have heard that one great saint and a prostitute who lived just in front of him died on the same day, and the messengers from the beyond came and started dragging the saint towards hell and the prostitute towards heaven.

The saint said, "Wait! There must be something wrong. You must have misunderstood the orders. I am the great saint and that woman is the greatest sinner. What are you doing?"

And the messengers said, "We have asked God. We also thought that there is some misunderstanding.... But God said, 'No, there is no misunderstanding. The prostitute was continuously thinking how bad she was, how ugly she was, and she was continuously thinking how pure the saint was. And whenever the saint would do his prayers, would chant his sutras, she would sit silently by the door and listen. She never thought herself capable of entering into the temple. She would sit outside the door and listen from there, and tears would flow from her eyes. And she always thought that the saint was living the life of bliss.

"And the saint? He was continuously thinking of the prostitute, how beautiful she was. And whenever visitors would come to the prostitute he would suffer very much. "They must be enjoying. She is enjoying her life, and what have I done to myself? I have become an ascetic. Who knows but maybe I have done something wrong." The saint was continuously obsessed with the prostitute. In his dreams he was making love to the prostitute. And in the prostitute's dreams there was a totally different flavor: she was always worshipping the saint, bowing down to the saint -- hence the decision."

God said, "Take the saint to hell; he has lived respectably long enough. And bring the

prostitute to heaven; she has suffered enough in the world."

The sinner is half, the saint is half -- and they both are attached to each other, both are thinking of each other. I know many saints who have confessed to me in their privacy, "Sometimes the question happens in our minds that maybe the whole world is right and we are wrong. But now it is too late. We may have missed real joys to attain something abstract which may not exist at all. Who knows about God and who knows about paradise? We may prove to be fools finally."

That doubt lingers in your so-called saints; it is bound to linger. The more they feel this doubt, the more they condemn the sinner. The more they condemn the sinner, so the sinner thinks they are great saints; he goes to worship them. The opposites attract each other.

But there is a third category also: the sage. He is neither a sinner nor a saint; he is beyond both. And he is the person who is always misunderstood in the world. You understand the sinner very well: he lives in immorality. You understand the saint: he lives in morality. The sage is a mystery; you cannot understand him. He seems to be beyond comprehension; hence Jesus is misunderstood, Socrates is misunderstood, Buddha is misunderstood. That has been the fate of all the sages. They have been misunderstood for the simple reason that you cannot put them in the ordinary categories; they are beyond the categories.

When Buddha says "purity" he means the purity of the sage who knows nothing of morality or immorality, who has become again a child, who is reborn.

"VICTORY IS MINE, KNOWLEDGE IS MINE, AND ALL PURITY, ALL SURRENDER." When you become absolutely silent, ego disappears; it is not found at all.

Just the other day Vedant Bharti asked, "Why should I drop the ego? That too is part of the divine play." You don't understand what divine play is, and you don't understand that no buddha has ever said to you, "Drop the ego." I am not saying to you, "Drop the ego," either. What I am saying is: Try to find it... and you will not find it at all! That is how it disappears, that's how it is dropped. When you can't find it, what can you do with it? It has never been found. It exists only when you don't search for it. It exists only like a shadow. If you look and search, then you come to understand that a shadow is a shadow; it has no substance in it. There is no need to drop it; in understanding it and not finding it there, it is dropped.

This is surrender. In silence surrender happens because in silence you can't find the ego at all. Surrender is not something that you have to do. If you do it, it is not surrender, because if you are the doer how can it be surrender? One day you do, another day you can undo it. One day you can say, "I surrender"; another day you can come and you can say, "I withdraw it." Who can prevent you? It was your doing, you can withdraw it. But surrender cannot be withdrawn, you cannot undo it, because it is not your doing in the first place. It is a happening. When you are silent, suddenly you see there is no ego; ego disappears. This is surrender, this is purity, this is wisdom, this is freedom.

"I WANT NOTHING.

I AM FREE.

I FOUND MY WAY.

WHOM SHALL I CALL TEACHER?"

Buddha says: Now, whom should I call my teacher? The whole life has been a learning, the whole life has been my teacher. I have learned through failure, through success, through poverty, through richness. I have learned through pain, through pleasure. I have learned

through agony, through ecstasy. Whom should I call my teacher?

It is impossible because the whole life, in fact, is a teaching device. Life exists so that you can grow up towards wisdom, so that you can grow up towards godliness.

And a very beautiful sutra:

THE GIFT OF TRUTH IS BEYOND GIVING.

Truth is always a gift. You cannot snatch it away, you cannot conquer truth. It is always a gift. When you are silent it simply descends in you. It fills your silence, overfills it, starts overflowing.

THE GIFT OF TRUTH IS BEYOND GIVING. But when you have it, the problem is you cannot give it to anybody else. You would like, you would love to share it, but how to share it? The other person has to be utterly silent, only then can it be shared. But when the other person is silent, he need not share YOUR truth; truth descends in him on its own accord. Hence it is beyond giving.

THE TASTE BEYOND SWEETNESS....

It is far sweeter than sweetness itself, it is beyond sweetness.

THE JOY BEYOND JOY.

We can call it blissfulness, but it is a blissfulness that goes far beyond our idea of blissfulness. In fact, it is incomprehensible for the mind. It is impossible to express it in adequate words. If we call it joy, yes, only a bit of it is expressed. If we call it sweet, only just a fragment of it is expressed; the total remains unexpressed. It has to be experienced, there is no other way.

THE END OF DESIRE IS THE END OF SORROW.

You do only one thing: let desire be gone. And how will desire go?

QUIETEN YOUR MIND.
REFLECT.
WATCH.

NOTHING BINDS YOU.
YOU ARE FREE.

Contemplate over these sutras. Try to experience them... because Buddha is not an ordinary religious person. He is not interested in miracles. He is not interested in anything occult, esoteric. He is interested in transforming you. He is very down to earth.

Moses and Jesus were playing a round of golf at the Celestial Country Club. First, Jesus teed up and made a hole in one. Then Moses also drove a hole in one.

"Well, Moe, we are even so far," said Jesus.

"Now look here, Jake," Moses protested. "We made our point. Now what do you say we cut out the miracles and play a little golf?"

Buddha never did any miracle -- that is the greatest miracle. He is not interested in mystifying you. His whole effort is to give you the key so you can open the doors of all the mysteries. He is very existential, nonphilosophical, nonintellectual in his approach. He is not heady -- but very practical, pragmatic. His whole approach is experimental, experiential. So you will not be able to understand him if you only go on reading.

Try to experiment with what he is saying. Try to quieten your mind, reflect, watch, and see yourself what happens: freedom, bliss, truth, wisdom, innocence, purity... thousands of flowers start blooming in you. The spring suddenly bursts forth.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Life transcends logic

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IN WANTING TO KNOW WHO I AM I OFTEN FEEL IN A SPACE OF NOTHINGNESS.
IN ONE WAY IT SCARES ME, IN THE OTHER IT FEELS FULFILLING. I FEEL BOTH
ALL AND NOTHING. HOW TO FEEL ONE OR THE OTHER? AND WHERE DOES
THE DISTINCTION LIE BETWEEN A VACUUM -- THAT SPACE OF NEITHER PAST,
PRESENT OR FUTURE -- AND A DEAD SPACE?

Prabhato, the first indication of a right, positive nothingness is that it will be paradoxical. It will be felt as all and nothing, both simultaneously. Then it is alive. All that is alive is paradoxical; only that which is dead is logical. Logic is applicable only to dead things; logic has nothing to say about life. Life transcends logic. Life is basically illogical. That's what I mean by calling it paradoxical: it contains its own opposite.

Hence it is a good indication that you feel both all and nothing. If you feel just nothing, then it is a dead space; if you just feel all, then it is all imagination. When you feel both, it is neither dead space nor pure projection; it is something authentically true.

Whenever you will feel all and nothing together, naturally, on the one hand you will feel scared because of nothingness, because nothingness looks like death.... It IS death; death of the ego, death of all that you have known up to now as yourself. It is a total discontinuity

with the past; hence fear arises. You are losing your identity, and that is the greatest crisis in life. One wants to cling to one's identity; at least one knows who one is. Even though that identity was nothing but hell, still you would like to cling to it. At least it was something tangible. Now all tangibles are disappearing and all that you have known about yourself is evaporating. A great fear grips you. It seems as if you are going to die. It is natural to feel scared.

But you also feel, on the other hand, deeply fulfilled, because it is death and resurrection, crucifixion and resurrection. When you are ready to lose your old identity you are born anew. A new life starts pulsating, a new heart starts beating. As an ego you disappear, but you appear as part of the whole, of the immense vastness, of the totality.

This is really the birth of the holy man, because one becomes part of the whole. This is the birth of a buddha, of a christ. So in spite of all your fears, go into it, don't cling to your past. And remember, fear is very powerful because your whole past will support it, and you have a tremendously long past of millions of lives. Not only this life but many many lives are contained in your collective unconscious. They will all pull you back. They will say, "Where are you going? Are you going mad? Come back to the old shelter, to the old security!" The past is long; it has immense weight, great gravitation. And the new that is being born is just like a new sprout, very fragile. It can be crushed very easily, it can be destroyed very easily.

Remember that unless you go on in spite of all your fears you will never go into the unknown. And to go into the unknown is to go into God. God is never known. He is not only unknown, he is also unknowable. And whatsoever you know about God is just your ideas about God, not your experience.

Those who have experienced God have kept mum, have kept completely silent. They have not uttered a single word about God. They have indicated the way. Buddha says: Buddhas point you the way, but they don't say anything about the ultimate experience. They show how to reach it, but they never say what exactly it is. It is indefinable, inexpressible. God is a mystery. In fact, God is another name for the mysterious universe in which we are living, breathing. We are part of this great mystery and there is no way to demystify it.

So you will have to go knowingly, deliberately. You will have to risk your past. You will have to listen to the call of the unknown. It is a faraway, distant call and there is no guarantee for it. Nobody can give you the guarantee, only hints.

I can say to you: You have heard the right call. But it is risky because you will be risking all that you know about yourself for something which is far away, invisible, mysterious. One can never be certain. You can't be calculative about God, you can't be cunning and clever about God. You have to go into simple innocence, just like a small child holding the hand of his father can go into the deep forest without any fear. Lions may be roaring, but the child has no fear because he knows his hand is in his father's hand. The father himself may be trembling, but the child is enchanted with the whole journey, with the whole adventure. Such a simplicity is needed, such innocence is needed; only then can you take the risk.

The child is the most courageous being. As he grows in age, in experience, he starts becoming cowardly, he becomes calculative. He thinks twice before he takes any step, and when you think too much you never take any step. Very calculative people remain stuck their whole lives. They never move because each movement creates fear in them -- and this is the greatest movement.

Prabhato, go joyously into it. And don't be worried what is the distinction between an empty space, a negative space, and a space that is positive, fulfilling. Don't be bothered. This is how the mind starts calculating, this is how the mind starts functioning. There is no need --

you are on the right track.

Wherever you feel a paradox happening, remember, that is the criterion that you are on the right track. If you don't come across a paradox you must have missed somewhere, you are moving in a wrong direction.

So don't ask me, "How to feel one or the other?" If you feel one or the other you will be wrong. When you feel both, then you feel the total. The total is bound to be both, the negative and the positive. It is bound to be both death and life, summer and winter.

And that's where mind feels baffled, puzzled. Mind would like clear-cut things, but nothing can be done about it. Mind's requirements and expectations cannot be fulfilled. Existence has no obligation to fulfill mind's requirements and demands. You have to accept existence as it is. It is paradoxical and mind is not paradoxical. Mind is linear, logical, not dialectical. As far as mind is concerned it is Aristotelian, and as far as life is concerned it is more Hegelian than Aristotelian. It is dialectics: it moves from thesis to antithesis, and so on, so forth. The whole movement depends on thesis and antithesis. The polar opposites are really not opposites but complementaries.

Enjoy the polarity, the paradox. Rejoice that you are on the right track. And go on moving in spite of all the fears. They are natural. I cannot say that you should not feel those fears -- they are absolutely natural, but you can go on in spite of them.

Remember, the difference between a coward and a courageous man is not that the coward feels fear and the courageous man does not feel fear. No, that is not the difference between the coward and the courageous. Both feel fear. The difference is that the coward listens to the fear and stops his movement, and the courageous takes no notice of it, pushes it aside, and moves in spite of it.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT IT IS RIGHT TO MEDITATE BUT WRONG TO PRAY? IN MY OPINION, MEDITATION GIVES DEEP INNER CALM TO A PERSON FOR HIS OWN SAKE, BUT TO PRAY DEEPLY AND CALMLY GIVES YOU THE DIRECT AND INTENSE CONNECTION TO GOD, AND HIS HOLY SPIRIT COMES DOWN TO YOU.

Rosemary, I have not said what you have heard. You must be hearing through a thick layer of Christianity, a thick layer of rubbish.

In the first place, you say, "Why do you say that it is right to meditate but wrong to pray?" ... Because meditation is the only prayer there is, and prayer is possible only in meditation; any other prayer is going to be false, pseudo. If you have not been in deep meditation, how are you going to know that there is God? Then the idea of God is just a conditioning given by others to you.

Just think, Rosemary, if you were born in Soviet Russia, then you would not have talked about God at all. You would not be talking about the Bible; you would be talking about the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO or DAS KAPITAL. You would not be talking about the Holy Trinity of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; you would be talking of the unholy trinity of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and V.I. Lenin, because you would have been told and conditioned by communist education.

If you had been born in a Jaina family you would have never thought of prayer, never -- because there is no God, so to whom to pray? If you were born in a Buddhist family, things

would have been totally different because you would have been conditioned in a different way. It is not you, Rosemary, who is asking this question; it is your conditioning. And all conditionings are wrong.

Meditation means a state of unconditioned mind. Meditation is the process of undoing the harm that every society goes on doing to every individual -- communist or Catholic, Jaina or Jew, it does not matter. I am not talking about any particular conditioning that is wrong; I am saying conditioning AS SUCH is wrong.

Conditioning is nothing but a process of hypnotizing people: go on repeating from the very childhood, in the church, in the Sunday school.... You have been told about God and prayer and you have been told by your parents and teachers and priests and all the authoritative people. And the small child has learned how to imitate those who are in power. Now you have completely forgotten the beginning of conditioning.

No child is born as a Christian or a Hindu. No child is born with any idea of God's existence -- whether God exists or does not exist, whether there is one hell or seven hells or seventy or seven hundred. No child is born with any theology.

Meditation means a process of removing all that has been forced upon you so that you can become again a child. That's what Jesus says. He says: Unless you are like a child you will not enter into my kingdom of God. He is talking about deconditioning, dehypnotizing. He is not using these words 'deconditioning', 'dehypnotizing', because these words did not exist in his days, but that's what actually he is saying. He is saying: Unless you become a child again.... Again and again he says: Unless you are BORN again... because this birth has been contaminated by the people; they have poisoned your minds. You need a new spiritual birth. And it is possible only through meditation; there is no other way.

Prayer will mean you will be continuing the conditioning. If you are Christian, your prayer will be Christian. Your very question says... it has the stink of Christianity! A Hindu will not say this, he will not use such words: "And his holy spirit comes down to you." A Jaina will never use such terminology -- impossible, because for a Jaina, nothing comes down, everything goes up! He believes in growing up into a god. God is not someone there high above who comes down to you; there is no God. You have the seed of divineness in you; it grows upwards. The holy spirit descending on you is simply something that has been taught to you.

You say, "In my opinion...."

Opinions mean nothing! If you have some experience, then it is important. Opinion is just opinion. Opinion means something of the mind. You have not experienced anything; it is just a thought. People have all kinds of opinions.

I have heard:

Two camels were passing through a desert. Both were looking very tired and both wanted to say something to the other, but somehow they were keeping control.

Finally one exploded and he said, "Whatever people say, whatever their opinion, I want to say that I am thirsty!"

Thirst is not an opinion, it is your experience. Is it your experience? If it is your experience, the question cannot arise, because then you would have understood exactly what I was saying.

Meditation is the process that cleanses you, and when you are utterly clean a fragrance arises in you. That is prayer. Prayer is a consequence of meditation. I am not against prayer; I

am against YOUR prayer, but not against prayer itself. Your prayer is false. Your prayer is only a part of your conditioning. The Hindu prays in the Hindu way and the Mohammedan prays in the Mohammedan way, but a real prayer is neither Hindu nor Mohammedan. It comes out of an unconditioned being. How can it be Hindu or Mohammedan?

A real prayer is simply prayer. It has no words; it is pure silence. It is a surrender in deep silence. In fact, it is not addressed to any God; it is bowing down to the whole existence. It is not an address. God is everywhere, all is God, so you simply bow down in tremendous gratitude, in ecstasy, in joy, in love. But first your love, your ecstasy, your joy have to be released. You are just a seed, and talking about fragrance will be only an opinion heard from others, borrowed. And anything borrowed is ugly. Anything borrowed is going to be only verbal.

And that's what has happened: when you heard me you only understood the literal meaning of the words. You missed the significance.

A gentile friend... a Christian friend cajoled Rabbi Berkowitz into attending Saint Joseph's in the city that made Schlitz famous. The old rabbi, long since retired, finally agreed when it was explained that a visiting dignitary would speak about the Jewish influence on the formation of the church.

In the front row, Rabbi Berkowitz's eyes widened as the visiting lecturer announced his topic: "My Name is Joseph, Father of Jesus."

At the conclusion of the talk, when they had been introduced, the rabbi said dryly, "My friend, you have had a most unusual experience!"

He misunderstood the whole thing. He took the title of the lecture literally: My Name Is Joseph, Father of Jesus. That was just going to be the subject. The man is not saying that he is Joseph, the father of Jesus. The rabbi said, "My friend, you have had a most unusual experience" -- being the father of Jesus, after two thousand years. And Jesus was the son of a virgin woman; it was certainly an unusual experience for the father!

That's what has happened to you, Rosemary. I have not said anything against prayer, but I have said that meditation prepares the way. It cleanses you -- it cleanses you of all thoughts given by others. It creates the space in which prayer can flower. Meditation brings the spring -- and there is no other way. If you pray without meditation, then your flowers will be plastic flowers. Real flowers of prayer grow only in meditation. And then prayer is not addressed to God; in fact, then there is no God.

The whole idea of God the Father is childish, and Sigmund Freud is right that it is a projection of our deep desire to cling to the parents. It is a projection of your idea of the father, because your father cannot be with you forever. One day he dies and you miss the protection, the security, the safety. And you project a father in heaven who is forever and forever, who will never die and who will always take care of you. And you pray on your knees to the father in heaven. The idea is YOUR creation, the prayer is your creation. And you go on doing this stupid thing for your whole life, thinking that you are doing something religious.

And sometimes it can happen that certain of your prayers may be fulfilled. That is just coincidence. If you go on praying for thousands of things, once in a while it is bound to happen.

One man came to me and he said, "I never believed in God, but now I believe."

I said, "What happened?"

He said, "I gave an ultimatum to God that if within fifteen days my son does not get employment, I will become a confirmed atheist forever. And the threatening worked: within fifteen days my son got the employment. Now I am a firm believer."

I said, "It is perfectly good, but never give the ultimatum again because it may not work always. It was just coincidence."

But he did not listen to me. After two years he met me and he said, "You were right. I again gave the ultimatum. My wife was very ill and I told him that he has to save her, otherwise I will become an atheist." He thought that once the trick had worked; now he knows how to force God into his service.

That's what people who are praying are doing; they are trying to use God. They are trying to use God as a means for certain ends.

And the wife died. Certainly he became an atheist.

Prayers sometimes will be fulfilled -- not that there is somebody who is there listening to your prayers and fulfilling them -- and sometimes they will not be fulfilled. And priests are very clever. They will say, "Whenever your prayer is fulfilled you prayed deeply, truly, sincerely." And whenever your prayer is not fulfilled they say, "Your prayer was superficial." And the argument has much appeal because, in fact, ALL your prayers are superficial so you know perfectly well that your prayers are superficial. The priest can always say that you prayed, but deep down there was doubt.

There is ALWAYS doubt because your belief in God cannot destroy doubt; it can only repress doubt. And the repressed doubt is always there boiling within you, ready to explode.

So don't be deceived if sometimes a coincidence happens. That's how many things continue in the world, many things CAN continue in the world. All hocus-pocus!

For example, there are so many "pathies" in the world: homeopathy, naturopathy, ayurvedic, and so many others. They all claim to cure -- and their claims are not false; they cure many people. You try. Just go on giving sugar pills to people and you will be surprised; many are cured, so you have invented a new therapy. Seventy percent of people are only falsely ill, they are not truly ill. Seventy percent of illnesses are psychological, so all that is needed is somebody to convince them that "This is going to help." And people go to homeopathy and to other exotic medicines only when nothing else helps them.

The trouble with allopathy is that it can help only if your illness is real. If your illness is not real, then a real medicine will do harm instead of helping you. So you have to search for some quack, somebody who can give you a false medicine to cure you of a false disease.

Your prayers are false, your diseases are false. Sometimes they do help, and when they help, you become more and more convinced. And in despair, in deep helplessness, you don't know where else to go. When all human efforts fail you start looking towards the sky. That has been always so; nothing much has changed.

In the Vedas it is said: When there is lightning in the clouds, it is God who is angry; it is his anger. Pray to God. Now we know it is not God or his anger; now we know it is electricity, natural electricity. Now we are using God's anger in running our fans and machines. Now nobody prays. In India, still, when you put the light on in the evening, orthodox Hindus will immediately bow down their head with folded hands -- to an electric bulb! Just an old conditioning.

God used to do many things; now science is doing all those things. God is being deprived every day! In fact, soon he will be out of employment; you will find him standing before

some employment office in a queue! Your God is your invention. Friedrich Nietzsche is right about your God -- that that God is dead. So don't be too much surprised or convinced when some coincidence happens. Coincidences are always happening.

On board an El-Al jet flight to Israel, a young mother and her two children were just getting settled when the youngsters began to clamor that they had to go to the "bafroom." Two priests on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, seated in front of the little family group, smiled in amusement while the embarrassed mother quickly took the children to the rest rooms on the plane. After a moment's hesitation, she put the small boy in the compartment marked "Gentlemen," while she entered the ladies' room with her little daughter.

The boy left quickly and one of the two priests went in, forgetting to lock the door. A few seconds later, the mother emerged from the ladies' lavatory and opened the other door a mere slit, thinking her boy was still there. "Don't forget to slide up your zipper," she whispered.

When the priest returned to his seat he was full of praise for the airline. "You have to hand it to these Jewish stewardesses," he said to his fellow priest. "They think of everything!"

Beware of coincidences!

You say, Rosemary, "Why do you say that it is right to meditate but wrong to pray?"

To pray is not right; to be in prayer is right. To pray means you will be saying something to God. Your God is your invention, your prayer is your invention. And what are you going to say? Just something trivial: Do this, do that, don't do that. Or: You are great. He has been hearing that for so long, he must be fed up! He must be using ear plugs just to avoid these so-called religious people! Millions of people praying and saying all kinds of things to God. He must be getting tired, utterly tired.

But to be in prayer is a totally different phenomenon. To pray is one thing; that is childish, out of a conditioned mind. But to be in prayer means to be in love with existence, to be in a dance with existence, to dance with the stars, to sing with the birds, to flow with the river. That is prayer. But that prayer arises only when meditation has created the right space for it. Hence my emphasis is on meditation and I don't talk much about prayer, because when meditation is complete, prayer comes on its own accord. There is no need to talk about it -- because if I talk about prayer there is every danger you will misunderstand, because prayer is easy and meditation is difficult.

Prayer is easy, very cheap. You can go to the church, kneel down on your knees, fold your hands, talk to God. It costs nothing. Or every night before you go to sleep you pray to God....

I have heard about a very very intelligent man who had put his prayer on the wall just by the side of his bed. And before he used to go to bed he would say to God, "Please read it."

What is the point of saying the same thing every day? And one hopes that God must be at least able to read it! That seems to be far more clear, intelligent. Why go on repeating it like a parrot every day?

I don't say to you to pray because I know that whatsoever you do right now will be wrong. I teach meditation -- and prayer comes inevitably; it can't be avoided, but a totally different kind of prayer, with a different fragrance, a different texture to it. It is just a joyousness, a cheerfulness, a gratitude. You feel so fulfilled, so blessed, that your whole heart says thank you -- not in so many words -- your whole heart says yes. Your whole heart

becomes the yes. You are surrendered. Your life is a prayer. Then you need not go to a church or a temple or a mosque. You LIVE your prayer. You breathe, you drink, you move... and all that is prayer.

You say, "In my opinion, meditation gives deep inner calm to a person for his own sake...." Rosemary, have you ever meditated? A mere opinion has no value -- and it is a mere opinion. You may have read, you may have heard about it, but don't give much importance to opinions.

You say, "Meditation gives deep inner calm to a person for his own sake...." You don't have any experience, any taste of meditation. In meditation, the self disappears, the ego disappears. There is no question of "for one's own sake." One is no more an island; one becomes part of the vast continent of existence. Meditation means you disappear, evaporate. You are no longer there, just a pure nothingness. How can it be for one's own sake? There is no SELF left. In meditation, no self is ever found so how can it be selfish?

People come to me and they ask me -- particularly Christian missionaries -- they write letters to me: "You are teaching people meditation; that is a kind of selfishness." They don't know what they are talking about.

Meditation is the only way to get rid of the self. Meditation is the only possibility to create unselfishness in the world. Everything else is selfish. The Christian missionary serving the poor people, the crippled -- this is all selfish. Mother Teresa of Calcutta and all her work is absolutely selfish.

Why do I call these works selfish? They are doing great service to humanity, but they are doing service to humanity as a means to reach to heaven. They are using the poor people and the blind people and the crippled and the lepers as ladders to reach to heaven.

Just think of a world where there is nobody poor, nobody crippled, nobody is a leper, nobody is blind. Then what will Mother Teresa do? Will you still give her a Nobel Prize? For what? The basic requirement is that blind people should be there, poor people should be there, lepers should be there, widows should be there, orphans should be there. Thousands of orphans are needed for one woman to become a great servant of humanity.

One of the Hindu priests, the head of the Hindu priests, Karpatri, has written a book, AGAINST SOCIALISM. He gives many reasons against socialism, but the most hilarious reason that he gives is that in Hindu scriptures it is said: Unless you donate to the poor people you will never enter into heaven. And socialism is trying to destroy classes so there will be no poor, no rich. Once there is nobody rich and nobody poor, who is going to donate unto whom? And what will happen to heaven? Very logical! And these people are great servants of humanity! These stupid people are thought to be saints!

In meditation, you disappear; in prayer, you are very much there. You have to be there to pray; otherwise who is going to pray and to whom?

Martin Buber has written one of the greatest books of this time, I AND THOU. He says that prayer is a relationship between I and thou; both are needed. "I" is needed -- the one who is going to pray -- and "thou," a concept of God. Then prayer is possible. Prayer is a dialogue between I and thou. Prayer is basically selfish, self-centered.

But meditation is not a dialogue at all. Neither I is needed nor thou is needed. No I, no thou. The whole idea of I-and-thou disappears. A silence prevails, a virgin silence, undisturbed with any dialogue. It is not for one's own sake. One disappears; only then meditation happens.

Meditation is like a flower opening, and prayer is the fragrance of the flower that is released to the winds. I don't talk about the fragrance, I only teach how to cultivate roses,

Rosemary, remember!

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL THINGS TO KEEP ONE'S WIFE HAPPY?

Satyam, I don't know much about wives. I am an unmarried man. You are asking a question to a wrong person. But I have been observing many wives and many husbands. So this is not my EXPERIENCE -- just my opinion!

There are two things necessary to keep one's wife happy. First: let her think she is having her own way. And second: let her have it.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DOES TRUTH HURT?

Prem Patipada, truth hurts because we live in lies. Our whole life consists of lies.

Friedrich Nietzsche has said: Don't take lies away from man; otherwise it will be impossible for him to live. Sigmund Freud also says exactly the same thing: that man cannot live without lies; he needs many lies -- religious, metaphysical, philosophical, political.

Just watch yourself -- how many lies you need to support yourself, to go on nourishing your ego.

Why does man need so many lies? -- because the basic lie is the ego, and the ego can exist only surrounded by many lies to support it. Any truth hurts because it takes away a few lies, a few props, a few supports, and your ego starts falling down. And that is all that you know about yourself. You don't know that you are something transcendental to the ego.

Somebody says to you, "How beautiful you are!" and you believe it immediately. Nobody ever objects. I have told it to many people; nobody ever objects. I have never come across a person who will object, "No, you are wrong because I know my face. I see it in the mirror every day." You say it to anybody, even the ugliest. Say it to a camel, and he will nod his head. He will say, "Right. I had always known it. You are the first intelligent person who has given it recognition." Even the ugliest person deep down thinks he is beautiful. He believes, otherwise it will be difficult to exist, to live. The most stupid thinks that he is very intelligent. Hence you go on giving compliments to each other. All those compliments are lies -- and everybody is ready to believe. And it is not only in the ordinary life. When you enter into your inner journey, there also you expect recognition.

Just the other day Somendra asked, "Why don't you give me recognition?" Everybody wants to be recognized, told that "You are enlightened," that "You have attained," that "You have realized" -- and you will be so happy! But that happiness will be only momentary because it is not true.

I cannot give you any lie; hence I am, many times, offensive to you, outrageous. I hurt you -- not that I want to hurt you, but to take any lie away from you is like taking a teddy bear from a child who can't sleep without the teddy bear. He goes on carrying the teddy bear -- dirty, but he will carry it everywhere. That is his life; you can't take it away from him. And you are carrying many teddy bears, Patipada; that's why it hurts.

Now Somendra is very angry because I said that he can be a good candidate for Judas.

Soon there is going to be a notice: "Wanted: a Judas." And there are many people eligible. Somendra can do the work. He is so angry because I had said that he sits behind keeping his back towards me, so the next day he came to his old place.

Today he has disappeared, because today he has asked a very ugly question out of sheer anger. That's why he has disappeared from here. Even though he has been sitting here for two or three days he does not look at me; he keeps his eyes down. He has not been coming to his group therapy darshan many times. Last night he appeared, but he did not look at me... boiling within. Today he has disappeared because of the question. He must have been afraid. He has put the question in somebody else's name -- but you can't deceive me! And the moment I saw that he is not there my suspicion became absolutely certain that it is his question.

In his question he says, "Are you not a lazy person? And still, what chutzpah you have to tell other people to work and be creative." I am not a lazy person -- I am the laziest! And naturally, the laziest person can live only if others work; otherwise how am I going to live? So I go on teaching, "Work, be creative! Clean the floor meditatively! Clean the toilets!" That is simple. It is not a question of chutzpah, it is simple logic! A man like me needs at least ten thousand people to work for him!

And he asks, "How can you tell others to work?" For a man who has never done anything, everything seems to be possible. Even the impossible seems to be possible. I have never worked, not for a single day. That's why I can say to you to do ANYTHING, because I don't know the trouble. I have no experience about it.

Truth hurts. And then it comes in many ways, it expresses itself in many ways.

Patipada, remember, if anything hurts then meditate over it. There must be something of truth in it, something true. If anything hurts, respect it, go deep into it. Find out why it hurts, and you will be rewarded. You will grow through that.

Lies are sweet; they don't hurt. So beware of sweet lies. When something does not hurt you it cannot become an impetus for growth; it is useless, not to be bothered about at all. But pay your total attention to anything that hurts, and don't get angry. You are to understand here, to be aware, not to be angry.

Just a few months ago I told Somendra that he had attained his first satori. He was just joy. You should have seen his face that time -- all laughter, all smiles, bubbling with ecstasy! That was easy for him to accept because although it was true, the ego jumped upon it, grabbed it, felt very good -- and that is how he missed it.

When truth -- any truth -- becomes an ego trip, you miss it, you lose track of it. And remember: before samadhi happens, before enlightenment happens, you may attain thousands of satoris -- and you may miss them. If one remains very alert when a satori happens, only then he will not miss it. If you become very gratified about it and you start bragging about it in subtle ways, you are bound to miss it. And many people are doing the same.

Sometimes it is very difficult for me; even if I see that something beautiful is happening to you I have to control myself not to say it, because there is every danger that just by saying it your ego may feel puffed up. And that will be the point when you will lose it.

There are many people who are coming closer and closer to the ultimate, but it is better for me not to say it to them. I go on blessing them as much as I can, I go on loving them as much as I can, but I don't say it. Saying can be a distraction; it can take them on a different route, it can distract them.

So lies are dangerous; sometimes even truth can be dangerous. If it does not hurt, then it can be dangerous; if it hurts, there is no danger. If it hurts, it will wake you up; if it becomes

a lullaby, then it is dangerous; it may take you in a deeper dream. You may start dreaming about satoris and enlightenment and becoming a buddha. And all that is possible -- it is within your capacity, it is within your reach -- but you can lose the thread many times.

Hence, don't ask for recognition. If I feel that the time is ripe and by recognizing something you will not slip back, I will give the recognition. But why hanker for the recognition? The real thing is happening to you. The recognition does not matter at all, it is irrelevant. If you are becoming a buddha, you are becoming a buddha whether I say so or not. Sometimes it may be needed that I will go on saying, "No, you are not becoming," just to help you go on in the right direction.

Patipada, anything that hurts, meditate over it and you will be immensely enriched.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MANY ENEMIES?

Gayan, remember two fundamental laws. One is: No good deed goes unpunished. And second: Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I VERY MUCH DOUBT MY WIFE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Narayan, the wife is not your God. You need not doubt, you need not trust. It is a game -- don't make it so serious! But you have been told to trust your wife, to trust your husband. And because of this very teaching, distrust arises. In fact, you have been told to trust. For centuries it has been known that it is very difficult to trust your own wife, very difficult to trust your own husband; it is next to impossible.

If your wife is interested in you, how can you trust her? If she is still interested in men -- and you are only a man, and there are many many men who are far more beautiful -- how can you trust your wife? If she is interested in you she must be interested in others too. She can be trusted only when she loses all interest in you too; then, of course, you can trust her. She has lost all interest in men -- she is almost dead.

You can trust your husband only if he is no longer interested in your body. If he is interested in your face, your body, your proportion, your beauty, how can he avoid being interested in other women's bodies, other women's faces, other women's beauty? It is impossible. You are asking something inhuman or something superhuman. And your poor husband is neither -- neither inhuman nor superhuman. He is just a poor husband, a poor human being... or a poor wife.

Don't demand such impossible things. It is natural; your wife is bound to fantasize about other men. It is impossible for her to dream about you, remember. I have never heard of a wife dreaming about her own husband. Who dreams about one's own husband or one's own wife? For what? Is the day not enough? Do you have to devote your night and your dreams also to the same woman, to the same man?

In dreams you are free; that is the only freedom left. In dreams you have a private world of your own. Your wife cannot peep in your dreams and say, "What are you doing? Stop!" In dreams you can have a few parties with the neighbors' wives. And nothing is wrong in it,

nobody is harmed. Just, you have a good sleep and in the morning you have a smile on your face.

Don't ask the impossible.

Mulla Nasruddin was saying to me, "For the whole ten years of our married life I always trusted my wife. And then we moved from Calcutta to Poona -- and I discovered we still had the same milkman!"

There is no need, Narayan, to trust or not to trust. Why bring in the question of trust? It is just a game! Play it joyfully. You make it too serious. And when you start demanding, "Be faithful to me!" you are creating a situation in which it will become impossible for the poor woman to be faithful to you. Give her total freedom; then she may be faithful to you.

Life functions in a very strange way. If you give her total freedom you are WORTH trusting. A great faith may arise in her. If a wife gives total freedom to the husband, that shows she loves him so much that she would like him to be happy in every possible way. Even if sometimes he is happy with some other woman she will feel happy because he is happy. And then a totally different quality of trust may arise. I am not saying that it is bound to arise -- it is not an inevitability. I am saying perhaps, because about human beings nothing can be predicted.

The relationship between wife and husband is a very strange relationship because these are two different worlds. The woman functions in a different way, from a different center. She is more intuitive and the man is more intellectual. That's why they are attracted to each other. Not only physiologically they are polarities, but psychologically also they are polar opposites. They are intimate enemies. There is bound to be a little conflict, and that is not bad; it keeps the relationship alive. Whenever you see that the husband and wife have stopped fighting completely, that means the marriage is really finished; nothing is left now. Even fight is not left... all is finished.

The butcher and the milkman were discussing the pros and cons of married life. "Do you really believe it is better than being single?" demanded Weiss, the butcher.

"In a way," said the milkman, who was fond of philosophizing. "After all, if it were not for marriage, we would have to do all our fighting with strangers."

Yes, that is true. It is good to fight with your own wife; at least the fight is with the friend. Otherwise you will have to do your fighting with strangers.

There is no need to demand these things -- trust, faith. Live together joyously. Make as much out of your being together as possible. Rather than doing that, people create such problems, useless problems, and destroy all their joys. The wife has no obligation to be faithful to you, neither do you have any obligation to be faithful to her. You love her, she loves you; that's enough. Don't bring faith into it. If love cannot keep you together, nothing else can keep you together. And if love cannot keep you together, then anything that can keep you together is dangerous.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE ALL WORDS REALLY USELESS?

Dharmendra, not all words. The words of the buddhas are immensely significant. They are the same words as your words, but they come from a deeper experience. Let your words come from deep experience; then they will have significance, then they will have some perfume of the unknown, of the beyond. But leaving the buddhas aside, then too all words are not useless. Otherwise, how are you going to communicate? You cannot communicate through silence, you cannot communicate without words.

To communicate without words you will have to become a total meditator. And then, too, you can communicate only with another total meditator, not with everybody else. The whole of humanity is not going to be in meditation, not at least in your life, and you will have to talk to people who are not meditators.

I am using words, Buddha used words, Jesus used words. You have to use words. Just make one effort; don't use unnecessary words. Be more telegraphic, be more condensed. Make your words more meaningful. When you use them, don't just go on using them so that you remain occupied.

Little Alma, a pupil in the first grade, arrived home from school all out of breath. "Daddy, Daddy," she cried, her eyes sparkling with excitement, "we had our very first drill today!" "That's good, shayneh," he said, smiling. "I believe in fire drills. Why I once almost died in a fire." "Ooh, tell me." "Well, it was like this: I fell into a great big vat of chicken soup. So I climbed on top of the knaidlach to keep from drowning and I hollered 'Fire' at the top of my lungs." "Fire?" exclaimed Alma, "Was there a fire, too?" "No," grinned the father, patting her curls, "but who would have helped me if I had yelled 'chicken soup'?"

Words are significant.

For their first date, the boy takes the girl to a carnival. After walking around for a while the girl says to her date, "I want to get weighed."

So the boy finds a man who guesses people's weight. The man accurately guesses the girl's weight.

After visiting some other attractions the boy again hears the girl say the same thing, "I want to get weighed." Again he finds another stall where she again has her weight judged correctly.

After some ice cream and taffy, she again says, "I want to get weighed."

The boy replies, "No, this is too much. I am taking you home."

After being deposited on her doorstep, the girl goes inside and seeing her mother, starts to cry and blurts out, "Oh, mother, I had such a wousy time!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #7

Chapter title: The fool is his own enemy

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THE FOOL IS HIS OWN ENEMY.
SEEKING WEALTH, HE DESTROYS HIMSELF.

SEEK RATHER THE OTHER SHORE.

WEEDS CHOKE THE FIELD.
PASSION POISONS THE NATURE OF MAN,
AND HATRED, ILLUSION AND DESIRE.

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT PASSION,
HATRED, ILLUSION AND DESIRE.

WHAT YOU GIVE TO HIM
WILL BE GIVEN BACK TO YOU,
AND MORE.

Man is born intelligent, but the society does not allow intelligence to flower; it destroys it. In a thousand and one ways it makes every effort to make every intelligent being unintelligent. The unintelligent person seems to be more obedient -- obedient to the state, to the church, to the society. He is less rebellious -- he CANNOT rebel. Rebellion needs intelligence. The greater the intelligence, the greater the rebellion. The unintelligent person seeks security and safety with the crowd. He cannot be an individual. He is always hankering to become part of a crowd -- Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan. These are all crowds. They depend on those people who have become victims of the social strategy of destroying intelligence.

An intelligent person will not go to the church in search of God, or to the temple. An intelligent person will go within. He will not go to Kaaba or to Kashi, because if God is not here he cannot be anywhere else -- and if he is ANYWHERE else, why not here? If God is not in me, he cannot be anywhere else; and if he is anywhere else, he is bound to be in me too.

The intelligent person is an individual; he is not part of a crowd, mob psychology. He is not a sheep, he is a man. And all the vested interests are against the individual -- against the man. They want machines. They don't like people who are intelligent, who decide on their own. They want people who depend on others, on authoritative figures -- on the leaders, on the priests, on the saints, but always on others, never on themselves.

The society has lived up to now in a very destructive way. It destroys the very possibility

of your ever being a buddha or a christ. It has always been against the wise; it respects the fool. The fool fits with the society perfectly. The fool is cut out to fit with the society.

No child is born foolish, and every child, sooner or later, turns out to be idiotic. The powers are so big, so great, that it is almost impossible for the child to resist. The child cannot survive if he resists too much. It is really a miracle that a few people have escaped from being machines. These few people are the salt of the earth; they are the only flowers. Because of them, humanity has a little perfume, a little fragrance; otherwise, all others are walking dead, corpses, somehow dragging towards the grave.

The way of the fool has to be understood because only if you understand it you can go beyond it. The fool also has a way of life. His way of life is the way of the crowd. Whatsoever others say, he repeats. The way others live, he imitates. He is always looking around for clues how to be, how to behave, what is right, what is wrong. He has no insight into anything. He depends on commandments from others. For thousands of years he goes on following commandments that were given in different situations, to a different kind of people, for different purposes, but he goes on following.

He is never spontaneous; that is the first thing to be remembered about the fool. He is repetitive: he repeats the past, but he is never spontaneous. He is never responsible -- he never responds to the situation. He has ready-made answers. He never listens to the question; he is not concerned with the question at all. The question simply triggers in him a process of memory, and a ready-made answer comes up. He is like a computer.

To be responsible means to be aware. Unless you are aware you will not be able to see the situation that is confronting you. And the situation is changing every moment, it is never the same -- not even for two consecutive moments is it the same. Hence one has to be very aware, then only can one respond to reality. And to respond to reality is to commune with God.

The fool knows nothing of God; he never comes across anything divine. He remains part of the stupid collectivity. Remember, the society, the collective has no soul; the soul belongs to the individual. Hence, those who belong to the collective are destroying every possibility of being souls.

George Gurdjieff used to say that it is very rare to find a person who has a soul -- and he was right. To have a soul means to have awareness, to have individuality, to have freedom, to be able to respond -- and to be able to respond on your own accord, not following dictums from others, directions from others.

The fool is never spontaneous; that is the first thing to be understood about the fool. If you become spontaneous you start becoming intelligent. The fool never learns; he is very stubborn about learning. He thinks he already knows.

The fool is not necessarily the ignorant person, mind you. The fool may be a great scholar; the fool may be a famous pundit; the fool may be a well-known professor; the fool may have a Ph.D., a D.Litt. In fact, who else bothers about Ph.D.s? The fool can be very well-informed, but that makes no difference to his foolishness.

Information does not transform you. Transformation is a totally different phenomenon than information. Transformation comes through awareness, through being open: open to life, open to people, open to everything possible. The fool lives in a closed world; he is dumb and deaf.

That's exactly the meaning of the English word 'idiot': closed. He lives in his own private world. He knows nothing of the reality. He lives in his own dreams -- and he thinks that's what reality is. He lives in beliefs. He lives what tradition, what convention has taught him --

whatsoever he has been conditioned for.

In a Catholic country he will be a Catholic. In a communist country he will be a communist -- the same person; there is no difference at all. Whether he quotes from the Bible or from DAS KAPITAL, it is all the same: he quotes mechanically. He cannot understand because he is not ready to learn.

He remains utterly closed. He is afraid of opening his windows, his doors. He is afraid to be open to the wind, to the sun, to the rain, because who knows? -- if he opens to life, his ready-made answers may not be adequate. He is very much afraid to lose his ready-made answers; he depends on them. They may be right or wrong, that is not important for him. As long as he believes they are right, they are right for him.

Hence the second characteristic of the foolish man: he is dumb and deaf. He is unlearning. He never listens. He may be able to hear, but he is not able to listen. Hearing is a physiological phenomenon; listening is something deeper. You hear through the ears; when your heart is also joined with your ears, listening happens. And the fool's heart is never joined with his ears. He is not able to see; he goes on seeing whatsoever HE wants to see. He never allows the reality to be reflected in him; he is incapable of reflection. He is not a mirror.

After a day at the seaside, a bus full of deaf and dumb people stopped at a country pub. The bus driver went in to explain to the barman: "You see those people over there? They are all deaf and dumb. They have a special sign language. Two fingers means a pint of bitter. Three fingers means a lager; four, a light ale; five, a guinness; a shake of the head, a whisky; a nod to the left, a brandy; and a nod to the right, a vodka."

The barman, having taken in all this information, agreed he could handle the situation.

Things went well for the first hour or so, and then the barman noticed three of the party standing at the bar, opening and shutting their mouths. He tried to figure out what they wanted, then gave up and forgot all about them.

But ten minutes later, a dozen of the deaf and dumb people were at the bar, opening and shutting their mouths like goldfish in a bowl. He started to feel a bit uneasy and pretended not to notice. But soon the whole crowd from the bus was at the bar, all of them opening and shutting their mouths.

Not knowing what to do, he rushed outside, ran over to where the bus was parked and hammered on the window.

"Hey, what's up?" asked the driver.

"Well, you know all those people in there? Well, it was okay for the first hour or so -- three fingers, two fingers, shake of the head, nod to the left -- but now the whole crowd of them is up at the bar, all opening and shutting their mouths!"

"Ah, no," said the driver, "they are not singing again! Now we will never get them home!"

The fool lives in a totally closed world. Neither is he available to reality, nor is he capable of expressing anything. He is uncreative because he cannot express.

Hence the third characteristic: the fool is uncreative. Imitative he is, but absolutely uncreative. He may be able to compose a few things, he may be able to put a few things together, but it is never creativity. Never is a new thing born through his being -- he himself is still unborn. He can become a great technician, but he is never a great artist. He can know how to paint -- and he can know perfectly well how to paint -- but he will not be able to paint anything genuinely new, authentically novel, original. He is absolutely unoriginal. He lives like a robot; he has been reduced to a machine.

If man is reduced to his lowest, he becomes a machine; if he is raised to his highest, he becomes a god. Man is a ladder: at the lowest rung, he is a machine; at the highest rung, he is a god. Either you can be a machine or you can be a god. If you remain unintelligent, unaware, you will remain a machine.

Conscience cannot change you. You have been told, "This is right and that is wrong," but that has not changed you. Nobody can change you from the outside. Any change from the outside is going to be only superficial; deep down you will remain the same -- and you will persist in your foolishness.

I have seen sinners who are foolish, I have seen saints who are foolish in the same way. There is a great difference between the sinner and the saint from the outside, but both may be fools. The sinner may have fallen in a wrong company, that's all, and the saint has fallen in a right company; that is the only difference. The sinner is following the wrong crowd; it is accidental. And the saint is following the right crowd, but that too is accidental. Deep down, both are the same.

Foolishness has a quality of persisting. It persists because for lives together you have lived through it, you have remained identified with it. It has been safe to be a fool. It has been safe to pretend that you know without knowing, because you know perfectly well that the world has not behaved well with the knowers. It has not poisoned any fool, but it has poisoned Socrates -- one of the most wise men ever born. It has not crucified any fool, but it has crucified Jesus.

Two hippies, short of cash, hit on a way of making money. With their long hair and beards, a couple of nightshirts and a makeshift cross, they headed one Sunday morning for the local Baptist church, arriving in the middle of the service. The first hippie entered, proclaiming aloud, "Make way for the Lord!"

The second staggered behind, wielding the cross.

The worshippers cried out aloud. Some fell flat on their faces. Coins and bills were showered on them as they paraded up the aisle and back out again into the street. That Sunday they made over forty dollars.

The following week they hit the local Catholic church. "Make way for the Lord!" The parishioners tore out their hair and shrieked up to heaven in paroxysms of divine ecstasy. That morning they made over a hundred dollars.

The following week, just for a laugh, they tried the synagogue. The first hippie entered crying, "Make way for the Lord!" and the second lumbered in with his load.

The old rabbi turned to his neighbor and whispered, "Moishe, get the hammer and nails out. He is back!"

To be a fool is safer. To be a Jesus is dangerous. To be a buddha is to live in insecurity. It is going against the crowd, and the crowd is vast; it is going against the current. Hence your experience of centuries tells you, "Remain a fool. Pretend that you are not foolish." That is part of foolishness. The moment a person stops pretending, he starts becoming wise.

The beginning of wisdom is to know that you are a fool -- and then you are not a fool at all; you have stopped being a fool. It is very rare to accept the fact that "I am a fool."

They say that if a madman knows that he is mad, he is no longer mad; sanity has come back. But no madman ever agrees that he is mad; he thinks he is the sanest man in the world. Everybody else may be mad, HE is not. That is also part of remaining foolish. The foolish person pretends in every possible way. He will pretend that he knows what he knows not. He

will pretend he is somebody he is not. His life becomes an acting. His life becomes a superficial show. He is always in a kind of exhibition; he becomes a showcase. He has many faces. He wears masks and he forgets his original face completely.

Hence, the Zen Buddhists say: Unless you discover your original face you will not know who you are and you will not know what this reality is all about, and you will not know the blessing and the benediction of being alive.

Discover the original face. Your original face is lost in so many masks. You have been pretending to others and, slowly slowly, you have become convinced of your own pretensions.

Now that Jack and Irma were rich they decided to add a little culture to their hitherto shallow lives. At their first opportunity they went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and took a guided tour of the exhibits.

"Say, this is a fine bust of Michelangelo," said Jack admiringly.

"That is not Michelangelo," explained the guide. "That is Leonardo da Vinci."

"Jack," she hissed, "why do you have to open your big mouth when you don't know a single thing about the New Testament?"

You will find these pretenders everywhere. You will find these pretenders inside you, outside you. You are living with them -- you are one of them. Recognize that "I am a pretender," and that is a great beginning.

The fool may try to be good, but he cannot be good because there is nothing like mechanical goodness. Goodness can only be out of consciousness. All that is mechanical is bad. In my definition and in the definition of Gautama the Buddha, to do anything unconsciously is bad, is evil, and to do anything consciously is good, is virtuous. It is not a question of what you are doing, it is not a question about your actions in particular; everything depends on what source it is coming from. If it is coming from your deep awareness, then whatsoever it is....

For example, Mohammed fought in many wars with a sword in his hand, but I will not call his wars evil. No, his wars are not evil because they are coming out of a deep awareness, a deep meditateness. He is simply responding to the situation. Of course, what he is doing is violence -- but violence, too, in the hands of a conscious, alert person, transforms its quality.

Adolf Hitler was a vegetarian, but his vegetarianism was not good. His vegetarianism was evil, because it was coming out of a totally unconscious mind. He never smoked, he never drank alcohol, he lived the life of a celibate. He was almost a monk -- a Jaina monk. If you look at his life, he lived it in a very disciplined way. He was not in any way an evil person -- never gambled, never even played cards. But he was not good, he was not virtuous. All that was coming out of an unconscious mind.

If you find Jesus drinking... yes, he used to drink, he enjoyed drinking. And I don't think there is anything wrong in drinking if you can drink the way Jesus drank, with absolute awareness; then there is nothing wrong in drinking. Then drinking, too, is good. But you may be a nondrinker like Adolf Hitler, and it is not good. So the question is not WHAT you do, but HOW you do it, from where comes the action.

Molly O'Brien went to visit the parish priest. "Father," she said, "I feel so bad! Last night I called a man a bastard."

"Now, why," said the priest, "would you want to do a thing like that?"
"Well, Father, you see... he put his arm around me."
"What -- like this?"
"Yes, just like that."
"Well, that is no reason to call him a bastard."
"Yes, but then, Father, he kissed me!"
"What -- like this?"
"Yes."
"Well, that's no reason to call him a bastard."
"I know, but then you see, he put me down on the sofa and lifted my dress up."
"You mean... like this?"
"Yes, Father."
"Well, still that is no reason to call him a bastard."
"Yes, but then he pulled his trousers down."
"Like this?"
"Yes."
"Well, that is still no reason to call him a bastard."
"But Father... then he made love to me."
"Like this?"
"Yes."
"And you called him a bastard just for that?"
"But Father -- you see -- then he told me he had the clap."
"Why, the dirty bastard!"

The fool can be found in the sinners, in the priests, in the saints. The fool is a very subtle phenomenon; it is not so gross as you think. You cannot judge from the outside whether a man is wise or foolish because sometimes their acts may be the same.

Krishna says in the Gita to Arjuna, "Fight, but fight with absolute surrender to God. Become a vehicle." Now, to surrender means absolute awareness, otherwise you cannot surrender. Surrender means dropping the ego, and ego IS your unconsciousness. Krishna says, "Drop the ego and then leave it to God. Then let his will be done. Then whatsoever happens is good."

Arjuna argues. Again and again he brings new arguments and he says, "But to kill these people -- innocent people, they have not done anything wrong -- just for the kingdom to kill so many people, so much violence, so much murder, so much bloodshed... how can it be right? Rather than killing these people for the kingdom I would like to renounce and go to the forest and become a monk."

Now, if you just look from the outside, Arjuna seems to be more religious than Krishna. Arjuna seems to be more a Gandhian than Krishna. Krishna seems to be very dangerous. He is saying, "Drop all this nonsense of being a monk and escaping to the Himalayan caves. That is not for you. You leave everything to God. You don't decide, you drop this deciding. You simply relax, be in a let-go, and let him descend in you and let him flow through you. Then, whatsoever happens.... If he wants to become a monk through you, he will become a monk. If he wants to become a warrior through you, he will become a warrior."

Arjuna seems to be more moralistic, puritanistic. Krishna seems to be totally different. Krishna is a buddha, an awakened being. He is saying, "Don't YOU decide. Out of your

unconsciousness, whatsoever you decide is going to be wrong, because unconsciousness is wrong."

And the foolish person lives in unconsciousness. Even if he tries to do good, in fact he succeeds only in doing bad.

Paddy NcNaughty went to confession: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."
"And what is it that you have done, my son?"
"I made love to one of the girls in the village."
"My God!" said the priest, "and which of the village girls did you commit sin with?"
"Ah, Father, that I cannot tell."
"And if you will not tell me, then I shall not give you absolution."
"Ah dear!" said Paddy.
"Was it Molly O'Flaherty?" asked the priest.
"No, it was not Molly O'Flaherty."
"Then was it Flora Fitzgibbons?"
"Ah no," said Paddy, "it was not Flora Fitzgibbons."
"Was it Maggie Muldoon, then?" persisted the priest.
"Ah, sure no, it was not Maggie Muldoon."
"Then who in heaven's name was it?"
"Ah, sure, Father -- that I cannot tell."
"And if you don't tell me I shall not give ya absolution."
"Ah, Father, that's too bad!" said Paddy and walked out of the confessional.
His friend, Michael, was waiting outside. "Well, Paddy, did ya get yar sins forgiven?"
"No," said Paddy, "but I got the names of a few good broads!"

If you are unconscious you may go to get forgiven, you may go to confession, but it is not going to help -- you will remain the same. Foolishness tends to persist. Beware of these characteristics of foolishness. Foolishness is very egoistic. In fact, the more intelligent you are, the less egoistic you are. When intelligence blooms in perfection, ego disappears. Hence, foolishness is very argumentative; it always tries to defend itself. In a thousand and one ways it will convince you that this is the right course, this is what is to be done.

One has to be very aware of all these deep tendencies; they go on forcing you to go astray, they go on forcing you to go off center. They make you eccentric. Consciousness centers you; unconsciousness takes you off your center.

A man walked into a cafeteria and ordered coffee and a cream bun. "Sorry," said the attendant, "but we're out of buns. Why not have a doughnut instead?"
"In that case," said the man, "I'll have a cup of tea and a cream bun."
"I just told you, sir, we're out of buns. Why don't you have a doughnut?"
"Hmm... so in that case, I'll have a toasted bun with butter and a cup of tea."
"Look! How many times do I have to tell you? We don't have any buns -- cream buns or toasted buns, or any other kind of buns!"
"Okay then," said the man. "Then give me a currant bun and a hot chocolate."
"Look here, you!" said the attendant, seizing the man by the collar and shaking him violently, "We DON'T HAVE NO BUNS! We don't have no cream buns, we don't have no currant buns, nor hot cross buns, or toasted buns with butter -- or any other kind of buns. Get it?"

"Okay, okay!" said the man. "No need to shout -- I'll just have a bun!"

Buddha says:

THE FOOL IS HIS OWN ENEMY.
SEEKING WEALTH, HE DESTROYS HIMSELF.

THE FOOL IS HIS OWN ENEMY... for many reasons. First: he will die without being born. He will die as a seed. He will never bloom, he will never come to flowers and to fruits. He will never know what fulfillment is. His life will be a sheer wastage. His life will be a desert without any oasis. He will not know any blessing, any benediction, any ecstasy -- which was his birthright. He will be self-destructive. Not to grow into consciousness is the most suicidal act one can commit; hence Buddha says: THE FOOL IS HIS OWN ENEMY. He misses a great opportunity.

Life is such a precious opportunity to know, to be, but the fool misses. He will not even be aware what he has missed. He will pass through life like a zombie. His whole life is mechanical. He gets up early in the morning, takes his breakfast, goes to the office, does his work, drives back home... and he is doing everything, but still he is a robot. He is not yet inwardly full of light; deep inside him there is only darkness. He is doing all these things because he has practiced doing them. He has become skillful.

Scientists have been working for centuries to create robots. I don't see why they should be so much concerned about creating robots -- there are so many, millions of them! And there is no need to make robots at all; all these millions of robots go on producing more robots! In fact, the question is how to stop them from producing more!

Each fool leaves at least a dozen fools -- particularly in India -- behind him. When he dies he makes the world twelve times more foolish; he leaves a dozen fools as a proof that he has been here. What is the need of creating robots?

I was reading a story that robots have been created -- it is a twenty-first century story -- and they are so exactly like human beings that it is very difficult to distinguish. If you meet a robot on the way driving his car you will not be able to distinguish whether he is a robot or not. He will look exactly like a man. Only one difference will be there: he will be more efficient. Less accidents will be there on the road. He will finish his work in time. He will not go on piling up files on his table; his table will be clean.

So a few indications so you can judge whether the man is really a robot or a man. Once in a while only you will know who is a robot -- when his battery runs down. Then only... if he was talking to you and he was giving you great argument, philosophical arguments for God's existence, and then he suddenly says, "Grrr, grrr, grrr-rr-rrr...!" and immediately runs towards the electric plug and connects himself to the electricity to recharge himself -- then you will know that this is not a real man; otherwise there will not be any difference.

And that, too, is possible to overcome sooner or later: we can fix two batteries. Why one battery? I was worried: why fix one battery in the poor man? -- you can fix two batteries so that while one is being used, the other is being charged automatically. If you can create a robot, can't you create an automatic battery? Why make him look foolish: "Grrr, grrr, grrr"? And this can happen any time. He is making love to his woman, and "Grrr, grrr, grrr!" And he has to say, "Excuse me, I have run out of gas!" Either electricity... or he will need petrol.

THE FOOL IS HIS OWN ENEMY. His first inimical act towards himself is his mechanicalness.

"Look what I got today! A brand-new car, and it only cost eight hundred pounds."

"Eight hundred pounds? But that's impossible -- a brand-new car?"

"Ah well, you see, it's got no engine."

"Got no engine?"

"That's right. You talk to it, see... you just talk to it and it goes."

"Is that so?"

"Yep, that's right. Wanna come for a ride? Only one thing, though, before we start. This car only understands a few words. Like, to make it go forward you say, 'Bloody hell'; to make it stop you say, 'Bastard.'"

"Oh... is that so?"

"Yep. Sure is. Come on, I will show ya. 'Bloody hell' -- she goes, see, and all you have to do is turn the steering wheel, blow the horn, flash the indicators.... 'Bastard' -- see, she stops when you want, too."

"Wow! I've never seen a car like that before!"

"Let's take her out into the country. Maybe we can go out towards the cliffs by the sea. See, on a straight road she'll go up to ninety, no problem -- ninety-four, ninety-five...."

"Uh... ahem... I say, aren't we getting a bit close to the edge of the cliffs?"

"Come on now, don't worry. Just watch how she brakes."

"Hey! Hey, careful! That sign says, 'Road ends in fifty yards,' and you're going ninety-five!"

"Right! Watch this: Bastard.... Hey, come on now -- she doesn't want to stop! Bastard! Bastard! Bastard! We made it! See, she stopped."

"Phew, bloody hell, that was close...!"

THE FOOL IS HIS OWN ENEMY. SEEKING WEALTH, HE DESTROYS HIMSELF. By "wealth" Buddha means everything that is outside you: power, prestige, money, sex -- anything that is outside you. The fool is extrovert; he never looks in. He accumulates everything on the outside. His whole life is devoted to money, power, prestige, and then one day death comes, but then it is too late. When death comes, he realizes that all that he has been doing has been simply stupid because all is slipping out of his fingers. All that he has been doing was making sandcastles. Just a blow of death, and everything disappears like a dream.

Buddha says: SEEKING WEALTH, HE DESTROYS HIMSELF. He remains constantly extrovert; hence he never becomes aware who he is, why he is, from where he comes, to where he is going, what is his destiny, what is his significance, why this existence needs him, what purpose he is supposed to fulfill, what fragrance has to be released by him. He never looks in. He goes on rushing faster and faster. As death comes closer he runs faster so that he can accumulate a little more wealth, a little more respect, respectability, so that he can become a president or a prime minister.

But death destroys everything -- your presidents, your prime ministers. You may be rich; death is not going to favor you. Before death, everybody is the same -- rich or poor, knowledgeable or not knowledgeable, famous or not famous.

Buddha says: If you are putting your energies into such projects which can be destroyed by death, then you are destroying yourself. Attain something that is imperishable. Attain to something that death cannot snatch away from you. Realize something that will go beyond

death with you. Realize something that even fire cannot burn, swords cannot cut, atom bombs, hydrogen bombs cannot destroy. Then only you have been a friend to yourself; otherwise you are an enemy.

Three couples were killed in a car crash. Saint Peter was waiting for them at the Pearly Gates, his big book under his arm. The first couple was summoned forth.

"Name?" shouted Saint Peter.

"Jones," replied the husband.

Saint Peter opened his big book and started thumbing through the pages.

"Hmmm... Jackson... Johnson... ah yes, Jones! Hmm... Jones, hey? Well now, Jones, this is not a very good record, is it? Drink, drink, drink -- that's all you've ever been after -- even married a woman called Sherry. Well, Jones, this isn't good enough, you know. I'm afraid it is downstairs to hell for you."

The Joneses broke into sobs and hugged each other, but two guardian angels pulled them apart and dragged the man towards the gates of hell. The wife followed shortly.

"Next!" called Saint Peter and the second couple shuffled forward. "Name!"

"Smith," they both replied shakily.

"Hmm... Sutherland... Spencer... ah yes, Smith! Hmm... well, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, this one doesn't look too good either. Money, money, money -- that's all you two have ever been after -- even called your sons Buck, Frank and Mark, and your daughter, Penny. Now what kind of a life is that! Well, there's only one place for people like you. You'll have to go downstairs -- down to hell!"

The Smiths wept and fell at his feet, but the verdict was final.

"Next!" shouted Saint Peter, as the guardian angels were hauling the Smiths away.

The next husband turned to his wife and said, "Come on, Fanny... I'm not gonna stand here and be insulted!"

SEEK RATHER THE OTHER SHORE.

Buddha says: Don't be too much concerned with this shore; it is momentary. Tomorrow you have to go. Even seventy years is not a long time; compared to eternity it is just a moment. Your life lasts only as long as a soap bubble. You THINK it is long enough -- seventy years -- because you compare your life with the life of flies or mosquitoes; then it looks long enough. But ask the mosquitoes and they think they are doing perfectly well: they are doing everything that you are doing and in a short span. They are born, they fall in love, they get married, they have children -- and many more than you can ever have -- and they sing and they dance. Maybe they have their own religion and priests and politicians. And then they become old and then they die. Maybe it lasts only for a few weeks, but in those few weeks they have done everything!

There are insects that will live only for a few hours, but in those few hours is condensed your whole life: boyfriends and girlfriends, husbands and wives, and all the fights.... I have heard they go even to marriage counselors, they consult sexologists!

One woman had a cat and the cat was creating much trouble in the neighborhood. He was a playboy and the whole night he was going from this house to that, and they were making so much noise -- because cats don't believe in making love silently. They are not Hindus, not Indians! They are all hippies!

So the whole neighborhood told the woman, "Do something. It's too much -- we can't sleep! This lovemaking of your cat -- he's driving us mad!"

Finally the woman took her cat to the vet and he was operated on. But the neighborhood was in as much trouble as before.

People asked the woman, "What is the matter? What kind of operation is this? Your cat has been operated on, you say, but we still see him coming."

The woman said, "Yes, he still goes -- now as a consultant."

Time does not matter. In a few hours you can live seventy years or seven hundred years in a condensed way. Into seven minutes seventy years can be condensed. And seven minutes look very small compared to seventy years, but what are seventy years compared to the age of the sun or the moon or the earth or the stars? And what are seventy years compared to eternity?

This shore consists of momentary phenomena. Don't waste your total energy in that which is momentary. Go on remembering the other shore. By "the other shore" Buddha means that which is beyond time and beyond space. This shore is outside you and the other shore is within you. This shore consists of money, sex, power, prestige, and that shore consists only of awareness, silence, peace, prayer.

SEEK RATHER THE OTHER SHORE.

WEEDS CHOKE THE FIELD.

PASSION POISONS THE NATURE OF MAN,
AND HATRED, ILLUSION AND DESIRE.

But you are full of weeds, hence you cannot grow roses. Before you can grow roses you will have to remove all the weeds, you will have to prepare the ground, you will have to prepare the soil. You will have to remove the weeds, the stones, and all that can be a hindrance for the roses. WEEDS CHOKE THE FIELD.

And about weeds, one thing has to be understood: you need not grow them, they grow on their own accord. Even if you pull them out they will grow again.

Mulla Nasruddin has a very beautiful lawn. A new neighbor moved recently next door to Mulla's house and he became very interested in Mulla's garden, particularly his lawn. He also wanted to make a beautiful lawn and a garden. He planted seeds, he planted plants, but so many weeds started growing.

He asked Mulla, "How to distinguish which is grass and which are weeds?"

Mulla said, "Simple. You pull them both out. The grass will not grow again and the weeds will grow again. That's how one knows, that's how one can distinguish."

Weeds have a quality -- the same quality as the fools: they persist, they insist, they don't want to be removed. Everything great in this life is fragile and everything ugly is rocklike, very strong. Weeds grow on their own accord. You have not cultivated anger and you have not cultivated lust. There are no schools where you are taught how to be jealous and how to be greedy. No teachers, no masters are needed to teach you how to be unconscious. These things grow on their own accord.

Falling downwards is easy; rising upwards is difficult -- it goes against gravitation.

You have to remove the weeds, otherwise they choke the field. You are so full of anger,

greed, lust, that they are choking your energies. It will be impossible for you to grow -- they won't allow you to grow. They will suck all your energy; they are suckers, they are parasites.

Buddha says: WEEDS CHOKE THE FIELD. PASSION POISONS THE NATURE OF MAN, AND HATRED, ILLUSION AND DESIRE.

Passion creates many things in you. It creates fever, it makes you more unconscious -- more unconscious than you already are. It drags you deeper into the mud. And with passion come hatred, illusion and desire -- and then you are distracted from your nature. Your nature is poisoned, your innocence is poisoned. You lose all simplicity, all humbleness.

Beware of the poisoning by passion. Be warm, be loving -- that is a totally different phenomenon -- but don't be full of lust. Warmth is possible with your consciousness. A Buddha is very warm, a Jesus is very warm, very loving. Passion has disappeared. Passion has become transformed into compassion. Their compassion showers on you like flowers. Just as passion poisons you, compassion purifies you. Compassion is nectar if passion is poison. The energy that is involved in passion can be released into compassion.

And the way to release the energy, the way to rechannel it towards compassion, is what Buddha calls SAMMASATI -- right awareness, right remembering; what Gurdjieff calls self-remembering, what Krishnamurti calls simply awareness, what I call meditation. They are all the same, different names indicating the same energy. You have to become alert, conscious of what you are doing.

Try, when you are angry, to be conscious, and you will be surprised -- you are in for a great surprise. If you become conscious, anger disappears. And suddenly you have found a key, you have stumbled upon a secret. When sex dominates you and you are full of lust, close your eyes, sit silently and meditate on this energy that is surrounding you, this lust that is surrounding you like a cloud. Just watch it, see it. I am not saying be against it, because if you are against it you have already taken a standpoint. Now you cannot watch.

For watching, the necessary step, the most necessary, is not to take any prejudice, not to conclude beforehand. Just remain silently watchful, neither for nor against. And within minutes you will be surprised that that great storm of lust is over. And when the storm is over, the silence that is left behind is so profound, is so great, such a blessing that you may not have felt it ever. No sexual experience can give you that beauty that will come if you watch your lust and through watchfulness the lust disappears. Then a silence comes to you which is virgin, which belongs to the beyond, which belongs to the other shore.

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT PASSION.... Hence Buddha says: If you can find a man who is without passion -- if you can find a christ or a buddha -- honor the man... for the simple reason that he has done almost the impossible: he has escaped from the ordinary bondage of humanity. He is no longer a prisoner, no longer a slave. He has asserted his individuality, his intelligence. He is no longer a fool. Wisdom has happened in his being. He is full of light; darkness has disappeared.

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT PASSION,
HATRED, ILLUSION AND DESIRE.

And the moment passion disappears, hatred disappears, illusion disappears, desire disappears, because one feels so contented, one feels so utterly fulfilled. One feels one has come home. There is nowhere to go, nothing else to ask for or desire.

Just think of those moments when there is no desire, when there is no tension, when your mind is absolutely quiet. Only then will you know God exists -- or it will be more right to

say, godliness exists.

WHAT YOU GIVE TO HIM.... If you give anything to Buddha... what can you give to him? You can give him your respect, you can give him your trust, you can give him your self, your surrender.

WHAT YOU GIVE TO HIM
WILL BE GIVEN BACK TO YOU,
AND MORE.

Whenever a disciple surrenders himself to an awakened master he becomes the richest person in the world. In his very surrender is victory. In his dropping of the ego he attains to beinghood. For the first time he is -- and in a very strange way, because he has dropped himself. But the one he has dropped was a false self, and when the false disappears, the real appears. When the false ceases to be, the real starts shining in all its glory, in all its splendor.

Whatsoever you give to a buddha comes back to you a thousandfold.

The disciple surrenders, the disciple opens his heart, and the buddha starts flowing into the heart of the disciple. The buddha is like a raincloud, so full of love, so full of truth, so full of ecstasy, that if you open your heart, if you are ready to drink out of him, you will, for the first time, feel a deep satisfaction. Your thirst will be quenched.

That's why Jesus says: Eat me, drink me. He is not telling you to become cannibals! He is saying to you, "I am available. Just open your heart and let me in."

When the awakened one knocks on your door, please open the door, because you may miss the opportunity and you may miss it for many many lives. It is very rare to come across a Buddha, a Christ, a Krishna, a Mahavira, a Mohammed. If you are fortunate enough to come across an awakened person, then don't be miserly. Then drop yourself totally, then be committed totally.

Just the other day somebody has asked, "You say: I am the gate. I have come here, I love you. I have come from far away, but I am not a sannyasin and I am not being allowed to see you. Then why do you say: I am the gate if I am not allowed to come through you?"

You are allowed to come through me, but a few things you will have to leave at the gate: your shoes, your heads. That's what sannyas is. These are your two extremes, the two polarities: the shoes and the head. Leave both the extremes outside, then you are balanced. The very word 'sannyas' means a state of equilibrium, of balance, of absolute balance.

I am the gate, but I am the gate only for those who are ready to pass through me. You have to pay the price -- and sannyas is the price. And if you love me, then love is always ready to sacrifice. And I am not asking for your money, I am not asking for your house; I am not asking anything of this shore from you. I am asking only for that which you don't have but you believe that you have. I am asking only for the false things: your beliefs, your ego, your hatred, your passion, your desires, your lust, your greed. I am asking for all your diseases! Give all your diseases to me; that's what sannyas is all about. Then I am the gate and I am ready. Come through me and you will find that which you have been seeking for lives together.

But you can miss the gate if you are so miserly or so cowardly that you cannot take the jump into sannyas. Then what kind of love are you talking about? Love knows how to be committed, how to be involved. Love knows how to die and how to be reborn. Love is ready to pass through any fire because love knows, "Nothing can destroy me, not even fire can burn me." Love knows its eternity. Hence love is always courageous.

Sannyas is courage, it is adventure.

Buddha says: WHAT YOU GIVE TO HIM WILL BE GIVEN BACK TO YOU, AND MORE.

Don't be worried and don't be miserly. Be open with me, be vulnerable, be receptive, so that I can pour myself totally in you. I am ready to be a guest in your heart, but you will have to be ready to be a host and you will have to cleanse your heart of all the weeds. You will have to empty your heart of all the junk that you have collected: of all the past, of all the memories, of all the belief systems, of all the philosophies, ideologies -- political, religious, social.

When you are absolutely empty you can come in me, I can come in you. The meeting can happen. And that meeting is the greatest orgasmic experience of life. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #8

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL LIKE SUCH A NO-SAYER. IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR NO-SAYERS?

Prem Jinesh, no-saying is a good beginning, but not a good end. No-saying is the seed; yes-saying is the flowering of it. The yes has to come through the no -- the no is the womb of the yes. If you cannot say no, your yes will be impotent. It won't have any meaning at all, it won't transform your life. It will be just on your lips, not in your heart.

That's what has happened to the whole of humanity. People have been forced to become yea-sayers, theists, God-believers, without ever knowing the taste of no. The yes has been forced upon them. They have not arrived at the yes, the yes has been handed over to them, it is borrowed.

It is a mere belief, and all beliefs are blind. They keep you blind, they keep you in darkness. They keep you stuck and stagnant.

There is nothing wrong in saying no. No has as much beauty as yes. No is the way to arrive at yes. Use the no as a stepping-stone. Don't let it become a habit; be conscious about it, that's all. I cannot say to you to start saying yes, because that will be not yet ripe for you.

Go on saying no as long as the no remains significant to you. The no will destroy all that is false, borrowed. It will negate all beliefs. It will create an empty space in you.

In the East we call the whole process NETI, NETI -- neither this nor that. We have never condemned it.

It cleans you of all rubbish, it purifies you. It is a fire. Passing through it is a necessary step you cannot avoid. Those who avoid passing through it, their yes is just parrotlike. You can teach the parrot anything and he will go on repeating it. He does not mean it. He has no heart within it, he simply says the words -- empty words, hollow words.

A man was purchasing a parrot. He went to the pet shop. He liked one parrot -- very beautiful. He asked the price. The price appeared to be a little too much: the man was asking one thousand dollars.

The purchaser asked, "Is that parrot worth that much?"

The shopkeeper said, "You can ask the parrot himself."

He asked the parrot, and the parrot said, "There is no doubt about it."

He said it so convincingly. It appeared so natural. The man purchased the parrot, and he was very excited to show it to his wife, to his children. He brought the parrot home.

He asked the parrot, "What is your name?"

He said, "There is no doubt about it."

The man said, "What?"

He said, "There is no doubt about it!"

The man asked, "Do you know anything else or not?"

He said, "There is no doubt about it."

The man said, "My God, I must have been a fool to purchase you!"

The parrot said, "There is no doubt about it!"

That was all that the parrot knew. You ask any question, the answer is the same. It has nothing to do with the questions, it has nothing to do with the reality, it is not a response. It is just like a gramophone record. It goes on repeating meaninglessly.

The people who have been conditioned to say yes -- yes to God, yes to the religion, yes to the society, yes to the parents -- their yes is bogus, it has no substance. It is not even a shadow. Even shadows have something in them, but this yes is absolutely a nonentity. Parents teach you to respect the parents, say yes to them, be obedient. Of course, that is THEIR vested interest. And the priest says: Respect the priest, respect the Bible, the Koran, the Gita, respect the tradition, respect convention. That is HIS vested interest. And so on, so forth.

Somebody asked George Gurdjieff, "Why has respect for parents been emphasized, in every religion, in every country, in every society? Is there something divine in it?" Gurdjieff laughed and said, "Yes. God knows perfectly well that if people are trained to say yes to the parents only then will they say yes to God. He has a vested interest in it" -- because God is the father figure, the ultimate father. And Gurdjieff also said, "Parents are sooner or later going to die, and then there will be a vacuum. You respected your parents, you were obedient to your parents, you were always following, imitating whatsoever they said. You were just a carbon copy. You will feel very empty -- so much so that you would like to fill your emptiness with something. And that is the place which God will start filling in you."

He was joking. It is not God's vested interest. Of course it is the vested interest of the priests. God has no vested interest in anything. In fact there is no God as a person; God is

only godliness.

One need not believe in God, one need not be a yea-sayer. One should learn the process of saying no.

So Jinesh, don't be worried. Say no boldly, courageously. Risk everything for the no. Slowly slowly, you will become aware that the no has limits. There are points when you cannot say no. When you explore the possibilities of saying no, you will come across certain spaces where no-saying is impossible and yes arises within your heart on its own accord, not as a conditioning, not because somebody has told you. Now it is your own flowering. And then that yes has beauty, then that yes has truth, that yes makes you a religious person. Otherwise you remain just imitators. You can imitate Christianity or Hinduism or Mohammedanism -- it does not matter whom you imitate.

I have seen Christians becoming Hindus, Hindus becoming Christians -- they are the same people. Not only that, I have seen Catholics become communists -- they still remain the same people. I have seen communists become religious -- but still they are the same people. Just the object of worship changes. Gods go on changing. One God fails, another God is replaced -- but the worshipper is the same. Whether you worship Mohammed or Marx, Mahavira or Moses, it is not going to make any difference.

If your yes has not come as a growth to you, then it is absolutely useless. Pass through this fire of no-saying, but remember only one thing: don't let it become a habit. It can become a habit, that is the danger. The danger is not in no-saying. The danger is that your no-saying may become mechanical. So say it consciously, that's all I can advise you -- say it consciously! Just don't go on saying it because you have become accustomed. That is as foolish as saying yes meaninglessly. If you say it as a habit, it is meaningless.

There are theists and there are atheists, and they are all in the same boat. Somebody has been told from the very beginning that God is -- say yes and you will be saved. And somebody has been told there is no God -- say no and you are saved. And they both are repeating. Whom you are imitating is irrelevant.

A man entered into a restaurant and ordered a cup of tea. He said, "P-p-please b-bring a cup of tea."

Another man who was sitting across the table also repeated the same, "P-p-please b-bring a cup of tea."

The first man looked at the second man in anger but didn't say anything. Then a third man entered and he asked that he should be brought a cup of tea.

And the second man said, "Yes, bring another cup of tea for me too."

Now the first man was really angry. He said, "Y-y-y-you have been imitating me!"

And the second man said, "N-n-no. I am imitating HIM."

But whom are you imitating? Does it matter? Imitation is imitation.

People are imitators. The whole world is full of those imitators. You think those imitators are yea-sayers? You think those imitators are no-sayers? They are not saying anything, they are simply repeating whatsoever they have been told to repeat.

So Jinesh, just remember one thing: don't let it become a habit. Be conscious of it and you will be immensely benefited.

I have heard:

One ex-Nazi was trying to hide the fact that he had been a stormtrooper. He decided to

become an opera singer.

When the night for his big debut came he walked on stage, looked at his audience and announced, "I am going to sing -- and you are going to listen!"

Things become unconscious. You cannot hide them. Everybody else will be able to see them except you. If you can also see your habits, you start becoming a little detached, unidentified from them, a little aloof. And that very aloofness is a transcendence. Then you will be able to say when no is needed -- you will say no. And you will be able to say yes when yes is needed. You will not be fixated.

To be fixated is insane. I don't want you to become yea-sayers; I want you to be conscious, alert, watchful, responsive. There are moments when your total being would like to say no. Then say no. If everything has to be risked, risk, but don't be false to your own being. And there will be moments when your whole being says, "Say yes." And then too, maybe there is great danger in saying yes, but say it. That's the way of the sannyasin, the really religious person.

Don't become fixated. You can move from no-saying to yes-saying, and you can still remain unconscious and fixated. Then nothing has happened. Your disbelief has become belief, but you are the same person.

Ira Schwartzbaum thought he was God. His worried parents, unable to convince him otherwise, finally took him to see a world-famous psychiatrist.

Ira lay on the couch and closed his eyes.

"Tell me," the psychiatrist asked him in an encouraging, sympathetic voice, "how did it all start?"

"Well," Ira said, "on the first day I created the earth, then...."

You can be fixated. And once you are fixated on a certain thing, when you cannot have a detached view of it, when you cannot create a distance between it and you -- you are insane. What your fixation is is not important. You may be a communist or a Catholic, Hindu or a Mohammedan, believer/disbeliever, no-sayer/yes-sayer -- it is all the same.

Hence, Jinesh, don't be worried about your no-saying. Be conscious of it. Next time you say no, don't just say it out of habit, out of a past pattern. Reflect, watch, wait... and let a response arise in you. And you may be surprised -- a yes is born. And it will be born in you, it will not be imposed from the outside.

Your freedom is a supreme value. Nothing is higher than that. But your freedom is possible only if you are not engaged in your habits, unconscious patterns of living. Change your gestalt from unconsciousness to consciousness. And I know that as you become conscious you will be able to say more yes than no.

Ultimately a moment comes when life becomes just yes. But it is not fixation. You are still capable of saying no, not that you have become incapable of saying no. In fact, the greater is your yes, in the same proportion is your capacity to say no. You may not say... it may not be needed. Your understanding of life, your love affair with life may have brought you such tremendous joy that you may not like to say no. You may see the childishness of it, the stupidity of it, the stubbornness of it. You may see its poison and you may not say no, but that does not mean that you have become incapable of saying it. The more capable you are of saying yes, in the same proportion you will be capable of saying no too. But now everything will be decided by your conscious response.

Ultimately the awakened person stops saying no. Not that he deliberately decides not to say no... it simply withers away just as dead leaves fall from the trees.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT AND SCARY TO SHOW YOUR FEELINGS AND JUST TO BE YOURSELF?

Prem Deven, it is difficult to show your feelings and just to be yourself because for thousands of years you have been told to repress your feelings. It has become part of your collective unconscious. For thousands of years you have been told NOT to be yourself. Be Jesus, be Buddha, be Krishna, but never be yourself. Be somebody else. Down the ages you have been taught so continuously, so persistently that it has gone into your blood, into your bones, into your very marrow.

A deep self-rejection has become part of you. All the priests have been condemning you. They have been telling you you are sinners, you are born in sin. Your only hope is that Jesus can save you, or Krishna can save you, but there is no hope as far as you are concerned -- you cannot save yourself, somebody else will save you. You are doomed, you can only pray to Jesus, to Krishna, to save you. As far as you are concerned you are just worthless, you are just dust and nothing more. You have no value, you have been reduced to ugly things, to disgusting beings. It is because of this, Deven, that one finds it very difficult and scary to show one's true feelings. You have been taught to be hypocrites.

Hypocrisy pays, and whatsoever pays seems to be valuable. They say honesty is the best policy -- but remember, the best POLICY. Even honesty has become only a policy because it pays. If it does not pay, then? -- then DIShonesty is the best policy. The whole thing depends on what works, what pays, what makes you richer, more respectable, what makes you more comfortable, more safe, more secure, what gives you more nourishment for the ego -- that's the best policy. It may be honesty, it may be dishonesty... whatsoever it is, use it as a means; it is not an end.

Religion also has become a good policy. It is a kind of insurance for the other world. You are preparing by being virtuous, by going to the church, by donating to the poor, for the other world. You are opening a bank account in paradise, so when you go there you will be received with great joy, angels shouting "Alleluia!", dancing, playing on their harps. How big a bank account you have there will depend on how many virtuous deeds you have done.

Religion too has become business, and your reality is repressed. And the repressed people have been respected so much. You call them saints; they are really schizophrenic. They should be treated, they need therapy -- and you worship them. Out of your hundred saints, even if one turns out to be a real saint that will be a miracle. Ninety-nine are just hocus-pocus, pretenders, deceivers. And I am not saying they are deceiving you... they are deceiving themselves too. They are repressed people.

I have known many mahatmas in this country, respected by the masses like anything. I have been very intimate with these people, and in their privacy they have opened their hearts to me. They are more ugly than you will find the ordinary people.

I used to visit prisoners, to teach them how to meditate, and my observation was.... I was surprised in the beginning that prisoners -- even those who have been sentenced for their whole lives -- are far more innocent than your saints, are far better people than your saints,

far simpler, far more innocent. Your saints are cunning, clever, and your saints have only one quality: that they are able to repress themselves. They go on repressing. Then naturally, they become split. Then they have two kinds of lives: one that they live at the front door, and the other that they live at the back door; one that they live as a showpiece, and the other -- the real one -- that they don't show to anybody. They are afraid even to see it themselves.

And that's the case with you too, on a smaller scale, of course, because, Deven, you are not a saint. Your illness is not yet incurable, it can be cured. It is not yet so acute, it is not yet chronic. Your illness is just like the common cold: it can disappear easily.

But everybody is influenced by these so-called saints, who are really insane people. They are repressed so much -- they have repressed their sex, they have repressed their greed, they have repressed their anger -- and they are boiling within themselves. Their inner life is very nightmarish. There is no peace, no silence. All their smiles are painted.

I have heard of a beautiful woman who came from the West in search of peace. She went to the Himalayas. She had heard about a great saint who used to live in the caves. It was hard to reach to those caves, but you know Americans: the harder a thing is, the more they become interested; it becomes a challenge.

So the American lady reached to that peak where the saint lived. He had lived there for thirty years absolutely alone. Not a single human being had visited him all this time, because Indians are very lazy; they don't bother to go that far. They have managed in a different way: every twelve years they gather in Allahabad and all the saints from all the caves come down so they can have all the saints together. They don't bother much to go to the Himalayas. Those who want to be worshipped come on their own.

But the American lady reached with arduous effort, and she told the saint -- he was very old, ancient -- she told the saint, "I have come here in search of peace. I want peace of mind and peace of heart."

The saint said, "Yes, you have come to the right place. You will be given both. Don't be worried, my daughter. It is not difficult. You will have peace of mind and peace of heart."

She was very happy. At last somebody is so certain. She has seen many psychiatrists and therapists; they all said that it will take seven years, ten years of analysis, and then too there is no guarantee. This man is so certain, and he looks so silent, so happy... a man from a totally different world, so unearthly.

But in the middle of the night the saint jumped into the bed of the woman. She was so shocked, for a few seconds she could not utter a single word. And the saint started making love, wild love, to the woman.

And the woman said, "What are you doing? You had promised me peace of the mind and peace of the heart! And what are you doing?"

He said, "First things first: piece of ass! We will take care of other things later on. One has to begin from the beginning."

If you repress.... That was his problem. Peace of mind and peace of heart was not his problem; he must have been repressing for thirty years, and he had not seen even a single woman. And I don't know whether the woman was really beautiful or not, because if you don't see a woman for thirty years, any woman looks beautiful! Any woman looks like she is coming from the gods.

Hindu scriptures are full of the stories that whenever a great saint reaches very close to attaining enlightenment, beautiful women come from the gods to disturb him. I have not been

yet able to find out why the gods should be interested in disturbing these poor fellows. Some ascetic, fasting for years, repressing, standing on his head, torturing himself... he has not done any harm to anybody else except himself. Why should the gods be so interested in distracting him? They should really help him! And they send beautiful women... naked... and those women dance around and make obscene gestures to the poor fellow. Naturally he becomes a victim, he is seduced, falls from grace -- as if the gods are against anyone who is reaching closer to enlightenment. This seems so ridiculous. They should help. Rather than helping they come to destroy.

But those stories should not be understood literally; they are symbolical, they are metaphors. They are very meaningful. Had Sigmund Freud come across those stories, he would have utterly enjoyed them. It would have been a treasure for him. It would have supported his psychoanalysis as nothing else. Nobody was coming; those repressed people were projecting. These were their desires, repressed desires -- so long repressed that now they have become so powerful that even with open eyes they were dreaming.

So I don't know whether this woman was really beautiful, but she must have appeared beautiful to the so-called saint.

In India, if a woman is sitting in one place, the saints are taught not to sit in the same place after the woman has left for a certain length of time, because that space vibrates with danger. Do you see the foolishness of it all? And these have been the teachers of humanity. And these are the people who have made you, Deven, scared of your own feelings -- because you cannot accept your own feelings. You reject them, hence the fear.

Accept them, nothing is wrong, nothing is wrong with you! All that is needed is not repression or destruction. You have to learn the art of creating harmony in your energies. You have to become an orchestra. Yes, if you don't know how to play on musical instruments, you will create noise, you will drive your neighbors mad. But if you know the art of playing on the instruments you can create beautiful music, you can create celestial music. You can bring something of the beyond on the earth.

Life is also a great instrument. You have to learn how to play upon it. Nothing has to be cut, destroyed, repressed, rejected. All that God has given to you is beautiful. If you have not been able to use it beautifully, it simply shows that you are not yet artful enough. We have all taken our lives for granted, and that is wrong. We are given only a raw possibility. We have been given only a POTENTIAL for life; we have to learn how to actualize it.

That's what sannyas is all about, Deven. That's what all the devices are: meditation, therapies -- all possible sources have to be used so that you can know how to use your anger in such a way that it becomes compassion, how to use your sex in such a way that it becomes love, how to use your greed in such a way that it becomes sharing. EVERY energy that you have can become its polar opposite, because the polar opposite is ALWAYS contained in it.

Your body contains the soul, matter contains mind. The world contains God. Dust contains divineness. You have to discover it, and the first step towards discovery is to accept yourself, rejoice in being yourself. You are not to be a Jesus, no, you are not to be a Buddha. You are not to be me or anybody else. You have to be just yourself. God does not want carbon copies; he loves your uniqueness. And you can offer yourself to God only as a unique phenomenon. You can be accepted as an offering but only as a unique phenomenon. An imitation Jesus, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mohammed -- these won't do. Imitators are bound to be rejected.

Be yourself, authentically yourself. Respect yourself. If God has given you life he respects you. And do you have higher standards than God himself? Love yourself. God loves

you. And then start watching all kinds of energies in you -- you are a vast universe!

And slowly slowly, as you become more conscious, you will be able to put things right, into right places. You are topsy-turvy, that is true, but nothing is wrong with you. You are not a sinner -- just a little rearrangement and you will become a beautiful phenomenon.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
AM I WASTING ENERGY BY LOOKING TO OCCULTISM AS A WAY TO EXPLORE
INNER SPACE?

Mark, occultism is for stupid people. God is not hidden; God is very much manifested. He is all over the place: singing in the birds, flowering in the flowers. He is green in the trees, red in the roses. He is breathing in you. He is talking through me and listening through you right this very moment. But you don't want to see the obvious.

Man has a very pathological interest in the occult. Occult means that which is hidden. Man wants to be interested in the hidden -- and there is nothing hidden! As far as God is concerned nothing is hidden. Just open your eyes and he is standing before you. Be silent and you will hear the still, small voice within yourself. Why go into occultism to explore inner space? Why not go directly into inner space? Occultism is so much nonsense, and there is no end to it because it is all invention. It is religious fiction. Just as there is science fiction, occultism is religious fiction. If you love fictions, it is perfectly okay. But then don't think that by reading science fiction you are studying science. And don't believe in science fiction, and don't act out of that belief; otherwise you will end up in a madhouse.

Occultism is exactly like science fiction. People love fiction; there is nothing wrong in it, but you should know that it is fiction. Enjoy, but don't take it seriously.

In Buddha's time there were eight great masters. Mahavira is well-known -- he was the last enlightened master of the tradition of the Jainas. He used to say there are three hells. One of his disciples became a renegade, betrayed him, declared himself to be a master, and he started talking about seven hells. He used to say to people, "Mahavira does not know much; he knows only about three hells and I know about seven." And naturally people were impressed. Mahavira talks only of three hells and he talks about seven!

One great master was Sanjay Belattiputta, another contemporary of Buddha. He must have been a man something like me -- nonserious. He started talking about seven hundred hells. He said, "What is this Gosalak talking about? -- only seven? There are seven hundred, and there are seven hundred heavens too."

He was joking, but people were very interested. This seems to be the right man, who has gone so deep into occultism.

Once a follower of Radhaswami, a small sect which is confined to an area near Agra, came to see me. I was in Agra. He was some kind of a priest, and he said, "Do you know? -- our master has said there are fourteen planes of existence."

I said, "Just fourteen?"

He said, "What do you mean, 'Just fourteen'? Are there more?"

I said, "Certainly."

He said, "But our master has said there are only fourteen. Mohammed has reached only up to the third," he said -- he had brought a map -- "Kabir and Nanak have reached up to the

fifth. And Mahavira and Buddha up to the seventh," and so on, so forth. But there has never been another who has reached up to the fourteenth except his so-called master.

I said, "I know your master. I have seen him struggling in the fourteenth. He is trying hard, but he cannot get out of it. I know it because I exist at the fifteenth. There are fifteen planes of existence."

He said, "But you are the first man...." And he was much impressed. When he was leaving he touched my feet and he said, "You have revealed a new secret."

I said, "Don't be foolish. I was just joking! There are only two categories of people: the people who are not aware and the people who are aware. The people who are aware have no hierarchy that one is more aware than the other, that somebody is at the fifth, somebody at the seventh, somebody at the ninth, somebody at the fourteenth. There is no higher and lower in awareness. Awareness is simply awareness."

But he was not much interested in that. He was more interested in my being on the fifteenth plane.

People are interested in religious fictions.

Mark, don't waste your time in occultism, unless you are interested in novels, fictions. Then it is okay, then there is no problem....

The lecturer on the occult was warming to his subject of supernatural manifestations. "Ah, my friends," he exclaimed, a look of dedicated zeal animating his face. "If you could but be made to believe! If only the world would cease its scoffing and come to realize that visitations from the Mystic Shore happen all the time."

The lecturer searched the faces in his audience to find those sympathetic souls who agreed with his philosophy.

"I have told you about my own experiences," he continued, "but surely one of you has also had direct communication with a departed spirit. If there is any such person here in this audience who has been in touch with a ghost, I would appreciate it if he or she would stand up."

From her seat in the front row, Mrs. Faigel Frume got to her feet. "Me," she said loudly. "Such a experience I had you would not believe."

"This is very gratifying," said the delighted speaker when the applause died down. "Behold, a volunteer witness; one who is a total stranger to me, arises to give her testimony. My dear lady, do I understand you to say that you have been in touch with a ghost?"

"In touch with him?" echoed Mrs. Frume. "Better even than that. When I was a little girl in Russia one of them butted me till I was black and blue."

"A ghost BUTTED you?"

"A GHOST, you said? Gosh! I thought you said a GOAT!"

Don't waste your time in ghosts and goats. If you want to explore inner space, explore inner space. How does occultism come in? That's a way of escaping from inner space, not exploring it. That's a way of keeping yourself engaged in sheer nonsense! And theosophy, particularly in this age, has released so much nonsense: hundreds of books and all kinds of foolish things. People are so gullible that they are ready to believe anything.

Man today exists in a kind of vacuum. Old religions have died or are almost dying. Either they have died or they are on the deathbed; hence new creeds are cropping up everywhere, and all the new creeds need new fictions to allure you.

I cannot give you any occult fiction. I am not interested in anything esoteric. I am a very down-to-earth man. I am simply stating the facts. I don't want to decorate them. I don't want to create illusions in your mind; I don't want to create projections in your mind. My effort here is to help you to go beyond the mind and all your occultism and esotericism, theology, anthroposophy -- and there are so many schools. You can create your own; there is no need to believe in anybody else's, you can create your own. All that you need is a pencil and paper; you can just go on writing your own fiction. That will be far more enlightening. At least it will be something creative. Then give your copy to somebody, and you will find a few believers. Then you will know how people go on believing in any kind of thing.

J. Krishnamurti was brought up by theosophists. He was fed, spoon-fed with all kinds of occultism. He became so fed up that when the theosophists were going to declare him to be the world teacher.... The day they had gathered from all over the world -- six thousand leading theosophists -- when they asked Krishnamurti to declare, he stood up and said, "I dissolve this organization. I am nobody's teacher. I am finished with it all, and I don't want to say anything more!"

They were shocked, but as far as I see it, it is a logical conclusion. For years he was taught all kinds of nonsense by all kinds of stupid people. He was getting fed up with the whole thing. But old ladies, and particularly retired old people, were very interested. They were the majority of the theosophists -- retired people and old ladies who now had nothing else to do -- and they would gather and talk nonsense about ghosts and about Tibetan masters who come flying in the air, and about letters that Master K.H.... Now nobody knows who this K.H. is. His full name is Koot Humi. That too, nobody knows what it means. The less you understand, the better.

Koot Humi -- in short K.H. -- used to write letters, until finally it was found that those letters were written by Blavatsky herself. A servant used to hide on the roof -- just think, just on the roof of Buddha Hall! -- and there was a small hole from where, when the theosophists would be sitting with closed eyes waiting for Koot Humi, he would drop a letter.

Now, people are so foolish.... Just ordinary paper -- they could have seen what brand it was, in what factory it had been made -- ordinary ink, and the handwriting was Blavatsky's. Then the letter would be read, and those letters were collected, and they were great treasures. But in the High Court there was a case against one of the great theosophists, Leadbeater. He was a colleague of Annie Besant, and he was suspected of homosexuality. Just a dirty old man, that's all!

So there was a case in the High Court against him, and in that case his servant confessed that he was the man who used to hide on the roof. He went and showed the hole and the place where he used to hide, and everything was discovered. Still, people go on reading those letters believing that Koot Humi wrote them.

When people WANT to believe, when they are feeling empty, some belief is needed. They cling to anything, they don't listen... they don't listen to their own heart. They just need belief; so anybody is ready to supply it. Wherever there is demand there is supply. People need fictions, so there are other people -- clever, cunning people -- who go on supplying fictions.

In a Catholic school, little Hans was asked to give an example of a dependent clause. "Our cat has a litter of ten kittens," he replied, "all of which are good Catholics." "That's excellent," said the teacher. "You have a good grasp on grammar as well as on our religion."

The following week the bishop visited the school and the teacher called on Hans. "Our cat has a litter of ten kittens," said Hans, "all of which are good sannyasins." "That is not what you said a week ago!" snapped the teacher. "Yes," replied Hans, "but my kittens' eyes are open now."

Be a little alert, be a little watchful. There are deceiving people all around; you can be easily deceived.

Morrissey, the ventriloquist, was on his way down to a bar for a drink when a big shaggy dog fell in at his side.

They went in, the ventriloquist ordered a scotch, and for a laugh he looked at the dog and said, "Well, are you having the usual?"

"No, thanks, I have had enough this morning," said the dog.

The barman was flabbergasted. He offered fifty dollars for the animal.

"No, sir!" said Morrissey. "I have had him since he was a pup."

"I'll make it a hundred dollars!" said the bartender.

Morrissey shook his head. When the offer went to five hundred dollars the ventriloquist grabbed the money and headed for the door.

"Alright," he added, "take good care of him." And with a last look at the dog, "Farewell, old pal!" he exclaimed.

"Old pal, my foot!" said the dog. "After what you have just done I will never speak to another human being as long as I live!"

Be aware of the cunning people, they are all around. Don't be exploited. Long enough humanity has been exploited by the cunning and the clever; it is time to put a full stop to it. Be a little more mature.

If you want to explore inner space, meditate. Listen to what Buddha says: Quieten the mind, reflect, watch, and all darkness will disappear on its own accord, and you will be full of light.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOUR JOKES ARE FAR OUT! EASE UP A LITTLE ON THE PRIESTS.
BELOVED MASTER, I REJOICE WITH EXISTENCE BECAUSE OF YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT! I FEEL GOOD TO BE HERE, TO BE HOME AFTER YEARS OF SEARCHING.

Deva Chintana, I am sorry if it hurts you. I know.... Deva Chintana has been a nun. She has been courageous. She dropped out of the monastery and became a sannyasin. And my jokes about the priests must be looking a little hard to her, naturally. I should have thought of her. I will be more careful in the future, Chintana.

A joke for you:

The pope died... and naturally assumed that he would go to heaven. So, dressed in all his papal finery, he went striding up towards the Pearly Gates, brushed past Saint Peter, and made straight for the entrance.

"Hey, you! Where are you going?" shouted Saint Peter, and two guardian angels stepped

forward to bar the way.

"Look-a here," said the pope. "I am-a da popa and I..."

"Who?"

"Da Popa!!! I am-a da popa of da Catholic-a Church-a and I wanna go to heaven."

"The pope?" said Saint Peter. "Never heard of you. We don't have anyone of that name in our books, do we, Gabriel? No, sorry sir, you cannot come in."

"Hey, come on! I am-a da popa! You gotta let me in. Ask-a God da Father -- he knows me!"

Saint Peter calls God the Father: "Hey, God, this is Saint Peter -- gate duty. Sorry to disturb you but there is a guy here who calls himself the popa and wants to come inside -- says you know him."

"Who?" asks God the Father.

"The popa."

"Who?"

"I think that's what he said."

"No, never heard of him."

"Sorry, Pope -- God the Father says he doesn't know you."

"What? But leesten, I am-a da popa. He must know me! Look-a here, you ask God da Son. For sure he knows me -- I am-a his representative on da earth-a -- he must-a know me!"

Saint Peter calls God the Son, but the answer is the same: "The pope? No, I've never heard of him!"

The pope is in despair: "Look-a, you gotta help me. Ring-a the Holy Ghost -- for sure he knows me! I am da popa -- da popa of the Catholic-a Church-a, the spiritual representative of Jesus Christ-a on da earth-a!! He has just gotta know me!"

Saint Peter calls the Holy Ghost. "Hmmm, the pope, you say!" answers the Holy Ghost. "Hmm, yes, I've heard that name before somewhere.... Wait a minute! He's that bastard who goes on spreading rumors about me and Virgin Mary. Tell him to go to hell!"

Chintana, I will try my best. But the priests are the priests; they are the most ugly people on the earth, the most cunning and the most mean, although their appearance is totally different.

And I am not saying that there are not some good people. Some good people are also caught in the net, but those good people are childish. Those good people are gullible, those good people are easily exploitable.

Humanity has to get rid of priesthood, only then can there be religion. They have been very destructive. It is because of them that the world is not religious yet. They have divided humanity instead of making humanity one whole. Much more blood has been shed in the name of religion than in the name of anything else. In fact, I am not really hard on them, I am very soft with them. They need to be hit harder. And when I am hitting them, I am not really hitting them, but simply hitting your conditioning.

What do I have to do with the pope or the shankaracharya or the imam or Ayatollah Khomeiniac? I have nothing to do with these people. But when I hit them I am simply hitting the chains inside you that keep you in a bondage. My jokes about the priests are just to help you to come out of the prison, laughing. I don't want it to become a serious affair for you to come out of the prison, because if it becomes a serious affair you will be affected by your seriousness and you will carry that load with you. And there is every danger that you will start projecting your seriousness on me.

I can free you from the priest very easily, but the danger is that you may start projecting

all that you have been projecting on the priest, on me. That is not freedom at all; only your chains are changed.

Someone else has asked me:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM A COWARD AND I CANNOT TAKE SANNYAS. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME?

Jesus was on the cross, a thief on either side of him. Suddenly the guards disappeared and they were alone. Seeing that there was no one around, Jesus addressed the two thieves.

"Repent, my brethren!" he said. "Repent, and the Kingdom of God will be opened unto you. I will take you with me to the House of my Father. REPENT!"

One of the thieves bowed down to Jesus, saying, "I repent, my Lord! Take me with you into the Kingdom of God!"

The other thief turned his head away in disdain. "Stop all this crap!" he exclaimed. Jesus insisted, "Repent! Come to my feet!"

"Fuck you!" replied the thief.

Jesus looked at him compassionately, and said, "Tough luck, old bean! You won't be in the souvenir picture, that's all!"

So don't be worried if you are not a sannyasin. If you cannot gather courage to be a sannyasin, you won't be in the souvenir picture, that's all. Don't take it seriously.

My whole effort here is to make sannyas as nonserious as possible. I don't want to become a pope or a shankaracharya. I don't want to become a replacement for you, a substitute for you. I don't want to become a father figure to you. I want simply to be a friend.

Hence my discourses are not ordinarily religious sermons. I am just chitchatting. They are not gospels, but gossips!

Enough for today.

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Chapter #9

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MASTER YOUR SENSES,
WHAT YOU TASTE AND SMELL,
WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU HEAR.

IN ALL THINGS BE A MASTER
OF WHAT YOU DO AND WHAT YOU SAY AND THINK.
BE FREE.

YOU ARE A SEEKER.
DELIGHT IN THE MASTERY
OF YOUR HANDS AND YOUR FEET,
OF YOUR WORDS AND YOUR THOUGHTS.

DELIGHT IN MEDITATION
AND IN SOLITUDE.
COMPOSE YOURSELF, BE HAPPY.
YOU ARE A SEEKER.

Freedom is the ultimate goal of true religion -- not God, not paradise, not even truth, but freedom. This has to be understood because this is Gautam Buddha's essential message to the world. Freedom is the highest value according to him, the SUMMUM BONUM; there is nothing higher than that. But by freedom he does not mean political freedom, social freedom, economic freedom. By freedom he means the freedom of consciousness.

Our consciousness is in a deep bondage; we are chained. Inside is our prison, not outside. The walls of the prison are not outside us; it exists deep in our unconscious. It exists in our instincts, it exists in our desires, it exists in our unawareness.

Freedom is the goal.

Awareness is the method to reach that goal.

And when you are really free you are a master; the slavery disappears. Ordinarily we may appear free, but we are not free. It may appear that we are the choosers, but we are not the choosers. We are being pulled, pushed by unconscious forces.

When you fall in love with a woman or a man, do you think you have decided it, it is your choice? You know perfectly well you cannot choose to love, you cannot force yourself to love somebody. You are not the master, you are just a slave of a biological force. That's why in all the languages the expression is 'falling in love' -- you FALL in love: you fall from your freedom, you fall from your selfhood. If love were your choice you would rise in love, not fall in love. Then love would be out of your consciousness, and it would have a totally different quality, a different beauty, a different fragrance.

The ordinary love stinks -- stinks of jealousy, anger, hatred, possessiveness. It is not love at all. Nature is forcing you towards something which is not of your choice; you are just a victim. This is our slavery. Even in love we are slaves, what to say about other things? Love seems to be our greatest experience; even that consists only of slavery, even in that we only suffer.

People suffer more in love than in anything else. The greatest suffering is that it deludes you -- it creates the illusion that you are the chooser, and soon you know that you are not the chooser; nature has played a trick upon you. Unconscious forces have taken possession of you, you are possessed. You are acting not on your own; you are just a vehicle. That is the first misery that one starts feeling in love, and one misery triggers a whole chain of misery.

Soon you become aware that you have become dependent on the other, that without the other you cannot exist, that without the other you start losing all sense of meaning, significance. The other has become your life, you are utterly dependent; hence lovers

continuously fight, because nobody likes to be dependent, everybody hates dependence. Nobody likes to be possessed by somebody else because to be possessed means to be reduced to a thing. The whole humanity suffers for the simple reason that every relationship goes on reducing you, goes on making your prison smaller and smaller.

Buddha says: This life is not true life. You are being lived, you are not really living. You are being lived by unconscious forces. Unless you become conscious, unless you take possession of your own life, unless you become independent of your instincts, you will not be a master. And without being a master there is no bliss, no benediction; life remains a hell.

The first sutra:

MASTER YOUR SENSES,
WHAT YOU TASTE AND SMELL,
WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU HEAR.

This sutra has been very misunderstood, misinterpreted, so much so that the Buddhists have taken exactly the opposite meaning of it. MASTER YOUR SENSES does not mean destroy your senses. If you destroy them, whom are you going to master? And that's what has been done for twenty-five centuries: Buddhists have been destroying the senses. That is easier, hence the mistake. It is difficult, arduous to master your senses. It needs great consciousness to master your senses; to destroy them needs nothing.

If you want to make a beautiful house you will have to learn many things, but if you want to demolish it you need not learn anything. Anybody can demolish it, any madman can do that. In fact, a madman can do it faster than anybody else, quicker. You need not know architecture to demolish a building. Destruction needs no art, no intelligence.

And that's how this sutra has been interpreted down the ages, for the simple reason that destruction is easier; any stupid person can do it. And your so-called saints are almost always stupid. It is very rare to come across a real saint who is a creative person. They are worshipped as saints because they have been successfully committing suicide -- slow suicide, of course -- destroying themselves slowly, poisoning themselves slowly. We have worshipped death, destruction. We should learn -- it is time now -- we should learn to love life and to love creativity, creation.

MY understanding of this sutra is totally different. "Master your senses" means become more conscious of your senses, become more sensitive. Don't destroy them; otherwise you will be left without the doors and windows into creation, into God, into truth.

There is a story of a Hindu mystic. I don't believe that it is true because I have been deeply impressed by that mystic's great sayings; they are so beautiful that it is impossible for me to conceive that he could have done such a thing.

Surdas is his name. He was a blind man, not born blind; that's how the story goes. He destroyed his eyes himself because he saw a beautiful woman and became fascinated by her. She took his fancy, he started thinking of her -- and he was a monk. He destroyed his eyes because he thought it was these two eyes that had made him aware of her beauty. If these eyes were not there, he would not have been infatuated.

I don't believe the story, but it is true of thousands of other people. My own experience is that Surdas must have been blind from the very beginning because his insight in his poetry is such that it is inconceivable that such a man will do such a stupid act.

By destroying your eyes you cannot get freedom from women or from men. You can close your eyes, that will not make much difference. In fact with closed eyes women appear more beautiful than they are!

That's why whenever you make love to a woman she closes her eyes; you appear more beautiful. Otherwise, looking at you she will become afraid, because on your face the expression of passion and lust can't be described as beautiful; it is ugly, it is animal. A man full of lust is nothing but an animal. Women must have learned the art of closing their eyes seeing again and again that the man turns into an animal.

I love a famous Zen anecdote:

Two monks were coming back to the monastery; they had gone into the village to preach. It was evening, the sun was setting; soon it would be night. They came across a river. A young woman, a beautiful woman, was standing there on the bank hesitating whether to enter the river or not: it may be too deep, it appears very deep.

The first monk -- the older one -- followed the Buddhist rule not to look at a woman. But that is a very strange rule: first you have to look, then only will you be able to see whether she is a woman or not. You can follow the rule only by breaking it! So he must have looked -- of course a stolen look -- and then he must have looked down. The Buddhist rule is: Don't look more than four feet ahead. Such fear... and he must have been trembling inside. And he crossed the river.

When he was crossing the river and was reaching the other shore, suddenly he remembered his younger fellow monk, who was also coming behind. What has happened to him? He looked back. The younger monk was carrying the woman on his shoulders! The older one was really enraged; in his rage there must have been jealousy also; otherwise why be angry?

The younger one brought the girl to the other shore, left her there, and both the monks moved towards the monastery. For one mile the old man didn't say a single word. Then, when they reached to the gate of the monastery, the old man turned to the younger monk and said, "Listen, I will have to report it to the abbot. This is against the rules. Buddha has said: Don't touch a woman, don't look at a woman. You have not only seen her, you have not only touched her, you have carried her on your shoulders. This is too much! This is going against the law."

I don't think that Buddha has said that. A man like Buddha cannot say such nonsense things. But twenty-five centuries of stupid interpreters have done as much harm as they can do.

The young monk said, "But I have left the woman on the bank, far behind. Are you still carrying her on your shoulders?"

It has a great truth in it: the old man was really still carrying her. You can see without seeing, you can carry without carrying, you can touch without touching. Man has great imagination.

Hence I cannot believe that Surdas destroyed his eyes; otherwise it would be impossible for him to give such beautiful insights. He must have been a man of inner vision, of inner eyes, of great understanding. So I don't believe in the story, but the story is significant. It is true about so many so-called saints. It may not be true about Surdas but it is true about almost all so-called saints -- Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian.

In Christianity there has been a sect which used to cut off their genital organs -- just in

order to transcend sex. If just by cutting off your genital organs you can transcend sex, things will be very easy. You can just go to the Sassoon Hospital and they will really do a butchery on you! They are official butchers, government butchers, recognized, authorized. But by removing your sexual organs you will not transcend sex; you may become more obsessed with sex than ever before.

That's what happens to old people -- hence the expression, 'the dirty old man'. You don't say 'the dirty young man' -- why? The old man is called dirty for the simple reason that now all his sexuality has entered into his mind. His sex center has moved into his mind; it has become cerebral. Now he thinks about it only, he continually thinks about it. Physiologically he has become incapable; that does not mean that psychologically he has transcended it, that he has mastery of his sexuality -- no.

By destroying your senses you don't, you can't become masters. Then what is the way to become the master?

Buddha says: MASTER YOUR SENSES.... He could have simply said: Destroy your senses. But mastery is a totally different phenomenon; it needs great art, skill, awareness, meditateness, watchfulness, alertness. Only then the senses will remain there. In fact, the master is more sensitive than the slave.

My own understanding is that Buddha smells more deeply; his sense of smell is far deeper than yours. Your sense of smell is repressed, very much repressed. For centuries you have been repressing sex, and the sense of smell is very much connected with your sexuality. You have been repressing your sense of smell. You use so many perfumes just to hide the smell of your sexuality. Otherwise, when a woman has her period she smells differently; you can smell that she has her period. When a woman is sexually aroused she starts smelling differently; you can know just by her smell that she is sexually aroused. And the same is true about man: sexually aroused, his body starts smelling because there are great chemical changes happening inside him. They affect his body, his perspiration, his breathing, his blood.

Man has been so much afraid of his sexuality: somebody may become aware, somebody may note what is happening to him. He has used clothes to hide his body, he has used perfumes to hide his natural smells. He has tried in every possible way to appear as nonsexual as possible. And we have had to repress our noses very much....

You know the animals. They know through their noses whether the female is willing or not. Just the nose is enough to know whether the female is saying yes. Unless the nose says the female is saying yes, the male won't approach the female. That is aggression, that is rape. No animal ever rapes, remember, except man. Man is the only rapist animal in the world. I am not including the animals who live in the zoos because they have become more like human beings. Living in the company of human beings they have been distorted; otherwise no animal rapes. Love happens only when both the parties are absolutely willing. But man has lost his sensitivity of smell. It is because of the so-called religious teaching down the centuries.

My understanding is that Buddha's sense of smell is far more clear than yours because there is no repression in him. His eyes see better than you can see because his eyes are not clouded by any prejudice, by any a priori conceptions. He hears perfectly well because his ears are not full of noise, his mind is silent.

When the mind is utterly silent you are capable of listening. Then you are capable of listening to the song of the birds, a distant call of the cuckoo. Then you are able to listen even to the silence. Just now, listen to the silence... not only sound but soundlessness can be

listened to. But you have to be noiseless.

And you can start smelling people not only in their sexuality, you can start smelling their anger because anger also changes their body chemistry. You can start smelling their greed, their jealousy, their hatred. You can start smelling all kinds of emotions. The moment a person comes to you, if your mind is silent and your senses are clear, unclouded, without any fog, you can smell everything that the man is carrying. He may be smiling on the surface, but deep down you can see that he is angry, a hypocrite. Try smelling people -- their greed, their anger, their cruelty.

And if you can learn to smell cruelty, anger, greed, slowly slowly you will be able to smell more subtle things: their compassion, their love, their prayer. Yes, even their meditateness, their silence has its own fragrance. When a person is full of greed, he stinks of greed; when a person is full of silence, he exudes something of the beyond, something of the unknown.

Buddha is not saying destroy your senses. He is saying master your senses, become more aware of your senses. Bring awareness to your senses so that they become more sensitive. They are doors, windows, bridges with existence. Without them you will be just a closed phenomenon, a Leibnizian monad, windowless. You will not see the light of the sun, moon, stars. You will not feel anything.

Destroying your senses will simply mean you are killing yourself. You have five senses. Destroy your eyes and eighty percent of your life is destroyed -- eighty percent, because your eyes contain eighty percent of your life; eighty percent of your sensibility depends on your eyes. Hence we feel so much sympathy for the blind man. You don't feel that much sympathy for the dumb or for the deaf. Why, all over the world, do we feel so much sympathy for the blind man? -- because he is really suffering much. He can't see colors, he can't see the light -- and life consists of light and life consists of colors. It is a rainbow. He will remain utterly in the dark. He will not know what colorful existence was available. He will not know the butterflies and the roses and the marigolds. He will not know the green and the red and the gold of the trees. He will not know the faces of the people, he will not be able to look into the eyes of the people. His main bridge is broken.

Destroy your ears, and something more dies in you. Destroy your tongue, and something more dies in you. When you have destroyed all your senses you are just a corpse, you are no longer alive. Life means sensitivity: more sensitivity and you have more life. So I cannot say destroy your senses -- you have already destroyed them. Revive them, rejuvenate them, pour energy into them. And the method to pour energy into them is by becoming aware.

Sometimes just become aware of your ears, as if you are just the ears and nothing else, as if your whole body has become the ears. Just be ears, and you will be surprised that you become aware of such subtle noises, such subtle happenings around you that you have never been aware of. You may start hearing your own breathing, your own heartbeat. You may start hearing many things -- and you have lived always amongst these things, but you were never aware; you were so occupied into yourself.

Buddha says: WHAT YOU TASTE AND SMELL, WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU HEAR -- MASTER YOUR SENSES. Bring your awareness to taste. When you are eating, forget everything else; just become your tongue, just your taste buds. Exist there in your totality. Taste your food as deeply as possible, and you will be in for a great surprise -- not one but many surprises.

First you will become aware that you cannot eat more than is needed. You need not diet -- only foolish people diet. And you can diet for a few days, and then you jump upon the food

with a vengeance, and you gain more weight than you have lost! If you are intelligent, bring your awareness to your taste. Why do you eat more? The simple reason is that you don't taste, and your hunger for taste remains, so you go on stuffing more. If you really taste, soon you will be satisfied, contented. Soon the body will say, "Stop!" And if you are alert you will be able to listen when the body says stop.

Right now you are not there at all. You are eating, but you are not there, present. You may be in your office or you may have gone somewhere else, doing a thousand and one things. One thing is certain: that you are not at the table where you are sitting, you are always somewhere else. You are never where you are; you can't be found where you are. If you are really there, totally absorbed in eating, you will be surprised. The first thing will be that for the first time, food becomes something divine.

The Upanishads say: ANNAM BRAHMA -- food is God. Such a beautiful statement: Food is God. These people must have tasted. Without tasting you cannot see God in food. These people can't be against food, they can't be for fasting, they can't teach you to starve your body. The people who have said: Annam Brahma -- food is God -- cannot be in favor of starving. Starvation cannot be anything spiritual.

Eat, but eat meditatively, silently. When you are eating you are talking. Don't talk, because if you are talking you will miss the joy of absorbing God into yourself. You will miss the joy of eating, and when you miss the joy of eating, your hunger for taste goes on asking for more, so you go on stuffing. And that seems to be nonending. People are stuffing the whole day and still it seems they are not satisfied. Eating twice may be enough or at the most thrice, but people are eating the whole day -- particularly Americans! If they are not eating they won't know what else to do. Just doing something with the mouth keeps them occupied. If they are not eating they are talking, if they are not talking they are smoking, if they are not smoking they are chewing gum -- as if the mouth has to remain continuously occupied.

Stan and Sid, both on the road with noncompeting merchandise, usually traveled together, sharing the same car and hotel rooms to save money.

One evening the two friends registered at a small hotel in Schenectady, and Stan immediately sat down to write his wife a letter.

Sid happened to notice his buddy's unusual salutation. "Tell me something, Stan," he said curiously. "How come you always address your wife as 'Dear AT&T'? Is she a big investor?" "No, nothing like that," answered Stan. "AT&T does not stand for American Telephone & Telegraph. It means 'Always Talking & Talking'."

People are continuously talking, particularly women more so -- for the simple reason that man has taken every other avenue from them. They are left only with one thing -- talking; they are not allowed anything else. Every other door has been closed, so their whole energy is turned into talking. They are talking because their minds are too noisy and they have to pour them out: it is a kind of catharsis. Even when you are eating you are talking. How can you taste food and how can you be sensitive to taste?

When you go into the garden you are talking. If you are not talking with somebody else you are in a constant dialogue within yourself. You divide yourself into many persons, you make a crowd inside yourself. You are questioning and answering within yourself. You don't look at the flowers. You don't feel the fragrance, the joy of the birds, the celebration of the trees. You don't allow yourself any sensitivity, any opportunity to be more sensitive, to be

more available to existence, to be more vulnerable.

Sensitivity means openness, vulnerability, availability.

Buddha says: MASTER YOUR SENSES, WHAT YOU TASTE AND SMELL, WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU HEAR.

People are either talking or reading newspapers or listening to the radio or watching the television -- even five hours, six hours per day, watching television, destroying your eyes! And there is so much to see, and you are sitting before a box, glued to your chair!

In his heavenly abode, the patriarch Abraham lit the shabbes candles and then, over a glass of tea and lemon, he settled back to read the 'Forvetz'.

Suddenly, from down below on Earth, he heard a raucous tumult.

"Now, who could be desecrating the Sabbath like that?" he wondered.

With his new laser telescope, he looked down and there he saw a crowd of at least eighty thousand people in the Houston Astrodome watching a baseball game. A quick count showed him that over thirty thousand Jews were among the spectators. Outraged, he picked up the phone and dialed G-O-D. After a few rings, the boss picked up the receiver.

"Hello," said Father Abraham, "that you, Joe?"

"Now look here, Abe -- the name is Jehovah! Show a little respect!"

"Alright, Jehovah, then. I have a complaint."

"What is it this time? Those people from the New Testament picking on you again?"

"Nothing like that. But you really must do something about all that goyishe conduct back on Earth. Did you know that at this very minute thirty thousand Jews are watching a baseball game at the Astrodome?"

"You got something against baseball?"

"No, of course not. But that is not the point. This is Friday evening and it seems to me our people ought to be a little more observant of the holy day."

"What is the big attraction they are all watching the game?"

"Hank Aaron is coming to bat and he is about to break Babe Ruth's record."

"You are absolutely right, Abe. That is no excuse for them to act like a bunch of wild Republicans. Call me back after the game and I will do something about it.... And by the way, what channel is it on?"

Not only man but even God is glued to his chair, looking at the television!

Buddha says: Whatsoever you are doing... small things -- eating, walking, drinking water, taking a bath, swimming in a river -- whatsoever you are doing -- lying down in the sun -- be utterly there, be totally there. Become your senses. Come down from the mind to the senses, come back to the senses.

And what the Buddhists have done for twenty-five centuries is just the opposite: they have gone more and more into the head, they have destroyed their senses completely. They have become dead as far as their bodies are concerned. Only their heads are continuously working, occupied day and night in great interpretations. And they have created so many absurd laws in the name of Buddha that you will not believe it. Thirty-three thousand laws and rules to be followed; even to remember them is impossible. Thirty-three thousand laws and rules to be followed!

Buddha knows only one law and that is awareness -- and that's enough; it takes care of everything. He gives you the master key; you need not carry thirty-three thousand keys with you. Otherwise, whenever the time arises to open a lock you will be at a loss, searching into

those thirty-three thousand keys! I don't think you will be able to find the right key. It is impossible to find the right key, because that's how things work. If you are supposed to take two pills, open the bottle and they will always come in threes, never twos! If you are supposed to take three pills, they will come in twos, they will never come in threes. Life is very mysterious!

Thirty-three thousand keys... and you think you will be able to find the right key when you come across a lock? Impossible... or it will take thirty-three thousand lives for you to find it; by that time the lock will be gone. Either you will have the key or you will have the lock, but never both at the same time. In your unconsciousness how can you carry thirty-three thousand laws?

Mulla Nasruddin came home one night late, utterly drunk. He was trying... and he had only one key, but it wouldn't go in the lock because he was trembling and shaking.

The policeman came to see because for half an hour Mulla was trying and trying. And he said, "Wait! Give me the key, I will open it."

He said, "No need to bother with the key. You just hold the house in place and I can open it!"

In your unconsciousness, thirty-three thousand keys! You will be burdened. That's what has happened to Buddhism. That's what has happened to all the religions. So many laws and so many rules that people have become burdened so much with them, they have forgotten all about them.

Religion is very simple. It consists of a single law -- awareness -- and that is the master key. Make each act of your life full of awareness. Focus your awareness on each act, and that very focusing transforms it, because when you give your awareness to anything it becomes alive; you are pouring your life into it. Your senses will become totally sensitive, and because you are aware you will remain the master. Slavery means unawareness.

Karl the Knaidel, King of Kansas City, had everything in life that a man could ask for, except for one thing: he wanted a grandson to carry on the family name, to say nothing of the family business. So he was understandably happy when his bachelor son told him one evening that he had fallen in love and was planning to marry.

"It is a smart thing you are doing," advised Karl. "Until a man marries he is incomplete."

He pondered the wisdom of his own statement for a moment or two and then added solemnly, "He is not only complete -- he is finished!"

And you are not falling in one thing -- in love -- you are falling in a thousand things -- in anger, in greed. You are continuously falling, falling victims of some unconscious forces within you that you have carried from your animal heritage.

We have to make our unconscious full of light. No nook or corner should be left without light inside you. Only one tenth of our mind is conscious; nine tenths is in darkness, deep darkness. We are like an iceberg: one tenth shows up, nine tenths is hidden underneath -- and that nine tenths is nine times more powerful.

So you may decide something, but you will not be able to follow it; that nine tenths will destroy it any moment. You may decide to get up tomorrow early at five o'clock, but this decision is only by the one tenth of your mind; nine tenths is completely unaware of your decision, absolutely unaware of your decision. So when in the morning the alarm goes, nine

tenths of the mind says, "What is the hurry? And it is so beautiful and so cozy and so warm. And that Dynamic Meditation can wait! Tomorrow we can meditate." And of course, the tomorrow never comes. And when you wake up you will feel guilty -- but this is again not the mind that stopped you from waking up which is feeling guilty; that is another one tenth which is feeling guilty.

And this goes on your whole life, this hide-and-seek. One part decides, another part cancels. And the part that cancels is nine times more powerful. You have decided many times not to be angry again, but all your decisions are impotent because that nine times more powerful unconscious is always there and it won't allow the one tenth to take possession, to be powerful.

Hence the transformation is not through decisions, through taking vows; the transformation needs a totally different approach. You have to change your unconscious slowly slowly into consciousness. That's what meditation is all about: it is making your light grow bigger, spreading it deeper, slowly slowly diving deeper into your own being.

As more and more of your unconscious is reclaimed by the consciousness your decisions will start becoming great fulfillments. Then you can promise yourself something. Right now all your promises are false; you know they are not going to work. You know you have failed so many times and you know you will fail again; but you go on hoping -- hoping against hope.

The ordinary religion taught in the temples and the churches by the priests teaches you character. The real religion -- the religion of the buddhas, the awakened ones -- teaches you consciousness, not character. Character is a by-product; when you are conscious, character comes on its own accord. The ordinary religion teaches you conscience; it is cheap. The buddhas teach you consciousness, not conscience.

Buddha says:

IN ALL THINGS BE A MASTER
OF WHAT YOU DO AND WHAT YOU SAY AND THINK.
BE FREE.

Man can be divided into four parts. The outermost circumference consists of action, what you do. The second layer, a little deeper than your action, consists of your saying, what you say. A little deeper, the third layer consists of your thinking, what you constantly think. And the fourth is not a layer; the fourth is your reality, your being. That is your center, the center of the cyclone. Your center, your being is surrounded by three concentric circles: thinking, saying, doing.

Buddha says: IN ALL THINGS BE A MASTER OF WHAT YOU DO.... Are you aware of what you are doing? Are you doing it consciously or just because others are doing it? Are you an imitator, just following the crowd like a sheep? Be a man, don't be a sheep! Don't follow the crowd, be individual. Only then can you be a master; only individuals can be masters. In the crowd you have to be a slave; the crowd consists of slaves. The crowd wants you to remain a slave; only then the crowd remains powerful. All the politicians and all the priests of the world want you to remain slaves; only then can they be priests and can they be great leaders. Otherwise who will follow your stupid leaders? Who is going to follow your so-called religious priests?

If you are a little alert, aware, you will be able to see perfectly well that your leaders are hocus-pocus, that your priests are pseudo, that you need not follow them, that following them

you have been falling in ditches. Who is going to follow Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin or Ayatollah Khomeini? Who is going to follow these people? Only slaves, only people who don't know what they are doing.

A young sports car enthusiast saved up enough money to buy the latest model of sports car.

After trying out the car, he went to his favorite pub to brag to all his friends about it. "Shit, man -- my new car is so fantastic! I just went from London to Liverpool in one hour!"

The next day he was back at the pub again, bragging to his friends. "Today," he said, "I made it from London to Liverpool in forty minutes!"

The day after, the young sports car enthusiast was again at the pub. "Today," he said, "would you believe it? London to Liverpool in twenty-eight minutes!"

After an absence of two days, to the astonishment of his friends, the young man arrived at the pub on foot.

"Where is your car?" asked his friends.

"I've sold it," he replied sadly.

"But why?" they asked incredulously.

"I could not help it," he told them. "What the fuck was I supposed to do in Liverpool every day?!"

But people go on doing it! This man must have been a little intelligent. They go on going to Liverpool, never thinking why. Why do you go to the church? Why do you go to the synagogue -- or to the mosque, or to the temple? Why do you go on following stupid ideologies, ridiculous politicians? Why? You have never asked.

I have heard about a man who went to the court and wanted his name changed. The magistrate was a little puzzled, but he could not object. He was puzzled because the new name that he had chosen was very strange. His new name was 'None of the above'.

The magistrate said, "What kind of name is this?"

He said, "But this is what I want." So he was allowed. He changed his name; he became 'None of the above'.

Then he stood for president. Then the secret was known. All other candidates who had stood for president objected because this man is dangerous: his name is 'None of the above'. Anybody marking his name on the vote list, on the vote, means canceling everybody! They objected. The man was called back to the court.

The court said, "Your name is a little deceptive."

He said, "Whatever it is, it is my name and I want to change the president. I want to give people a chance to cancel everybody else. I am not interested in being the president myself; my whole interest is to cancel all the others, because everybody knows they are all fools, but you have to choose somebody. So I simply want to give them a chance: if they want to reject all, they can reject. They can simply mark on my name: 'None of the above'."

If you look at the situation of the world you will be able to see what these politicians and the priests have done to humanity: they have made it a hell. There is no need to ask for any proof. Now there is no need to ask whether hell exists or not. Politicians and priests, in a deep conspiracy, have made it a reality on the earth. Who is going to follow them? That's why they don't want you to be intelligent, they don't want you to think, they don't want you to be alert.

They want you to live in a kind of deep sleep. They want you to be machines, not men.

Buddha says: IN ALL THINGS BE A MASTER -- so that you are not reduced to a machine -- OF WHAT YOU DO...

Watch what you are doing and why. Is it worth doing? Is it worth wasting your life and your breath? Are you just doing it because you don't know what else to do? It is better to do nothing than to do something without knowing why, without knowing what. ... OF WHAT YOU DO AND SAY AND THINK.

You go on saying things and you suffer much because of your sayings. And many times you have decided not to say such things because unnecessarily you get into trouble; you say something and you are in trouble. But still you will go on saying the same things and getting into the same troubles, as if you never watch yourself, what you are doing. You are moving like a somnambulist in your sleep.

And have you ever looked at what you think? Have you ever looked inside? You will be surprised: you are carrying many many mad people inside you. But nobody looks inside; people are continuously occupied on the outside. Nobody thinks what he is doing, what he is saying, what he is thinking.

Rabbi Isaacs was quite fond of the Shapiro family whose members were long-time congregants of his temple. So it was understandable that he would react sympathetically when they asked him to have a serious talk with their daughter, Rachel, who was unmarried but pregnant again for the third time.

He confronted the young lady on the following evening. "I can't understand how a nice Jewish girl could allow such a disgraceful thing to happen," he began severely. "Three times yet! I suppose the babies all have different fathers!"

"Ah no!" said Rachel. "It is the same fellow."

"He is single, this man?"

"Certainly. You think I would go with a married man?"

"Then why don't you marry him?" demanded the rabbi.

"Well, frankly," Rachel answered with complete candor, "he does not appeal to me."

Just look at yourself and you will not laugh at Rachel. People are living with each other not knowing why.

So many people come to me, they write letters to me. They say, "I am living with a man for fifteen years. I don't know why because all that he gives me is misery, suffering!" Maybe that's why -- because you are a masochist. You love being miserable, you want to suffer. That man is giving you good service! And people write to me, "I am living with a woman and my life is hell." But why are you living with that woman? Nobody is forcing you. People say to me, "I am working in a job that I hate" -- but why? Get out of it immediately! Walk out of it!

I was a professor in the university. One day I was talking to the vice-chancellor and I told him, "This whole thing is nonsense. Just give me a piece of paper so I can write my resignation."

He said, "What are you doing? Are you mad? Such a good job, so little work!" He said, "I know perfectly well that you don't do even that!" And that was true! "Why are you leaving?" I said, "It is just nonsense. Enough is enough!"

He said, "But wait! I have been in this business for thirty years -- I also know it is all nonsense. But how can you leave like this? I have not been able to leave this. Many times I

have decided, but now look -- I have succeeded. I have become the vice-chancellor. One day you may become the vice-chancellor."

I said, "Forget all about it!"

He rushed... when he saw me leaving his office, he rushed out. He pulled me back inside. He said, "What are you doing? Think it over!"

I said, "Finished is finished! I don't think twice!"

He thought I was ill or something, or I had taken some drug. He said, "Wait! I don't think you are in a state to drive back home. I will come with you."

I said, "You don't be worried. In fact, this is the first time I am perfectly sane! I was insane when I joined this university!"

But he came with me just to see whether I could drive back home. For two or three days he continued to come. He said, "You think. I am still keeping your resignation, I have not sent it. I have not told anybody."

I said, "That's up to you. I am not coming back."

The fourth day he said, "You are really a man! I have also thought many times to divorce my wife -- I could not. And now I have seven children!" Seven children from a wife you always wanted to divorce.... So what were you doing with her?

I asked him, "Are those children really yours? If you wanted to divorce the woman, why were you making love to her?"

He said, "You are right, but what else to do?"

And for thirty years he had been thinking to drop out of the job, because he always wanted to be a musician. And now the poor fellow is dead -- just two years ago he died. He could never become a musician; he died a vice-chancellor. What a failure! What frustration! But that's how things are.

Watch your life. Buddha is all for watchfulness. IN ALL THINGS BE A MASTER OF WHAT YOU DO AND SAY AND THINK. BE FREE. If you can be a master, if you can be watchful, freedom comes on its own accord. Freedom is the shadow of being a master of your life.

YOU ARE A SEEKER.

Remember, always remember. Buddha insisted again and again: Remember you are a seeker. You are seeking your true home; you have not yet found it. Many lives you have been seeking, this life also you are seeking. Have you found it? Don't waste your time, don't go astray. Pour your whole energy into seeking, because nobody knows about tomorrow. This may be your last day. Find it so that you can live joyously and you can die joyously. YOU ARE A SEEKER.

DELIGHT IN THE MASTERY....

The only delight in life is when you master something. And when a man has mastered all his being -- his action, his saying, his thinking -- his delight is infinite. DELIGHT IN THE MASTERY....

OF YOUR HANDS AND YOUR FEET,
OF YOUR WORDS AND YOUR THOUGHTS.

Buddha never divides your bodymind. He says: Be a master of both because you are psychosomatic, you are bodymind. So be a master of your body and be a master of your mind. Then you will know who you are. Then you will know the master is you beyond bodymind. Then you will know you are pure consciousness.

DELIGHT IN MEDITATION....

Delight in silence, stillness; that is meditation.

AND IN SOLITUDE.

Delight in being alone. Enjoy being alone as much as feasible, as much as practical. Delight in solitude.

Sitting silently, doing nothing,
The spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

If you can sit silently doing nothing, the spring is not far away, the spring is bound to come. It always comes in silence. It always comes when you know how to delight in your aloneness because only then are you independent. If you delight in others' company you are dependent. If you feel lonely when you are alone you don't know aloneness yet.

Loneliness and aloneness are two different things, notwithstanding what the dictionaries say. In dictionaries they are synonymous, but in existence they are totally different. Loneliness is negative. It means you are dependent, you are hankering for the other, you are suffering. Your being alone is not a joy, it is a misery. You want to be occupied.

The zookeeper guided the visitors to the next cage. "Now here, ladies and gentlemen, we have the laughing hyena. Now, the laughing hyena has sex on only one night in the year." "Well, what has he got to laugh about then?" asked a young lad in the group. "Aha! Well, tonight's the night!"

People are happy with others, but that happiness is dependent; it can be taken away. It WILL be taken away, it is bound to disappear. It can't be permanent, it is momentary.

Raleigh Rosenblum, the romantic young bachelor of Palm Beach who was also a big spender, telephoned the girl he had just met the night before. She was not only gorgeous but had also proved to be a real swinger. He wanted another date. To his surprise, however, she turned him down.

"How come you are refusing to go out with me tonight?" he demanded. "Only yesterday you said there was something about me you adored." "There was, baby," she crooned in a husky voice, "but you spent it."

All happiness that is dependent on others is bound to disappear sooner or later. It is temporary, it is momentary, it is illusory. Only that joy is yours which wells up within your own being. Hence Buddha says: DELIGHT IN MEDITATION, delight IN SOLITUDE.

Aloneness is the joy of being just yourself. It is being joyous with yourself, it is enjoying

your own company. There are very few people who enjoy their own company. And it is a very strange world: nobody enjoys his company and everybody wants others to enjoy his company! If they don't enjoy he feels insulted -- and alone he feels disgusted with himself. In fact, if YOU cannot enjoy your own company, who else is going to enjoy it?

Aloneness, solitude is positive. It is overflowing joy for no reason. It is our very nature to be joyous; hence there is no need to depend on anybody else. There is no other motive in it, it is simply there. Just as the water flows downwards, your being rises upwards. Just give it a chance -- give it solitude. And remember again, solitude is not solitariness, just as aloneness is not loneliness.

COMPOSE YOURSELF, BE HAPPY.
YOU ARE A SEEKER.

Buddha reminds you again: YOU ARE A SEEKER. COMPOSE YOURSELF... Be harmonious, be graceful. Learn the art of being alone and yet utterly happy. Then one day, in that solitude, something starts happening which you had never expected. Something immense, something vast descends in you. Something of the beyond penetrates you. A great uplift, a great feeling of levitation arises in you. You are being uplifted, you start rising towards the ultimate. Call that ultimate God, truth, whatsoever you prefer to call it. Buddha calls it freedom, nirvana: cessation of the ego, freedom from the ego, freedom from all bondage, freedom from all dependence on others. And you become unbounded, you become as vast as the sky: even the sky is not your limit.

MASTER YOUR SENSES,
WHAT YOU TASTE AND SMELL,
WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU HEAR.

IN ALL THINGS BE A MASTER
OF WHAT YOU DO AND WHAT YOU SAY AND THINK.
BE FREE.

YOU ARE A SEEKER.
DELIGHT IN THE MASTERY
OF YOUR HANDS AND YOUR FEET,
OF YOUR WORDS AND YOUR THOUGHTS.

DELIGHT IN MEDITATION
AND IN SOLITUDE.
COMPOSE YOURSELF, BE HAPPY.
YOU ARE A SEEKER.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Love is its own reward

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO I TAKE MYSELF AND EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY?

Prembodhi, the ego can exist only if you take yourself and everything seriously. Nothing kills the ego like playfulness, like laughter. When you start taking life as fun, the ego has to die, it cannot exist anymore. Ego is illness; it needs an atmosphere of sadness to exist. Seriousness creates the sadness in you. Sadness is a necessary soil for the ego. Hence your saints are so serious, for the simple reason that they are the most egoistic people on the earth. They may be trying to be humble, but they are very proud of their humbleness. They take their humbleness very seriously.

The real saint cannot be serious. The really religious person has to be a celebrant. Just look around... look at the trees -- are they serious? Look at the birds, listen to them -- are they serious? Look at the stars, the moon, the sun -- are they serious? Existence is utterly nonserious; it goes on dancing. It is an eternal celebration, it is a festivity.

Only man is serious, because only man has been trying to create a separation between himself and existence. He doesn't want to be part of the whole, because then he disappears. He wants his own identity, his own name, his own form, his definition. Even if it creates misery it is okay, even if he has to live in hell he is ready for it.

Once George Bernard Shaw was asked where he would like to go after he dies -- to hell or to heaven. He said, "Wherever I can be the first, I don't want to be the second" -- and in heaven there is no chance to be the first, because so many saints have already reached there: Jesus and Zarathustra and Mahavira and Buddha. Who will take note of poor George Bernard Shaw? He is willing to go to hell if he can be the first there.

Ego wants to be the first, ego wants to put everybody below itself; hence it takes itself seriously. Hence it is perfectionist: it demands perfection, which is impossible. Nobody is perfect; nobody can exist for a single moment if he is perfect. Imperfection is the way of life, because it is possible to grow only if you are imperfect. If you are perfect there is no more growth, no more evolution. If you are perfect you are stuck. Perfection means death; imperfection means flow, growth, movement, dynamism.

The ego demands perfection of oneself and of others too. It asks for the impossible, and because the impossible cannot be achieved it can go on living. It is not happy with the ordinary; it wants the extraordinary, and life consists only of the ordinary. But the ordinary is

beautiful, the ordinary is exquisite. There is no need of anything extraordinary. The ordinary life is sacred, but the ego condemns it as mundane. It demands extraordinary life. Hence all the religions go on inventing stories about their founders which are all untrue: Moses separating the sea, Jesus walking on the water... all these stories are inventions, lies, created by the followers just to prove that their master is extraordinary; he is not an ordinary human being.

In fact, the truth is that you cannot find a more ordinary human being than Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus, Moses, Zarathustra, Lao Tzu. They are so simple! They have accepted themselves as they are. They live in suchness, in TATHATA. They don't hanker for any perfection. They are perfectly at ease with the imperfect world, utterly contented with it. And they don't take themselves so seriously that they have to attain to great heights, great peaks, that they have to surpass everybody. They are not insane! They are beautiful people, and their beauty consists in having accepted the ordinary as the extraordinary, the mundane as sacred.

Prembodhi, you ask, "Why do I take myself and everything so seriously?"

Everybody takes himself and others seriously. That's the way of the ego to exist. Start being a little more playful and you will see ego evaporating. Take life nonseriously, as a joke -- yes, as a cosmic joke. Laugh a little more.

Laughter is far more significant than prayer. Prayer may not destroy your ego; on the contrary, it may make it holy, pious, but laughter certainly destroys your ego. When you are really in a state of laughter, have you observed? -- the ego disappears for a moment. You are again a child, giggling. Again you have forgotten that you are special. You are no longer serious; for a moment you have removed your fixation.

That's why I love jokes -- they are poison to your ego! You would like me to talk about serious things: astral planes and how many bodies men have, seven or nine, and how many chakras. And every day there are questions -- esoteric, occult. These are the serious people. They have fallen in a wrong company!

I am not serious at all. I don't laugh with you because that is part of telling a joke: the person who tells it has to be very serious, he cannot laugh with you. All my laughter I have to do alone. But my approach towards life is utterly nonserious, playful, because in my experience this is how the ego disappears.

Watch when you laugh: where is the ego? Suddenly you have melted, suddenly you are liquid, no more solid, but flowing. You are not old, experienced, knowledgeable.

Listen to this joke and try to find out whether the ego remains or not.

Shortly after arriving at their honeymoon suite, the still nervous groom became worried about the state of his bride's innocence. Deciding on the direct approach, he quickly undressed, pointed at his exposed manhood, and asked his mate, "Do you know what that is?"

Without hesitating, she blushed and answered, "That's a wee-wee."

Delighted at the idea of instructing his naive wife, the husband whispered, "From now on, dearest, this will be called a prick."

"Ah, come now," the girl chided, "I've seen lots of pricks, and I assure you, that's a wee-wee."

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

Jayananda, it depends. It depends on you, on your state of consciousness or unconsciousness, whether you are asleep or awake.

There is one famous maxim of Murphy. He says there are two types of people: One, who always divide humanity in two types, and the other, who don't divide humanity at all.

I belong to the first type.... Humanity can be divided in two types: the sleeping ones and the awakened ones -- and, of course, a small part in between.

Happiness will depend on where you are in your consciousness. If you are asleep, then pleasure is happiness. Pleasure means sensation, trying to achieve something through the body which is not possible to achieve through the body, forcing the body to achieve something it is not capable of. People are trying, in every possible way, to achieve happiness through the body. The body can give you only momentary pleasures, and each pleasure is balanced by pain in the same amount, in the same degree. Each pleasure is followed by its opposite because body exists in the world of duality, just as the day is followed by night and death is followed by life and life is followed by death. It is a vicious circle. Your pleasure will be followed by pain, your pain will be followed by pleasure.

But you will never be at ease. When you will be in a state of pleasure you will be afraid that you are going to lose it, and that fear will poison it. And when you will be lost in pain, of course, you will be in suffering, and you will try every possible effort to get out of it -- just to fall again back into it.

Buddha calls this the wheel of birth and death. We go on moving in this wheel, clinging to the wheel... and the wheel moves on. Sometimes pleasure comes up and sometimes pain comes up, but we are crushed between these two rocks.

But the sleepy person knows nothing else. He knows only a few sensations of the body -- food, sex. This is his world; he goes on moving between these two. These are the two ends of his body: food and sex. If he represses sex he becomes addicted to food: if he represses food he becomes addicted to sex. Energy goes on moving like a pendulum. And whatsoever you call pleasure is, at the most, just a relief of a tense state. Sexual energy gathers, accumulates; you become tense and heavy and you want to release it.

The man who is asleep, his sexuality is nothing but a relief, like a good sneeze. It gives you nothing but a certain relief. A tension was there, now it is no more there; but it will accumulate again. Food gives you only a little taste on the tongue; it is not much to live for. But many people are living only to eat; there are very few people who eat to live.

The story of Columbus is well-known. It was a long trip. For three months they saw nothing but water. Then one day Columbus looked out at the horizon and saw trees. And if you think Columbus was happy to see trees, you should have seen his dog!

That's why the Siberian dogs are the fastest in the world: because the trees are so far apart.

But this is the world of pleasure. The dog can be forgiven, but you cannot be forgiven.

During their first date, the young man, looking for ways to have a good time, asked the young lady if she would like to go bowling. She replied that she did not care to go bowling. He then suggested a movie, but she answered that she did not care for them. While trying to think of something else he offered her a cigarette which she declined. He then asked if she

would like to dance and drink at the new disco. She again declined by saying she did not care for those things.

In desperation he asked her to come to his apartment for a night of lovemaking. To his surprise she happily agreed, kissed him passionately and said, "You see, you don't need any of those things to have a good time!"

It depends on people what can be called happiness. To the sleeping, pleasurable sensations are happiness. He lives from one pleasure to another pleasure. He is just rushing from one sensation to another sensation. He lives for small thrills. His life is very superficial; it has no depth, it has no quality. He lives in the world of quantity.

Then the people who are in between, who are neither asleep nor awake, who are just in a limbo, a little bit asleep, a little bit awake. You sometimes have that experience in the early morning: still sleepy, but you can't say you are asleep because you can hear the noise in the house, your wife preparing tea, the noise of the samovar or the milkman at the door or children getting ready to go to school. You can hear these things, but still you are not awake. Vaguely, dimly these noises reach to you, as if there is a great distance between you and all that is happening around you. It feels as if it is still a part of the dream. It is not a part of the dream, but you are in a state of in-between.

The same happens when you start meditating. The nonmeditator sleeps, dreams; the meditator starts moving away from his sleep towards awakening. He is in a transitory state. Then happiness has a totally different meaning: it becomes more of a quality, less of a quantity; it is more psychological, less physiological. He enjoys music more, he enjoys poetry more, he enjoys creating something. He enjoys nature, its beauty. He enjoys silence. He enjoys what he had never enjoyed before, and this is far more lasting. Even if the music stops, something goes on lingering in you. And it is not a relief.

The difference between pleasure and THIS happiness is: it is not a relief, it is an enrichment. You become more full, you become a little overflowing. Listening to good music, something is triggered in your being, a harmony arises in you -- you become musical. Or dancing, suddenly you forget your body; your body becomes weightless. The grip of gravitation over you is lost. Suddenly you are in a different space: the ego is not so solid, the dancer melts and merges into the dance. This is far higher, far deeper than the joy that you gain from food or sex. This has a depth. But this is also not the ultimate.

The ultimate happens only when you are fully awake, when you are a buddha, when all sleep is gone and all dreaming is gone, when your whole being is full of light, when there is no darkness within you. All darkness has disappeared and with that darkness, the ego is gone. All tensions have disappeared, all anguish, all anxiety. You are in a state of total contentment. You live in the present; no past, no future anymore. You are utterly herenow.

This moment is all. Now is the only time and here is the only space. And then suddenly the whole sky drops into you. This is bliss. This is REAL happiness.

Seek bliss, Jayananda; it is your birthright. Don't remain lost in the jungle of pleasures; rise a little higher. Reach to happiness and then to bliss.

Pleasure is animal, happiness is human, bliss is divine. Pleasure binds you, it is a bondage, it chains you. Happiness gives you a little more rope, a little bit of freedom, but only a little bit. Bliss is absolute freedom. You start moving upwards; it gives you wings. You are no more part of the gross earth; you become part of the sky. You become light, you become joy.

Pleasure is dependent on others. Happiness is not so dependent on others, but still it is

separate from you. Bliss is not dependent, is not separate either; it is your very being, it is your very nature. To attain it is to attain to God, to nirvana.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS SELFISHNESS?

Yoga Chetana, selfishness is the shadow of the idea of a separate self. It is a shadow of a shadow, a reflection of a reflection. It is as if you see the moon in the lake and then you see the moon reflected in the lake in a mirror. It is far far removed from reality. Even the reflection in the lake is not real, but the reflection of the lake in the mirror is even more unreal.

The ego is a reflection in the lake of your true being. Your true being is the moon; the ego is only a reflection in the lake. The reflection in the lake can be disturbed even by a small pebble. Throw a small pebble and you will see: the moon is disturbed, distorted. Ripples arise and the moon is broken into thousands of pieces.

Selfishness is the shadow of the ego, even more unreal. You are not a self. In Buddha's words, you are not an ATTA -- a self; you are ANATTA -- a no-self. Hence, Buddha does not teach you altruism, neither do I teach you altruism. This point has to be understood well: I don't teach you to be altruistic. That's what the priests of almost all the religions go on doing. They say, "Selfishness is bad." They don't say, "Selfishness is false." They say, "Selfishness is bad, selfishness is sin." But they accept its reality, they don't reject its reality. If it is unreal, then they cannot condemn it as a sin. How can you call anything unreal a sin? If it does not exist in the first place, how can it be sin and how can it be bad? So they go on saying, "Selfishness is bad, selfishness is sin." And to avoid it they teach you to be altruistic: "Serve others, be servants of humanity, public servants."

Many times people who have been conditioned by these priests and missionaries come to me and, of course, they are shocked because I never talk about altruism. And they ask me why I don't teach my sannyasins to be altruistic.

I cannot, because in the first place the self is false, so to tell them to be unselfish is absolutely wrong. To tell them to serve others, to be altruistic, is taking them deeper and deeper into unreality.

My effort here is to help them to see that the self is false. Hence I am not against the self -- it does not exist. How can I be against something which does not exist? And I don't teach you altruism. If the disease is false, what is the point of giving you some medicine?

I simply tell you to look within yourself, watch silently... and you will not find the ego at all. The self disappears. In fact, to say "disappears" is not right; it has never been there, but you had never looked in. When you look you don't find it.

It is like you say, "In my room there is darkness," and I give you a lamp and I tell you, "Go and search with the lamp where the darkness is." You go with the lamp and you search -- and you can't find it! You come back and you say, "I can't find it!" So I say, "It is finished! Don't be worried about it. Whenever this itching arises in you, this urge, this doubt, take the lamp and go again and search." Slowly slowly, the truth will settle in you that there is no darkness; it is only absence of light.

Ego is absence of your attention, absence of your awareness, nothing else. If you move in, if you look in, it is not found at all. And with self gone, where is selfishness?

And then your life is a life of love, of compassion. Then your life is truly altruistic. I will not call it "unselfish," I will call it "nonselfish," because in the word 'unselfish' the reality of the self is recognized. I would like to use the Buddhist word, 'nonselfish' -- anatta, no-self.

Buddha's insight is tremendous, very significant. There is no need to teach people to be unselfish. Just let them know that there is no ego, and then their whole life, without any effort, becomes a life of love. They will not become missionaries because they will not be doing anything in particular. They will not brag that they have done so much for humanity; they have done it because they enjoyed it. They are already well rewarded. The reward is not somewhere in a future life, after death, in paradise; the reward is in love itself. Love is its own reward.

When you live out of love, your life is tremendously joyous, ecstatic; that is the reward. And when you live out of a false ego, your life is a misery, it is a suffering, it is hell; that is the punishment. There is no need to wait -- that after death you will be thrown into hell. Forget all these stories! They are good to tell to children because they can't understand anything else; they can understand only stories. But to mature people those stories are irrelevant.

Each act is either its own punishment or its own reward. If it is arising out of your reality it brings great joy, beauty, bliss, benediction. If it is arising out of some false idea it brings misery, pain, suffering. That's what hell is.

Yoga Chetana, selfishness is the shadow of a self which does not exist at all. But don't accept what I say just because I am saying it. You will have to look in, let it become your experience. You will have to become a little more awake to look in. You will have to come out of your slumber.

It was down South in a dry state. The railroad station was packed with a party on their way to a football game. Over at one side of the waiting room stood Baxter, a quiet little man, fidgeting about and attempting to hide himself from the crowd.

A federal agent, assigned to this moonshine-making area, noticed Baxter had something under his jacket from which drops were falling in slow trickles. The fed, with a gleam in his eye, walked over to him, put a finger out under one of the drops, caught one, and tasted it.

"Scotch?" he asked.

"Nope," said Baxter. "Airedale pup."

You missed it! Taste it again... it is not Scotch, it is an Airedale pup.

There was a big alcoholic party on at this flat in San Francisco. Everything was at its drunkest and wildest when it happened -- an earthquake. Chimneys toppled in the street, water mains were broken. All the guests rushed outside from the wild party. But one man was missing. The heroic host dashed back and there in the bathroom he found the missing man, knee-deep in water. The inebriated guest could only mumble, "Honest, Paul, I swear all I did was pull the handle."

Yoga Chetana, you will have to become a little more conscious, that's all. Come out of your drunkenness; it is very ancient. For many many lives we have lived in a drunk state. You will have to make a little effort to pull yourself out of the mud of unconsciousness. And then the ego disappears and a pure space is left behind.

Out of that pure space, lotuses bloom -- lotuses of compassion, of love, of joy. Not only

are you blessed, but you become a blessing to the whole existence.

Don't fight with selfishness, remember. Fighting with it is what you have been told again and again. Don't fight with it. Fighting with it means you have already accepted its reality; hence I don't teach you to fight with your ego. If you fight with your ego you will become humble, but then in your humbleness the ego will hide. Then the ego will go on bragging about its humbleness. The ego can even say, "I am the most humble person in the world, the greatest humble person in the world."

Three Christian priests were talking; they met on a crossroad. One belonged to a Trappist monastery. He said, "As far as asceticism is concerned, nobody can compete with us. We are the most ascetic people in the whole Christian kingdom."

The second belonged to another monastery. He said, "That may be so, but as far as scholarship is concerned you are nowhere. Our people sacrifice their whole life for the scriptures to find out the truth and the gems."

The third one smiled and said, "You both may be right, but as far as humbleness is concerned, we are the tops!"

"As far as humbleness is concerned we are the tops...."

Hence, Yoga Chetana, I will not say fight with your selfishness. Fighting has not been of any help; it has only created pious egoists all over the world. My suggestion is watch it, look at it, observe it. Observe how it functions, how you go on creating it -- because it IS your creation.

It is very arbitrary. It is a fiction that you maintain and manage. And the maintenance is very costly because it keeps you in hell; it destroys your whole life just to maintain something false. Watch it. The moment you will see its falseness it is gone. You need not drop it, it simply drops on its own accord. It is not found at all.

And then a totally new life begins. You are reborn. That's what I call sannyas.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT REALLY TRUE THAT YOU NEVER WORKED IN YOUR WHOLE LIFE?

Sandesh, it is really true. I am the original hippie! You may not know it, but I am the founder of the whole movement!

The shop foreman, irritation showing plainly in his face, strode over to Sheldon, a hippie. "Listen," he grated, "do me and everyone else in the shop a big favor and quit whistling while you work."

"Hey, man," retorted Sheldon defensively, "who's working?"

I have lived, I have not worked! Whatsoever I have done I have enjoyed it; it was not work, it was my joy, it was play. I loved it, that's why I did it. I was not doing any service to anybody, I was not working for any other motive; hence it was not work at all, it was my joy.

I am talking to you. It is not work, it is my joy. I enjoy -- yakkety, yakkety, yakkety... this is not work! I simply love it. To call it work will not be right -- it is fun!

Whatsoever I have done in my life, it has never been work. I have been simply whistling!

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU ARE EXACTLY WHAT I HAVE BEEN SEEKING FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS IN STUDIES, POLITICS, YOGA, FAMILY AND COMMUNITIES. NOW FINALLY I AM HERE. AND IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL! AND TOMORROW I LEAVE. AND I AM HAPPY, TOO. WHY?

Hans Peter Finger, there is no tomorrow. Today you are here, and that's more than enough; that's more than one can ask for. Who knows about tomorrow? I myself may be leaving, even before you leave!

And it is not a question of BEING here. If you have found me, you have found me; wherever you are you will be with me, I will be with you. The whole thing is once you have found the right person with whom you fit together, with whom you find absolute harmony, communion, then no space can divide you. That's why you are feeling happy. I can understand your problem.

You say, "And I am happy, too. Why?"

Ordinarily, if you have fallen in love with me and are going tomorrow you should have thought, expected to be miserable, because "Now here is the man I have been looking for, for twenty years and now I have found him, and I have to leave tomorrow." But you are not miserable. That is a clear-cut indication that you have really found me. To find me AND be miserable is impossible!

There are a few people who are here AND miserable, because they have not found me. And there are people who are not here but are immensely joyous because they have found me, wherever they are.

You will belong to me from now onwards.

A single moment of deep harmony is enough, a single moment of love is eternity. Then time does not matter, space does not matter.

Your heart knows it, but your mind is questioning because it seems illogical. Your mind says, "If you are really so much in love, then why are you leaving? If you are really enjoying, then why should you go at all? For twenty years you have been searching! You wasted twenty years and now you have found -- and you are going! And still you are happy! What is happening to you?" This is your mind which is creating a question mark, but your heart knows you have found me. Now wherever you are, this communion will continue.

Whatsoever has transpired between me and you is something beyond time, beyond space. So you can go happily, you can go joyously. And whenever you will close your eyes and remember me, you will be now and here.

My buddhfield has not to become confined to the commune; it has to spread all over the earth. So wherever a person exists who loves me deeply, he creates a small buddhfield around himself.

Hans-Peter, not only will you remain related to me, but you will become a bridge to many people towards me. You will become a messenger -- not a missionary but a messenger. A missionary is bogus. A missionary is one who himself has not understood at all, who has not experienced anything at all. A missionary is a professional: he has chosen religion as a profession, he earns his livelihood out of it. You will be a messenger. You will be spreading the word to many more people -- to your friends, to people you know, you love.

Yes, it is perfectly good -- go and share me with others. And whenever it is needed you

will be called forth, you will be back here again. And if it is needed to be here forever you will be here forever. Whatsoever is needful will happen.
Trust!

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DOES NOBODY TAKE ANY NOTICE OF ME?

Narendra, meditate over Murphy's maxim:

Nobody notices when things go right.

You must be going right. People notice only when something goes wrong. If everything goes absolutely right, people are not going to notice you at all.

It is said of Mahavira that he wanted to renounce his kingdom. He asked the permission of his mother. The mother said, "Stop this nonsense -- never ask me again! Till I die I won't allow you. If you leave the house without permission you will be doing something very violent to me -- and you go on talking about nonviolence. So remember!"

Mahavira never asked her again. After two years she died. When they were coming back from the funeral he asked his elder brother on the way home, "Can I leave now? -- I was just living here because our mother said, 'Never ask again.' Now, fortunately, she is dead -- so can I go?"

The brother said, "Stop all this nonsense! Such a calamity has fallen over us -- our mother has died -- and you want to leave me? Till I die you are not allowed."

And Mahavira was so obedient -- he said okay. He started living in the palace as if he had renounced. He would meditate, he would be silent, he would move so quietly and so gracefully that, slowly slowly, he became almost absent. It is a beautiful story, that the family stopped taking any notice of him.

Then one day suddenly the brother realized, "For months we have not taken any notice of him." He remembered, "Where is he?" He went in search of him. He called the whole family and asked them, "What to do now? He has almost left! He has become so silent, so peaceful. He makes no noise, he never interferes, he never says anything to anybody. He is as if he is not in the house at all! So what is the point of preventing him anymore?"

They all gathered together and requested Mahavira, "Now you can go. In fact, you have already gone because we have stopped taking any notice of you."

Mahavira said, "It makes no difference now. But if you say go, I will go."

Narendra, don't be worried. People take notice only when you are doing something wrong. When a dog bites a man it is not news, but when a man bites a dog it is news! So if you want to become news, bite a dog! Do something stupid, become some kind of nuisance. Only people who are a nuisance are taken notice of.

That's why you see in the newspapers all the politicians are covered every day, for the simple reason that they have nuisance value. You can ask any prime minister or any president of the world on what grounds he chooses his cabinet. It is nuisance value! Whoever is going to create nuisance, if he is not chosen has to be chosen. The more you are a nuisance, the more you will be taken notice of, obviously. If you are a silent person living in deep harmony with yourself and existence, who is going to take any notice of you? Do something wrong, anything!

That's why your saints go on doing such stupid things -- just to be taken notice of. Stand on your head in the M.G. Road market and a crowd will gather. People will stop wherever they were going. They may have been going on some urgent work, but now a greater thing is happening: a foolish man is standing on his head! They have to stop, they have to watch. Do something stupid.

Robert Ripley says that one man wanted to become famous. He asked Ripley what to do. Ripley is a famous man; he has written many books -- BELIEVE IT OR NOT.... He used to accumulate all kinds of unbelievable things; he was an expert in unbelievable things -- true but unbelievable. People used to ask him also... somebody asked him how to become famous.

He said, "You do one thing. Shave half the hair of your head and just walk silently all over New York. For three days go on walking and don't say anything, just let people watch."

And within three days he was in every newspaper! That a strange man is there, half his head shaved, walking all over New York, never saying anything. You ask him and he keeps quiet. Very strange!

That's why I have chosen orange for you, so that wherever you are -- New York, Berlin, Paris, Rome, wherever you are, everybody has to take notice of you. It helps my work! People start asking, "What has happened to you?" My sannnyasins all look like Jesus is back!

Narendra, you must be doing everything right. Be happy that nobody is taking notice of you.

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO YOU GIVE THE PRIESTS SUCH A BAD TIME? THEY DON'T STOP YOU DRINKING AND YOU ONLY HAVE TO LISTEN TO THEM ONCE A WEEK.

Niranjan, it is enough to poison people if they have to listen once a week to all kinds of nonsense. For centuries it has been propagated... it has come into the air, it has become part of the atmosphere. It is not a question of listening to them once a week only; their vibe is everywhere. They go on reminding you in every possible way. Whenever you pass, there is a church or a temple or a mosque. Do you think it does not remind you of something? And they go on tolling bells in the churches just to remind you, "Don't forget we are still here!" And the towering churches, you can see them from anywhere; they are reminding you. These are subtle processes of reminding you.

In India you cannot pass a street without coming across a temple -- everywhere temples. And it is so simple in India to make a temple: you can just paint any stone. You can try! Just bring a rock from anywhere, put it under a tree, paint it red and just sit by the side with closed eyes. Within a few minutes you will see people are arriving. Somebody will put flowers, somebody will bow down to the rock; they will think this is the statue of Hanumanji!

India does not believe in very costly things; it has made everything cheap. It is a poor country, you know, so things have to be cheap, within everybody's capacity. You can have as many gods as you want. Any stone will do; just, if it is round it becomes Shankara, Shiva. If it is not round, ugly in shape, paint it red; it becomes Hanuman! Just sit by the side and wait, and you will find worshippers have started coming.

I am not giving a bad time to the priests. In fact, the intelligent priests are immensely pleased with me.

Just the other day I received a card from a priest who is very happy because he has been listening to my tapes, reading my books. He is happy because I am here -- a congratulation card from a priest! I am not giving a hard time to intelligent priests. No, I am simply showing them the exit! And a few have escaped. There are many priests, monks and nuns who have become sannyasins. And there is great fear now because if this goes on happening there is danger.

The Protestant authorities in Germany have ordered all the Protestant churches of Germany that my name has not to be mentioned in any sermon. There was an eighteen-page report published by a special commission appointed by the Protestant church to investigate what I am saying. They have read all the books... and my feeling is half of them will be converted because the report seems to be very confused! Sometimes they seem to be favorable to me, sometimes they seem to be against me. They are not in a situation to say whether this man is right or wrong. Their report is very revealing.

They say, "This man talks like Jesus -- yet beware of him." Now I think more priests, particularly Protestant priests in Germany, will read the books. They have quoted all the books. They have given the names of the books. Even the priests who would not have known about me will be knowing about me now! This is how things happen in the world. This is a very strange world!

And I am not giving anybody a hard time. At the most, I told a few jokes about the priests. And my feeling is that reading them when they are alone they must be enjoying!

The pope stood before a hushed crowd of attentive villagers and spoke to them, "You must not use the Pill!"

A lovely signora stepped forward, shaking her finger. "Look," she chided the pontiff, "you no play da game-a, you no make-a da rules!"

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
MY HUSBAND IS MAD, BUT SOMETIMES WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE. IS IT
POSSIBLE FOR A MADMAN TO DO THAT? 8

Neelam, madmen can do anything, obviously -- they are mad! They can even say the truth. It is the so-called sane people who are unbelievable, who are expert in lying. Mad people are simple; they can say the truth. They don't worry, they don't care.

Listen to your husband. He is far saner than the other so-called sane people. If sometimes you find that he is telling you the truth, maybe at other times also he is telling you the truth, you are just not aware of it.

Mad people are beautiful people. They are mad only because they are so sensitive that they cannot live in this mad world. This mad world drives them mad! They are so sensitive and vulnerable that they become victims. They are not cunning; they are innocent, sincere and honest people. I know many mad people -- in fact, I know only mad people -- and I respect them.

You ask me, Neelam, "Can a madman do that? Is it possible for a madman to say the truth?"

Only madmen can say the truth.

Jesus must have been mad; otherwise he would not have said the truth. He would have

played the game of the crowd and he would have become a famous rabbi, not crucified but crowned. But he was mad and he said the truth.

Socrates must have been mad, utterly mad; otherwise why bother about truth? Live as other people live, imitate them; lie as they lie, deceive as they deceive, be hypocrites as THEY are. Why try to be true? Why insist on truth? But he must have been mad.

The judges had asked him in the last moment... because they also felt sorry for the man, they knew his sincerity. They told him that if he was ready to leave Athens he could be forgiven -- but he could not enter Athens again.

Socrates said, "That I cannot do. I have lived in Athens, I have taught in Athens, my disciples are here, my people are here. Now in this old age, where am I going to start my business again?"

Yes, he actually used the word 'business'.

The judges asked, "What do you mean by your business?"

He said, "The business of telling the truth -- that is my business."

The judges were really sympathetic. They said, "Then you do one thing. You can live in Athens, but stop talking, be silent."

He said, "That is not possible. It is better to die because then my death will speak. And let me remind you," he said to the judges, "even after centuries, when I am dead, my death will go on speaking to people about the truth. And you will be remembered only because of me; otherwise nobody will remember you. I cannot stop my business of speaking the truth. I am ready to die."

He must have been mad! Even his disciples thought that he was mad. Life is so valuable! But to a man of truth, truth is more valuable.

And mad people can do anything. Help your husband, don't hinder him. Help him to be authentic and true and don't call him mad. Who knows who is mad? In fact, no definition exists. Psychoanalysts call Jesus neurotic. Friedrich Nietzsche says Buddha is mad. Freud says Nietzsche is mad. Jung thinks Freud is mad. Who is to be believed?

The noted doctor opened the patient's stomach and a bunch of butterflies flew out. "Say," the doctor said, "this guy was really telling the truth!"

And maybe he is just playing a role, just acting, because sometimes it is really beautiful.

I know one madman. When he was alone with me he was absolutely sane, and when he would go home he would become mad. I asked him, "What is the matter?"

He said, "This is very comfortable. I don't have to go to work, I don't have to bother about the family business, I don't have to worry about anything. I enjoy! I swim in the river, I lie down in the sun, and everybody thinks, 'He is mad!' My wife, my children, they have all taken all the responsibility. My wife runs the shop, my children about whom I was always worried -- now they are worried about me! And I am enjoying, I am having the time of my life!" He said, "I have done enough. Now this is the only way."

There are many mad people who are simply pretending to be mad.

Just help your husband. Maybe it is just because of you that he is pretending to be mad! Neelam, women are dangerous! You should see Aseema....

Aseema is a beautiful sannyasin. I have seen her two ex-husbands -- both have gone crazy! Then I started thinking, what is the matter? And both are beautiful people -- you know both. One is Sarvesh, the ventriloquist. He was perfectly okay before he met Aseema. Now

this beautiful sannyasin has driven him mad! Another is Nikunj; Nikunj is mad. The whole credit goes to Aseema! Now, if anybody else is thinking to fall in love with Aseema, think twice! And then stop yourself!

A woman goes to a palm reader.

"Your husband will die a violent death," she is told.

"One more question," she asks. "Will I be acquitted?"

A group of hikers passing a hillbilly's cabin smiled as they saw the owner reclining in a rocking chair on the porch. They noticed his wife going into the house via the front, and only door. A few seconds later they saw a wildcat leap through the open window.

They rushed up to the mountaineer. "Do something quick!" someone shouted. "A wildcat just leaped into your house and your wife is in there."

"That's his tough luck," said the hillbilly. "I never did like wildcats, anyway."

So, Neelam, meditate a little about yourself. Why is this poor man behaving as if he is mad?

At the height of the unfortunate American involvement in East Asia, an owl-like-looking young fellow approached the recruiting officer's desk.

"What must I do to get to Vietnam as soon as possible?" asked the prospective soldier.

"Well, first you have to sign up," exclaimed the officer with a grin.

"Do volunteers have to take a physical?"

"Certainly."

"Darn, that'll slow me up. I wanna get to the front lines right away."

"In any case, you'd have to go to boot camp for training," explained the officer. "Nobody goes where the fighting is until he's properly trained."

"Then at least will the army fly me to Vietnam? I'd hate to go there by slow boat."

"What are you so all-fired anxious about?" growled the army man. "Don't you realize you could get killed or wounded over there?"

"So I get killed or wounded. What's the difference, as long as I'm getting all the glory?"

"Listen, buddy," snapped the recruiter, "why don't you go home and forget the whole thing? You're crazy!"

The young fellow abruptly reached into his coat pocket, pulled out a paper and thrust it into the army officer's hands.

"Here," he said quickly. "Just sign!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #11

Chapter title: All is not lost, but time is running short

2 March 1980 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE YOU BEING CONTINUOUSLY MISUNDERSTOOD AND
MISINTERPRETED BY PEOPLE?

Rajesh, it is absolutely inevitable, it is unavoidable. It has to be so. It is part of the destiny of those who speak the truth. They are bound to be misunderstood, misinterpreted. If they were not misunderstood, not misinterpreted, that would be a miracle. It has not happened up to now and there is no hope that it is ever going to happen.

Buddhas have always been misunderstood for the simple reason that they speak from a totally different vision which is not available to the masses. They speak from a totally different experience. Their experience is such that it cannot be expressed through words, yet they try to express it through words -- they try to do the impossible. Saying it through words creates trouble. They use words in their own way, they give the words their own color, but when those words reach YOU they have lost all the meaning that was given by the awakened ones. Immediately you interpret them, you translate them into your experience.

Buddhas speak from sunlit peaks and you live in dark valleys. They talk about light and you have never seen light. They talk about eyes and you have not even dreamed about eyes. They talk about eternity and all that you know is time; all that you know is temporary and they talk of that which never changes, which is always the same, which abides. It is unbridgeable, the gap. Unless YOU become also conscious it remains unbridgeable.

Hence only a few disciples, slowly slowly, attain to the meaning of the masters. Very slowly a few people become awakened, they come out of their sleep. It is arduous, too, because all that you know about your life is your sleep and your dreams. Leaving your dreams and your life behind is hard. It is demolishing your whole past. It is entering into such an unknown territory and without maps -- one feels scared.

Only disciples can understand; the masses cannot understand. The masses have every investment in NOT understanding. Even if there is some possibility of understanding they will avoid that possibility. They will not come close to the buddhas. They will try in every possible way to create more and more barriers. They will create rumors, all kinds of rumors. They will surround the buddhas with so much smoke of their own creation that the buddhas become almost invisible to them. They don't WANT to listen -- it hurts. Their whole life is rooted in lies and the truth hurts, it shatters.

And the masses are vast, the blind people are millions. The people with eyes are rare, few and far between. Only once in a while comes a Zarathustra, a Lao Tzu, a Jesus, a Moses, a Buddha. They are doing something unimaginable. They are trying to explain light to the millions who are blind. The blind people can hear the word 'light', but they cannot understand

it -- or they will understand it in their own way, whatsoever is their idea, opinion about light. And they are not only blind; they have thousands of opinions. They have much knowledge -- without knowing anything at all. They are full of scriptures. They hide their blindness behind scriptures. They can quote scriptures, they can argue. They are clever and skillful in argument.

In fact, truth cannot be argued about. Either you know it or you don't. Truth cannot be proved either; either you know it or you don't. Knowing is all that is possible, or not-knowing; there is no way to prove it.

Once it happened:

A blind man was brought to Gautama the Buddha. He was a logician, a philosopher, very argumentative. He had been arguing with the village that there is no light, "and you are all blind, just as I am blind. I know it and you don't know it, that's the only difference." He was saying this to people who had eyes! And he was so clever in argument that the villagers were at a loss what to do with this man.

He was asking them, "Bring your light. Let me taste it or smell it or touch it. Only then will I believe."

Now, light cannot be touched, cannot be tasted, cannot be smelled. You cannot hear it. And these were the four senses available to the blind man. Then he would laugh in victory. He would say, "Look! There is no light. Otherwise, give me the proofs!"

When Buddha came to the village, the villagers thought it would be good: "Let us take this man to Buddha."

They brought the man to Buddha. Buddha listened to the whole story and then he said, "He does not need me. I also work with blind people, but of a different kind -- spiritually blind people. I heal them, I cure them. But this is physical blindness. You take him to a physician. You take him to my personal physician."

He had a personal physician a king had given him. The greatest physician of those days, Jivaka, was given to Buddha as a gift to take care of his body. "You take him to Jivaka, and I am certain that he will be able to do something. He needs a physician; he does not need great philosophy about light. Talking about light is just stupid. And if you argue with him, he is going to win. He can prove that there is no light."

Remember, to prove that there is no God is very easy; to prove that there IS God is impossible. To prove the negative is easy because all logic tends to be negative. To prove the positive is not possible; logic has no opening towards the positive. Hence the atheist is more argumentative and the theist feels almost defeated. He cannot prove the existence of God or the soul.

Buddha said, "You take him to Jivaka." Jivaka cured his eyes. Within six months the man was able to see. He came dancing with many flowers and fruits as a present to Buddha. He fell at his feet and he said, "If you had not been there I would have argued my whole life against light -- and light is! Now I know!"

Buddha said, "Can you prove it? Where is light? I would like to taste it and touch it and smell it!"

And the blind man -- the EX-blind man -- said, "That is impossible. Now I know it can only be seen; there is no other way to approach it. Excuse me, I am sorry. I was blind, utterly blind, and in my blindness I was saying things. I was arguing against something which exists and is the most beautiful experience of life. If YOU were not there I would have argued my whole life against something which is, and I would have remained a blind man. And you did

well that you did not say a single word about light; otherwise, I had come prepared, fully prepared to argue with you, and I know now, even you would not have been able to prove it. But your insight is deep: you could see that I didn't need any proofs; I needed some medicine. I didn't need philosophy, I needed a physician. You directed me to the right person. I am immensely grateful."

And the man never left Buddha. He said, "What you have done to my physical eyes, now do to my spiritual eyes too."

He became a disciple, he became a sannyasin.

To be a disciple means to be ready to be operated on. It is a surgery, a very internal surgery: surgery in the very deepest core of your being. Only then can you understand me, what I am saying to you.

But the masses are not ready. And don't be worried about them, Rajesh. That is none of our business. If they misunderstand, for us it does not matter. If they misunderstand, they miss something. If they misinterpret, it is their loss. Try to help them to come closer to me, but don't argue with them.

I am a physician, I am not a philosopher. My work here is that of a surgeon, not that of a teacher. The master is always a surgeon. He cuts away all that is false in you, chunk by chunk. Slowly slowly, he demolishes the whole edifice of your falsehood. And then what is left behind is your truth, is your being. When you have experienced it, only then will you be able to understand what is being conveyed to you through words, through silence, through communion.

I am trying every possible way to reach to you, but I can reach you only if you are open to me. I cannot reach to the masses; that is not possible in the very nature of things.

The second question:

**BELOVED MASTER,
HOW CAN I BECOME THE NEW MAN THAT YOU SPEAK ABOUT?**

Bhagwato, Jesus says: Unless you are born again you will not enter into my kingdom of God. Exactly that's what I say to you: Unless you are born again....

There are two births. One is given to you by your parents; that is a physical birth. That is only an opportunity for the second birth. If you think that the first birth is all, you have missed the whole point. The first birth is only a seed. It is of immense value if the second happens; it is of no value at all if you miss the second birth. You have to be twice-born. That's how we have defined the buddhas in the East.

The second birth has to happen within you; it is of consciousness. It is not of your body, it is not even of your mind; it is of awareness.

Ordinarily, the first birth makes you only a machine. You start living in a very superficial way; you don't have any depth, you don't have any soul yet. You eat, you drink, you work, you sleep, but all like a robot. You don't see the beauty of existence -- you can't see it. You don't see the godliness of every moment; it is impossible for you to experience it. It needs a transformation of your whole interiority. It needs a new subjectivity, a new vision, a new perspective.

You see in a certain sense, you hear only in a certain sense. Yes, you hear the words, but the meaning is missed. You read the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, but just like a parrot. Even

parrots are far more intelligent than your so-called pundits, than your so-called knowledgeable people. You go on repeating like a gramophone record. And you are so egoistic that you can't accept, you can't say, "I don't know."

Jascha Heifetz, the distinguished violinist, was in London where he was scheduled to give a concert. A few hours before curtain time, he noticed that a violin string had broken, so he hurried to a music supply shop for a replacement. He was waited on by a girl who was new to the business.

"I would like to have an 'E' string for my violin," said Heifetz.

"A what?" asked the uncomprehending girl.

"An 'E' string."

"Sorry, luv," she replied apologetically, "but ye will have to pick it out yourself. I can't tell the he's from the she's!"

People are very reluctant to accept the fact that they don't know. They try in every possible way to manage a facade that they know. This is the greatest mistake in life. You are not yet born, but if you think you are already born, if you think you have already attained to life, then this whole opportunity is going to be lost. It will go down the drain.

And you can learn great words; they are available. You can learn them so much so that if you meet Jesus you may repeat his words better than he can do it himself because you have been repeating them for so long. You may defeat him; in a competition he may not be able to survive at all. Some stupid priest may win the competition because he will be just repeating exactly, word for word. Jesus cannot do that; that is impossible. He has to be spontaneous. He will respond to the situation. He may say some new things -- because twenty centuries have passed. How can he go on saying the same old things? Impossible.

That's why the people who believe that they know are the most ignorant in the world. To be ignorant is not that bad, but to believe that you know, without knowing, is very dangerous.

It seems that talking parrots had become quite fashionable. Understandably, Mulla Nasruddin's wife decided she must have one for herself. However, every store she went to had sold out of parrots. Finally she found a shop that had one left.

"But," the owner cautioned, "this bird was previously owned by a madam in a whorehouse and its language may be quite salty. Perhaps if you keep him covered for a week, he will forget what he has seen and heard."

Mrs. Nasruddin purchased the bird and did as the shopkeeper bid. At long last the week was over and the bird was finally uncovered. He first blinked his eyes and then after adjusting to the light looked around and said, "Hmm... pretty new house. Hmm... pretty new madam. Hmm... pretty new girls too."

Just then Mulla Nasruddin walked in. The bird took one look at him and said, "Ah, shit! Same old customers. Hi, Mulla!"

Yes, even parrots are more spontaneous than your pundits. You go on repeating. Your parents believed that they lived and their parents believed that they lived, and they have given you the idea that you are alive. You are not alive, you are only vegetating. To be alive means to be awakened.

Bhagwato, when I say the new man, I mean the conscious man. Humanity cannot be saved if the conscious man does not arrive. In the past it was not so necessary, but now it is

absolutely necessary, it is a must. If the new man does not arrive on the earth, if more and more people are not going to become conscious, alert, awake, then this earth is doomed. Its fate is in the hand of the stupid politicians, and now they have immense power of destruction, such as they never had before. That is something new.

Just five years ago they had so much power that they could have killed every single human being seven times -- although you don't need to kill any human being seven times, once is enough. We had five years ago so much atomic energy -- atom bombs, hydrogen bombs -- that we could have destroyed this earth seven times. And within five years we have really progressed -- now it is seven hundred times! We can destroy seven hundred earths like this earth, and we go on piling up.... And any moment, any mad politician can trigger the process of self-destruction.

The coming twenty years are going to be the most dangerous in the whole history of humanity; it has never been so dangerous -- we are sitting on a volcano. Only more consciousness, more alertness can save it; there is no other way. We have to de-automatize man. The society automatizes you. It creates efficient machines, not human beings.

My effort here is to de-automatize you. I am doing something absolutely antisocial. The society makes you a machine and my effort is to undo it. I would like this fire to spread and reach to all the nooks and corners of the earth, to help as many people as possible to be conscious. If in a great quantity consciousness grows on the earth, there is a possibility, a hope, we can save humanity yet. All is not lost, but time is running short. Everything is being controlled by politicians and by computers, and both are dangerous. Politicians are mad. It is impossible to be a politician if you are not mad enough. You have to be absolutely insane, because only insane people are power-obsessed.

A sane person lives life joyously; he is not power-obsessed. He may be interested in music, in singing, in dancing, but he is not interested in dominating anybody. He may be interested in becoming a master of himself, but he is not interested in becoming a master of others.

Politicians are insane people. History is enough proof. And now computers are dominating.

You know the saying: To err is human.... That is true, but if you really want to create a great mess, human beings are not enough -- you need computers. Now machines and mad people are dominating the whole world. We have to change the very foundation. That's what I mean by a new man.

A new man means more conscious, more loving, more creative. This whole process is possible through being more meditative. Become more meditative, silent, still. Experience yourself deeply. In that experience, a fragrance will be released through you. And if many many people become meditators, the earth can be full of a new perfume.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I NEVER KNOW WHAT IS COMING NEXT.
IT IS NO USE BEING PREPARED.
YOU ARE KILLING ME.
I AM SO GLAD, BUT IT IS SO PAINFUL AND SO SCARY.
P.S. THIS IS FOR A FEW STROKES. PLEASE DON'T CAUSE ANY MORE TROUBLE.

Prem Samarpan, a few strokes are enough to cause trouble. And when you ask it, you get it! Sometimes people get it even without asking. Whatever you need and whenever you need, it is given to you.

Pain is not always bad; sometimes it is absolutely necessary. It is a blessing in disguise. You grow through it; you cannot grow if you try to bypass it. One becomes integrated, crystallized through pain. The only condition to be fulfilled is that you should go into it consciously. Then pain, too, is a gift of God, just as death is. Then everything is a gift, if you can go consciously into it. Then everything prepares you for the new birth, for the new man. You say, "I never know what is coming next."

Nobody knows and nobody needs to know. Samarpan, it is good not to be bothered about the future. The present is enough. And to live in the present, totally absorbed in the present, is the way of the sannyasin.

Jesus says to his disciples, "Look at the lilies in the field, how beautiful they are!" And what is their secret? The secret is, they never think of the morrow, they live in the present. The whole existence lives in the present, except man. Hence, except man, there is no anxiety, no anguish. All anxiety, all anguish is man-created; it is our own doing. It simply exists in our own minds. Either we are worried about the past -- which is so stupid because you can't do anything about it; whatsoever has happened has happened, you cannot go back. But we go on thinking, "Had I done this, had I said this...." You are simply wasting more time. People go on repenting about the past -- that which is not is not worth repenting about. People feel guilty about their past. That which is gone is gone forever. Feel disconnected, become discontinuous.

Each moment, Samarpan, one has to become discontinuous with the past. And if you become discontinuous with the past, only then do you stop worrying about the future, because the future is nothing but a projection of the past. The people who live in the past also live in the future. The future is a reflection of the past. What exactly is your idea of future? It means you are not going to commit the mistakes that you committed in the past -- delete those mistakes. And you are going to enjoy all that was pleasant in the past more deeply. That's what your future is: intensifying your pleasures of the past and deleting your pains of the past.

But you don't understand life. Pains and pleasures are joined together. If you want the same pleasures that you enjoyed in the past and you want them to be more intense, you are asking for the pain that you also suffered in the past. And, of course, the pain will be as intense as the pleasure. They are always balanced, they move together, they are inseparable. They are two sides of the same coin.

So you are simply wasting time, whether you are thinking of the past or of the future. And the future is not going to be according to YOU. Who are you to decide about the future? This vast universe can't be decided by your private will, by your ego. You have to stop pushing the river. You have to learn how to go with the river, how to go with the wind.

Lao Tzu says: Be like a dead leaf, so wherever the wind blows the leaf goes with it. It has no destiny of its own, it has no private goals of its own, it has no will of its own. It is utterly surrendered. That is the meaning of your name, Samarpan. SAMARPAN means "totally surrendered": one who has lost his will into the will of the whole.

Jesus says on the cross, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." That is samarpan, that is surrender. "Thy will, not mine." That is his last prayer and the very essence of prayer, the very soul of a religious man.

There is no need to prepare for the future. Live in the present so totally, that's all. That is

preparation for the future without preparing at all. Why? -- because when you live totally in the present, the future is going to be born out of the present. From where is it going to come? It is going to grow out of this moment. If you have lived this moment in its total beauty, joy, celebration, the next moment will come out of it and you will be able to live it even more totally, even more joyously. But you don't think about it and you don't prepare for it because thinking and preparing means missing this moment. And if you miss this moment you will miss the next too, because it will be coming out of this empty moment which you absolutely missed.

So a strange phenomenon happens, a very strange law of life: those who prepare for the future are the ones who go on missing, and those who don't prepare but LIVE in the present, utterly surrendered to the whole, they never miss anything. Their future comes out of the present, flows out of the present. Then the whole takes care. When you are surrendered, the whole takes care; when you are not surrendered, you have to take care of yourself. And that is like trying to pull yourself up by pulling your shoestrings.

Mulla Nasruddin went for his first airplane flight. When he came back he was looking very tired -- and just a fifteen-minute flight from Bombay to Poona -- he was trembling, his face was looking so pale.

I asked, "What is the matter?"

He said, "What is the matter! Those two plane flights!"

I said, "What two plane flights? You have been only on one plane flight."

He said, "Two -- my first and my last! I am finished with this nonsense! I was so afraid, I had to sit just on the edge of the chair."

"But why on the edge?" I asked him.

He said, "So that my whole weight was not on the plane, that's why."

And this is the way millions of people are living in the world: so their whole weight is not on the whole; otherwise something may go wrong.

The whole is capable of carrying you. You are almost nothing; it is not a problem for the whole.

A man who had finished his life went before God. God reviewed his life and showed him the many lessons he had learned. When he had finished God said, "My child, is there anything you wish to ask?"

The man said, "While you were showing me my life, I noticed that when the times were pleasant there were two sets of footprints, and I knew you walked beside me. But when times were difficult there was only one set of footprints. Why, Father, did you desert me during the difficult times?"

And God said, "You misinterpret me, my son. It is true that when times were pleasant I walked beside you and pointed out the way. But when times were difficult, I carried you."

You say, Samarpan, "I never know what is coming next. It is no use being prepared."

Certainly, it is no use being prepared -- or, there is a totally different way of being prepared. That is what I am trying to show you. Live in the moment totally, fully aware. That is the real way of preparing WITHOUT preparing. That is preparation without preparation. You will be ready for the next moment naturally, without any worry.

You say, "You are killing me."

Yes, in a sense. And in another sense....

Meditate over this story:

A man is taking a walk in a park late at night. Suddenly, behind some bushes he hears strange gasps and muffled screams. Alarmed, he shouts, "Is anybody being killed in there?" "No, no," shouts back a voice. "Just the opposite!"

Yes, in one sense I am killing you; in another sense, I am giving you a new birth. I am doing just the opposite.

The master is a womb. He takes the disciple inside his womb. We call that womb the buddhafield. And then the disciple grows in his love, is nourished through his love, in his light. He is showered continuously with his compassion, with his understanding. And one day he comes out of the womb of the master, a totally new man. The old dies and the new is born. This is how you become twice-born.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'KNOWING' AND 'KNOWLEDGE'. BUT TO BECOME A MASTER, DO YOU NOT HAVE TO HAVE 'KNOWLEDGE' AS WELL AS 'KNOWING'? IT SEEMS TO ME THAT YOU, IN YOUR TALKS, SHOW MUCH KNOWLEDGE. CAN THIS NOT BE A PART OF THE WAY FOR SOME?

Nicholas Mosley, there is a great difference between knowledge and knowing. And to you, knowing may appear as knowledge because you are not acquainted with knowing at all; you know only knowledge. Hence you may find much knowledge in what I am saying, but it is not KNOWLEDGE to me, it is knowing to me. Knowing means my own experience; knowledge means something borrowed.

And it is not necessary that my knowing should go against the knowing of Buddha or Jesus or Krishna. In fact, it cannot go against anybody's knowing. Knowing is the same, the process is the same, whether Buddha knows or Zarathustra. It is the same.

Knowing means you enter into your interiority, you move inwards, you reach to the very center of your being. You experience who you are... and in that very experience you know you ARE God, because only God exists. To say, "God is," is a tautology because God means "is"; "isness" is God.

Whatever I am saying here may appear to you as knowledge because it can be found in the Bible, in the Koran, in the Gita, in THE DHAMMAPADA. And you will think, "Of course, it is knowledge." It is not. The difference is subtle and delicate.

One can know about love -- libraries are full; thousands of books about love have been written. You can gather as much knowledge about love as possible. You can make an encyclopedia of love. You can become an encyclopedia of love. Still, if you have not experienced love, all that you know is rubbish, all that you know is verbal, intellectual; it has no existential value.

Buddha used to say: It is like a man who goes on counting other people's cows and buffaloes every day -- and he himself has no cow, no buffalo. Counting other people's cows and buffaloes you may become very expert in counting, you may become very reliable, but unless you have your own cow you will not be nourished by that counting.

To know means to be silent, utterly silent, so you can hear the still, small voice within. To

know means to drop the mind. When you are absolutely still, unmoving, nothing wavers in you, the doors open. You are part of this mysterious existence. You know it by becoming part of it, by becoming a participant in it. That is knowing.

And once knowing has happened, then to read the Bible and the Koran and the Gita is beautiful, because then they all become witnesses. Otherwise you can read, you can repeat, but they are only words with no meaning, with no content.

Knowledge is without content, empty shells with nothing inside. But if you have seen only knowledge, from the outside both will look almost the same. Knowledge comes through studying and knowing happens through meditation. The processes are different. In knowledge you have to go into words, into language, into scriptures. In knowing you have to go within yourself. The processes are not only different but polar opposites. In knowing, first you have to drop knowledge because that becomes a hindrance. First you have to know that "I don't know." You have to become innocent.

Jesus says: Unless you are as innocent as small children you will not enter into my kingdom of God.

The clergyman was telling his guests a story when his little girl interrupted. "Daddy," she asked, "is it true or is it mere preaching?"

There is a great difference whether something is true or is just preaching -- "mere preaching."

An old priest had to leave his village one Saturday -- the day everyone goes to confession. He taught the new young priest who was taking over his job the necessary basics: "If a woman steals money from her husband -- three 'Ave Maria' and two 'Pater Noster'; if someone commits adultery -- five 'Ave Maria' and three 'Pater Noster'; for those who have been telling lies -- one 'Ave Maria' and two 'Pater Noster', and so on."

The young priest heard first the confession of a pretty village girl.

"Father, I have committed a sin," the girl said.

"What have you done-a, my child-a?" asked the priest.

"I have given the boy next door a blow job," she replied timidly.

The young priest was puzzled because he had not been instructed about such a situation. At that moment, he saw the old priest passing by, his suitcase in hand, preparing to leave. Quickly he called out to the old man, "Father, Father, one moment please. There is a young-a girl-a here. What do I give her-a for a blow-a job?"

"Fifty dollars," replied the old priest.

Knowledge is borrowed; knowing is yours, your own. It is authentic. Knowledge is information, knowing is transformation.

You ask me, Nicholas, "You talk about the difference between knowing and knowledge. But to become a master, do you not have to have knowledge as well as knowing?"

Knowing is enough. To be a master, knowing is enough.

"It seems to me," you say, "that you, in your talks, show much knowledge."

I am not a master because of my knowledge, but in spite of it! I was a professor in the university. I had to struggle a great deal to get out of my knowledge. Still, something of it goes on lingering around me. Forgive me for that! But it has nothing to do with being a master.

Jesus had no knowledge; he was more fortunate. He was not a professor in a university, he was just a poor carpenter's son. Mohammed was fortunate; he was absolutely illiterate. I was unfortunate. I have suffered a lot from knowledge. My whole problem was how to get rid of it. That's why I am so much concerned about you and I continuously insist on being aware of knowledge -- don't become knowledgeable. I am saying it because of my own experience.

It is easy to renounce wealth, it is easy to renounce power, prestige, because they are outside things. The greatest problem is to renounce your knowledge because it goes so deep. It becomes almost a part of your being, it becomes so ingrained. You can escape to the Himalayas -- the wife, the shop, the power, everything will be left behind, but not knowledge. It will be there with you wherever you go. It is not a shadow, it is something inside your skin. It is easy to get out of your skin; it is more difficult to get out of your knowledge. Hence I go on saying to you: Beware, beware of becoming knowledgeable. And there is a great tendency in the mind to become knowledgeable because it is very ego-fulfilling.

But one need not be knowledgeable to become a master. If you are already knowledgeable, then put it aside. Become innocent again so that you can know on your own, and when you have known you can use your knowledge. It can be used, but only later on. Knowing comes first, then you can use your knowledge, but your use of knowledge will be totally different from the use of the scholars.

That's why MY interpretation of Jesus, Buddha, Mahavira, is totally different from the interpretations of scholars. It is bound to be so. Their interpretations are verbal, they are only logical interpretations. They are great argumentators, clever in hairsplitting.

My interpretations are not argumentative, are not intellectual. My interpretations are paradoxical. If you are against me you can call them anti-intellectual; if you love me you can call them supra-intellectual. It depends on you. If you are against me, they are irrational; if you are in love with me, they are suprarational. If you are against me, they are self-contradictory; if you love me they are mysterious, paradoxical.

And when I say anything I am not concerned whether I am being true to Buddha or not. My concern is whether I am being true to myself or not. If I am true to myself I know that I must be true to Buddha; it can't be otherwise. So I don't take much care whether I am literally true to Buddha, to Jesus, or not. I take every freedom.

Sometimes I change the stories because when I see that this story is not possible, it can't happen to a buddha... sometimes I invent stories too.

Once a great Buddhist scholar, Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, came to see me. He said, "Everything you say is beautiful, but a few stories I have come across which I have not found in any scriptures."

I asked him, "For example?"

He said, "For example, just the other day I was reading a beautiful story you have told: Buddha is passing down a street talking to his disciple, Ananda, and a fly sits on his head. He goes on talking and just moves his hand to scare away the fly, and then he stops suddenly in the middle of the road. The fly is gone, but he moves his hand again slowly as if the fly is there.

"Ananda is very much puzzled. He says, 'What are you doing? The fly is no longer there!'

"Buddha says, 'Yes, I know, but this is how I should have done it before. I continued to talk with you and automatically I allowed my hand to move. That is not right for me. I should move my hand with more awareness. So now I am doing it as I should have done.'"

Anand Kausalyayan said, "I have never come across this story. I have read ALL the

scriptures."

I asked him, "But do you think the story is beautiful?"

He said, "The story is beautiful."

Then I said, "It is perfectly right. Then why bother about the scriptures? Don't you see a Buddhist flavor in it?"

He said, "I can see."

"So that is the whole point!"

I am not functioning here as a man of knowledge, but only as a man of knowing.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM LOSING MY MEMORY AND IT IS WORRYING ME TO DEATH. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Mamta, nonsense! Just forget all about it!

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS WRONG WITH THE INDIANS?

Madhuri, almost everything!

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YES! I WAS NOT SURE UNTIL NOW! I SAID THE SAME WORDS TO ASEEMA A MONTH AGO: "YOU HAVE DRIVEN TWO OTHER MEN MAD. DON'T LET IT BE ME." WOW! WE HAVE BEEN IN LOVE FOR MAYBE ONE YEAR NOW, AND TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH I AM REALLY ALLOWING HER TO AFFECT ME IN ALL POSSIBLE WAYS. BOTH NIKUNJ AND SARVESH ARE AFFECTED BY HER, AND FOR MYSELF I SEE WHAT IT IS: LOVE WITH A WITCH! RELEASE ME, BELOVED MASTER.
AH... WHAT SHALL I DO?

Narayana, it is too late! And I am not a witch doctor! Now, nothing can be done. In fact, you are already mad.

Mulla Nasruddin plays on the sitar, but he goes on playing the same note continuously for hours. His wife has gone mad, his children have gone mad, his parents have gone mad.

One day he continued to play the same note, and a neighbor asked him, "Mulla, we have seen many people playing sitar, but they change notes."

Nasruddin said, "I know they go on changing -- because they have not yet found the right note. And I have found it, so why should I change?"

The neighbor said, "But now it is two o'clock in the night. Please! Just one hour more and I will go mad. Stop it!"

Nasruddin said, "It is too late because I have stopped already. It is almost two hours since I stopped! What are you talking about?"

Narayana, one year with Aseema... you are finished! She is dangerous -- all beautiful women are. All women are witches! In fact, the word 'witch' means wise. It is exactly the equivalent of 'buddha'. If a woman becomes enlightened she becomes a witch.

Aseema is just on the verge of becoming enlightened, and on the way she is giving whatsoever help she can. Whosoever meets her, she helps him. You have been helped by her, and there is no way now for you to be released. All is finished! You had better settle in it.

Nikunj and Sarvesh got mad because they tried to escape. Only then they became aware that they were mad. If they had remained with Aseema, there would have been no problem.

So don't try to escape from Aseema, that's my only advice. Remain with her. She is beautiful and I love her.

The eighth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS THERE ANY GOOD QUALITY IN THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE OR NOT AT ALL?

Jagdeesh, an ancient scripture says... this is knowledge: Marriage is an institution that teaches a man regularity, frugality, temperance, forbearance and many other splendid virtues he would not need had he stayed single.

The venerable old man was celebrating his one-hundredth birthday and was asked by a reporter, "To what do you attribute your advanced age and remarkable physical condition?" "I will tell you," replied the centenarian. "When my wife and I were first married, the rabbi who performed the ceremony suggested that whenever I saw an argument coming I should take a walk around the block. I took the rabbi's advice and I want you to know that for seventy years the constant exercise did wonders for my health."

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ABOUT THIS TALK YOU GAVE IN FAVOR OF MIXED MARRIAGES. I COME FROM GOOD OLD TRADITIONAL DUTCH STOCK AND HAVE RECENTLY GOTTEN TOGETHER WITH A SIMPLE-MINDED, BEER-BOOZING COCKNEY. SINCE THEN I HAVE TAKEN UP DISCO DANCING, ROCK 'N' ROLL SINGING, PARTIES AND BEER. I AM HAVING A BALL -- BUT ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE WAY TO RAISE THE CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WORLD?

Arup, I am absolutely sure!
Enough for today.

Chapter #12

Chapter title: A new man with a new vision

3 March 1980 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM AN UNEDUCATED MAN. CAN I STILL BECOME ENLIGHTENED?

John, there is more possibility for you than for an educated man. The education that exists in the world is not true education. True education will be a help towards enlightenment because it will make you more meditative, more silent, more aware, more inward-looking.

The education that exists in the world makes you more ambitious, outward-looking, more egoistic, more superficial. It gives you all kinds of wrong values. It is a kind of poisoning. It does not help you, in any way, to be yourself. It is destructive. It helps you to be somebody else, and that's its very destructive foundation. It is a poisoning, but so slow that you never become aware. It begins the day you are born and it goes on slowly slowly destroying you, distracting you from your nature.

By the time you come out of the university you are no longer a natural being. You are artificial, arbitrary. Universities are like factories, assembly lines, where man is destroyed and machines are created, where man is reduced to a machine.

Enlightenment means discovering your being. It has nothing to do with education. In fact, those who are educated will have to become, in a certain sense, uneducated again. Those who are knowledgeable will have to cease to be knowledgeable. They will have to become again childlike, innocent, so their eyes can be full of wonder, surprise, so they can again see the tremendous beauty of existence, the eternal joy, the celebration that surrounds you. But the knowledgeable person is absolutely unaware because he thinks he knows; that is his barrier.

The more you know, the less you are surprised by anything. The more you know, the less you wonder. And God is only for those whose wonder is total, who know the experience of being in awe; those who can dance with the wind and the sun and the rain; those who, seeing a roseflower, are so struck by its beauty that they become speechless, that for a moment their minds stop functioning. Only those few can know God. Only those few can become enlightened.

John, you are fortunate. Of course, if you are educated you will be able to earn more money -- but not more meditation. You will be able to have more political power because you will be more cunning, more clever -- but not insight into your own being. You may be able to possess many things, but that will be only a deception. In fact, things will possess you

because you will not be your own master. It is better to possess one's own being than to possess the whole world. It is better to be a buddha -- a beggar -- than to be Alexander the Great, because the buddha lives a full life and dies a full death, and Alexander the Great lives an empty life, hollow, somehow stuffing it in an effort to convince himself that he is not empty, and then dies utterly empty.

When he died he said to his generals, "Let my hands hang out of my coffin."
"Why?" they asked, because that was not the way to carry a dead body.

He said, "That may not be conventional, but I would like my hands to hang out of my coffin so people can see that I am dying empty-handed."

That's how his body was carried. Millions of people had gathered to see, and everybody was wondering, "Why are his hands hanging out?" And, slowly slowly, the rumor went around that Alexander wanted it to be known by everybody that he was going empty-handed. His life had been utterly futile.

John, no need to be worried about education, knowledge. In the inner world, the ordinary education is not needed -- something else, a TRUE education.

The word 'education' is beautiful. It means "drawing something out": drawing out that which is within you. In fact, we should not use it for the ordinary education. It is wrong to use a beautiful word like 'education' for this rotten system of schools, colleges and universities. It is not education in the literal sense even, because instead of drawing out what is within you it forces things from the outside upon you. It is an imposition.

Real education is like drawing water from a well, not pouring something into the well. Real education is drawing out your being so that your inner luminosity starts filtering through your body, through your behavior.

I am reminded of a beautiful story. It really happened, it is not just a story.

Stosh, a new immigrant, got off a boat at Ellis Island and set about finding himself a job. Door-to-door inquiries brought no luck until he rang the bell of a whorehouse. The madam was sympathetic and employed him to clean up the basement. After completing the task in record time, Stosh asked for further work, whereupon the madam suggested that he become their permanent bookkeeper.

When Stosh explained that he could neither read nor write, the madam paid him ten cents and sent him off on his way with her best wishes.

With the ten cents Stosh bought two apples in the market. He ate one and sold the other in the town center for ten cents. He returned to the market and bought two more apples which he sold again for ten cents each. Increasing his business this way he eventually became the owner of a small fruit wagon, then several fruit wagons, then a small fruit store, then a supermarket, and finally a chain of supermarkets.

When several of the giant national food chains offered to buy him out, he accepted the highest bid -- seven and a half million dollars. The contracts were drawn up and the corporate executive and Stosh, surrounded by a large number of attorneys, met in the plush corporate offices atop one of Manhattan's most prestigious skyscrapers. The contracts were looked over, heads were nodded and finally the executive signed on the relevant dotted line. Then Stosh picked up the solid gold pen and laboriously scrawled his 'X' at the bottom of the page.

The corporate executive leaped up from his chair and shouted, "My God, man! You mean to say you have amassed this business worth seven and a half million dollars without being able to read or write?"

"Hell!" snorted Stosh emphatically. "If Stosh could read or write, Stosh would still be a

bookkeeper in a whorehouse!"

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS MECHANICAL GOODNESS?

Gina Goyt, there is nothing like mechanical goodness. Goodness cannot be mechanical and anything mechanical cannot be good. It is a contradiction in terms. Goodness can only be conscious, nonmechanical; and evil can only be unconscious, mechanical.

But I understand your question. It is relevant, because for centuries something like mechanical goodness has been taught to people because it is easy. People ARE mechanical. To bring real goodness in their lives, real virtue, you will have to transform their unconsciousness into consciousness, you will have to change their darkness into light. That is an arduous effort, and the society, moreover, is not interested in it at all. In fact, it is afraid of it because whenever a REALLY good person has happened in the world he has created trouble for the society.

A Jesus, a Lao Tzu, a Buddha, a Kabir, these are the greatest rebels for the simple reason that they were so conscious that they could see through the whole stupid game that we go on playing. They could see through our lies, they could see through our deceptions. It was impossible to deceive them and it was impossible to exploit them and it was impossible to enslave them. Not only was it impossible to enslave them, but they created great movements of consciousness in the world. They created chains, they triggered chains. Many many people became enlightened through their efforts. Their efforts were thought to be antisocial. That's why Jesus was crucified.

Where can you find a man who is more good than Jesus? What was his crime? His crime was that he was REALLY good. If he had been only mechanically good there would have been no trouble. There were many rabbis who were mechanically good. The society is not afraid of mechanical people; they are manageable. They are dependent on the society. They always live with the collective, they are always following the crowd. The crowd is very happy with these people. And it is easy to create mechanical goodness because, in the first place, people ARE mechanical. You have just to replace their evil ideas with good ideas, not changing at all their beings.

For example, hell was created -- the idea of hell -- to create mechanical goodness. People are afraid, people live in fear; priests became aware of it in the very beginning of humanity, that it can be exploited: make them more afraid. They depicted hell in such detail, they created so much fear in people, that people became conditioned -- out of fear.

It is the same type of conditioning that can be done now in easier ways because we have more developed technology. There is no need to teach for twenty-five years the idea of hell; then a person becomes mechanically good. Now you can ask Pavlov, Skinner and other behaviorists: they will teach you some methods. Just electric shocks will do.

Somebody smokes and you don't want him to smoke -- just give him electric shocks. Whenever he smokes let him have an electric shock. Within three days he will drop smoking because the moment he takes a cigarette in his hand he will start trembling. He will become so much afraid that now the shock is coming. That's how they teach rats, they teach monkeys and chimpanzees. And that's how they are trying to teach human beings.

Religious people created hell, politicians created prisons -- just to torture people. If you

torture them enough, people become accustomed. Pavlov calls it "conditioned reflex." He worked his whole life with dogs; he conditioned his dogs.

If you bring food before a dog, of course, it affects his saliva. He starts salivating, his tongue starts hanging out, saliva starts dripping. Seeing delicious food, it is natural. But if you ring a bell it won't happen. There is no connection between a bell and saliva glands, but Pavlov did one thing: whenever he would give food to his dogs he would ring a bell. Whenever he would ring a bell he would give food to the dogs. The bell and the food became associated, linked, hooked with each other. After fifteen days he just rang the bell and the dogs started salivating and their tongues hanging out. Now, there is no natural connection between the bell and the tongue, but a new, unnatural connection has been created.

Pavlov became the founder of communist psychology. That's how in Soviet Russia, in China and other communist countries, people are being conditioned. They don't think that man is any different from dogs; maybe a little more developed, a little more complicated, but still a dog.

Skinner goes on working on rats and goes on finding how to condition rats, and he says the same is applicable to human beings. You just create fear and then they will not do certain things; and you create greed.... And that's why paradise, heaven were created. These are simple strategies for dominating people. Create fear for that which you want people not to do and create the idea of reward for that which you want them to do -- and you have created a mechanical behavior. They will not do the bad and they will do the good.

But what kind of good is this? It is exploitation by the society, by the church, by the state -- by the vested interests. It has not changed the BEING of the man. It has not made him more aware, alert, more joyous, more celebrating. It has not given him any taste of bliss. It has not opened any window for him from where he can have a little glimpse of God. I don't call it goodness, virtue. My idea of virtue is that it should be a by-product of consciousness. You should become so conscious that you CAN'T do wrong -- not because you are conditioned but because you can see it is wrong.

For example, I was born in a Jaina family. Now, Jainas are the most fanatic vegetarians in the world. In my house even tomatoes were not allowed because their redness reminds you of meat and blood. Even poor tomatoes, so innocent! In my childhood, the very idea of somebody eating meat was enough to make me sick. In my family there was no possibility to eat in the night. Jainas don't eat in the night. Who wants to suffer in hell just for eating in the night?

When I was eighteen years old, for the first time I ate in the night. It was so much against my whole background, but I had to because we had gone for a picnic and all the other boys were Hindus. They were not interested the whole day in preparing food, and I don't even know how to prepare tea! So I had to depend on them. I told them many times, but they were not interested. They were interested in exploring the mountains we had gone to, the fort, a very ancient fort, and the statues and there were many other things.

The day was tiring and by the evening we were utterly tired. Then they started cooking food. The food was ready in the night. Tired, hungry... and the delicious food that they were preparing... and the aroma! And I was the only one who was in such suffering! I could not eat because just one night's wavering and you suffer in hell for eternity. But I was wavering -- naturally. On the surface I was keeping calm and cool as I was supposed to, but they were persuading me -- and deep down I was ready to be persuaded. In fact, I was hoping that they would be able to persuade me! Finally they persuaded me and I ate. But I have never suffered

so much. The whole night I was sick and vomiting. Nobody else was vomiting, nobody else was sick. It was just my conditioning.

Now, this kind of vegetarianism is not good. It does not come out of your consciousness -- it is mechanical.

Mechanical goodness is not real goodness; it is just a facade. Intelligence is needed to be good, awareness is needed to be good.

The unshaven and booze-smelling Polack was arrested for public drunkenness, and now he stood in front of the judge.

"Your honor," he pleaded, "I honestly didn't mean to drink a whole quart of vodka at one time."

"Then why did you do it?" demanded the judge.

"I lost the cork."

A contractor working for the U.S. government in Vietnam submitted a bill for the tiling of a roof. The government office was astonished at the total of over twenty thousand dollars, most of it for medical expenses incurred on the job. A lieutenant was dispatched to the hospital to investigate.

This was the contractor's explanation: "At the outset of the job I attached a pulley to the edge of the roof and ran a rope through it. To one end I attached a large barrel; the other end I tied to a stake in the ground. I then filled the barrel half full with tiles, untied the rope, hoisted the barrel up to the roof, retied the rope to the stake, climbed up the ladder, unloaded the tiles on the roof, lowered the barrel, climbed down the ladder, and repeated this process several times until all the tiles were on the roof.

"Early in the evening the job was completed and I began loading the unused tiles into the barrel. I had overestimated the number of tiles needed and so had a full barrel of extras. I climbed down the ladder and unhooked the rope.

"It was then that I realized my error. The barrel, now full of tiles, was heavier than I and began descending. In my shock, I forgot to let go -- up I went! Halfway up, the barrel and I met, breaking my right hip. I continued up, breaking several fingers and one hand as I hit the edge of the roof. Meanwhile the barrel hit the ground, tipped over and spilled out most of the tiles. The barrel, now lighter than I, came back up. I descended. Halfway down we met again -- this time my ribs were crushed. When I hit the ground my left leg was broken.

"It was at this time that I had the presence of mind to let go of the rope. A few seconds later the barrel landed on my head giving me concussion!"

More intelligence is needed, more awareness is needed, and then life becomes naturally good, spontaneously good.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM HOMOSEXUAL. I FEEL TERRIBLY OPPRESSED AND STRICKEN BY THE STIGMA OF HOMOSEXUALITY. IT SEEMS FALSE TO ME TO COME HERE TO FIND A WAY TO COME CLOSER TO MYSELF AND AT THE SAME TIME NOT TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO SHOW MYSELF THE WAY I AM. THEN I WANT TO RESIGN AND RETURN HOME SO THAT I DON'T HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT ANY

LONGER. WHAT CAN I DO?

Hein Steff, there is nothing wrong in being homosexual. You need not feel guilty about it. One certainly has to go beyond sex, but that is as much applicable to heterosexuality as it is applicable to homosexuality. Heterosexuality or homosexuality are just styles of the same stupidity! You need not feel guilty.

In fact, looking at the population of the world, homosexuality should be supported. At least you will not be increasing the population of the world, you will not be loading the earth more. It is already loaded too much. Homosexuality should be valued, respected -- it is pure fun! Heterosexuality is dangerous. And what is wrong? If two persons are enjoying each other's bodies, nothing is wrong. It should be their concern; nobody else's business to interfere.

But the society is continuously interfering in everything; it does not leave anybody any privacy. It enters in your bedroom too. Your society is not a free society. It talks of freedom and democracy and all that rot, but it is pure slavery. It is a big prison. And your priests and your so-called God are all Peeping Toms. They are all looking into your private lives, what you are doing. It should be nobody's business.

What is wrong in loving a man or a woman? Two men can love each other, two women can love each other. Love is a value in itself. And fun should not be condemned. Life is already such a burden, such a drag, such a boredom. Leave at least something in life so people can feel a little less bored.

Here you need not feel afraid to show yourself the way you are. My whole approach is to help you to be the way you are because that is the only way to help you transcend it. Feel guilty and you will remain the same. Guilt never transforms anybody.

And homosexuality is such an innocent phenomenon. Why is it so much condemned? The reason is that if it is not condemned, the fear is that almost everybody will turn homosexual because every child has the tendency. Every child passes through the stage when he is homosexual. Every boy, every girl, passes through a time when boys like boys and girls like girls. The fear is that if many people turn homosexual -- and particularly in the past when the population was not big and every society wanted more numbers because numbers meant power... To allow homosexuality was dangerous; it had to be condemned, absolutely condemned, so much so that in a few countries it is the greatest crime.

For example, in Ayatollah Khomeini's country, Iran, it is one of the greatest crimes. You can be imprisoned for your whole life or you can even be sentenced to death, just for being homosexual. It seems absolutely absurd, ridiculous, but in the past there was some reason in it. Every society wanted to be more powerful. It was a constant struggle -- a struggle between groups, struggle between tribes, struggle between clans -- the deciding factor was your number, how many you are. If people become homosexual, then the population will decrease; hence it has to be condemned as the greatest sin.

It may have some meaning if you think of the past, but in the present it is absolutely meaningless. In fact, the whole situation has become just the opposite: now heterosexuality is the danger; less numbers are needed. If humanity goes on growing this way, then we cannot support humanity, we cannot live any longer. By the end of this century the population will be so much, the poverty will be so much, that there seems to be no way out except a third world war which will kill almost everybody -- so that a few people can start the whole story again.

I have heard a story, a twenty-first century story:

The third world war has happened, and a monkey is sitting on a rock taking a sunbath. A female monkey comes with an apple and gives the apple to the monkey. And the monkey says, "My God, are we going to start it all over again?"

Homosexuality is condemned because there is every possibility that if it is not condemned many more people will turn towards it. The inner tendency is there in every person. In fact, the person who is against it... the more he is against it, the more he has the tendency. Deep down, unconsciously, he knows it is there. To repress it he has to be very much against it; he feels disgusted by the very idea.

But nobody is telling HIM to become homosexual. If others feel attracted, then it is not your business to interfere or to condemn them. It is their freedom, and they are not doing any harm to anybody. It is a harmless game -- stupid, certainly, but not a sin. But as far as stupidity is concerned all sex is stupid, for the simple reason that it is a biological urge and you are not the master of it, you are just a victim.

And you need not be so much worried about it, Hein, because homosexuality has a very beautiful origin: it originated in the monasteries. It is something religious! The first homosexuals were monks and nuns -- Christians, Buddhists, Jinas; all great religions have contributed their share to it. It was bound to be so because there are monasteries even now in existence where no woman has ever entered.

In a Catholic monastery in Europe, Mount Athos, for one thousand years no woman has entered; not even a six-month-old girl has been allowed to enter in. What kind of people are living there? A six-month-old girl and they are afraid even of that! What can they do? But repressing sex creates fear, so the whole monastery is full of men; and homosexuality is a natural by-product if only boys are together or only girls are together.

Religious people have contributed greatly. Educationists have contributed greatly, because boys have to be educated separately. They have to reside in different hostels specially for them and girls have to stay aloof in separate hostels, in separate schools. If you put too many girls together they are bound to become lesbians, because when the sexual urge takes possession of them and they cannot find a boy, then anything is better than nothing.

In zoos even animals turn homosexual -- only in zoos, remember. In their wild state they don't become homosexual. There is no need -- females are available. But in a zoo, if females are not available, they become homosexual. A zoo is worth studying. I used to study zoos because the zoo gives you many indications about human society. The human society is a big zoo because everything has become so unnatural.

Go to a zoo and watch the animals and you will be able to see many things. They become homosexuals; they never become homosexuals in their wild stage. They are FORCED to become homosexuals. They go crazy, they become insane, mad. In wild states they never become insane. No animal ever becomes mad in his wild state; he remains sane. But his sanity needs a little freedom.

A lion has a big territory in his wild state, miles of territory, and he is the king of the whole territory. In a zoo he is in a small cage. If you go to the zoo you will see the lion walking up and down the cage, up and down, up and down, the whole day. It can drive anybody mad. He needs freedom, he needs a certain territory. In such a small space he is overcrowded. He becomes angry, enraged, violent.

Many diseases never happen in the wild. For example, no animal suffers from tuberculosis or cancer, but in a zoo animals suffer from tuberculosis and cancer. Strange! In

the wild there are no medical facilities for them and in the zoo every kind of medical facility is available. Doctors are there to look after them, great doctors, doing something great! What they cannot take care of on their own -- cancer, tuberculosis -- doctors help them with. Animals become victims of illnesses which they have never known before.

Human society has been so much forced to live in unnatural circumstances -- and the monastery is one of the most unnatural circumstances. It is a zoo, a religious zoo! Homosexuality was born there, so you need not feel very bad about it. You are a religious person! And you have a great lineage of homosexuals....

If you look for homosexuals you will be surprised. Many poets, many authors, many painters, many musicians, many dancers, many great people, many creative people, were homosexuals. Many Nobel Prize winners have been homosexuals.

And don't be worried about enlightenment either, because at least one homosexual I know has become enlightened -- Socrates; he was a homosexual. And there are suspicions about Jesus. I cannot prove it, they are only suspicions -- because he always moved with the boys. Those twelve apostles... who knows? But if he was, nothing is wrong in it. Socrates was certainly a homosexual. Plato was, Aristotle was. Greeks are great people!

One American girl was going to marry a Greek. The mother was very much worried. She said, "Wait! If you can avoid this marriage...."

The girl was mad. She said, "No. He looks so beautiful, just like a Greek god!"

The mother said, "I know, but after only a few days you will know he is nothing but a goddamned Greek! And one thing more," the mother said, "if you marry this man then remember one thing: never turn your back towards him, never! Whatsoever happens sleep on your back the whole night!"

The girl got married. She insisted, and soon she found the mother was right: the Greek god was nothing but a goddamned Greek! And she was also puzzled because he was always trying to tell her, "Why don't you turn over?" -- but she wouldn't turn over; she was also stubborn!

After six months all efforts failed. The Greek said, "Listen. If you don't turn over you are not going to have children ever."

Then the girl had to turn because she wanted children. The Greek played a logical trick.

Greeks have been homosexuals for centuries. All their great people have been homosexuals. So you need not worry -- you have a great history behind you! Walt Whitman was a homosexual -- one of the greatest poets of all the ages.

There seems to be something in homosexuality that makes people creative, or creative people homosexuals. There is something in it and I can see the point. When you stop creating children, your creativity takes new turns, new dimensions. You create poetry, you create painting.

And the people who have been condemning homosexuality for ages are also condemning it for one more reason. As far as the man/woman relationship is concerned it is always on the rocks, because man cannot understand the mind of the woman, the woman cannot understand the mind of the man. They are poles apart. That is their attraction, but that is also their conflict, constant conflict. If homosexuality is allowed, accepted, the fear is that many people will settle into it because a man can understand another man more easily -- they have the same mind. And women can understand each other more easily -- they have the same mind.

That's why homosexuals are called "gay" people. They are really gay! The heterosexuals

look so sad. Whenever you see a couple you can immediately know whether they are married or not: if they are sad they are married, if they are looking dull and dead they are married. Marriage kills all joy for the simple reason that it creates so many conflicts. Hence all societies have condemned homosexuality, for the simple reason that if it is not condemned, what will happen to reproduction? In the past it had some meaning, but now it has no meaning.

Now the day has come when homosexuality CAN be accepted, should be accepted as a natural outlet of your sexual energies. I am not against it, I am not for it either. I am simply saying that if you have to live your sex you can choose your style, you are free to choose your style. If you decide to be stupid, at least you should be given the freedom to choose what kind of stupid you want to be! I give you total freedom.

My effort here is to help you to go beyond it, so if you are homosexual you have to go beyond homosexuality, if you are heterosexual you have to go beyond heterosexuality. And there are other people also who are neither, who are autoerotic, autosexual. They have to go beyond their autoeroticism. Man has to transcend sex, whatsoever kind of sex it is, because unless you go beyond your biology you will never know your soul. But meanwhile -- before you go beyond -- it is your freedom to be whatsoever you want to be.

You say, "I am homosexual. I feel terribly oppressed and stricken by the stigma of homosexuality."

There is no need to be "terribly oppressed." You must be accepting people's condemnation. Deep down somewhere you are also against it; otherwise, why feel oppressed? If people are against, let them be against! You need not declare to everybody that you are a homosexual. You need not move with a flag that you are a homosexual! You can remain a homosexual. Of course, you cannot hide it because your sex style changes your body language. The way the homosexual walks is totally different from the heterosexual; the way he talks is totally different. And he looks so gay, so happy!

So you will have to remain a little less happy, that's all. Don't look so happy, and walk a little more consciously, that's all. Don't feel oppressed and don't feel stricken by the stigma of homosexuality. That is all nonsense!

And you say, "It seems false to me to come here to find a way to come closer to myself and at the same time not to have the courage to show myself the way I am."

What courage are you talking about? Here there is no question of courage. If you are homosexual you are homosexual! Here it does not need courage to declare it. Here you can write on your shirt, "I am homosexual." Nobody will take any notice of it. People will say, "So what?"

This is a totally different world. Here we accept all kinds of people: sane, insane, crazy -- we have no objection. Unless you start harming others we have no objection. And homosexuality is a harmless game, absolutely harmless. But you think that this is courageous that you are declaring that you are a homosexual. Here it is not; anywhere else it will be. And I will not suggest that you declare it anywhere else; there is no need. Why brag about it? Accept it silently, relax into it.

But you wanted to say it because it is boiling within you. Don't be worried what others say. Just look within yourself, what you are saying to your own homosexuality. You are not at ease with it. The society has corrupted you, contaminated you. The society has given you ideas. It has created a certain conscience in you and that conscience is pricking, continuously feeling hurt.

Now you say, "Then I want to resign and return home so that I don't have to think about it

any longer."

Just by going back home you will not be getting rid of it. Neither you will get rid of homosexuality nor will you get rid of the stigma or the feeling of being oppressed. You will have to drop your conscience that has been created by the society in you. You will have to understand yourself and clean yourself of all ideas imposed by others; only then will you be able to relax.

You ask me, "What can I do?"

Hein, don't make a problem out of it. Nothing has to be done about it. I don't tackle individual problems. My whole approach is that there are millions of diseases, but there is only one cure, and that cure is meditation.

You meditate -- homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual.... You meditate. You become more still and more silent. You create inner emptiness. You become more transparent, and then things will start changing. You will be able to see what you are doing to yourself. If it is right you will go on doing it with more joy, with more totality, with more intensity, with more passion. If it is wrong it will simply drop, just like dead leaves falling from a tree.

So I cannot suggest any specific method because to me all the problems are arising because we have become minds and we have forgotten that deep down there is a space within us which can be called no-mind. Entering that space, no-mind, will give you perspective, vision, clarity.

Meditate. Sit silently watching your thoughts -- homosexual, heterosexual, whatsoever they are, it doesn't matter. You watch, you become the witness. Slowly slowly, a distance will be created between you and your thoughts. And one day suddenly, the realization that you are not your mind. And that day a revolution has happened within you. After that day you will never be the same again. A transcendence has happened. After that, whatsoever you do is right; you can't do wrong then. And before that, whatsoever you do is wrong.

So when I say I have nothing against homosexuality I am not supporting it, remember. I am not saying, "Be homosexual." I don't have anything against heterosexuality either, but I am not supporting heterosexuality. I am not supporting anything. These are all mind games -- and you have to go beyond all the games.

Your mind is created by the society.

Fifteen-year-old Bobby was running out of a theater where he had just seen a porno movie.

The manager stopped him. "Why are you in such a hurry?"
"My mother told me," said Bobby, "that if I ever looked at anything bad I would turn to stone -- and I have started!"

Two members of London's exclusive Explorers Club were discussing a mutual friend over large brandies and soda.

"Well, I'll be damned," said the first old boy. "You say Parkhurst has gone to Africa and married an ape?"

"Quite so, old man."

There was a pause and the first clubman asked in a discreet tone, "A female ape, naturally?"

"Of course," came the reply. "There is nothing queer about old Parkhurst."

The mind functions as an agent of the society within you.

To go beyond mind is to go beyond society.

To go beyond mind is to go beyond the whole history.

To go beyond mind is to go beyond past.

To go beyond mind is to enter into God.

And then whatsoever happens is good, is virtue.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THE WEST SEEMS TO BE OBSESSED WITH SEX. PEOPLE ARE STUFFED WITH
ENDLESS TECHNIQUES AND PORNO IMAGES. WHY, IN ALL THIS TIME, ARE
PEOPLE STILL STUCK AND UNABLE TO MOVE INTO THE TANTRIC EXPERIENCE
OF SEX, OF LOVE AND OF LIFE? 4

Prem Karin, it is not a question of West or East. Both are obsessed with sex -- of course, in different ways. The West is indulgent, the East is repressive, but the obsession is the same. And the significant question is: Why is the West so indulgent? It is two thousand years of Christianity and its repressive methods that have brought this indulgence.

The East is repressive; sooner or later, it is going to become indulgent. The mind of man moves like a pendulum, from the right to the left, from the left to the right. And remember, while the pendulum is moving to the right it is gaining momentum to move to the left, and vice versa. It appears it is going to the left, but it is gaining momentum, energy, to go to the right. When a society is repressive it is gaining momentum to become indulgent, and when a society is indulgent it is gaining momentum again to become repressive.

So a strange thing is bound to happen, and in fact, it is happening: the West has been indulgent for a few decades and the repressive trend is arising again. There are many cults which preach celibacy now. The Hare Krishna movement preaches celibacy, BRAHMACHARYA, and thousands of people have become interested in it. And there are many cults arising which are all agreed on one point: that sex has to be repressed. In the name of yoga, in the name of Zen, in the name of Christianity, many cults are arising which are again repressive. The West will become repressive soon.

And in the East, the number of porno magazines is growing every day; porno movies are coming more and more. The East is a little slow in everything, a little lazy in everything, so it takes a little longer. The West moves with speed. But the East is becoming West and the West is becoming East, and that is one of the greatest problems. If this happens, then the misery remains the same. Again the pendulum has moved and again you will go on doing the same things.

This has happened many times in the past. A repressive society becomes indulgent sooner or later. When the repression comes to a point where you cannot repress it anymore it explodes: people go berserk. Or when a society has been very indulgent it starts seeing the futility of it, the sheer wastage of energy. And it gives no contentment; rather it makes one feel more and more frustrated. Then one starts thinking of brahmacharya -- celibacy. Maybe the ancient RISHIS were right!

In the East also it has happened many times. The Hindu religion, in the beginning, was very indulgent; it was not a repressive religion. The Hindu seers were married people. Not only were they married, they were allowed to have a few other women also as their concubines. They were allowed even to purchase women -- because in those days in India,

men and women were sold in the marketplaces just like any commodity.

Beware of all those people who go on talking about the Golden Age of India. There has never been any golden age. Even in the days of Rama... Hindus talk very much about Ramarajya -- the kingdom of Rama is thought to be the highest pinnacle. People were sold like commodities in the marketplaces, and particularly women were thought to be just property; anybody can sell, anybody can purchase. People used to give them as gifts. A guest would come to your house and he would like one of your women, and you would present the woman to him. Even the so-called saints used to have many women; they were all indulgent. All the stories of those days, even about the gods, are very indulgent.

You must have seen Shiva temples -- temples devoted to the god Shiva. The statue is nothing but a phallic symbol. If you look, if you observe minutely, you will be surprised: it has both man and woman's sexual organs in it. It depicts the meeting of man and woman. The story is this:

One day Vishnu and Brahma went to see Shiva... this is the Hindu trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva. Brahma is the creator god, Vishnu is the maintainer god and Shiva is the destroyer god. All the three are needed to keep the world running. One creates, one maintains, one destroys; then again one creates, the other maintains and the third one destroys. So it remains in a flow.

Brahma and Vishnu went to see Shiva. As it happened, the guard was fast asleep, so they entered in without asking any permission, and Shiva was making love to his wife, Parvati. He was so passionately into it, so drunk! -- he may have taken some drug, because he is perfectly well known to have used drugs. Marijuana and hash and opium were all known to him.

He continued to make love and these two gods stood there watching. Great gods! They could not even say, "Excuse us," and get out. They must have enjoyed the scene -- living pornography! Six hours it continued, the love-making, and these two gods stood there for six hours watching. A long blue film! -- and nothing else, just making love! No other incidents, nothing else... just Shiva making love to his wife. But they were very angry.

When Shiva was finished they told him, "We have been waiting for six hours and you have not even taken any notice of us. We are very angry and we curse you that you will be remembered forever and forever by your sexual organs."

That's why in the Shiva temple you see the phallic symbol: Shiva is remembered by his sexual organ.

Now, these Hindus must have been very indulgent. Their gods, too, were very indulgent. But then came a reaction, the pendulum moved. Buddhism and Jainism rebelled against this indulgence and they created a very repressive world, a repressive morality.

India still lives under that influence, but it is moving slowly slowly again towards the indulgent. The West is influencing it -- Western films, Western novels are influencing it. The West is being influenced by Buddha, by Zen, by Patanjali, by yoga, by meditation, and the East is influenced by PLAYBOY! People are reading PLAYBOY, hiding it inside their Gitas!

Prem Karin, you ask, "The West seems to be obsessed with sex."

It is not true only about the West. The whole of humanity, up to now, has remained obsessed with sex, and it is going to remain so unless we change the whole gestalt. Up to now the gestalt has been repression/indulgence, indulgence/repression, going on moving between these two. We have to stop exactly in the middle. Have you ever tried to stop the pendulum

of a clock in the middle? What happens? The clock stops. The time stops.

That's my effort here. I don't want you to be indulgent and I don't want you to be repressive. I would like you to be balanced, just in the middle. It is in the middle that transcendence is possible, and it is in the middle that we can create a humanity which will be neither Eastern nor Western. And it is immensely needed, urgently needed, that a man comes on the earth which is neither Eastern nor Western: a new kind of man with a new vision, freed of all the bondage of the past.

You ask, "Why, in all this time, are people still stuck and unable to move into the tantric experience of sex, of love and of life?"

Tantric experience means neither to be repressive nor to be indulgent. Tantric experience is possible only if you move deep into meditation, otherwise not. When you become very still, silent, aware, alert, then only is it possible that you will know something of tantra. Otherwise, tantra can also become an excuse for indulgence -- a new name, a religious name. And you can move into indulgence behind the name of tantra. Names won't make much change; your being needs change.

Zelda, the Hebrew zebra, was walking down a country lane, some place in the boondocks of Pennsylvania. Soon she came upon a flock of sheep.

"Yoo-hoo, may I speak to you, please?" she called out.

One of the sheep came to the fence.

"What do you want to speak about?"

"I represent the Hadassah Zebra Association of South Africa. You are Jewish?"

"Oh yes, we are all Jewish here."

"Well, I am on a fact-finding tour. Our zebras are interested in learning how Jewish animals in America earn a living. Would you mind telling me what kind of work you do?"

"What do I do?" exclaimed the sheep. "What kind of a question is that? I give wool, what else? Every year they shear it off and next season they do the same thing. Is it any different there in South Africa?"

"Oh no, it is just the same. Well, I must be running along. Ta-ta, and thank you most kindly."

Zelda continued on her fact-finding mission until she met a cow.

"Excuse me, madam, I am from the Hadassah Zebra Association of South Africa. I am interviewing Jewish-American domestic animals. Would you be so kind as to describe your work?"

"Glad to," murmured the cow. "I am employed by a strictly kosher dairy, being orthodox myself, of course. My work, you ask? Well, I am a purebred Guernsey, and I give Grade A milk. I live up there in that pretty white barn. Sorry I can't ask you in, but we were not expecting company and the place is a mess."

"That's perfectly alright. Thank you for your information. You have been most helpful. Toodle-oo."

A short time later, Zelda saw a stallion in a pasture, and there was no mistaking his Jewishness. He happened to see her at just about the same moment. He charged toward the fence, skidded to a four-footed stop and loomed over the zebra with nostrils flaring.

"And just what is it that you do, sir?" asked the zebra demurely.

"Honey, you just slip out of those fancy pajamas," he said, "and I will show you what I do!"

The whole humanity is suffering from obsession, either through indulgence or through repression. The whole humanity is concerned with sex twenty-four hours a day.

Psychologists have discovered that every man thinks of women at least once in three minutes, and every woman thinks of man at least once in six minutes. That may cause enough problems -- the difference; that may be the whole trouble between man and woman.

Tantric sex is not sex at all; it is meditation. Meditation has to spread all over your life. Whatsoever you do, do meditatively. Walk meditatively, eat meditatively. If you are making love, make love meditatively. Meditation has to become your life twenty-four hours a day; then only the transformation. Then you go beyond sex, you go beyond body, you go beyond mind. And for the first time you become aware of godliness, of ecstasy, of bliss, of truth, of liberation.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE THE INDIANS SUCH A PROUD PEOPLE?

Paul, God knows! They have no reason to be. I am also surprised. There is nothing -- but the ego clings to anything or it invents something. India goes on inventing a beautiful past. It is invention, pure invention. It has never been there, it has never existed.

Yes, there have been people like Krishna and Mahavira and Buddha, but they are not Indians at all. Jesus is not Jewish and Lao Tzu is not Chinese. These people are universal; nobody can claim them. The whole earth belongs to them; they are our common heritage, so you cannot brag about them.

But every country has to invent something to feel good. Just as individuals need egos, countries need egos, races need egos, religions need egos. And Indians have a tremendously big ego. They think they are the most spiritual people on the earth, and that is just bullshit! The very idea is unspiritual.

To be spiritual means to be humble. To be spiritual means to be nobodies. To be spiritual means not to belong to any country, to any nation. To be spiritual means not to be Hindu, not to be Mohammedan, not to be Christian. But even spirituality is being used as a prop.

It happens every day: some new Indians come, once in a while, those who don't understand me... because it is not possible to understand me just if you come once as a visitor just to look around. You can't understand me if you come as a tourist. Indians come, but they come only as visitors.

And the few Indians who have become absorbed into my commune, who have become sannyasins, I don't count them as Indians anymore. They have become universal. It is a universal brotherhood.

But when new Indians come they ARE Indians, very much Indians. And what egos they carry! When I pass around the Buddha Hall with my hands joined together, with my head bowed down to them in love, in prayer, in salutation, they can't even respond. They sit like stones. Not even a formal gesture they can show. They look so silly, so stupid, and I feel so sorry! How to help them? These people seem to be beyond help, beyond approach. And they see the whole ocean of sannyasins with their hands joined together joyously bowing, responding in love, communing, but they can't do it. They just sit there like dead rocks. Strange... but not so strange because deep down they think they already know. Deep down they think they are great inheritors of a spiritual tradition. They know the Vedas and the Gita and the Upanishads.

I watch them, I watch their spirituality. They don't look at me -- they look at my Rolls

Royce! That's why I have asked my secretary to bring a Rolls Royce: at least for Indians there must be something to see! They are more interested in the car -- and they are spiritual people, not materialists! When they come to the ashram, the first question they ask the guides here is, "Where is the Rolls?" They are not interested in seeing meditations, they are not interested in seeing Sufi dancers, they are not interested in seeing vipassana, they are not interested in anything. "Where is the Rolls?" Their whole mind is materialistic, but they go on pretending to be spiritual. And you can always invent something or other.

The country is poor so they cannot brag about richness. The country is uneducated, they cannot brag about education. The country is technologically backward, they cannot brag about technology. So they have fallen upon something invisible: spirituality. You can always brag about spirituality. Nobody can disprove it. Of course, you cannot prove it either, but one thing good about spirituality is that it cannot be disproved. So you can go on talking about your spirituality -- which exists nowhere, which has never existed.

Individuals have been spiritual beings, societies have never been. We have still to wait for that great day when there will be so many individuals awakened that the society will start having the color of spirituality. Up to now, it has not happened. Hitherto it has not been happening; it has only been a hope. But every religion believes that they are religious. Just believing in certain ideas gives you a false feeling of being religious. And whenever you come across a real religious person you shrink back, you become afraid.

Hence they are against me -- they are bound to be against me. I am shattering all their structures. I am shattering their whole egoistic patterns. I am trying to bring them down to the earth, to the reality -- and it hurts.

India has never been against anybody as India is against me, for the simple reason that nobody has ever shattered their egos. I am making every possible effort to shatter their egos because that is the only hope. If India loses its ego, there is a possibility of a rebirth. The country can be reborn. It has great potential. It has the same potential as when you don't use a field for many many years, you don't grow any crop, and the field becomes more and more potential every year.

For centuries India has not grown any creativity. It has become the most potential country in the world. If it explodes into creativity it is really going to be something great, something of great consequence to the whole earth. But before it can ever happen the shell of the seed has to be shattered, has to be broken.

I am going to be condemned, criticized, rejected; that is bound to be my destiny. But I am the only hope. If I succeed in helping a few intelligent Indians to come out of their closed egos into the open, that will help not only India but the whole world. It will be a great contribution to the growth of consciousness.

It is possible, and you are all here to help it happen.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 10

Chapter #13

Chapter title: Religion is a song, poetry, a dance of your heart

4 March 1980 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU CONVERTING PEOPLE TO YOUR OWN RELIGION?

Christina, I don't have any religion at all: a certain kind of religiousness, but no religion in particular. That's why it is so easy for me to absorb Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Zarathustra, Moses, Mohammed, Mahavira. If I had a religion, then it would not be possible for me to be so universal.

To have a religion means to become limited. To have a religion means you have defined life, you have made a dogma out of life, you have demystified it. It is no longer infinite; it is no longer unknown, unknowable. You have reduced it to a system of thought.

My whole effort here is to melt all systems of thought, to melt your minds which have become ice-cold, frozen into prejudices, so that a new kind of warmth surrounds the earth. It will be a kind of religiousness -- just a vague feeling, not a definite thought. You can experience it, but you cannot explain it. It will not be like a flower, it will be more like a fragrance. If you are not suffering from cold you will be able to feel it, the fragrance. And people's heads are too full of coldness; they are suffering from cold, they have become frozen. One is a Hindu, another is a Christian.

That is the meaning of your name, Christina: a Christian.

Be a christ and never be a Christian! Be a buddha, never be a Buddhist! That is settling for rubbish. When you can experience the truth yourself, why settle for secondhand knowledge? All religions are secondhand knowledge.

When a master is alive he has a certain climate, there is no doubt about it, a certain atmosphere around him, where people start growing -- growing into themselves. That is true conversion. Conversion does not mean a Hindu becoming a Christian or a Christian becoming a Hindu; that is not conversion. That is simply changing one prison for another, moving from one dead system of thought to another dead system of thought -- but you remain the same.

Conversion means a radical change in your being. It is not a question of changing your ideology, it is a question of changing your consciousness. In that sense, people are certainly being converted. And I am not converting them, they are allowing themselves to be converted. Remember that difference. I am not interested in converting anybody; I am simply making a space available for those who want to go through this revolution. They can go through this revolution. Neither directly nor indirectly am I trying to make you part of any religion.

Just the other day I was reading... somebody has written -- a Hindu -- that I am converting people into Jainism because I was born in a Jaina religion. And Jains think that I am

converting Jainas into the Hindu religion because orange is a Hindu color -- as if colors can also be Hindu or Mohammedan! And Christians have been writing letters to me, writing articles against me, that I am converting Christians to Hinduism. It is a very strange world! Christians think I am converting you to Hinduism, Hindus think I am converting you to Jainism, Jainas think I am converting you to Hinduism, Mohammedans think I am converting you to Buddhism and Buddhists think I am converting you to something else.

I am not converting you to any organized system of thought, directly or indirectly. I am not interested in that at all. But certainly I am making a dimension available to you. If you are interested in going through a revolution you can go. If you have guts and courage you can have a new consciousness.

But I can understand the question, particularly from a Christian, because Christians have been doing this business of conversion all over the earth for centuries, in every possible way, right or wrong. If people cannot be converted by convincing them, then convert them by swords. If swords have become out-of-date and look ugly, then convert them by money, by bread and butter. People are poor and starving.

In India I have never come across a single rich family who has become Christian. Only very poor people who are always on the verge of dying because of starvation have become Christians. The reason is not that they are interested in Christ; they are simply interested in surviving -- and Christian missionaries have the money. They can give them the money, employment, clothes, medicine, schools, hospitals. And when it is a question of survival, who cares about religion? To what religion you belong does not matter -- the first requirement is to survive. So in India all the poor people, very poor people have been converted. This is converting them by bribery. Now instead of swords, a very subtle methodology is being used to convert them.

But I am not interested in converting anybody. I love Jesus as much as I love Buddha because I don't see any difference. Both are religious because both are awakened. There is no difference at all between the awakened people. But the churches are not concerned with awakening or the awakened people; their concern is with numbers, and they use every possible way, direct, indirect, gross and subtle to convert people.

Hence, Christina, the question has arisen in your mind: maybe I am doing something like the Christian missionaries. I am not a missionary.

Mr. and Mrs. Chotnik had hoped that their son, Stanley, would follow in the path of their own orthodox ways and pursue his higher education at Yeshiva University. Instead, despite their voluble concern, he entered a Christian college. But when he returned home for summer vacation, they were vastly relieved to see that their fears had been groundless. Stanley had not forsaken his ancestral faith, he had not been converted, he had not, it was clear, been affected in the slightest way by his non-Jewish environment. In fact, on the very next Friday, he readily agreed to accompany them to synagogue.

That evening, at the close of shabbos services, the rabbi, an old friend of the Chotnik family, greeted the young student with a wide smile.

"It is good to see you here in the temple again, Stanley," said the rabbi, shaking the youth's hand. "Frankly, your parents and I were afraid you might be Catholicized there at South Bend."

Stanley's eyebrows lifted in surprise. "Impossible!" he declared. "No one will ever convert me, Father."

There are subtle ways to convert. The person who is being converted does not become aware at all what is happening. You go on conditioning him, slowly slowly. You go on repeating the gospels and slowly slowly, without his awareness, his mind becomes full of all that has been repeated. He is being conditioned. It is a process of hypnosis.

MY effort here is just the opposite: it is a process of dehypnosis, deconditioning. I decondition you, whosoever you are, Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan. I simply decondition you and then I leave it to you so that you can be yourself. I don't recondition you again. I stop with deconditioning so that you are free from the old pattern, from the old gestalt that has been imposed upon you. Once you are free then my work is finished. Then you can grow on your own according to your own light, according to your own inner needs. Each individual has a birthright to be himself.

The world does not need Christians, Hindus and Mohammedans; it needs certainly religious people. And what do I mean when I use the words 'religious people'? I mean people who are aware that the world is not only matter, that the world is something more, something plus. It is not finished with matter; matter is only the circumference: consciousness is at the center. And this is possible only when you experience consciousness at your own center; then you can experience consciousness everywhere. When you start feeling consciousness everywhere you have come across godliness. This experience is religion.

I am certainly interested in introducing you into this vast experience, but you have to come to it on your own. You have to come to it without any beliefs, prejudices -- open, vulnerable, ready to see that which is, rather than to project what should be. I don't give you any shoulds and should-nots, I don't give you any commandments. I simply help you like a gardener helps a seed. It is not an effort to make a lotus out of a rosebush or vice versa. The gardener helps the rose to be a rose and the lotus to be a lotus. Whatsoever is your potential, you have to be that.

I am not here to decide what you have to be; I can only give you hints how to grow into your own being. And that's how a person becomes a Jesus, a Buddha, a Zarathustra.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THE WEST IS OVERPOPULATED WITH PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AND THEIR PATIENTS, BUT WHY DOES NO ONE SEEM TO BE HELPED?

Patrick, the help is possible only through a buddha. The help is possible only through the awakened one.

The psychotherapists are as asleep as you are; they are in the same boat. There is no qualitative difference between you and them -- in fact they may be crazier than you are. They may be more in a mess than you are because they constantly deal with mad people; day in, day out, they are surrounded by mad people. Rather than helping the mad people to become sane, just the opposite happens: being constantly in contact with mad people, slowly slowly they become mad themselves.

This is natural. They don't have yet that awareness which can remain aloof, unaffected. They don't have that distance, that coolness, that detachment. They are not living on sunlit peaks; they are groping in the same dark valley where you are groping. They are as blind as you are, but they have to pretend that they are not blind -- and that is more dangerous.

If a person is blind and knows that he is blind and never pretends otherwise, there is every

possibility he will walk more cautiously. If he pretends that he is not blind, if he projects that he is not blind, if he convinces others that he is not blind, slowly slowly he will be hypnotized by his own sayings, auto-hypnotized. He will start believing that he is not blind and he will start walking less cautiously. And that is more dangerous.

I have heard:

Once a blind man came to visit a Zen master. When he was leaving -- it was night, a dark night, no moon, and so many clouds -- the master said to the blind man, "Please take this lamp with you."

The blind man laughed loudly. He said, "Are you joking? What can a lamp do for me? I cannot see! It is all the same to me whether I have a lamp or not."

But the master said, "That I know, that you cannot see, but at least others will be able to see in the darkness that you are coming so they will not stumble into you."

The argument appeared right. The blind man took the lamp, went away. He had just walked only a hundred yards and a man just walked into him. He said, "What is the matter? Are you too blind? Can't you see this lamp?"

And the man said, "I am not blind. Excuse me, but your lamp is no longer lit; its flame has gone out."

The blind man went back to the Zen master and said, "Look, never give a lamp to another blind man again. If there was no lamp I would have walked more cautiously. I always walk cautiously. Because of the lamp I walked as if I were no longer blind -- and the lamp went out. But how was I to know that the lamp went out? Because of this lamp, for the first time I have been hurt by a man. Otherwise, I have walked my whole life in every possible situation, but because I was so cautious, always making noise with my stick on the road so people can feel that some blind man is there, always groping with my stick in the darkness so I know where I am, whether I am facing a wall or a door.... It was the first time that I walked without any fear."

And that's what is happening to your psychotherapists, Patrick. They think they know -- they know nothing. They are more informed, but information is not knowing. They are well educated, but they have not a higher being than you. And help is possible only when somebody higher than you gives you a hand.

More psychotherapists go mad than any other profession and more psychotherapists commit suicide than any other profession. And it is natural. Living with mad people, one can understand -- they become affected.

A few scenes will be helpful to you....

The first scene:

A man walks into a psychiatrist's office.

"You must help me!" he exclaims.

"What do you do for a living?" asks the shrink.

"I am an automobile mechanic."

"Get under the couch!"

The second scene:

First psychiatrist: "Hello!"

Second psychiatrist: "I wonder what you mean by that?"

The third scene:

The patient: "Of course I am upset, doctor. I have eleven children and I find out my husband does not love me."

The doctor: "You are very lucky. Imagine if he did!"

The fourth scene:

"Doctor, my wife accuses me of being a compulsive card-player."

"That's ridiculous. Now shut up and deal!"

And the fifth scene:

"Doctor, now that you have cured me of my homosexual tendencies and since this is our last session, may I kiss you goodbye?"

"Don't be ridiculous -- men don't kiss. I shouldn't even be lying on the couch with you!"

You ask me, Patrick, "The West is overpopulated with psychotherapists and their patients, but why does no one seem to be helped?"

Help is possible only from higher sources. A person who is on the same ground as you cannot be of any help to you. Help is possible only when a fully conscious man tries to help the unconscious. It is as if you are asleep; do you think somebody else asleep can help you in any way? Only somebody who is awake can wake you. If you want to be awakened at a particular hour, you don't say to somebody else who is asleep, "Please wake me up at five o'clock in the morning. I have to go for that goddamned Dynamic Meditation!" You have to ask somebody who is awake. Only somebody awake can wake you up. In fact, the person who is asleep may help you to fall into a deeper sleep.

You may have watched it happen. If a few people are sitting just by your side yawning, you start feeling sleepy. They create a certain vibe; they create a certain atmosphere in which anybody vulnerable will start feeling it is better to go to sleep.

The same happens with awakened people: a buddha creates a totally different vibe. He shakes you up, he wakes you up. He goes on shocking you in many ways; he finds devices to shock you.

Kavita has asked, "Beloved Master, sometimes you use such words that I feel shocked -- and I used to think that no word can ever shock me. Don't you have any couch?"

Kavita, I will go on using these words unless you wake up. You would like to listen to lullabies -- but lullabies are not going to help. What appeals to you, what you like is not going to help. Something that shocks you.... I am going to use rough words till you stop yawning.

Whenever I see somebody yawning somewhere, immediately I have to say something which shocks you -- and I can see his yawning disappears. The moment I say "bullshit" -- immediately I say it he stops yawning! His spine is erect, his kundalini is rising upwards!

Unless you all become awakened I am not going to leave you at ease; I will go on hitting you in every possible way.

Help is possible, Patrick, only from the awakened ones. You don't need psychotherapists, you need buddhas.

Secondly: you go to the psychotherapist, but you don't really want to be helped. You have

great investment in your pathology.

A few scenes again.

First:

"Doctor, my wife thinks she is a refrigerator."

"Why don't you divorce her?"

"I would but I need the ice."

Second scene:

"Doctor, my girlfriend thinks she is a rabbit."

"Bring her in. I will see what can I do."

"Okay, but whatever happens, I hope you don't cure her."

Nobody wants really to be helped. People are only playing games. They go to the psychiatrist in the hope that he can't do anything, that he is not going really to change them. Nobody wants to be changed; everybody wants to remain the same as he is. You have become so accustomed to your misery, to your pathology... it is your life, it is your way of life.

If you want to be changed you will seek a master, not a psychotherapist.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS THERE ANY TRUTH IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL IMMORTALITY WHICH SAYS THAT IT IS ONLY OUR BELIEF IN THE INEVITABILITY OF DEATH WHICH PRODUCES OLD AGE, DISEASE AND DEATH? TO WHAT EXTENT DO OUR THOUGHTS MANIFEST RESULTS?

John Fisant, man is afraid of death; hence he goes on creating all kinds of stupid ideas. Physical immortality is sheer nonsense because anything that begins is bound to end. Physical immortality is possible only if you are not born through parents but manufactured in a factory. If you are made out of plastic, if you are not a real man, then there is a possibility. Plastic seems to be the only immortal thing.

So if you don't have skin but plastic instead, if you don't have real blood but synthetic blood which you can change any time -- you can go to the petrol pump -- and all that you have in your body -- your bones, your joints, everything -- is replaceable so whenever there is some problem, things can be replaced; you just have to change a few parts and parts will be available.... You may have to go to the garage for a time; a few things may have to be unscrewed and screwed again. Then you can be physically immortal -- but then you will not be a man, you will be a machine.

If you are born you are bound to die. Yes, it is possible your life can be prolonged -- life HAS been prolonged. As medicine has evolved, as scientific technology has come to help human beings, as we have become more and more aware of the secrets of life, life has been prolonged. It may be prolonged from seventy years to seven hundred years, but then too you will not be physically immortal.

And I don't think many people would like to live seven hundred years; even seventy years is too much! People start thinking after a time, "Now it will be better to die." Death is a relief, a relaxation. Everything wants rest; death is going into rest. Your body also gets tired, matter

also gets tired. It wants to go back to its original source: water into water and air into air and earth into earth and fire into fire. Everything wants to go back to its source to rest, to rejuvenate itself, and come back again. But man has always cherished these ideas -- physical immortality. And not ordinary people, even people who are thought to be extraordinary, they also go on having such stupid ideas.

Sri Aurobindo and the mother of Sri Aurobindo both believed in physical immortality -- and both died! When Sri Aurobindo died nobody believed it, because all the disciples who had gathered there had gathered for the simple reason that he knows the secret of physical immortality and by being his disciples THEY are going to become physically immortal. How can they believe that he had died?

For three days it was kept a secret that he had died. They waited: he may be in deep samadhi, he may come back. But after three days when they saw no sign of his coming back and his body started stinking, then they had to bury it. Then they hoped that the mother would be immortal. She lived a long life, but a long life does not mean physical immortality. When she died, again they were shocked. Their whole philosophy was confused by these two persons' deaths.

But one thing is good about death: now you cannot ask Sri Aurobindo, "Why have you been telling your whole life that physical immortality is possible, that you know the secret, that you have been able to bring God into the physical world?"

But fools gathered. Fools become attracted always to strange things. Just deep down the fear is there -- nobody wants to die. Why? Why in the first place are you afraid of death? Death is not the enemy. To a man who has really lived, death is the friend. It is like sleep. Nobody wants to remain wakeful twenty-four hours a day.

There are a few people who think that sleep is also just an old habit and they try to reduce it. For centuries they have tried. Yes, it can be reduced, it can be reduced to two hours because two hours is the essential sleep; you also sleep only two hours in a deep way. Somewhere between two and four or three and five you sleep for two hours very deeply; those are the refreshing moments. All dreaming disappears, you are almost dead. Hence the ancients used to say sleep is a small death. But people have been trying to avoid sleep also.

The logic is: if you can avoid sleep then you can one day avoid death too. If sleep is a small death and you have conquered sleep, you will be able to conquer the big sleep, death, too. But why? What is wrong in dying? The people who are afraid of death are the people who have not really lived their lives. They are not afraid of death, they are simply afraid that they have not lived yet and death has come.

Rather than thinking of physical immortality, think of living your life totally. While you are here, live your life in a multidimensional richness. And then when death comes you will feel it as a crescendo, as a peak, as an ultimate -- life reaching to the highest -- and you will enjoy death as much as you have enjoyed life. You will be utterly satisfied with death because it will give you rest, relaxation; it will renew you. It will take away the old garments and it will give you new garments.

But people go on philosophizing. They have created things like Christian Science, mind over matter. They think that if you believe that you are not going to die then you will not die.

I heard about a man who was a Christian Scientist. One day he met a young man. He asked the young man, "Any news about your father?"

The young man said, "He is very ill."

The Christian Scientist said, "All nonsense! Tell him, 'Mind over matter.' He believes he is ill, that's all; it is his belief that is creating illness. Don't believe in illness and you will be healthy."

After a few days again the young man came across this Christian Scientist, and the Christian Scientist asked, "How are things now with your old man? How is he?"

And the young man said, "Now he believes that he is dead."

It is not a question of belief: illness has a reality, and death too has a reality. Yes, by believing also you can create a few illnesses -- which are false, bogus -- and by disbelieving in them you can destroy them. But you cannot destroy a real illness; the illness has to be false in the first place. If you BELIEVE in it and create it, then by disbelieving in it, it can be dropped.

But death is not your belief; otherwise why do animals die? They don't believe, they don't believe that they are going to die. Why do trees die? They don't believe that they are going to die, they don't have any belief system. Why do stars and suns and moons die? Why do earths die? They don't believe; death is a universal phenomenon, it happens everywhere. It is part of life; it is the other side of the coin.

I am not in any support of Christian Science. It is neither science nor Christian -- it is simply nonsense.

Two middle-aged men were walking off the tennis court after only a few minutes of play. The older, somewhat corpulent fellow was puffing heavily.

"I guess I am in pretty poor shape," he confessed ruefully.

"How long have you been playing, Herbie?" asked the young man.

"About two weeks."

"Then let me give you a little practical advice. Try the Christian Science way -- mind over matter."

"I already have," admitted the fat one. "When my opponent serves the ball to me, my Christian Science mind says, 'Now, Herbie, you just race right up to the net, slam a blistering drive to the far corner of the court and then jump back into position.' That's exactly what my Christian Science mind tells me...."

"But my Jewish body says, 'Herbie, to make a schlemiel out of yourself you don't need!'"

In fact, body and mind are not two things: the body is the outer side of the mind, the mind is the inner side of the body. To use the phrase 'body AND mind' is not right; you are bodymind, not even a hyphen in between. We should use it as a single word 'bodymind', 'psychosomatic'. So of course, your inner affects your outer, your outer affects your inner -- you are bodymind -- but you are not finished with the bodymind. There is a witness also.

John Fisant, rather than bothering about physical immortality, get in touch with your witnessing soul which watches the body and mind both. It watches life, it watches death; hence it transcends life and death both. Only this witness is immortal because it is never born and it never dies.

The Zen people call it the original face. This witnessing is your original face. And meditation is nothing but an art to discover your original face. You are immortal, but not physically; just in your awareness, in your consciousness you ARE immortal, you are universal.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WAS BUDDHA NOT A POET? DID HE NOT HAVE A LOGICAL MIND? HOW ARE WE AS NEW MEN AND WOMEN TO GO BEYOND WHAT YOU HAVE CALLED HIS ONE-DIMENSIONALITY, WHEN IT SEEMS THAT YOUR BASIC TEACHING, AS WELL AS THAT OF BUDDHA, IS SIMPLY AWARENESS?

Roderick, Gautama the Buddha was not a poet if you understand him directly, but if you understand him via me, he IS a poet. When I am speaking on Buddha it is very natural that my color is reflected in him.

I love poetry and I go on finding poetry even where it is not.

Buddha is like a desertland -- but I love oases and I go on discovering them. If you had seen Buddha you would have seen immediately that he couldn't have anything to do with poetry. Poetry was fiction for him, as much fiction as it was for Plato. In his Republic, Plato says, poets will not be allowed, for the simple reason that they are liars, they live in lies. What is poetry? Beautiful lying! Buddha was also of the same mind; he would have agreed with Plato. He was very insistent on truth.

My approach is different. I don't see religion as a dry, dead thing. To me religion is a song, a dance. If I am going to create a republic, a utopia, then poets will be the only citizens there; they will be the only ones allowed -- because beauty is far more valuable than truth itself. And the poet discovers beauty -- not only discovers, he creates. The poet is creative.

It is because of me that in Buddha you will find poetry. Excuse me, I cannot do otherwise. That's why Buddhists are not happy with me; particularly Buddhist scholars are not happy at all. They say I go on finding in Buddha things which are not there. I am not much concerned whether they are there or not. I use Buddha only as an excuse, just as I use Jesus and I use Mahavira and I use Patanjali. I am not a commentator -- I have my own vision. I use them as pegs to hang myself on.

When you are hearing Buddha through me, it is a totally different phenomenon. You are looking through MY eyes; hence Buddha will look like a poet -- but he was not. He was a very logical man; hence I say he was one-dimensional. He was utterly logical, as logical as Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein says you should not speak about something which cannot be spoken of. That's exactly Buddha's standpoint; Buddha would have immediately agreed with Wittgenstein. That's exactly what he said twenty-five centuries before Wittgenstein. He never spoke about God because nothing can be spoken about God; hence don't say anything. Even to say that nothing can be spoken about God is to say something about God; better not to say even that.

The Upanishads say: Nothing can be said about God; he is indefinable. Buddha will not say even that because that is self-contradictory. To say that nothing can be said about God is self-contradictory because you have said something already. Even to say that nothing can be said is saying something. Buddha was utterly logical, absolutely logical. He kept absolutely silent.

Whenever he would enter a town, a city, a village, his disciples would go ahead of him to declare, "Don't ask these eleven questions to the Buddha, because he is not going to answer, so don't waste your time and his time." Those eleven questions consisted of everything that

philosophy, theology, metaphysics is made of. If you don't ask those eleven questions, nothing is left to ask -- nothing metaphysical. Then you can ask only actual problems. You can ask about your anger, your greed, your sex. You can ask about your misery, suffering, how to get rid of it, but you cannot ask whether God is. You cannot ask what will happen after death. You cannot ask what is truth, what is beauty, what is good; he forbade it. He was a very logical man and one-dimensional.

Life is three-dimensional. And up to now there have been people, great people, but they were all one-dimensional. For example, Buddha is logical, so is Socrates. There have been great poets -- Kalidas, Rabindranath, Shelley, Shakespeare. They are one-dimensional: beauty is their god. And there have been moral people, absolutely moral people, virtuous people whose whole life was devoted to being just as virtuous as possible: Mahavira, Lao Tzu. But all are one-dimensional.

Humanity has come now to a crossroads. We have lived the one-dimensional man, we have exhausted it. We need now a more enriched human being, three-dimensional. I call them three C's, just like three R's.

The first C is consciousness, the second C is compassion, the third C is creativity.

Consciousness is being, compassion is feeling, creativity is action. My sannyasin has to be all the three simultaneously. I am giving you the greatest challenge ever given, the hardest task to be fulfilled. You have to be as meditative as a Buddha, as loving as a Krishna, as creative as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci. You have to be all together simultaneously. Only then your totality will be fulfilled; otherwise something will remain missing in you. And that which is missing in you will keep you lopsided, unfulfilled. You can attain to a very high peak if you are one-dimensional, but you will be only a peak. I would like you to become the whole range of the Himalayas, not just a peak but peaks upon peaks!

The one-dimensional man has failed. It has not been able to create a beautiful earth, it has not been able to create paradise on the earth. It has failed, utterly failed! It created a few beautiful people, but it could not transform the whole humanity, it could not raise the consciousness of the whole humanity. Only a few individuals here and there became enlightened. That is not going to help anymore. We need more enlightened people, and enlightened in a three-dimensional way.

That is my definition of the new man.

Roderick, you ask me, "Was Buddha not a poet?"

He was not! But the people who will become awakened here with me are going to be poets. When I say "poets" I don't mean that you have to WRITE poetry -- you have to be poetic. Your life has to be poetic, your approach has to be poetic. Logic is dry, poetry is alive. Logic cannot dance; it is impossible for logic to dance. To see logic dancing will be like Mahatma Gandhi dancing! It will look very ridiculous. Poetry can dance; poetry is a dance of your heart. Logic cannot love; it can talk about love, but it cannot love. Love seems to be illogical. Only poetry can love; only poetry can take the jump into the paradox of love. Logic is cold, very cold; it is good as far as mathematics is concerned, but it is not good as far as humanity is concerned. If humanity becomes too logical then humanity disappears; then there are only numbers, not human beings -- replaceable numbers.

Poetry, love, feeling give you a depth, a warmth. You become more melted, you lose your ice-coldness. You become more human.

Buddha is superhuman, about that there is no doubt, but he loses the human dimension. He is unearthly. He has a beauty of being unearthly, but he does not have the beauty that Zorba the Greek has. Zorba is so earthly.

I would like you to be both together: Zorba the Buddha! One has to be meditative, but not against feeling. One has to be meditative but full of feeling, overflowing with love. And one has to be creative. If your love is only a feeling and it is not translated into action, it won't affect the larger humanity. You have to make it a reality, you have to materialize it.

These are your three dimensions: being, feeling, action. Action contains all creativity, all kinds of creativity: music, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, science, technology. Feeling contains all that is aesthetic: love, beauty. And being contains meditation, awareness, consciousness.

You ask me, "It seems awareness is your basic teaching, as well as that of Buddha...."

I have no basic teaching, I cannot have a basic teaching. I am not a teacher at all. I don't teach you, I am simply a presence. You can learn, but I don't teach. You can imbibe my spirit, and my spirit and its implication will depend on you.

There are people to whom awareness will help as a basic teaching; they will learn awareness from me. And there are people to whom love will help; then they will learn love as a basic teaching from me. It will depend on you. I am multidimensional, hence I can absorb all kinds of people.

Buddha would not have accepted you all, remember, neither would Jesus or Mahavira; they would have chosen. A few people would have been chosen by Buddha and a few would have been chosen by Jesus and a few would have been chosen by somebody else. But I don't choose at all, I am absolutely choiceless. Whosoever comes to me is accepted, absolutely accepted, totally accepted, because I don't have a basic pattern. I have only hints -- and hints for all, for all kinds of people.

It is not a teaching; teaching becomes rigid, becomes defined. It is only a presence. I am only a window; through me you can look into God. And once you have looked into God, then you can look into God on your own -- I am not needed anymore.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE ALL THE AWAKENED ONES AGAINST DESIRING? WHAT IS WRONG WITH DESIRE?

Sujata, meditate over Murphy's maxim: Be careful about what you want, because you are liable to get it.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO I ALWAYS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RELATE TO MY WIFE?

Richard, because you are British, and you know British wives!

Sent to Australia for an extended business trip, the Englishman was asked if he missed his wife, who was still back in London.

"Ah, I don't miss her all that much," he explained. "One day a week I hire a local woman to come in and nag."

After they had been discussing their problems for more than an hour, the prissy English

lady said to the marriage counselor, "I think it is unfair to suggest that I don't enjoy sex. But what can you say about a man who wants it five or six times a year?"

And the last:

"I am taking Kung Fu lessons just in case some sex fiend tries to rape me on some dark night," the prune-faced Englishwoman told her long-suffering husband.

"Why bother?" remarked the husband. "It will never get that dark."

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ALL THE BUDDHAS SAY THAT ONE SHOULD LEARN TO BE SILENT, BUT IN
DAY-TO-DAY LIFE ONE HAS TO SPEAK. THEN WHAT SHOULD ONE DO?

Shakti, first meditate over Murphy's maxim: Think twice before you speak and then don't say anything.

But if you have to say something, then meditate over this:

Walker, a newspaperman, was on vacation up in Maine. He came across a lonely hut and began interviewing the owner with the idea of doing a story on the locale.

"Whose house is this?" asked the reporter.

"Moggs'," replied the Mainer.

"What in the world is it built of?"

"Logs."

"Any animals natural to the locality?"

"Frogs."

"What sort of soil have you?"

"Bogs."

"How about the climate?"

"Fogs."

"What do you live on chiefly?"

"Hogs."

"Have you any friends?"

"Dogs."

Be telegraphic!

The eighth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
AHA! I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT HIM -- MURPHY
IS A JEW! USED TO BE CALLED MOSHE KAPOYER?

Tao, this is a remarkable discovery! I wonder how you managed to find it out. It is true. Moshe Kapoyer was the only Jew in a small town and since business was bad he decided to change his name. There were other reasons also to change his name: because he was a Jew and the only Jew, people were avoiding him and his business was suffering. And secondly

because his name, Moshe Kapoyer, means Mr. Topsy-turvy or Mr. Upside-down, so he was not very happy with his name either.

He went to a judge and became Mr. Jones. One week later he was back before the same judge asking that his name be changed to Murphy.

"Why do you want your name changed? I just changed it last week."

"So that when people ask me what my name was before it was Murphy, I can say it was Jones."

The ninth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN I ALSO BE A GOD?

Krishna, Deva, I have given you the name Krishna Deva. It means God Krishna. Yes, there is no trouble about it. In fact you ARE a god; even if you want to be somebody else you cannot. Everybody is trying to be somebody else, but nobody has ever succeeded in being somebody else. God is our nature. You can forget all about it, but you cannot change it.

Flaherty and Gluckstein were discussing the merits of their religion.

"Answer me this," said the Irishman, "could one of your boys be pope?"

"No," answered Gluckstein. "Could one of your boys be God?"

"Why, of course not!" replied Flaherty.

"Well," said Gluckstein, "one of our boys made it!"

If Jesus can make it, if Buddha can make it, why not you? In fact, they could make it because it is not something to be achieved, it is something to be only discovered. We have forgotten it; it is already there like an undercurrent. Our godliness is always there; wherever you go it goes with you. It is you. It is in the sinner, it is even in the saint!

The tenth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I LOVED YOUR ANSWER THE OTHER DAY TO ARUP'S QUESTION. THE ONLY TROUBLE IS THAT I HAVE STARTED COMING HOME EARLY AND NOT DRINKING SO MUCH, WHILE ARUP IS GETTING DISCO PARTIES TOGETHER, GOING OUT AND GENERALLY HAVING A GOOD TIME. AM I BECOMING MEDITATIVE, WHILE ARUP IS BECOMING AS LOOSE AS A GOOSE?

Niranjan, now you know why I said to Arup that this is absolutely the sure way to raise the consciousness of humanity. She has started -- she has begun with you. You are her first victim!

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS MISUNDERSTANDING?

Dhyanesh, three stories for you:

Anna: "Is it true what I hear about your husband cutting down on his smoking?"

Hannah: "Yes, now he is smoking only after meals -- his meal, my meal, the children's meals, everybody's meal!"

The second:

The defendant was accused of sullyng the honor of a pure young maiden, according to the lady's testimony, and he was having a difficult time explaining the circumstances.

"I am innocent, Your Honor," he declared. "All I did was offer her a scotch and soda, and she reclined!"

And the third and the last:

Young Moishe was getting married. On the day of his wedding, his father took him aside and said, "Look here, Moishe, if you want to have a successful marriage you've got to make three things clear right from the start: you've got to show your wife that you're the master of the house, that you're a man, and that you're independent."

Moishe thanked his father and went off to his wedding and honeymoon.

Kavita, if you are asleep, be awake!

After the couple had returned and father and son were alone together in a quiet moment, the father asked how his advice had worked.

"Ah, beautiful!" beamed Moishe. "I put it into practice on the first night of our honeymoon. When we were alone in the hotel room, I first ripped off her clothes to show her who's the master; then I ripped off my clothes to show her that I'm a man; and then I jerked off in front of her to show her that I'm independent!"

Enough for today.