
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

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The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #1

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HOLD YOUR TONGUE.
DO NOT EXALT YOURSELF
BUT LIGHTEN THE WAY
FOR YOUR WORDS ARE SWEET.

FOLLOW THE TRUTH OF THE WAY.
REFLECT UPON IT.
MAKE IT YOUR OWN.
LIVE IT.
IT WILL ALWAYS SUSTAIN YOU.

DO NOT TURN AWAY WHAT IS GIVEN YOU,
NOR REACH OUT FOR WHAT IS GIVEN TO OTHERS,
LEST YOU DISTURB YOUR QUIETNESS.

GIVE THANKS
FOR WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU,
HOWEVER LITTLE.
BE PURE, NEVER FALTER.

Life is full of complications. Even when we are born there is a string attached. The greatest complication, the source of all complications is unawareness, unconsciousness. We are focused on the objective world and we are totally unaware who we are.

The whole message of Gautama the Buddha is to turn in. The message is simple, but the implementation is arduous. It is arduous because for many many lives we have lived outwardly, we have lived the life of an extrovert. We have completely forgotten how to relate with our own beings, how to be with ourselves. We have forgotten the path, the language, the method. Not only that, we have become completely oblivious that there is an interiority to us. We think as if we have only an outside. Now that is stupid. The outside can exist only with an inside; without the inside the outside is impossible. If we can see out, we can also see in. In fact, to see in is easier because it is there that we are rooted.

But never seeing in, we go on rushing in all directions, doing all kinds of things, not knowing why, just because others are doing them. We are imitating, following. We become carbon copies. That's the most ugly thing in life: to be a carbon copy. Man can never be blissful unless he is original, unless he knows his original face.

I have heard a very beautiful story. It may be true, it may not be true. Its truth is not historical but, far more significant, it is metaphorical.

The story is: Alexander the Great was on his way to India. He met a fakir sitting by the roadside with a round, small, crystal-like object in his hand.

"What's that?" inquired Alexander.

"I will not tell you," said the fakir, "but I will bet you that it is heavier than all your gold, silver and jewels."

Alexander ordered an enormous balance to be brought along with all of his treasures. On one side of the balance he piled all the treasures; the fakir put his small round crystal on the other side and, lo! it was heavier. Down it went and the vast treasures were lifted into the air. Alexander was amazed.

Then the fakir said, "I will show you one more thing." He took a little dust and spread it over the crystal. It immediately became light, went up into the air, and the treasures came down.

Alexander could not contain his amazement anymore and asked the fakir, "Please, you must tell me. What is this object?"

Said the fakir, "It is nothing special. It is only a human eye."

Man has the capacity to see himself too, but that capacity is full of dust. We have an inner eye too -- the third eye -- but that eye is not functioning, and we have not used it for so long that it has gone out of function completely; it has become a paralyzed part in our being.

Now even physiologists have discovered a certain part in the human brain which seems to be absolutely superfluous. They are puzzled because nature never creates anything superfluous. It must have a purpose, but it seems to have no purpose. It can be removed and that will not affect you at all.

But all the mystics down the ages have been saying the same thing -- of course, not in scientific terminology; they have their own way of saying it. They call it the third eye. A

certain part of your mind is capable of functioning in an introvert way only. Meditation creates the right atmosphere, the right climate for it to function.

Meditation simply means removing the dust that the fakir threw on the eye. And the dust is nothing but the whole mind process of thoughts, desires, imagination, memory. If you become capable of a few intervals, gaps, when all thought processes cease... suddenly you are and there is nothing to see inside. Then the turning happens; then immediately there is a radical change in your vision, your gestalt changes. The outside world disappears and the inside world appears.

It is because of this that the mystics say that the outside world is illusory. Not that it does not exist; it exists, but it is illusory because the mystic knows a certain state of consciousness when it simply evaporates, it is found no more. You enter into a totally different dimension: the dimension of bliss, the dimension of peace, the dimension of Buddha, Christ, Krishna.

These sutras today are very special. This whole series... this is the last series of Buddha's sutras. Up to now he was talking to the disciples who were getting ready. Now this last part of his sutras is meant for the BODHISATTVAS, for those who have become ready, for those who have experienced something of the inner. It is not for the initiates, it is not for the adepts. Hence this last part is the most important part.

Buddha says there are two kinds of enlightened people in the world; he is very scientific about his approach. His categories are very significant; nobody has done that before or since. He says the first category of the enlightened ones is called ARHATAS. The arhata is a mystic; he has known, he has realized, but he is utterly unconcerned about others. He has found the way. He has reached his home and he does not care about others who are seeking and searching, because his understanding is that if they seek and search authentically they will find the way themselves. And if they are not true seekers, nobody can make them true seekers; hence no help is needed. The arhata does not help anyone. He has traveled alone and he knows everybody has to travel alone.

When Buddha became enlightened himself, his first idea was to become an arhata. For seven days he remained absolutely silent, not saying a single word.

The story is: Gods from heaven came. They were very much worried because only once in a while does a person become awakened, and if he remains absolutely silent the world will miss his message. And his message is a medicine for those who are dying; his message is a nourishment for those who are starving for truth. His message can be a boat to the other shore. His message HAS to be delivered, he has to be persuaded. They came, and they argued.

But Buddha said, "You must agree with me that nobody was able to help me -- of course, I knocked on many doors -- because it is something which is not transferable. Even if they had it they could not give it to me; I had to find it by my own effort. Hence I think that is the only way: people have to seek and search; it cannot be borrowed."

He was right and the gods had to agree. And he said, "Even if I say it, only one out of ten thousand people will understand. The remaining ones will not understand; on the contrary, they will MISunderstand. So why create so much misunderstanding in the world? The world is already in confusion -- why create more confusion? Out of compassion I am keeping quiet. And the one who will understand will find it himself anyway. The man who can understand what I say is so intelligent that really he needs no help. So what is the point? Why should I bother?"

The gods were silenced. They moved into the woods to ponder over the matter. "How to

convince the Buddha? He appears to be right, he is logical, but some way has to be found." It is good that they were able to find some way, otherwise we would have missed THE DHAMMAPADA; these beautiful sutras would have been missed. The world would have been far poorer. The whole credit goes to those anonymous gods who persuaded Buddha!

They pondered over the matter for hours; they found a way. They came back and they said, "We agree with you, but only on one point we cannot agree. And that point is that we understand that only one person will understand out of ten thousand, so you need not bother about that one person; he will find himself sooner or later. It is only a question of time, and time does not matter because existence is eternal. So what does it matter, how does it matter, whether one achieves today and somebody else achieves tomorrow or the day after tomorrow? All those who have become awakened are contemporaries; it does not make much difference at all."

That's why I say I am a contemporary to Buddha, a contemporary to Jesus, a contemporary to Zarathustra, a contemporary to Lao Tzu. Once you know, you become contemporary to all the knowers. All small time gaps simply disappear, they are so tiny. Twenty-five hundred years make no difference at all.

That's why in the East we have not bothered much about time. Nobody knows when Krishna was born. We could have also created a calendar in the name of Krishna -- before Krishna, after Krishna -- we could have made a history. And Krishna certainly preceded Jesus by at least three thousand years, so his calendar would have been five thousand years old by now. But we have never bothered about it. Nobody knows when the founder of Jainism, Adinatha, was born or when he died. He must have preceded even Krishna by at least five thousand years. If we had a calendar then, his calendar would by now have been at least ten thousand years old. I am saying "at least," because Jainas say that he is far older. According to them he is almost ninety thousand years ancient; it is possible.

But we have not created history, we have not written history, for the simple reason that the people who are worth writing about go beyond time; for them time becomes irrelevant. And the people who are not worth writing about, only they make much noise in the world of time. Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Ayatollah Khomeiniac, these people make much noise in the world of time. A Buddha, a Krishna, a Jesus, a Zarathustra simply make no trace in time; they disappear without leaving a trace, as if they are not part of history, or they are part of a totally different kind of history which is nontemporal.

The gods argued with Buddha. They said, "We agree about that one person: he will find it whether you tell him or not, he is so intelligent; if he can understand you immediately, then he will find it by himself. And we also agree about the others, that thousands will not understand you at all; they will, on the contrary, misunderstand you. But they are already misunderstanding, what more misunderstanding can there be? So you need not be worried about that point. They are already in confusion, you cannot confuse them any more."

And this is my experience too: howsoever I try I cannot confuse you any more! You have already touched the rock bottom; there is nothing below it, you can't go deeper than that. You are utterly secure.

So the gods said, "You cannot confuse them more. They are so skillful in confusing themselves, they have done it already to the maximum. So about that we don't agree.

"And one thing more: there may be one or two people among ten thousand who are just between these two sorts of people -- the one who can understand you and the millions who cannot understand you and are bound to misunderstand you. Between these two do you think," they said to Buddha, "there is not a possibility of a few people, one or two or three --

yes, they will be very few, they can be counted on the fingers -- who may be just in the middle, neither so confused that they cannot be helped at all nor so clear that they can find their path on their own? Speak for them; they will be helped by you."

And Buddha had to agree; it was not an argument for argument's sake. People like Buddha don't argue for argument's sake; he saw the truth of it. He said, "I have to agree with you. Yes, there are a few people who are exactly in the middle, on the boundary line. If I don't say anything to them they may be lost in the crowd; if some help is given to them, a little hand, they may be pulled out of their mud. I will speak for them."

He was going to be an arhata. Arhata means one who has arrived but is unconcerned about others, almost cold, does not care a bit. He became a bodhisattva; that is the second category.

Bodhisattva means one who is not only a mystic but also a master, who has not only known himself, but tries to make it known to others. Of course, the work of the bodhisattva is far more difficult; the arhata is in a better position. The bodhisattva has to struggle with all kinds of insanities -- insane people, split people, schizophrenic people, neurotics, psychotics. Humanity is full of these people. The bodhisattva has to go into the crowd, into the mud where you are, because that is the only way to help you out. Unless he comes amongst you, unless he lives with you, unless he relates with you, communicates with you, in a thousand and one ways seduces you, creates the longing for truth in you, he cannot help you. And these are not easy things.

People are not concerned about truth at all. They are concerned about money, they are concerned about power, about prestige. They are not interested in being liberated, they don't want to be sane. They protect their insanity in every possible way because they have invested so much in their insanity. It is THEIR insanity and they are very proud of it.

Are you not proud of being a Christian, of being a Hindu, of being a Mohammedan? Are you not proud of being a German or British or an Indian? You are proud of all these insanities. These divisions have been destructive. These divisions have proved curses to humanity. They have been calamities, but you are very proud. Everybody seems to be proud.

I have heard:

An Englishman was talking to an Italian. And the Englishman asked the Italian, "If you had been given a choice before you were born, what nationality would you have chosen?"

He said, "Of course I would have been British!"

And the Englishman asked, "How would you have felt?"

He said, "I would have felt very proud!"

These were the days of the second world war and the Italians and the Germans were being defeated. They were losing their prestige and their power, they were condemned all over the world.

The Italian asked the Englishman, "If you had not been born British, how would you have felt?"

And the Englishman said, "I would have felt ashamed."

That's why the British seem to be the most neurotic of all -- very much obsessed with being British, as if it is something very great.

The same is the case with the Indians; they also suffer from the same chronic disease. They feel very proud of being Indian. They don't think that anybody else in the world is

really human; all are a little below. But that's how everybody thinks deep down.

When the first Westerners reached China, they wrote in their diaries that they could not believe the Chinese were human. Encountering such a different race for the first time it must have been difficult for them to accept them as human. And what about the Chinese? Their records say that looking at the Western people they were very much puzzled -- they had never thought that monkeys could talk like human beings!

Everybody tries to protect his insanity; hence it is difficult work.

"Psychiatry is a lot of junk," said one man to another.

"Oh?" said his companion. "Why do you say that?"

"Well, today my psychiatrist told me that I am in love with my umbrella. Have you ever heard of anything so silly?"

"It does sound rather daft."

"I mean, me and my umbrella certainly have a sincere affection for each other. But love? That is just ridiculous!"

Affection is okay: "... A certain affection between me and my umbrella, that's okay, but love? That's ridiculous!"

Just watch yourself, the functioning of your mind, how you go on protecting, how you go on defending yourself. And what are you? Nothing but a bundle of insanities!

These sutras are for the bodhisattvas, for those who are going to work with the crowds, with the insane people. These are suggestions for them. Try to understand each single sutra as deeply as possible.

HOLD YOUR TONGUE.

Buddha says: Speak, but speak only when it is absolutely necessary. Speak, but speak only to those who are ready to listen. Don't go on speaking to each and everybody; that is a sheer wastage. Speak only to the disciples because only a disciple is ready to risk. It is really a risk to transform yourself. It is a risk to encounter yourself. It is a risk to find yourself, to know yourself. It is a risk because by knowing yourself all your old projects will fall down to the dust, and your whole life that you have spent working for them will be gone down the drain. You will have to start from ABC, afresh.

Unless you are very courageous you cannot make an effort to know yourself. Yes, you would like to know ABOUT yourself; that is cheap. Knowing about is cheap because it is only information, it is not transformation. But knowing oneself is transformation; it hurts, it cuts you. It has to cut many chunks out of your being which are unnecessary, which are only a drag on you, which are only an unnecessary weight and a barrier to your growth. And it hurts because it goes against your idea of yourself, your image of yourself.

Hence Buddha says: Speak, but be alert -- speak only to those who are ready to listen. Speak only to those who are surrendered to listening. Otherwise: HOLD YOUR TONGUE.

Buddha is asked thousand of questions by all kinds of people; he rarely answers. He answers only when a disciple asks.

This happens here too every day. Many people ask questions who have come just for one day -- visitors, tourists, and immediately they ask great questions. I never answer their questions; they feel offended. They write angry letters: "Why don't you answer my questions?" I cannot answer your questions unless you are ready to listen, unless you are a

disciple.

A disciple means one who is ready to learn. If your question comes out of your knowledge I am not going to answer it; if it comes out of your innocence, certainly I am here to answer it. If you are asking only to be confirmed that whatsoever you think is right, I am not going to answer because I am not here to confirm all kinds of stupid ideologies.

Somebody believes in UFO's and goes on asking, "What do you think about UFO's?" Why should I think? I don't think at all!

Just a few days ago somebody was here who was asking about the theory of the hollow earth. I laughed at his question, I joked about his question. But people are so encapsulated in their knowledge. Back in America he wrote a letter thanking me, saying, "Whatsoever you say, I know you believe in the theory of the hollow earth." How does he know that I believe in the theory of the hollow earth? He gives the reason that it is impossible for an enlightened person NOT to believe. Now if I am to be an enlightened person I have to believe in the theory of the hollow earth. Buddha never heard about it and he was enlightened; Jesus never knew about it and he was enlightened. But this man writes a letter saying, "You may joke, you may laugh at it, because you don't want to say anything about it. There may be some reasons why you don't want to talk about it, but I am absolutely certain that you know that it is so."

Even if you deny it, even if you laugh and joke, the people who are convinced of a certain idea, whatsoever it is, howsoever insane, absurd, will find ways and means to get support for it. If you don't answer they will think you are not answering because other people, the common people, won't understand it; it is such a subtle matter that only very few people can understand it.

Now one woman has inquired, "Beloved Master, what do you say? I feel I have become enlightened." I never asked anybody. Why should you ask me? If you are enlightened, very good! Get lost! What are you doing here? Now become a bodhisattva and help others to become enlightened. Go to California because there you will find so many enlightened people, and all confirming each other!

Buddha says: The first thing to remember when you move into the masses is to hold your tongue.

Once he was convinced of the fact that people are in need of great help he insisted his whole life that, unless you find it absolutely contrary to your innermost nature, become a bodhisattva. But there are a few people for whom it may be against their inner nature; then they have to remain arhatas. Don't force them. Remember: people need help. If you can be of any help, do whatsoever you can, but if you cannot, if it feels simply something totally against your intrinsic nature, your inner voice, then forget all about it.

An arhata also helps in his own way; without helping he helps -- by his presence. He remains in his silence, he lives his ordinary life without telling anybody anything, without manifesting his experience, without expressing his joy. He lives joyously, but he makes no deliberate effort to communicate. Still, a few sensitive souls will be attracted to him. They will start following him silently, they will sit by his side. He will not say anything; they will listen to his silence. If he has arrived then there is an aura around him; they will be nourished by this aura. If he has found his home there will be such peace radiating that you will be bathed in it, you will be blessed to be with him. He will be able to help you only indirectly.

A hot and flustered city gent in his big car was hopelessly lost in a maze of country lanes. Spotting a local sitting on a gate, chewing a piece of straw, he drew up opposite and shouted,

"I say, my good man, can you tell me where this road goes to?"

"No," was the reply.

"Can you tell me where that road goes to, that turns off to the left?"

"No."

Getting quite a bit irritated the city gent yelled, "Well, where does that road that goes off to the right go to?"

"Don't know," was the reply.

"You must be some sort of idiot!" yelled the frustrated gent.

"Maybe," said the cool man, "but at least I know where I am."

This is the way of the arhata: he knows where he is. He will not say anything about any road, anything about any way, but he knows where he is and he is utterly contented with that. You can sit by his side, you can be nourished by his presence, but he is not going to make any direct effort. Indirectly... if you can drink out of his presence you are welcome, but he will not call you forth, he will not seek and search for you.

Buddha says: Mostly it happens that fifty percent of the enlightened ones are arhatas and fifty percent are bodhisattvas. That's how nature keeps its balance on every plane. So don't be worried if you feel one day that you have arrived, but there is no desire to help anybody; then don't force it. Forcing it will be ugly, will be violent, will be destructive. If it is not there it is not there. Then God is happy with you as you are.

But if you feel that there is a desire arising in you to help, to be compassionate, to hold somebody's hand, to make a boat and take people to the further shore, then don't be worried about the troubles. The troubles ARE there, but the world needs some people who can show the way, and only those who know can show the way. Even for them it is difficult. And the world is in immense need because it is being led by stupid people. It is being guided by politicians and priests, all kinds of people who don't know what they are doing. That's why it is always in such chaos.

Mulla Nasruddin's son came home late from school. The Mulla grabbed him and gave him a beating, saying, "Let this be a lesson to you not to come home late!"

The next day the boy came home with his clothes dirty from playing. The Mulla gave him a good smacking, saying, "Let this be a lesson to you not to dirty your clothes!"

The following day the boy came home with bad grades. The Mulla beat him again, saying, "Let this be a lesson to you not to get bad grades!"

The fourth day, as soon as the son came home, the Mulla just grabbed him and beat him. "What is the matter, father?" asked the boy, crying. "Today I came on time, with clean clothes, and with good grades!"

"Let this be a lesson to you," said Mulla Nasruddin. "There is no justice in the world!"

Now these are the people who have created the world and who are guiding it and who are teaching and who are bringing up new children -- to create more chaos in the world.

Yes, bodhisattvas are needed, but their path is far more arduous than the path of the arhatas. The mystic enjoys his bliss. He is like a beautiful roseflower, fragrant, dancing in the wind, in the sun, in the rain, but unconcerned about anything else. The bodhisattva takes the burden of others on his shoulders. He tries to help people who are mostly incapable of taking any help, who are not only incapable of taking any help but who are also very stubborn in their refusal of it, who feel offended if you try to help them.

That's why Buddha says: HOLD YOUR TONGUE.

Be very conscious of what you are saying, to whom you are saying it, for a few reasons. The first: the truth that you have found cannot be said; language is inadequate. You can only indicate, you can only make a few gestures -- fingers pointing to the moon. You cannot argue for it. You can persuade, but you cannot convince anybody. It is not their experience, so don't be angry if they don't listen to you. If they go against you, don't feel that they are ungrateful. They are simply behaving the way they can behave. You have to be very very patient with them. You have to accept all kinds of abuse that they will throw on you. You have to accept their stones as flowers. Even if they kill you, you have to die loving them.

That's how Jesus died: with a prayer on his lips to God, "Forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."

Secondly: to say the truth is to falsify it -- so try to say it indirectly; never make direct statements about it. Don't say "God is" or "God is not." These direct statements have created much confusion in the world; rather than helping people they have created conflict, wars, murders. Don't make any direct statement about God or truth or nirvana. You have to be very very subtle. You have to live in such a way that people become aware that you have attained something which is missing in their lives, that there is something more in life which is not available to them. That's all that you can do.

Speak not in prose but in poetry. Sing a song -- no syllogism is needed. Let your laughter and your joy trigger some process in them so that they can also start searching and seeking. Let YOU be the proof rather than making great arguments. A bodhisattva is not a theologian, he does not argue for anything. He IS the proof; he gives no other proof.

Truth is something which is beyond words and beyond even meaning. It is closer to music. So let there be a music around you: HOLD YOUR TONGUE... otherwise your words may destroy the music. Silence is more musical, more eloquent. Words give to truth a certain meaning, naturally, because words have meanings. Meaning gives a frame to the truth which is infinite.

It is like when you are looking from the window towards the starry sky and your window gives a frame to the sky. The sky has no frame; it begins nowhere, ends nowhere, but now your window is making a frame on the sky. That frame belongs to the window, but the person who has always lived inside the window and has never gone out of it will think that the sky is square like the window, that it has the same shape and form.

People live in words, they have never known anything wordless, so give them an experience of wordlessness. Help them to meditate. Rather than giving them a doctrine give them an experience.

Third: remember always, whatsoever you say is bound to be misunderstood by millions. So don't feel offended, don't feel angry, don't feel judged. When they are misunderstanding you they are simply saying something about themselves, not about you. Unless you can remain cool with all kinds of misunderstandings being heaped upon you, you cannot be of any help to them; then you yourself will need help.

Two very hippie hippies were walking down a country lane.

One hippie turned to the other and asked, "Did you shit in your pants?"

"No," replied the other.

A little further down the lane the first hippie again asked the other, "Are you sure you haven't shit in your pants?"

"Quite sure," said the other.

Further on down the lane the first hippie said, "Come on, take down your pants and let me see."

When the other hippie had obliged, the first hippie exclaimed, "There, I told you so!" "Oh," said the other, "I thought you meant today!"

People understand according to themselves.

Mulla Nasruddin was going to Italy, so I told him, "Nasruddin, learn a little bit of Italian."

He said, "I have done it. I have been taking lessons from Radha."

When he came back from Italy he was very angry. I said, "What is the matter?"

He said, "One day I went-a to a big town to a big-a hotel. In-a the morning, I go down to breakfast. I tell-a the waitress, 'I wanna two piss toast.'

"She bring-a me only one piss. I tell-a her, 'I wanna two piss.'

"She say, 'Go to the toilet.'

"I say, 'No, you no understand -- I wanna two piss on-a my plate.'

"She say, 'You better no piss on-a the plate, you sonavabitch!'

"Later I go out to eat at a big-a restaurant. The waitress bring-a me a spoon and knife, but no fock. I tell-a her, 'I wanna fock.'

"She say, 'Everyone wanna fock.'

"I tell-a her, 'You no understand -- I wanna fock on-a the table.'

"She say, 'You better no fock on-a the table, you sonavabitch!'

"So I go to my room in-a hotel and there is no shits on-a my bed. I call-a the manager and tell-a him, 'I wanna shit.'

"He tell me, 'Go to the toilet.'

"I say, 'You no understand -- I wanna shit on-a the bed.'

"He say, 'You better no shit on-a the bed, you sonavabitch!'

"I go to check out and the man at the desk say, 'Peace to you.'

"I say, 'Piss on-a you too, you sonavabitch. I gonna go back home!'"

When you are learning Italian, avoid Radha! I have also been learning from her, but since Mulla Nasruddin told me I have stopped -- it is dangerous!

People have their own language, their own minds, their own prejudices, their own concepts, their own systems of philosophy, religion. When you talk to them you are talking to a mind which is full of garbage; you are not talking to somebody who is silent. And unless one is silent one is bound to misunderstand. Hence Buddha says: **HOLD YOUR TONGUE.**

And the fourth reason is: truth is something existential, it is not philosophical. Philosophy can be talked about; in fact, you can't do anything with philosophy except talk about it. About and about it goes, round and round it goes. The word 'about' means round and round. But truth is existential. You have to help people to taste it. So talk only if you see that through talk you can persuade a person to meditate, to be silent.

It is a very paradoxical effort, hence the difficulty. You have to talk to people to help them become silent. You have to talk about silence because people can't understand silence directly. It is very absurd -- talking about silence, teaching people to be silent -- but that has to be done, particularly in the beginning.

Second: **DO NOT EXALT YOURSELF....**

It is very natural when you become enlightened. It is not egoistic, it happens very naturally. It has nothing to do with the ego because if the ego is still there you cannot become enlightened.

Buddha says: HOLD YOUR TONGUE. DO NOT EXALT YOURSELF... because when you become enlightened the ego HAS disappeared -- you can become enlightened only when you have fulfilled that condition -- but now the experience is so vast, so overflowing, so ecstatic that it starts expressing itself. You have to learn....

It is said of al-Hillaj Mansoor -- who was crucified like Jesus, in a far more inhuman and cruel way than Jesus himself -- it is said about him that the day he became enlightened, he shouted, "ANA'L HAQ -- I am the truth! I am God!"

His master, Junnaid, was present. He came close to him, whispered in his ear, "Mansoor, keep it inside you. Please keep it inside you! Contain it! I know it is very difficult to contain it -- it is so vast, almost uncontainable. It expresses itself. I know you are not uttering it, it is being uttered by some unknown force, by God himself, but still I say to you, hold your tongue!"

And Mansoor promised, "I will hold my tongue." He understood the point, but again and again he would forget. Again and again he would come into that same state of inner light, joy, bliss, and again the shout -- the lion's roar, as Buddha used to call it -- would come out of him in spite of himself.

He would come and apologize to Junnaid, his master, but the master would say, "Mansoor, something has to be done; otherwise you are going to get into trouble unnecessarily. You could be of great help to humanity, but this way you will be unnecessarily in trouble. And not only you, you will stop my work too. It happened to me too, but I had to contain it and you have to contain it too."

But Mansoor was not capable of it. Junnaid sent him to Kaaba for a three-year pilgrimage. "Maybe on this three-year-long journey, being with many mystics, he may cool down. The experience is so new; by and by he will become accustomed to it." But he could not become accustomed to it; when he came back he was again in the same state. He was caught by the king, by the people... because it was a Mohammedan country and it was one of the greatest crimes, the greatest sins, to call oneself God, to declare oneself God. He was killed.

For centuries it has been discussed among Sufis who was greater, Junnaid or Mansoor. Ordinarily one would say Mansoor: he was really a great martyr: he suffered and suffered laughingly. He died with laughter. Even Jesus had gone a little forsaken. When the last nail was put in his hands he looked at the sky and said, "God, have you forsaken me? Have you forgotten me? Why is all this happening to me?" There must have been a little doubt, just a shadow of doubt. He understood immediately, he apologized. He said, "No, forgive me. Let thy will be done." But for a moment he had wavered. Mansoor never wavered.

And he was killed so mercilessly that Jesus' crucifixion seems to be very humane compared to Mansoor's. First his legs were cut off, then his hands were cut off, then his eyes were destroyed, then his tongue was cut off, then his head was cut off. But even though all this suffering was there he was all laughter.

Before his tongue was cut off, somebody asked, "Why are you laughing?"

He said, "I am laughing because you cannot destroy my experience; whatsoever you do is irrelevant. And I am laughing because you are killing one person and I am somebody else. You are such fools, that's why I am laughing! And I am also laughing at God. I am laughing

at him, 'You cannot deceive me. In whatsoever form you come I will recognize you. I recognize you in the butcher who has cut off my feet, who has cut off my hands. It is you who are in him, and nobody else.'

In fact, Junnaid seems to be a little cowardly; many people think that he was a little cowardly. Why should he tell Mansoor to keep it inside? But that is not true -- he was not a coward. In fact, he sacrificed far more than Mansoor. Mansoor's sacrifice is apparent; Junnaid's sacrifice is not apparent, it is very subtle.

To contain the truth when it happens is a superhuman feat, it is a miracle. And he tries to contain it so that he can help people. He is a bodhisattva and Mansoor is an arhata. He cares nothing for the work, he cares nothing for anybody else. He has attained, now there is no problem. Death is not a problem at all, he knows he is immortal.

Junnaid is working silently, in the dark, to help people who are blind. And you don't know HIS suffering. His suffering is that he has to contain something which is uncontainable.

Buddha says: DO NOT EXALT YOURSELF.... Avoid any exaltation, avoid any declaration -- unless you find it is going to help, unless you find it is going to prepare the way; then it is okay.

Buddha himself declared, "I am the most perfect enlightened one." He knew that this was going to help. But if Jesus had asked him he would have said, "No, contain it," because Jesus was in a wrong country with wrong people. To declare there that, "I am God" was just asking for your death, nothing else.

Jesus could only work for three years. Hence Christianity is so poor, because the master lived only three years. Up to his thirtieth year he was working for his own enlightenment. When he was ready he came out of the monasteries, started working, and then lived only three years. By the age of thirty-three he was crucified. Now, three years' time is not enough at all. Buddha worked for forty-two years; even that is not enough.

If Jesus had asked Buddha, Buddha would have told him, "Keep quiet, work silently. Just be an ordinary rabbi. There is no need to declare that you are the Son of God. You know it, that's enough; and God knows it, that's enough."

But in India, Buddha himself declared it. It is a totally different milieu, it is a totally different climate. For centuries buddhas have happened in this country, they have prepared the way; hence it is very simple to declare, no problem.

Still Buddha says: Be very cautious, because your function is to LIGHTEN THE WAY. Don't create more trouble for people who follow you. They are already in trouble, they are living in hell. You have to make their burden light.

FOR YOUR WORDS ARE SWEET.

If your words come out of silence, compassion, understanding, out of absolute emptiness -- if your words don't come from somebody who is extraordinary but from somebody who is just ordinary -- then they will be sweet and they will help people far more deeply than anything else.

FOLLOW THE TRUTH OF THE WAY.

What is the truth of the way? Buddha is always for experience and never for believing. He says: Whatsoever you have experienced, now follow it. Don't believe it because it has

been told by other buddhas; follow it only when you have experienced and follow it only to the extent that you have experienced. If you follow it to that extent, your light will fall a little further ahead and you will be able to follow in that light a little more and a little more. And just by a small lamp one can travel thousands of miles; one can pass the dark night of the soul very easily, howsoever long it is.

And remember never to find a shortcut. Belief is a shortcut; experience is not a shortcut.

Just a few days ago my samurai-in-chief, Shiva, had a fall from a wall. Now, a samurai is not supposed to be a Humpty-Dumpty! So I inquired, "What happened?" I came to know that he was trying to find a shortcut from one house to another house by crossing the wall. And the shortcut turned out to be a long cut -- he had twelve stitches!

Avoid shortcuts; shortcuts don't help. There are no shortcuts in life. Life has to be lived in all its totality. A shortcut means you are avoiding a few things. You are jumping to the conclusion, avoiding the process, avoiding a few steps. You may reach the conclusion, but it will not be your conclusion. And if it is not your conclusion it is of no value, it is borrowed. You are like a parrot. Even a parrot can be very knowledgeable, but that does not make him a buddha.

Rastus, the hot, black Harlem stud, decided that he needed an exotic parrot for his classy apartment.

After searching for some time, he finally found a pet shop that sold talking parrots. The shopkeeper showed him one for twenty-five dollars.

"Polly wanna cracker?" inquired Rastus, to which the parrot did not respond. "This parrot doesn't talk," said Rastus, "I want me a talking parrot. Do you have any others?"

The owner said there was one for seventy-five dollars. He brought out a cage from behind the counter and uncovered a most attractive bird.

"Polly wanna cracker?" asked Rastus again, and again there was no response. "This parrot don't talk!" shouted Rastus with annoyance. "Don't you have any birds that talk?"

The shopkeeper told him that he did keep another one in the back room, but that it was quite expensive -- two hundred and fifty dollars.

He brought out the most beautiful bird Rastus had ever seen, and he excitedly asked, "Polly wanna cracker?" There was no response. Rastus was outraged. "Do you or don't you have any talking birds?" he asked.

The shopkeeper hesitated and then replied that he did have one bird that was quite exceptional, and although he had not planned to sell it, for two thousand dollars he would consider it. He led Rastus to a room at the very back of the shop. There, surrounded by one of the most complete libraries Rastus had ever seen, was the parrot. He was sitting in an overstuffed chair under a reading lamp, book in his lap, wearing glasses, a smoking jacket and slippers. He was smoking a pipe, deeply involved in his reading.

"Polly wanna cracker?" inquired Rastus breathlessly from the doorway.

Slowly slowly, the parrot looked up from his reading and wryly responded, "Nigger want a watermelon?"

Even then a parrot is a parrot!

Unless you have experienced, whatsoever beliefs you have are absolutely worthless. Hence Buddha says: FOLLOW THE TRUTH OF THE WAY. He means that which you have experienced by moving on the way of meditation, REFLECT UPON IT. Before you start helping others, reflect upon the experience that has happened to you through meditation --

because it is one thing to experience, it is totally another to express. Meditation is not so difficult as expressing the experience of meditation and persuading people to meditate. Mystics have been many, masters are very few.

A master has a golden touch. The moment he touches you, something in you starts growing. He is like a gardener who has green fingers.

REFLECT UPON IT.
MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

Absorb it totally. Meditation in the beginning is just an experience and you are the experiencer. Slowly slowly, the distance between the experiencer and the experience disappears; it takes time. Unless the experience and the experiencer become one you cannot help others. Unless meditation becomes your very heartbeat you will not be able to persuade anybody. It is almost a seduction! MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

LIVE IT.

Before you start helping others, live it in all possible ways. Walk meditatively, eat meditatively, sit meditatively, even sleep meditatively. Let meditation be spread all over your life. It should become a twenty-four-hour phenomenon, like breathing -- so much so that you need not remember to meditate. It becomes so much your own that it is always there like an undercurrent. Only then can you help.

LIVE IT.

IT WILL ALWAYS SUSTAIN YOU.

DO NOT TURN AWAY WHAT IS GIVEN YOU....

Remember, meditation will give you many joys, many blessings, many gifts will descend on you.

DO NOT TURN AWAY WHAT IS GIVEN YOU. Don't be a miser in receiving. People are miserly in giving, they are miserly in receiving too. When great gifts descend on you, you shrink away, you back away; you become afraid because those great gifts are so great that you feel you may be drowned. When bliss comes to you it is like a flood.

Hence Buddha says: DO NOT TURN AWAY WHAT IS GIVEN YOU... because if you turn it away you will miss the opportunity, and it may not knock on your door again for a long time. One never knows when the moment will come again. So whenever something happens to you in meditation, open your heart. Even if you are afraid of the unknown, still go into the unknown. And go dancing, go joyously, because in meditation nothing wrong can ever happen to you. In meditation, only blessings are possible.

NOR REACH OUT FOR WHAT IS GIVEN TO OTHERS....

But that's how our minds function. Even when the minds are gone, even when the snake is no more, it leaves its trace on the sand. People become more interested in what is happening to others. Rather than receiving that which is happening to them they start

becoming interested in what is happening to others; they start striving for those things.

Remember, that which is happening to you is yours and that which is not happening to you, you are not yet ripe for; and it cannot happen before its time, so don't hanker for it. Wait. Keep yourself as patient as possible. Receive whatsoever comes and don't hanker for that which does not come on your way; it will come.

... LEST YOU DISTURB YOUR QUIETNESS.

You can disturb your quietness in two ways. One: by refusing that which comes to you, out of fear. And two: by asking for that which has not come to you, out of ambition.

GIVE THANKS....

For all that comes to you, be grateful.

... FOR WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU,
HOWEVER LITTLE.
BE PURE, NEVER FALTER.

Whenever Buddha uses the word 'pure' he always means innocent. Don't become knowledgeable. Even if you have come to know yourself, don't become knowledgeable. Even if you have encountered God, don't become knowledgeable. Whatsoever you have known, forget all about it. Become again innocent. Remain always in the state of not-knowing, then much more will go on happening to you.

What ordinarily happens when you move into meditation is that something happens, but you don't feel grateful; on the contrary, you feel this is your due -- in fact it should have happened long ago. You are such a worthy person, so virtuous, so holy, and you have done so much; why should you be grateful?

That is a wrong approach; that means you are stopping the process. In gratefulness much more will come to you. So even if a little glimpse comes to you, feel grateful. Just a ray of light and feel grateful, as if the whole sun has come to you. And the whole sun will be coming, following the ray. But if you are not grateful you become closed; even the ray will disappear and you will again be in your darkness, back in your darkness.

And remember to remain always in the state of not-knowing. Don't start becoming knowledgeable, don't start philosophizing, don't start creating systems of thought. This happens; that's why Buddha is making his bodhisattvas alert.

I would like you to remember these sutras because many of you -- at least fifty percent of you -- are going to become bodhisattvas sooner or later. So remember these sutras -- they ARE for you. I am not interested in THE DHAMMAPADA, I am interested in YOU! I am speaking for YOU! THE DHAMMAPADA is just an excuse. I would like to say the same things to you, but Buddha has said them so beautifully, so poetically that I don't see any need to say them on my own; I can just comment on him -- because the truth is eternal and it remains the same forever.

Avoid philosophizing when you enter into the world of meditation. It arises, it arises inevitably -- the itch to philosophize -- because so many beautiful things are happening and you would like to create systems of thought around them. All these philosophies in the world have arisen in this way. Something, just a little, had happened, and they started creating a big

palace out of that. Just a brick was there and they made a big house, a palace, just an imaginary palace, out of it. Even the brick is lost in that imaginary palace.

Three small mice were sitting in front of their holes in a field. They were in a sad mood, as they silently watched the birds flying from one tree to another. After a while one mouse said, "It must be wonderful to be a bird and to fly in the sky."

All three mice pondered about it for a long time and became more sad.

Eventually the second mouse said, "It would be very nice to be one bird, but it would be even nicer to be two birds. If you were two birds you could fly behind yourself."

The mice thought about this even longer and they became even sadder than before.

After a long time the third mouse said, "The most beautiful feeling must be to be three birds, because then you could watch yourself fly behind yourself!"

This is what philosophy is. People just go on thinking things which are nowhere. But you can enjoy it. Philosophy is enjoyed by many people for the simple reason that everybody can afford it. If these three mice can afford it, what about man? Every man is a philosopher.

Buddha is very much against philosophy. He says philosophy corrupts, it makes you knowledgeable -- without making you a knower it makes you knowledgeable. It brings impurity; it pollutes your inner being.

Be pure and never falter from your purity.

If you want to help people, these sutras have to be remembered constantly. Meditate over them, make them your own, live them. They will always sustain you; they are a great nourishment.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #2

Chapter title: In a right moment

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY CAN'T I TAKE SANNYAS? I GO ON THINKING AND THINKING AND
THINKING.

Richard, sannyas has nothing to do with thinking at all. It is the crazy man's way to enlightenment! By thinking you can never come to a decision as far as sannyas is concerned. Thinking, at the most, can only help you to postpone it, and you can go on postponing it ad infinitum. Thinking, in fact, is a process of postponement.

Sannyas is not something that you can think about. You don't know it, you have not experienced it. Thinking moves within the world of the known; it has no approach towards the unknown, no bridge with the unknown. And sannyas is unknown for you. You may have seen sannyasins; that does not mean that you know what sannyas is. By seeing lovers you cannot know what love is. By seeing meditators you cannot know what meditation is. There are things which are known only existentially.

Sannyas is not a philosophical phenomenon, it is something existential. You have to take the jump... then think later on, then think as much as you want, to your heart's content. But once you have tasted it, then there is no way of going back.

Thinking is part of the head and sannyas happens in the heart; it is a love affair. It is utterly mad, as mad as love or even madder, because love happens biologically and sannyas happens spiritually.

Sannyas happens only to a very few, rare human beings. Love is ordinary; it happens to animals, to birds, even to trees. It is nothing special. Religion is absolutely supernatural: it surpasses your instinctive world. But our hearts are not functioning, and the head cannot work in the place of the heart.

That's what you are doing, Richard. You can go on doing it, but you will never arrive in the world of sannyas. The head is impotent; it cannot act because it is never spontaneous. It is only the heart that acts. The head only reacts; the head only goes on repeating the past. You have not been a sannyasin before, so how can you think about it? What can you think about it? There is no base to begin with.

Only the heart is courageous enough to take a jump into the unknown, into the unfamiliar. But with the unfamiliar open up millions of possibilities. With the unknown you start growing. With the known you go on moving in circles. Be a little heartfelt, not so thoughtful.

Richard, your name means hard. Transcend hardness, become a little soft, a little more feminine, a little more round. Losing a few corners will be of tremendous help. Logic is hard, love is soft. Logic is square, love is hip! Logic is always a coward; it thinks and thinks before it acts. And, in fact, by the time it comes to act it is already too late; the moment has passed.

Life is not static. It won't stand still for you, it won't wait for you. Who knows? Tomorrow I may stop giving sannyas -- then what? Then you will have missed the train! And remember, the sannyas I am giving to you nobody else can give to you. Gather a little courage. Today is the day!

The two skeletons in the corner closet were grumbling about the heat, the dust, the boredom.

"What are we staying here for anyhow?" one asked.

"Damned if I know," the second skeleton answered. "I would leave in a minute if I had any guts."

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,

I AM MORE AFRAID OF LIVING THAN OF DYING. IS IT POSSIBLE?

Yogananda, it must be possible if it is happening to you! Do you think you are managing the impossible? In fact, it is a very common phenomenon, nothing extraordinary about it -- very normal. Nobody is more afraid of dying than of living. The fear of death is nothing compared to the fear of life.

That's why thousands of people around the earth commit suicide, and many more think many times in their lives of committing suicide. Many try but are prevented; many try but try halfheartedly. But very few people try to live. The number of people who try to live life is much less than those who try to commit suicide or actually commit suicide.

The man who lives life becomes a buddha. How many buddhas do you have? They can be counted on your fingers. Only once in a while is there a man like Jesus, Zarathustra, Lao Tzu. Centuries pass; millions of people come and go, then only is there a man who really lives, authentically lives, lives to the utmost, lives fearlessly. Then what are the others doing? Their life is not life; on the contrary, it is a constant avoidance of life. They are simply protecting themselves from life. They are hiding in their black holes in the name of security, safety, comfort. They are simply trying to evade life.

You can watch yourself -- have you lived? You can watch others around you -- are they really living? People only become aware that they were alive when they die. When death knocks on your door, suddenly you become aware: "My God, I was alive! And now death has come." But when death comes, millions of people feel relieved -- relieved of the burden, of the anxiety, of the constant fear of life.

Death has no fear in it. When you are no more, what fear can there be? Death cannot hurt you -- life can hurt you. Life hurts because one needs to be very intelligent, alert, to live. If you live unconsciously, life is bound to be a painful experience, an agony. Life can be ecstatic too, but only when you are alert, aware. Life is an opportunity, but it demands; it is a challenge, it is an adventure, a moment-to-moment adventure into the uncharted.

You cannot be imitators if you really want to live. You cannot be Christians and Hindus and Mohammedans. If you really want to live you have to be yourself -- simply yourself. You cannot be anybody else; that is a way of avoiding true life.

God never repeats. He creates each and every individual unique, absolutely unique. You are not manufactured like cars on an assembly line. Hence Jesus will never be again, Krishna will never be again, howsoever beautiful they were. God does not believe in carbon copies; he always creates individuals. He is a creator and no creator would like to repeat.

But that's what you have been told to do, and you are doing it. Somebody is trying to be like Krishna or like Confucius or like Mohammed; these have become your ideals. Then you go on missing that which you are -- and that is the only way you can be. You become pseudo. Yes, to be pseudo seems to be a little more comfortable than to be original, because you can adjust to a pseudo society more easily, more comfortably. When everybody is false like you, you can easily become part of the crowd. When you are true and authentic, living your life on your own, in your own light, with no blueprints given by others to you -- by the parents, by the priests, by the politicians -- when you are moving every day into the unknown with no idea of what is going to happen, with great creativity, sensitivity, awareness, but with no fixed ideology; when you are exploring newer pastures, new peaks of being, then certainly you are no more a part of the crowd.

And the crowd hates individuals for the simple reason that they are so different. It hates them because they are rebels. It hates them because they cannot be enslaved easily; in fact, it

is impossible to enslave them. It hates them for their intelligence, it hates them for their joy, it hates them for their creativity. It wants to destroy them.

Yogananda, that's why people are afraid of life: life has many dangers. The path of life is full of hazards. One never knows what is going to happen the next moment; everything is possible. You cannot live with expectations because life has no obligation to fulfill your desires. You can live with an open heart, but you cannot live with expectations. The more expectations you have, the more frustrated you will be.

And then you can go astray. In death, nobody can go astray; in life you can go astray. In life you can commit errors, mistakes. In fact, if you really want to live you will have to commit many errors and many mistakes. Remember it: never be afraid of committing errors and mistakes; otherwise you will be paralyzed because of the fear. Go on committing mistakes and errors. Remember only one thing: don't commit the same mistake again. Once is enough. Invent new mistakes, discover new errors! Don't go on falling in the same ditch -- find new ditches! By committing mistakes, by going astray, you grow. That's the only way to grow.

Life is dangerous; death is very cozy, very comfortable. Lying down in your grave, what danger is there? There is no problem, no anxiety. You can't go bankrupt, your wife cannot leave you, you cannot die anymore. You are so safe in death! Life is not safe -- anything is possible. Life is full of accidents. Some madman may cut off your head...!

I have heard:

A great psychoanalyst was reading, sitting in his garden underneath a tree, and his only daughter, just eight, nine years old was playing with one of her friends on the lawn. Suddenly she hit her friend on the head with a stick so hard that blood started coming out of her head. The psychoanalyst rushed over, but before he could say anything his daughter turned towards him and asked, "Daddy, now tell me why I did this!"

She must have been hearing again and again that her father goes on finding reasons for every act, unconscious reasons and this and that, so now she asks, "Now tell me WHY I have done this."

Life can do anything and you cannot even ask why: you have to accept it. There is nobody to answer. Hence the fear, Yogananda. You say, "I am more afraid of living than of dying."

Everybody is more afraid of living; that's why people are dead. People die nearabout the age of thirty. Of course, they are not put into their graves at that time; they go to their graves nearabout seventy, eighty. The fifty years between their death and their entry into the grave are just a drag. It is a miracle to see dead people walking, talking, doing all kinds of things. It certainly is a miracle!

Love life. That's why to me life is the only religion, the only god. Live life in its totality. And the beauty is that if you live life in its totality there is no death. The body is bound to die one day, but you are not the body. If you have lived your life totally, if you have loved your life totally, you will have come across the eternal in you. That is the meeting with God. That is the encounter with truth that transcends time. And to know it is to know bliss; to know it is to know all that is worth knowing.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DO YOU CALL THIS PLACE A PUB? A PUB! I HAVE BEEN HANGING AROUND
THIS PUB FOR TWO YEARS AND I STILL CAN'T GET THE RIGHT BEER!

Niranjan, Perce walked in to where the Last Supper was being held, sat down at the table and said to the waiter, "Give me a scotch and soda!"
"I am sorry, sir," said the waiter, "all we are serving is wine."
"Okay, give me a nice steak with a baked potato and salad."
"Sorry, but all we are serving is bread."
"Holy mackerel! Only bread and wine! The guy who is giving this party ought to be crucified!"

Niranjan, please don't crucify me! This is not the Last Supper! And if you cannot find the right beer, the reason is because you are not the right person. You are so full of beer already, how can you find the right beer? How can you manage to know what is right and what is wrong? I don't think that in Niranjan's veins there is blood -- just beer! Go to the Medical Center and be examined. You can't have blood in your veins: you are really full of beer!

If some cannibals ever find you they will dance with joy. They will have found the right beer! And they are not going to kill you or cook you -- they will sip you!

Michael picked up a blonde at a bar and after quite a few drinks they went to a hotel room and made love. In the middle of the night Michael woke up to go to the bathroom and noticed that the woman had taken off a wooden leg and laid it by the bed.

As the girl slept Michael began fiddling with its springs and braces and finally found he had taken the wooden leg apart and could not put it back together again.

He went out into the hall and stopped a man perfumed with booze, saying, "Can you help me? I've got a woman in my room with one leg apart and I can't seem to get it back together."
"Hell!" said the drunk, "I got a woman in my room with BOTH legs apart and I can't even find the goddamn room!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DOES THE SEEKER HAVE TO SUFFER INEVITABLY ON THE WAY?

Deva Louis, it all depends. Growth in itself has no suffering in it; suffering comes from your resistance towards growth. Suffering is created by you because you resist continuously, you don't allow it to happen. You are afraid to go totally with it; you go only halfheartedly. Hence the suffering -- because you become divided, you become split. A part of you cooperates and a part of you is against it, resists it. This conflict inside you creates suffering.

So drop the idea -- many people have that idea -- that you have to suffer if you are to grow. It is sheer nonsense. If you cooperate totally there is no suffering at all. If you are in a let-go, instead of suffering you will rejoice. Every moment of it will be a moment of bliss and benediction.

So don't throw the responsibility on growth. Our mind is very tricky and cunning: it always throws the responsibility on somebody, on something; it never takes the responsibility on itself. YOU are the cause of suffering.

If you can remember three things.... The first is: drop the past if you want to grow,

because it is from the past that resistance arises. You are always judging from the past. The past is no more, it is absolutely irrelevant, but it goes on interfering. You go on judging according to it; you go on saying, "This is right and that is wrong," and all those ideas of right and wrong, all those judgments are coming from something which is dead. Your dead past remains so heavy on you that it does not allow you to move.

Drop the past completely and you will be surprised: much of the suffering has disappeared.

The second thing to remember is: don't create expectations for the future. If you are expecting, then again you will create suffering, because things are not going to happen according to YOU; things are going to happen according to the whole. The wave, the small wave in the ocean, cannot be the deciding factor. The ocean decides; the wave has to be in a state of let-go. If the wave wants to go to the east, then there is going to be trouble, then there is going to be pain. If the winds are not going to the east, if the ocean is not willing, then what is the wave going to do? It will suffer. It will call it fate, it will call it circumstances, social conditions, the economic structure, the capitalist society, the bourgeois culture, the Freudian unconscious... and now you will call it growing pains. But you are simply shifting the responsibility.

The real thing is that you are suffering from your expectations. When they are not fulfilled -- and they are never going to be fulfilled -- frustration arises, failure arises, and you feel neglected, as if existence does not care for you.

Drop expectations for the future. Remain open, remain available to whatsoever happens, but don't plan ahead. Don't make any psychological, fixed ideas about the future -- that things should be like this -- and much more suffering will disappear. These two are the root causes of suffering.

And the third is: the Human Potential movement lacks something essential. It tries to help you to grow, but it has not yet been able to create a meditative space in you. So there is constant struggle, effort, will, but no relaxation, no rest. Hence the third thing to be remembered and all suffering will disappear: create meditative energy, create a meditative space within you. Western methods lack that something which is very essential.

That's why here in my commune the effort is to use all the Western methods side by side with all the Eastern methods. This may be the only place in the whole world today where East and West are REALLY meeting, and not meeting in a diplomatic way as they meet in the UNO. Here they are really merging -- not politically, not diplomatically, because a diplomatic meeting is not a meeting, it is only a facade, it is pseudo. It is a love meeting that is happening here. For the first time East and West are in a love affair.

The West has grown a few very important methods: gestalt, encounter, primal, bioenergetics and many more. The East has also grown many methods: zazen, vipassana, Sufi whirling, yoga, tantra. Their approaches are different, so different that both are only halves of one whole; hence both lack something. The Eastern methods can create a meditative space, but they make you so introverted that you start escaping from life; all Eastern methods have proved escapist in the past. You want to go to a monastery, you want to go to the Himalayas, you want to go to a cave somewhere and to live alone. They teach you how to be alone, joyously alone -- but then something is missed.

Life is also relationship, life is also togetherness, life is also communion. It is beautiful to be blissful when you are alone, but that is only half the story; you should be blissful also when you are together with someone. And when you are blissful with someone, the bliss reaches a higher peak. When you are alone you are like a solo flute player; when you are

blissful together in relationship, the music is more like an orchestra.

The West has created methods which give you more impetus to be extroverts. They allow you methods, skills to relate, and to enjoy relationship. They are love methods, but something is missing. You enjoy relationship, but whenever you are alone... and essentially you ARE alone. You are born alone and you will die alone, and at the deepest core of your being you are always alone. So on the surface you remain happy, but deep down a subtle current of misery continues. You cannot encounter yourself, you cannot face yourself, you cannot meet yourself.

The West has failed because all that it has developed is extroversion; the East has failed because all that it has developed is introversion. And man is neither extrovert nor introvert.

I would like it to be on record that Carl Gustav Jung's typology is absolutely wrong. Man cannot be divided so easily into categories -- that somebody is an extrovert and somebody is an introvert -- because man is a totality, a wholeness. He has an inside and he has an outside, and both have to be nourished and both have to be fulfilled.

So if you are only following Western methods you will be going through much pain because you will not be able to create a meditative space through them. If you are following only Eastern methods you will be able to create a meditative space, but you will become absolutely useless in the world, and you will miss the enrichment that comes with communion with other human beings.

My effort here is to create the first synthesis between extroversion and introversion and help man to become so capable of both, together, simultaneously, so easily able to move from extroversion to introversion and from introversion to extroversion, that there is no need to divide man into such categories. Man can become so fluid.

It is as simple as when you come out of your house: you don't think that you are becoming extrovert coming out of your house. When you feel it is cold inside and outside there are no clouds and it is so sunny, you come out, but you don't think at all. You don't decide, "Now I want to be an extrovert." Or when the sun becomes too hot and you start feeling the heat, you don't make a deliberate decision, "I should go in. Now I want to be an introvert." No, when the sun is too hot you simply move in! And when inside it is cold you come out. Coming out of your house or going into the house is not a problem at all, because you are free from the inner and the outer.

My effort here is to help you to be free from the inner and the outer, because you are neither the inner nor the outer, you are something transcendental to both. The inner and the outer are just parts of your personality; it is the house in which you live which has an outside and an inside. But your awareness has no inside and no outside.

So these three things are to be remembered: drop the past, drop future expectations, and third, create a synthesis between extroversion and introversion... and all misery disappears.

Deva Louis, it is not inevitable for a spiritual seeker to suffer. You suffer because you are not aware of your own responsibility. It is not because of growth that you suffer. You suffer because you are unconscious of your resistance, of your past-orientation, of your future expectations, and you are unaware that you don't have any meditative space within you.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT POSSIBLE TO MISS THE PERFECT JEWEL? IS IT POSSIBLE?

Prem Maitri, it depends how conscious you are. If you are conscious it is impossible to miss. If you really know the perfect jewel, if you recognize it, if it is your own vision, your own understanding, it is impossible to miss it. But it may not be so. You may have heard others say, "This is a perfect jewel"; it may be a borrowed understanding. Then it is not only possible to miss it, it is absolutely inevitable that you will miss it -- it is impossible not to miss it.

If you come across a buddha and you pay your respects just because others are paying their respects, because others are saying, "He is a buddha, he is enlightened, he is awakened," you will miss. But if you have even a glimpse of your own into the being of the buddha, just a little taste of his milieu, just a small experience of his perfume, that's enough; it is impossible to miss. Then no force in the world can distract you. But it has to be your own experience. And we are so unconscious that nothing seems to be our own experience.

People say that Jesus is Christ, so you believe it. But the people who crucified him, they could not see anything in him; otherwise, do you think it would have been possible for them to crucify a man like Jesus? They crucified him so easily. No problem was felt; their conscience was not disturbed. They did it just as they used to kill criminals every year. The day they crucified Jesus they also crucified two thieves. They treated all three persons in the same way; in fact, they treated the thieves in a far more human way because the thieves were more like them.

Thousands of people had gathered to see. Nobody was crying, nobody was weeping, nobody had any pain in the heart. Even Jesus' own disciples had escaped, fearing that they may be caught.

When the people had gone -- when the show was over -- and Jesus was almost dead on the cross, three soldiers were there just playing cards. They were on duty so nobody could steal the dead body of Jesus. So just sitting underneath the cross they were playing cards!

And Maitri, you ask, "Is it possible to miss the perfect jewel?"

Those three soldiers were just people like you. Of course, now you will think, "Those soldiers must have been utterly stupid, great sinners, unconscious, not knowing what they were doing -- we could not have done it," because now you have heard for two thousand years continuous propaganda that Jesus was Christ. But Jews still don't think that he was Christ; they still think that he was a charlatan, that he was a deceiver, that he was a false messiah. Two thousand years' continuous propaganda has not helped at all; they have kept on clinging to their idea.

Do you think you would have recognized Buddha? Now, of course -- because now twenty-five centuries have passed and Buddha has become bigger and bigger, so huge; he looms large on the horizon like a beautiful sunrise -- you cannot believe that people could have missed him. But they were missing him! Even his own father could not recognize that he was enlightened; even his own wife could not recognize that he was enlightened. There were only a few people who had the courage to recognize him -- because to recognize him means you have to change your life-style, to recognize him means you can't remain the same anymore. To recognize a buddha as a buddha means you are waking up.

The big cafeteria was crowded. A long line of people carrying trays was slowly moving along the counter when someone shouted, "Fire! McGinty's house is on fire!"

Came the crash of a tray of dishes as an Italian near the front of the line made a mad dash out of the restaurant, around the corner, and up the side street, bumping into people and knocking several of them down as he worked his way homeward.

Then, just as suddenly, after he had narrowly escaped death several times, the man stopped short, clapped his hand to his head and moaned, "Hey, what am I doing? My name ain't McGinty!"

People are living in such unconsciousness. What to say about recognizing a buddha? -- you don't even know who YOU are!

Maitri, it is possible to miss the perfect jewel if you are not aware. But if you are aware then it is impossible. It all depends on your awareness.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DID GOD REALLY MAKE THE WORLD, AND JUST IN SIX DAYS?

Sujata, looking at the world, one thing is certain: it has been made in a hurry. Whoever made it, it is in such a mess that it must have been made in six days. Whether God made it or not I cannot say, because if you look at the world it seems more like a creation of the Devil than of God!

Man is so destructive, so violent, so mad, that it is very improbable that God made this kind of mind. Either the Devil made it or it was only the first time that God was making it so he made many mistakes. And he became so afraid of his own creation that he has not tried again. It seems he has escaped! Seeing what he has done he must have become frightened.

The story is that he made trees and mountains and rivers and animals. On the sixth day he made man and since then he has not made anything. It seems man brought him to his senses: "What are you doing?" He simply stopped absolutely.

But, Sujata, why do such questions bother YOU? It is none of your business! One thing is certain: you have not made it, so why should you be worried? You are not responsible, I am not responsible either -- I have not made it. So why should we waste our time with it? There are many crazy people who have nothing else to do -- leave it for them to think about. These are great subjects; one can go on thinking about them for ever and ever; they are unending. That's why philosophy begins but never ends, theology begins but never ends. It goes in circles. Each answer brings more questions than it answers.

If I say, "Yes, God made it," then immediately many questions will arise: "Why did he make it in the first place? Why did he not ask us whether we wanted to be made or not? This seems to be such a dictatorial act, not democratic at all -- people are being made without even asking them! And why did he make THIS kind of world when he is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient? He must have seen what was going to happen, he must have seen the future. He must have seen that there would be Genghis Khan and Tamerlane and Adolf Hitler and Mussolini and Tojo; he must have seen all these people. He must have seen that man would fight thousands of wars. He must have seen that sooner or later man would discover atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs and deathrays and whatnot. Then why did he create this world? Is he a sadist? Is he enjoying all this misery? And millions of people live in such misery -- and what does he go on doing? Can't he come and help?"

In scriptures it is said... in the SRIMAD BHAGAVADGITA Krishna declares: I will come whenever there is too much misery. Is it not enough, the misery that man is living in now? When is he going to come? And what did he do when he really came? He didn't help anybody. In fact, in his days the greatest war in India was fought. If we believe the scriptures,

so many people died in that war... the whole of India could not have contained so many people. Even now the whole world contains only three times as many. It must have been some war! Today it would have been one person out of three; in those days, five thousand years ago, the population was not so large. It could have been the end of the whole of humanity. What kind of help was that?

And God comes in Jesus: he sends his only begotten Son to save humanity. Nobody seems to have been saved. Jesus could not even save himself -- he was crucified! The savior was crucified by those for whom he had come; he had come to save them.

Thousands of questions will arise. Leave these questions to mad people.

Two inmates of a Michigan mental institution were chatting in the recreation room. The first loony said, "Don't talk to me, I am Napoleon!"

"What do you mean, you are Napoleon?" asked the second nut.

"I told you not to speak to me. I am Napoleon."

"How do you know you are Napoleon?"

"God told me I am Napoleon."

A little voice from the corner piped, "I did not!"

Leave such theological problems to nuts!

Some visitors to an insane asylum were being shown around by a guard.

"You see that man over there?" said the guard. "He thinks he is the Lord."

One of the visitors approached the lunatic and asked, "Did you really make the earth in seven days?"

The nut sneered at him, "I'm not in the mood to talk shop!"

Sujata, these are not really religious questions, although religious people have been talking about these questions for centuries -- because religion has been dominated by lunatics for centuries.

The really religious questions are concerned with YOU, with your unconsciousness and how to transform your unconsciousness into consciousness. Real religion is not metaphysical; it is rooted in psychology, it is psychological, because real religion means a way to transcend the mind. Unless you understand the mind you cannot transcend it.

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,

"HOLD YOUR MOUTH," YOU SAID.

DIFFICULT! ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR AN ITALIAN. MY APPROACH TO THE BODHISATTVAHOOD IN THESE DAYS IS CONTAINED IN THIS LITTLE STORY THAT HAS BEEN HAUNTING ME FOR MONTHS:

THERE IS THIS LITTLE MAN (ANYONE) THAT I MEET IN A STREET (ANYWHERE) AND HE LOOKS VERY MISERABLE, LIKE ALL THE LITTLE MEN EVERYWHERE... AND SEEING ME AFTER A LONG TIME, HE SAYS, "HEY, YOU LOOK GREAT!"

"HMM," I REPLY, "I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THE SAME THING ABOUT YOU, BUT YOU LOOK SO SAD!"

"WELL, YOU KNOW MY LIFE... I FEEL SO MISERABLE. BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU? HOW COME YOU LOOK SO RADIANT?"

"WELL," I SAY TO HIM WITH A SMILE, "I HAVE FOUND A MASTER."
"AH!" HE LOOKS AT ME SADLY. "AND WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?"
SO PLEASE, YOU AND THE OTHER GUY, BUDDHA, DON'T TELL ME TO HOLD
MY MOUTH. I CAN'T BEAR THIS LITTLE MAN KNOCKING EVEN WHEN I AM
DANCING, AND ASKING, "WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?"

Sarjano, now you have told him, what happened? The little man has not come to me yet. Just your telling him is not going to make any difference; he will simply think that you are crazy.

The miserable people think that if you are looking blissful you are mad. They can't believe that anybody can be blissful; that is beyond their grasp. Their whole life is such a misery, how can they believe there is any possibility of being blissful? -- unless you are mad. If you tell them that you have found a master they may not say anything to your face, but behind your back they will laugh at you; they will think something has gone wrong. They are not going to believe you. How can one become blissful by finding a master? They can't see any relatedness between their problems and finding a master. If their wives are nagging them to death, how is finding a master going to change it? Now the master will nag you more! If they are suffering from nightmares -- and everybody is suffering from nightmares, day in, day out -- how is finding a master going to help? They can't make any sense out of the statement.

I can understand your difficulty, Sarjano. It is very difficult to keep silent when you know the answer, but part of being a bodhisattva is to learn the art of being silent. Let them ask again and again. Let them feel that your bliss is not just something crazy, that your bliss is something real, authentic. Let them feel it of their own accord. Let them come and knock at your doors again and again.

Only in a right moment, when you see that they can understand, when you feel that their hearts are open, when you see a real thirst, a longing in them, when a search has arisen in them, only then tell them; otherwise you will simply be wasting your breath. And if you go on telling everybody and nobody listens, sooner or later you will feel very tired of the whole thing.

Buddha is right -- that guy is almost always right. Of course, he was not talking to Italians! That was not his problem, that is MY problem! But I know how to manage it.

Truth insists that it should be spoken, although it cannot be spoken -- that is the paradox -- but it insists that it should be spoken.

When you know and you see that others can be helped, it is impossible to resist the temptation to tell them -- but that is part of being a bodhisattva.

Somebody else has asked: "Beloved Master, you say fifty percent of enlightened people become arhats and fifty percent become bodhisattvas. Still you say again and again that there are many mystics but very few masters -- there seems to be a contradiction in it...?"

There is no contradiction in it. Yes, apparently there is, but only apparently. Not all bodhisattvas are masters. The bodhisattva is one who tries to help others; the master is one who SUCCEEDS in helping others. Just trying does not mean that you will succeed. Many try, very few succeed. Whosoever attains truth is bound to have the temptation to tell it. If he is not by nature an arhata then he will try to say it to each and everybody, and he will be thought just crazy. Communication is a difficult art, and communicating the ultimate truth is the most difficult phenomenon in the world. A master is one who waits for the right time.

Many people have asked me why I kept silent although I became enlightened in 1953. For

almost twenty years I never said anything about it to anybody, unless somebody suspected it himself, unless somebody said to me on his own, "We feel that something has happened to you. We don't know what it is, but one thing is certain: that something has happened and you are no more the same as we are -- and you are hiding it."

In those twenty years not more than ten people asked me, and even then I avoided them as much as I could unless I felt that their desire was genuine. And I told them only when they had promised to keep it a secret. And they all fulfilled it. Now they are all sanniyasins, but they all fulfilled it, they kept it a secret. I said, "You wait. Wait for the right moment. Only then will I declare it."

I have learned much from the past buddhas. If Jesus had kept a little quieter about being the Son of God it would have been far more beneficial to humanity. I had made it a point that until I stopped traveling in the country I was not going to declare it; otherwise I would have been killed -- you would not be here.

Once I had finished with traveling, mixing with the masses, moving from one town to another... For twenty years continuously I was moving, and there was not a single bodyguard. Shiva and his samurai had not yet arrived! And I was in constant danger. Stones were being thrown at me, shoes were being thrown at me.

I would reach a town after traveling for twenty-four hours in a train and the crowd wouldn't allow me to get down at the station; they would force me to go back. A fight would ensue between those who wanted me to get down from the train and those who did not want me to get down, in their town at least.

If I had declared it I would have been killed very easily. There would have been no problem in it; it would have been so simple. But for twenty years I kept absolutely silent about it. I declared it only when I saw that now I had gathered enough people who could understand it. I had gathered enough people who were mine, who belonged to me. I declared it only when I knew that now I could create my own small world and I was no more concerned with the crowds and the masses and the stupid mob.

Sarjano, there IS a difficulty. I can understand your difficulty. But please keep your big mouth shut -- Italian or not Italian! Otherwise you will simply be thought crazy. And if you cannot keep your mouth shut, then I will declare, "He is crazy!" Then nobody will listen to you. Then you can go on saying to these little men, "I have found the master," but they will say, "The master says you are crazy!"

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY IS EVERYTHING TOPSY-TURVY HERE?

Anurati, it must be because of the Italians! One has to find some reason....

The Italian died and went to the Pearly Gates where he was greeted by Saint Peter and his impressive Golden Book. After staring intently at the new applicant's sallow face, weak chin and shifty eyes, Saint Peter declared in thunderous tones, "I trust you are not Italian?"

Saint Peter's voice became stentorian, "Are you Italian?"

The Italian's reply was meek, "No, sir, I am Puerto Rican."

Saint Peter smiled. "Pass, friend," he said, "Come in."

Even Saint Peter is afraid!

And then there was one Italian chick -- so ugly that when she came into a room all the mice jumped up on the chairs.

Can anyone doubt that New York is a great city?

The Jews own it, the Irish run it -- and the Italians after fifty years are still wondering what happened!

How did Columbus happen to discover America?
He was trying to get away from Italy.

What did God say when he made the first Italian?
"Shit! I fucked up again!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #3

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YOU HAVE NO NAME AND NO FORM.
WHY MISS WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE?
THE SEEKER IS NOT SORRY.

LOVE AND JOYFULLY
FOLLOW THE WAY,
THE QUIET WAY TO THE HAPPY COUNTRY.

SEEKER!
EMPTY THE BOAT,
LIGHTEN THE LOAD,
PASSION AND DESIRE AND HATRED.

AND SAIL SWIFTLY.

THERE ARE FIVE AT THE DOOR

TO TURN AWAY, AND FIVE MORE,
AND THERE ARE FIVE TO WELCOME IN.

AND WHEN FIVE HAVE BEEN LEFT
STRANDED ON THE SHORE,
THE SEEKER IS CALLED OGHATINNOTI --
"HE WHO HAS CROSSED OVER."

A new inmate checked into a California asylum. He seemed quite happy -- in fact, he was laughing uproariously. "Nearest kin?" asked the examining physician.

"Twin brother," responded the fellow. "We were identical twins. Couldn't tell us apart. In school he would throw a spitball and the teacher would blame me. Once he was arrested for speeding and the judge fined me. I had a girl, he ran off with her."

"Then why are you laughing?"

"Because I got even with him last week."

"What happened?"

"I died and they buried HIM."

Man IS mad. Madness is not a disease, it is the normal condition of mankind. Yes, people differ in degrees, but that is not much of a difference. Man as he exists on the earth is insane.

The effort of all the buddhas is to bring sanity to you, to dispel your madness. But because everybody is mad, just like you, you remain oblivious of the fact your whole life. Unless you come across a buddha you will never be aware of the fact that you are mad. The buddha becomes a mirror: he reflects your reality, he shows you your face as it is -- and it is utterly distorted. It is not the way you are meant to be. Something has gone fundamentally wrong, something very basic is missing.

Man is born in such a state of unconsciousness that whatsoever he does brings more and more misery to him and to others. He goes on blaming fate, he goes on blaming nature, he goes on blaming the society -- but he always goes on blaming others, he never blames himself. The moment you gather courage enough to blame yourself, the moment you accept the responsibility of whatsoever you are, a ray of light enters into your being. You are on the path of inner transformation.

These sutras are for the bodhisattvas. Now Buddha is saying to his bodhisattvas -- to those disciples who are going to become helpers to mankind, who are ready to go into the world and to help people who are drowning in their own insanity -- Buddha is saying to his bodhisattvas, "These are the basic things you have to start your teaching with."

The first thing he says: Tell the people that... YOU HAVE NO NAME AND NO FORM -- because that is where millions are stuck. People live and die for name and fame. It seems their life purpose is to have a name known to the whole world, a name which is going to be written in golden letters in history, a name which will go on resounding down the corridors of time for ever and ever.

And the whole thing is so stupid, so ridiculous, because you don't have any name in the first place. You are born nameless, you are nameless. All names are arbitrary. Don't sacrifice your life for a name. Don't sacrifice the real for something unreal. We are sacrificing something true for something which is untrue and cannot be made true.

When a child is born, you know he does not bring a name with him; he is born as namelessness. But of course a name is needed; it has a certain utility but no reality. It is arbitrary. You can call him anything, any name will do -- X, Y, Z will do. In a more scientific

age there is every possibility that we will drop these old names. Somebody will be O-11, somebody will be X-13. Names are going to be more mathematical one day because they will be more precise. And there is no need to have the same name for two persons; computers can decide. The computer can say that this is a new name, nobody has it all over the world. Right now so many people have the same name; it is bound to happen. It is not very scientific, but it works.

Buddha wants his bodhisattvas to tell the people the first thing: You are nameless. So don't be worried about your name or your fame. You are also formless: your innermost being has no form. Your body has a form, but your body goes on changing; every day it changes. Within seven years your body is completely new, entirely new. Not even a single cell of the old exists in it, everything goes on changing.

If you come across the first sperm of your father that started your life, will you be able to recognize it as yourself? Impossible. Will you be able to recognize your mother's egg as yourself? Impossible. That was your form one day, but you were not it. And then in nine months' time in the mother's womb you passed through many forms.

The scientists say that each child passes quickly, very speedily, through the whole evolution of humanity. From the fish to the monkey to the man, he passes through all the phases -- of course in very quick succession because he has to fulfill the whole evolution in nine months. That's why a premature child is a little retarded, because he has not evolved yet completely; he has not been able to complete the whole cycle of evolution. Every child begins as a fish in the mother's womb. Will you be able to recognize that fish as you? But one day that was your form. Will you be able to recognize your face the day you were born? If a picture is shown to you it will be impossible for anybody to recognize that, "This is me." Right now you have a certain form; that form will also go down the drain in the same way. Every moment it is changing.

But there is something eternal in you: your consciousness, your being, your awareness. You can call it your soul, whatsoever you want to call it; names don't matter. But one thing is certain: that you don't have any particular form; you pass through many forms. You can pass through many forms only because you don't have any form, so don't become attached to any form. Don't become attached to any name and don't become attached to any form.

This is the beginning of sannyas. This is the beginning of initiation into the path.

In fact, you don't have any father, you don't have any mother; you can't have. The father fathered your body and the mother mothered your body; they both contributed to your body, to your form, but not to your essential core. Your body is accidental. You have been in many bodies before, thousands of bodies. You have passed through, you have lived in many many houses, and when you were living in a certain house you became identified with it.

Hence the pain of death. It is not because of death, remember; it is just because of your identification with the body, with the form. If you understand the message of Buddha, there is no pain in death. If you are not identified with any name or form there is nobody who is born and there is nobody who is dying.

In fact, that should be the real meaning of Jesus' virgin birth. Everybody is born in the same way. It is not only that you don't have a father, you don't have a mother either. The day you discover your original being you will know that you pass through the mother and the father, you come through them, but you are not created by them.

A snoopy social worker investigating conditions in an old tenement stopped a ragged, neglected-looking youngster and asked him where his mother lived.

"Ain't got no mother," replied the child.

"What about your father, then?"

"Ain't got none, lady."

"What, both your father and your mother dead!" exclaimed the social worker.

"Nope, never had any."

"Good grief, but that's impossible, my boy!"

"If you've gotta know, lady," said the urchin contemptuously, "some damned racketeer played a dirty trick on my aunt."

In fact, nobody has a father or a mother -- and no dirty racketeer has played any trick on your aunt either. You are eternal beings: you are never born and you never die. Death and birth are episodes in the long journey, in the eternal journey of your life. Life does not begin with birth and does not end with death.

But this is possible to know only if you become a little detached from the form with which you have become so much attached. You are not man and you are not woman either; your body is male or your body is female. You are not man, you are not animal, you are not vegetable. These are all forms, accidental forms, just circumferences, not the centers of your being. The centers of your being are totally different from the circumferences. And we have become so attached to the circumferences that we have completely forgotten the centers.

This is the basic and fundamental cause of our insanity. A man who does not know his center is insane.

Buddha says, tell the people:

YOU HAVE NO NAME AND NO FORM.
WHY MISS WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE?

How much people suffer if they are not famous, if they are not well-known! To be anonymous feels so humiliating. If nobody knows you, you feel as if you are no longer alive. The more people know you, the more alive you feel. If the whole world knows you, your ego is puffed up to the extreme, it is bursting.

That's why politics has so much interest for people, because that is the easiest way to become world-famous. You don't need to be very intelligent to be a politician; in fact, if you are very intelligent you cannot be a politician. You need a certain stupidity, in good quantity, to be a politician. You need to be stubborn, you need to be violent, you need to be utterly mediocre -- so that you can't see what you are doing, so that you can't see how you are wasting your life, and you go on and on.... You have to be utterly blind, you have to be very gross. Politics has great appeal because it can give you both a great name and great fame; it can make you a world figure.

I have heard:

A pope and a politician both showed up in heaven one day. Saint Peter greeted them and led the pope to his quarters where he would be spending eternity. Upon opening the door, the pope found a small, plainly furnished room with but one window. When he looked out he noticed the politician being shown to the luxury apartments across the way, which were equipped with hot tubs, saunas, swimming pools, tennis courts and the like.

Filled with righteous indignation, he turned to Saint Peter and protested vehemently, "I

am a pope! Why is this politician being treated like this while I get almost nothing?"
"Well," replied Saint Peter, "we have over two hundred popes up here, but this is the first time we've seen a politician!"

But here on the earth the politicians make much fuss. Politics has become the center of life; your newspapers are full of it, your radio programs are full of it. Everything seems to be colored by politics for the simple reason that these people have got something which you are all hankering for -- they have got name and fame.

But Buddha says: WHY MISS WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE? And, in fact, why miss that which you do not have and can never have? To believe that you are famous is to live in a fool's paradise. And even if your name is going to be written in history... you can make so much nuisance that they will have to write it down in history. Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong, of course their names will remain in history, but not in golden letters. History is not written in golden letters at all, and their names will be only in some footnotes. And even if they are there, what does it matter? Your whole history is bunk! It is less history and more hysteria! Of course, if you are very hysterical you will become historical. But what is the point of it all? You would have missed a great opportunity.

The real man does not care about name and fame. The authentic man lives his life irrespective of name and fame; he does not care a bit whether anybody knows him or not.

THE SEEKER IS NOT SORRY.

Buddha says: Teach people that the search for truth should not be a sad search. This is one of the things which has been very much misunderstood. Somehow the sad people have dominated the whole religious scene down the ages. Only once in a while do you find a Buddha or a Jesus or a Zarathustra who talks about joy, who talks about living in bliss. Only once in a while do you find a Krishna -- who not only teaches dance but dances himself, who not only teaches singing but sings himself. Otherwise the scene is dominated by pathological people, either by masochists or by sadists.

Ninety-nine percent of so-called religious people are ill, seriously ill people. They have gone into religion because they have failed in life, they have gone into religion because they could not cope with life. It is an escape -- and the escapist can never be happy.

Christians say that Jesus never laughed. Now, there cannot be a greater lie than that. Jesus, and never laughed? Then who will be able to laugh? Then nobody will be able to laugh at all! And the whole life of Jesus proves that he must have been a man of very joyous nature. He must have been really spiritual -- in the sense the French use the word SPIRITUEL. In French this word 'spirituel' means both "spiritual" and "humorous." There seems to be a great insight in it -- the same word meaning both. He must have laughed with his companions. It is well known that he used to enjoy eating and drinking, and when a man enjoys eating and drinking it is difficult to think of him never laughing. People who enjoy eating and drinking, people who enjoy parties, also enjoy dancing and singing and joking. He must have laughed, he must have joked. One cannot believe that twenty-four hours a day he was delivering only gospels -- he must have gossiped!

But the people who are sad, they would like him also to be sad. All the figures, statues, paintings of Jesus seem to be false. And they have been changing down the ages. In the earliest pictures he was shown without beard and mustache. After two centuries, suddenly the beard and the mustache appeared -- because without a beard and a mustache he did not look

like a prophet; he looked too young, not mature enough. A face without a beard and without a mustache looks a little boyish... suddenly the beard appeared.

In the East just the opposite has been the case. Buddha is never painted with a beard, neither is Krishna or Mahavira, neither is Rama or Patanjali... nobody. Why? -- because the Eastern idea is that these people were so young, spiritually young, that it is better to let them appear young from the outside too. The outside should represent the inside.

Buddha became very old, he died when he was eighty-two, but still he is never depicted as having a beard. Jesus died when he was only thirty-three, but the beard appeared after two centuries. Still his face was not sad. After two centuries even that face changed. He became more and more sad -- as if he were carrying the whole burden of the earth. Now they have changed him into the savior; he is carrying the cross. He has come to deliver you from your sufferings, he is taking your sufferings on himself. And they have falsified this beautiful man who used to enjoy the company of very ordinary people -- carpenters, laborers, gardeners, fishermen, gamblers, prostitutes, drunkards, tax collectors, every kind of people -- even tax collectors! They are making him more and more abstract; he is losing his earthliness. He is becoming more and more a concept rather than a real human being; he is losing his humanity. He is no more the Son of Man, he is becoming only the Son of God.

These are the sad people who are projecting their sadness on him. They say he never laughed -- I can't believe it. I can believe a far more impossible thing....

The followers of Zarathustra say that he laughed the very moment he was born -- I can believe that, that he was born laughing. It looks absolutely impossible -- no child is ever born laughing -- but it has something beautiful about it. Zarathustra getting out of the womb, laughing, appeals to me more. Such a joyous spirit! That's why Zarathustra could not become a world religion. The followers of Zarathustra are confined to Bombay only. And they are good people -- not religious in the ordinary sense, not at all.

Nobody thinks that Parsis are religious; in India nobody thinks them religious. They enjoy eating, they enjoy beautiful clothes, they enjoy the beautiful things of life, they enjoy beautiful houses... they enjoy everything! And we have the idea of religion as renunciation.

I can believe Zarathustra coming into the world laughing, but I cannot believe Jesus never laughing, because to me sadness can never become the source for the search -- although millions of people go in search of God just because they are sad. You remember God only when you are unhappy, miserable; when you are in deep anguish then you remember God, otherwise who cares?

But let me tell you: if you remember God only when you are miserable, your remembrance is not worth anything. It is almost a complaint; it is not a prayer, it cannot be. You cannot be grateful for being miserable, and prayer needs to be essentially gratitude.

Buddha says: **THE SEEKER IS NOT SORRY.** He is telling his bodhisattvas: Go to the people and tell them that if you don't drop your being sorry you can never become a real seeker. Seek God out of happiness, seek God out of joy, seek God because this call of the cuckoo is so beautiful, because the songs of the birds are so joyous, because the flowers are so ecstatic, because life is such a blessing. Look at the blessing that life is and then go for the source of it. From where are all these songs and all these flowers and all these stars born? What is the cause of it all, of this mysterious existence?

Don't go in search because you are sad, miserable, a failure. If you go with failure in your heart you will be simply repressing your sadness. You may start smiling, but that smile will be only a painted smile. You can see the priests smiling, but that smile is not true, it can't be true. They have never loved life enough for their smile to be true, they have never lived life

enough for their smile to be true. They are escapists, they are afraid of life. And the people who are afraid of life, their search is wrong from the very beginning. But this misunderstanding has happened and this misunderstanding has to be dispelled.

A policeman patrolling lovers' lane late at night shines his flashlight in the window of a car and sees a couple making love. He taps on the window and says, "I am next!" In ten minutes he comes by again and the couple is still making love, so he taps on the window again and says, "I am next!"

In twenty minutes he comes by again and the couple is still making love. Again he taps on the window and says, "I am next. What's taking you so long anyway?"

The man looks up and says, "Man, I'm really nervous. I've never screwed a cop before!"

Misunderstandings and misunderstandings....

Buddhas have been misunderstood so much that whatsoever you think about Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Lao Tzu, be very cautious -- ninety-nine percent of it is going to be a misunderstanding. If you ask me, "Who are Christians?" I say "The people who have misunderstood Christ." If you ask me, "Who are Buddhists?" I will say, "The people who have misunderstood Buddha."

Misunderstanding is so easy because if you want to understand a buddha you will have to rise a little higher to see what he is showing. But if you want to misunderstand you need not move anywhere; wherever you are, remain there and you can misunderstand. To misunderstand is so comfortable, so cozy. You can misunderstand without any effort; it requires no change on your part. But it will show in your life.

People go to the temples, but there is no dance in their eyes. Going to the temple and no dance in your feet and no dance in your eyes -- then why are you going? What is the point? Why are you wasting your time? People are praying, but there is no joy, there is no light on their faces. Then why are you wasting your time and God's time? But one thing is good: that God is utterly deaf -- deaf to all languages. He listens only to silence, he is available only to silence. So you can go on praying -- nobody is listening. It is a monologue.

Martin Buber says that prayer is a dialogue. I say no, unless a prayer is absolutely silent it is not a dialogue. Martin Buber says a prayer means an I/Thou dialogue. If there is I, then there can be no Thou; these two things can't exist together. If there is I AND Thou, then the Thou is only a projection and there is no dialogue at all; it is a monologue. You can believe that somebody is listening -- nobody is listening. You are simply wasting your time, your breath. Do something else, anything will be better. Even playing cards will be far better, drinking Coca-Cola will be far better!

Your prayers are meaningless. You cannot hide the fact. If you move towards God or truth in sadness, in misery, in some way or other, your life will show it. Truth cannot be repressed.

The Gladwells had a baby born without ears. They brought it home and their neighbors, the Petersons, were preparing to visit it. "Now, please be careful," said Mrs. Peterson to her husband. "Don't say anything about the baby not having any ears."
"Don't worry," said Peterson. "I won't do anything to hurt their feelings."

So they went next door, up into the nursery and stood over the new baby's crib with the Gladwells. "He's so cute," said Mrs. Peterson to the baby's mother.

"Yeah," agreed Mr. Peterson. "What strong arms and legs the kid has -- he's gonna grow up

to be a bruiser."

"Thanks," said the baby's father.

"How's the kid's eyes?"

"They're perfect!" said Gladwell.

"They'd better be -- he won't ever be able to wear glasses!"

Somehow or other it is going to come up. How can you avoid it? The more you avoid, the greater is the possibility you will stumble upon it. In fact, the very effort to avoid it makes you focused on it; then you can't see anything else.

A very holy man went into an optician's one day to order a new pair of spectacles. Behind the counter was an extremely pretty girl, which reduced the customer to total confusion.

"Can I help you, sir?" she asked with a ravishing smile.

"Er -- yes -- er... I want a pair of rim-speckt hornicles... I mean I want a pair of heck-rimmed spornicles... er... I mean...."

At which point the optician himself came to the rescue.

"It's alright, Miss Jones. What the holy man wants is a pair of rim-sporned hectacles."

Hence Buddha says the seeker has to start his journey not out of misery but out of joy. Rejoice in life. He says:

LOVE AND JOYFULLY
FOLLOW THE WAY,
THE QUIET WAY TO THE HAPPY COUNTRY.

When one first comes across these words one feels a little surprised. Buddha, and saying: LOVE AND JOYFULLY FOLLOW THE WAY, THE QUIET WAY TO THE HAPPY COUNTRY...? Yes, one is a little shocked because the Buddhist priests have been avoiding these beautiful sayings, they have been bypassing them. They have been emphasizing those words of Buddha which emphasize pessimism. And he was not a pessimist at all, he could not be. One who knows, how can he be a pessimist? It is impossible. He is not even an optimist, remember, because the optimist is connected with the pessimist; he is the other extreme.

Buddha is beyond both; he is neither a pessimist nor an optimist. He simply wants you to see that which is -- and that is enough to make you love life. It is enough, more than enough, to make you dance with joy, with gratitude.

And the way is silent, very quiet. Hence Buddha has not taught any prayer, he only teaches meditation. When prayer is silent it is meditation; when meditation becomes eloquent it is prayer. But first you have to learn meditation; otherwise you will move in a wrong direction. Without knowing meditation all your prayers are going to be false. You will be pouring your rubbish on God -- holy rubbish, but it is all holy cow dung!

First learn to be silent. And yes, out of silence some songs are born, out of silence some flowers bloom. Then offer those songs, those flowers to God. But they will be of joy, of tremendous joy.

SEEKER!
EMPTY THE BOAT,
LIGHTEN THE LOAD,

PASSION AND DESIRE AND HATRED.

Let me remind you again and again: Buddha is talking to his bodhisattvas, to his messengers, to his apostles, who are going to the masses. He is helping them with what to say, from where to begin. He is saying the first thing a seeker has to fulfill is, the first requirement of a true seeker is, that he should not have any belief system, that he should not have any philosophy, any ideology. If you already believe then there is no question of seeking, inquiring. Inquiry means you start with a state of not-knowing. Hence: SEEKER! EMPTY THE BOAT.... Empty your mind of all the baggage that you have been carrying all along. Become utterly empty. Then the same mind that has been causing you so much insanity, so much turmoil, so much anguish... the same mind when empty becomes the boat for the other shore, for the further shore. Empty, it becomes a vehicle; burdened with all kinds of thoughts, with all kinds of beliefs, scriptures, which each generation goes on handing over to the next generation.... We are so much burdened that we are carrying almost Himalayas of weight on our heads; it is not possible to move with such a load. You need unlearning. You already have too much knowledge; all this knowledge has to be dropped.

EMPTY THE BOAT, LIGHTEN THE LOAD.... When you are utterly empty, when you say, "I know nothing," then the inquiry starts. It is fresh, it is young, it is authentic, because there is a fundamental law of life that if you are in a state of not-knowing, a great urge will arise in you to know. Just as nature abhors a vacuum and it rushes to fill it, exactly in the same way if your mind is totally empty, truth rushes in and fills it.

But right now there is no space. Your mind is so full, even YOU cannot go in. You have to live somewhere on the outside. People are living in their porches; their houses are so full of junk that they are afraid to go in. They may get lost, and there is no space either.

And three things Buddha mentions particularly which are making you loaded, much too loaded. The first he calls passion, the second, desire and the third, hatred.

Passion means animal lust, biological, unconscious lust. Every animal has it, there is nothing special about it. If man has it he simply remains part of the animal kingdom; it is an animal heritage. You don't really become human unless you go beyond lust. You think that it is your love and you have great, romantic words to describe it and you use great poetry, but that is all rubbish. If you look deep down it is biology, it is chemistry, it is hormones and nothing else. If your hormones are changed you will not be interested in any woman anymore, or if you are a woman and your hormones are changed you will not be interested in any man anymore, and all poetry and all romance will disappear. The Don Juan simply needs a small operation... and he will disappear.

Buddha says the first thing that keeps your mind full of junk is lust. And it is, in a way, natural because for millions of years we have been in animal bodies; we are still carrying those imprints, we are full of animal heritage. We are ninety-nine percent animals; only one percent perhaps -- that too is a perhaps -- are we human beings. Just a little part of us has risen a little above.

A fiery-tongued Italian priest was laying down some heavy stuff about sex and morality. Stabbing his bony finger at his Little Italy congregation, the guinea padre bellowed, "Sex is-a dirty! I want-a see only good-a girls tonight. I want-a every virgin in-a church to-a stand up."

Furious at the lack of his parishioners' response, he repeated the exhortation.

After a long pause, a sexy-looking chick with an infant in her arms got to her feet. "Virgins is what I want-a!" the outraged preacher said.

"Hey, Father," the lady asked, "you expect a two-month-old baby to stand by herself?"

It is said that's why Jesus chose to be born two thousand years before us, because now where can you find a virgin? And, moreover, where will you find three wise men? Even if you find a virgin -- a two-month-old baby, okay -- but three wise men? The conditions cannot be fulfilled now.

People tell me again and again, "Jesus has promised he will come again." I say to you, forget all about it! -- he cannot come. The conditions cannot be fulfilled. If he drops his conditions, then it is okay. But then he won't be a Jesus, remember -- he will be just another hippie, maybe a Jesus freak but not Jesus!

Remember, Buddha does not want you to repress your lust, he wants you to understand, he wants you to meditate over it. He wants you not to repress it, because repression has never helped. It is repression that has made this sad situation in which humanity is living. It is repression that has driven humanity mad.

Buddha wants you to transform sex energy, not to repress it, because it is the only energy you have got. It can be refined, it can be uplifted, it can be channeled in new directions; it can be moved towards higher planes of being. And it all happens through a simple process of meditation.

The process of meditation is not complicated at all. If your mind can drop its load and if it can become absolutely empty, immediately your sex energy starts rising upwards to fill the gap, as if the emptiness pulls it upwards. A new law starts functioning: the law of levitation. Ordinarily we live under the law of gravitation: everything goes downwards. And you are so top-heavy that nothing can go towards the top; the top is already full, everything goes downwards. Make the top light.

In Japan they make a DARUMA doll. Daruma is the Japanese name of Bodhidharma, one of Buddha's greatest disciples, who founded Zen in China; he is the first patriarch of Zen. Bodhidharma was his Indian name, Daruma is his Japanese name. They have made a doll in his name, in his memory; for centuries the doll has been made. It is one of the most beautiful dolls; it has a great message. You throw the doll any way, it always sits back in a Buddha posture; you cannot put it upside-down. You can throw it, you can tilt it, you can do anything with it, but you cannot shake or make Daruma fall. He always sits back again in the lotus posture, as Buddha used to sit.

The secret is: his top is not heavy, his bottom is heavy. He has a hollow head, an empty head; there is nothing inside. The head is so empty and the bottom is so heavy that naturally he settles back again into the Buddha posture. It is a beautiful doll. It was invented by the Zen monks for children to play with, and the children are bound to ask, "What is the secret?" And the secret is that the head is totally empty -- the secret is meditation.

The second thing is desire. Desire is psychological; just as lust is biological, desire is psychological. Desire means more and more, always for more. Nothing satisfies, nothing fulfills; you go on running for more and more. And you know it, because many times you have achieved your target but your discontent remains the same. Again the desire arises for more, and you start running without giving it a second thought.

Buddha says: Wait, contemplate. Where is it going to end? You are chasing an illusion. The desire for more can never be fulfilled. You can have ten thousand rupees and your mind asks for one hundred thousand; you can have one hundred thousand, the mind starts asking for more -- and so on and so forth. Whatsoever you have, the distance between what you have and what the mind asks for remains the same. It is unfulfillable. It is driving people crazy.

Seeing it, seeing the point of it, one drops it. Or it would be better to say: the moment you see the futility of it, it drops of its own accord.

And the third thing is hatred. Hatred arises because of these first two, passion and desire. Whosoever comes in the way of your passion or in the way of your desire, whosoever becomes a hindrance, whosoever becomes a competitor, becomes your enemy. Whosoever tries to grab something that you wanted creates hatred in you. If the first two disappear, the third disappears on its own.

The first two are like fire and the third is just smoke. If you are still feeling hatred for something, for somebody, then remember somewhere there is fire still. Wherever there is smoke there is fire. Hatred and anger simply show that you are still living through lust and desire, consciously or unconsciously. But your smoke shows that the fire has not been put out. Go back deep into your being and put out the fire. And it can be put out not by repressing but by understanding.

Understanding is the most fundamental message of Gautama the Buddha. If it happens, you can SAIL SWIFTLY.

THERE ARE FIVE AT THE DOOR
TO TURN AWAY, AND FIVE MORE,
AND THERE ARE FIVE TO WELCOME IN.

AND WHEN FIVE HAVE BEEN LEFT
STRANDED ON THE SHORE,
THE SEEKER IS CALLED OGHATINNOTI --
"HE WHO HAS CROSSED OVER."

These fives have to be understood. THERE ARE FIVE AT THE DOOR....

The first five: Buddha says the first is selfishness, the second is doubt, the third is pseudo spirituality, the fourth is passion and the fifth is hatred. They are always standing at the door. You have to be very conscious; otherwise they will jump upon you.

Even the people who think they are doing selfless service -- their service is selfish. They are hoping to gain some reward in the other world, in paradise; hence they are serving. Their service is not just out of love, their service is a bargain. It is a search for some great reward -- heaven, paradise and the heavenly joys. Beware of selfishness.

Second is doubt. Even people who believe are full of doubt; in fact, if you are not full of doubt there is no need to believe. Belief simply means you have covered up a doubt. You have a wound, you cover it up with a beautiful flower, but the wound remains.

Third is pseudo spirituality. When people want to be spiritual it is easier to be pseudospiritual because it costs nothing. You can be a Christian, you can be a Hindu, you can be a Mohammedan; it is so easy, it is so formal. You go and do certain rituals in a temple and you are a Hindu, or you go to the church every Sunday and you are a Christian -- and it is so easy!

But real spirituality is going through fire. Real spirituality is rebellion against all that is rotten, against all that is past, against all that is being forced on you by others, against all conditionings. Real spirituality is the greatest rebellion there is. It is risky, it is adventurous, it is dangerous.

So beware of pseudo spirituality which is always there, available, easily available at the door.

And passion.... You can drop passion here, you can repress it here, but then you are

asking for it somewhere else. In heaven, all the religions have provided for your passion -- beautiful women are available there. Of course, because these stories have been written by men they talk only about beautiful women. Now I think some liberated woman is going to write a few scriptures; then they will manage some beautiful men, very beautiful men who always remain young, never become old, are always nice....

Your so-called mahatmas and saints, all have been hoping that beautiful women are waiting; it is only a question of a few days. Just torture yourself a little more and you will get an even better one. Just go into the scriptures of your religions and look and you will be able -- it is so clearly there -- to see the projections.

In the Hindu heaven the girls never grow older than sixteen, because in India that is thought to be the best age. So thousands of years have passed, but in heaven the same beautiful women are still hanging around at sixteen. They don't perspire; in heaven you don't need deodorants, you need not use perfumes, etcetera! Their bodies are made of gold. I think if right now you write the scriptures again you will not make the bodies of gold because they will be too heavy. Carrying a golden woman will give you a heart attack! A plastic one will be far better -- with washable, exchangeable parts! And just a few buttons... so you push one button and the woman smiles and you push another button and the woman goes into an orgasm and you push another button... and it will just be far more scientific now. In the old days those old fools could not think of anything better -- gold bodies! And if it is solid gold it is going to be really difficult.

But you can see the desire.... So Buddha says: Beware! You can repress here, but you will be desiring somewhere else. Passion is not going to leave you so easily.

And hatred: all your saints are full of hatred -- hatred for the sinners. That's why they have created hell: heaven for themselves and hell for the sinners; heaven for themselves and hell for people who don't follow their religion. If you are a Catholic you will go to heaven -- according to Catholic priests. The Hindu has no hope. First he has to become a Catholic, then he can hope; otherwise he is bound to go to hell. And ask the Hindus: they laugh at the whole idea! Their scriptures are far more ancient and they have a longer tradition -- and a longer propaganda. They think that except Hindus nobody is going to heaven; and not even all the Hindus -- the SUDRAS, the untouchables, have no place there.

This is hatred! This is still the same mind, the same ugly mind playing new games, but nothing has changed.

THERE ARE FIVE AT THE DOOR TO TURN AWAY.... These are the five. Buddha says: Turn them away. Be watchful so they don't catch hold of you.

AND FIVE MORE.... These five are very visible, and there are five more which are not so visible, but they are also there hiding behind these five. Those five are: first, lust for life.... It is easy to drop the lust for a woman or the lust for a man, but it is very difficult to drop the lust for life itself. Everybody wants to live and to live as long as possible.

You can ask in India -- yogis are trying hard to live as long as possible. Now what is that? Why should they be so much concerned about living long? And what is going to happen even if you live long?

Before Bernard Shaw died he left a message to be engraved as an epitaph on his grave. The message was, "I knew all along that if I lived long enough, something like this was going to happen."

So whether you live ninety years or a hundred years or two hundred years, what is the point of it? Death is going to happen. But lust for life.... Buddha says that ordinary people lust for money, power, prestige, and your so-called saints lust for life, long life. And the yogis

go on pretending that they are more aged than they are.

I have heard:

One yogi was telling people that his age was seven hundred years, and all the Indians were nodding their heads. One Westerner was also there, a tourist, who could not believe this. The man looked not more than seventy -- and he was saying he was seven hundred years? Impossible! He wanted to find out so he remained there.

He saw one man who used to serve the old man; he bribed the young man. And it is so easy in India to bribe anybody! In fact, nobody feels offended by it; it is absolutely accepted. It is a way of life in India, no problem in it.

And the young man was happy. He said, "What do you want?"

The Westerner said, "I want to know only one thing. Is your master really seven hundred years old? -- because only you can tell me; you have been with him."

He said, "Yes, I can tell you only one thing, more than that I don't know. I have been with him for only three hundred years."

And the man was not more than thirty years old!

And there are books -- now they are being translated into all the languages of the world -- saying that if you practice yoga you will prolong your life. And if you eat this and if you eat that, and if you do this ASANA, this posture, your life will be prolonged. If you breathe in this way or that way....

Buddha is saying this is the same lust. So the first subtle thing is lust for life.

And second: longing for birth in higher realms. Even if you drop it from here -- "Okay, I don't want to live long here" -- then you have a deep desire to be born on some subtle planes, some higher planes, bodiless planes. You would like to be angels. Beware of all these games!

The third is vanity. The people who are virtuous are very vain, they are not humble. In fact they may have practiced humbleness for years, but their practicing of humbleness has given them only a new kind of vanity, a new kind of ego.

Fourth: restlessness. These people are restless, they are not at ease herenow, they can't be. All their hopes are somewhere else, beyond death, in heaven, in paradise. How can they be at ease herenow?

A really spiritual man is absolutely at ease herenow. He has no other time; his only time is now, and his only place is here. And he is utterly at ease, at home. He does not hanker for anything.

And the fifth is self-ignorance. These people go on practicing yoga... a thousand and one methods are available. You can distort your body this way and that -- you can become a good performer in a circus -- but that will not help you to know who you are. And unless you know "Who am I?" all your knowledge and all your cultivated virtues and practices are simply futile -- exercises in utter futility.

AND THERE ARE FIVE TO WELCOME IN. And what are those five? Faith.... Remember, by faith Buddha does not mean belief; by faith he means trust, a loving trust, a trust in existence -- not in theories, not in scriptures, not in dogmas and creeds, but in existence itself, a trust -- because this is our home, we are part of it. If we live in doubt, we live disconnected from the whole; if we live in trust, a bridge is slowly slowly made between the part and the whole. Only with trust can one know what one is and what the whole is; and they are not different. The dewdrop contains the whole ocean; in exactly the same way, every man contains the whole of God.

Second: vigilance. One has to be very alert. Alertness is Buddha's method; his only yoga that he has taught is that of being alert. We are living almost mechanically, robotlike. Bring alertness to your actions, to your thoughts, to your feelings.

And the third is energy. We go on dissipating energy in stupid things -- quarreling, arguing, for no reason at all. Preserve your energy because unless you have an overflowing energy you will not be able to take the ultimate jump. The ultimate jump means the river entering into the ocean, the river disappearing into the ocean and becoming the ocean. If you are not full of energy you will not be able to reach the ocean; you will be lost somewhere in a desert.

And the fourth is meditation. By "meditation" he means remaining more and more silent so slowly slowly, a shift happens from mind to no-mind, so slowly slowly, the gestalt changes from noise to silence.

And fifth: wisdom. Wisdom is not knowledge. Knowledge is borrowed, wisdom is yours. Knowledge can be gathered from a library; you can contain the whole library in your mind. Still you will remain as ignorant as before; in fact, you will be far more ignorant than before because now the load is bigger. Wisdom comes from your own heart; it is the voice of our own inner being. It happens in meditation: when you are silent you start hearing the still, small voice within. That is wisdom.

AND WHEN FIVE HAVE BEEN LEFT STRANDED ON THE SHORE.... What are those five? Greed, anger, delusion, ego, false teachings. ... THE SEEKER IS CALLED OGHATINNOTI -- "HE WHO HAS CROSSED OVER."

This is Buddha's message for the seekers. He is telling his bodhisattvas to go and give it to the people who are ready, to the people who are prepared, to the people who are willing to listen, to understand, to follow the path.

Meditate over these sutras -- they are for you. Everything that Buddha says is very significant. It is no ordinary religion, it is pure religiousness. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #4

Chapter title: I goofed again!

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THERE IS SOMETHING THAT EVEN YOU CANNOT DO. YOU CAN'T PUT AN
ITALIAN IN AN IRISH JOKE. IT IS AGAINST THE DHARMA.

Dharma Chetana, it is true, I goofed again! Go on reminding me. These goddamned jokes are dangerous! And I love the Italians so much that wherever I can find a place for them I try to manage. Sometimes I succeed, sometimes I fail, but you caught me.
To put the record right, the joke is:

Two gentlemen are sitting in a garden, one British, one Irish.
The British gentleman asked the Irish, "If you were not Irish, what would you be?"
The Irish says, "Of course I would be British."
And then he asks the British, "If you were not British, what would you be?"
And the British said, "I would be ashamed."

But I got mixed up. That's why I have all my jokes typed with me. That one was not typed with me. About God and about truth and about religion there is no trouble -- I know them from my personal experience. But these jokes!

Yes, Chetana, it is against the Dharma. And I hope it is not going to happen again.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY CAN'T I SEE MY OWN FAULTS WHILE I AM IMMENSELY CAPABLE OF
SEEING OTHERS', EVEN THEIR SMALLEST ONES?

Prageeta, it is very normal. It is not something exceptional. Our eyes are focused on others; we are other-oriented. We only see the others -- it is not only a question of faults -- we never see ourselves. Even if we want to see ourselves we have to look in a mirror, we have to create the image. When the image is there the other has appeared. The mirror helps us to see ourselves because it creates the other. Otherwise we are absolutely extroverts; we have forgotten the language of how to look in. Hence, as a consequence, you cannot see your own faults; nobody can.

The moment you start seeing your faults they start dropping like dry leaves. Then nothing else has to be done; to see them is enough. Just to be aware of your faults is all that is needed. In that awareness they start disappearing, they evaporate. One can go on committing a certain error only if one remains unconscious of it. Unconsciousness is a must to go on committing the same errors. Even if you try to change you will commit the same error in some other form, in some other shape. And they come in all sizes and all shapes. You will exchange, you will substitute, but you cannot drop it because deep down you don't see that it is a fault. Others may be telling you because they can see.

That's why everybody thinks himself so beautiful, so intelligent, so virtuous, so saintly -- and nobody agrees with him! The reason is simple: you look at others, you see their reality, and about yourself you carry fictions -- beautiful fictions. About yourself you are very fictitious. All that you know about yourself is more or less a myth; it has nothing to do with reality.

The moment one sees one's faults, a radical change sets in. Hence all the buddhas down the ages have been telling only one thing: awareness. They don't teach you character.

Character is taught by priests, politicians, but not by the buddhas. Buddhas teach you consciousness -- not conscience. Conscience is a trick played upon you by others. Others are telling you what is right and what is wrong; they are forcing their ideas upon you. And they go on forcing them from your very childhood, when you were so innocent, so vulnerable, so delicate, that there was a possibility to make any impression on you, any imprint on you. They have conditioned you from the very beginning. That conditioning is called conscience and that conscience goes on dominating your whole life. Conscience is a strategy of society to enslave you.

Buddhas teach consciousness. Consciousness means you are not to learn from others what is right and what is wrong; there is no need to learn from anybody. You have simply to go in; just the inward journey is enough. The deeper you go, the more consciousness is released. When you reach the center you are so full of light that darkness disappears. When you bring light into your room you don't have to push the darkness out of the room. The presence of the light is enough because darkness is only an absence of light. So are all your insanities, madnesses.

But everybody can see others' faults, so don't be worried about it, Prageeta. This is the situation in which everybody is living.

A man dressed as Adolf Hitler visited a psychiatrist.

"You can see I have no problems," he said. "I have the greatest army in the world, all the money I will ever need and every conceivable luxury you can imagine."

"Then what seems to be your problem?" asked the doctor.

"It's my wife," said the man. "She thinks she's Mrs. Weaver."

Don't laugh at the poor man. It is nobody else but you.

A man went into a tailor's shop and saw a man hanging by one arm from the center of the ceiling.

"What is he doing there?" he asked the tailor.

"Oh, pay no attention," said the tailor, "he thinks he's a light bulb."

"Well, why don't you tell him he's not?" asked the startled customer.

"What?" replied the tailor. "And work in the dark?"

The moment you know you are mad you are no longer mad. That's the only criterion of sanity. The moment you know you are ignorant you have become wise.

The Oracle at Delphi declared Socrates the most wise man on the earth. A few people rushed to Socrates and they told him, "Be pleased, rejoice: the Oracle at Delphi has declared you the wisest man in the world."

Socrates said, "That is all nonsense. I know only one thing: that I know nothing."

The people were puzzled and confused. They went back to the temple, they told the Oracle, "You say that Socrates is the wisest man in the world, but he himself denies it. On the contrary, he says he is utterly ignorant. He says he knows only one thing: that he knows nothing."

The Oracle laughed and said, "That's why I have declared him the wisest man in the world, the greatest wise man in the world. That's why -- precisely because he knows that he is ignorant."

Ignorant people believe they are wise. Insane people believe they are the sanest.

Yes, Prageeta, it happens; it is part of human nature that we go on looking to the outside. We watch everybody except ourselves. Hence we know more about others than about ourselves; we know nothing about ourselves. We are not witnesses to our own functioning of the mind, we are not watchful inside.

You need a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn -- that's what meditation is all about. You have to close your eyes and start watching. In the beginning you will find only darkness and nothing else. And many people become frightened and rush out because outside there is light. Yes, there is light outside but that light is not going to enlighten you, that light is not going to help you at all. You need inner light, a light which has its source in your very being, a light which cannot be extinguished even by death, a light which is eternal. And you have it, the potential is there! You are born with it, but you are keeping it behind you; you never look at it.

And because for centuries, for many lives, you have looked outside, it has become a mechanical habit. Even when you are asleep you are looking at dreams. Dreams mean reflections of the outside. When you close your eyes you again start daydreaming or thinking; that means again you become interested in others. This has become such a chronic habit that there are not even small intervals, small windows into your own being from where you can have a glimpse of who you are.

In the beginning it is a hard struggle, it is arduous, it is difficult -- but not impossible. If you are decisive, if you are committed to inner exploration, then sooner or later it happens. You just have to go on digging, you have to go on struggling with the darkness. Soon you will pass the darkness and you will enter into the realm of light. And that light is true light, far truer than the light of the sun or the moon, because all the lights that are outside are temporal; they are only for the time being.

Even the sun is going to die one day. Not only do small lamps exhaust their resources and die in the morning, even the sun with such an immense resource is dying every day. Sooner or later it will become a black hole; it will die and no light will come from it. Howsoever long it lives it is not eternal. The inner light is eternal; it has no beginning, no end. It is synonymous with God.

And I am not interested in telling you to drop your faults, to make yourself good, to improve your character -- no, not at all. I am not interested in your character at all; I am interested only in your consciousness.

Become more alert, more conscious. Just go deeper and deeper into yourself till you find the center of your being. You are living on the periphery, and on the periphery there is always turmoil. The deeper you go, the deeper the silence that prevails. And in those experiences of silence, light, joy, your life starts moving into a different dimension. The errors, the mistakes start disappearing.

So don't be worried about the errors and the mistakes and the faults. Be concerned about one single thing, one single phenomenon; put your total energy into one goal, and that is how to be more conscious, how to be more awakened. If you put your total energy into it, it is going to happen, it is inevitable. It is your birthright.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY CALLING SARJANO A BIGMOUTH?

Nirmal, exactly that: a big mouth!

I will tell you a fictitious story:

I was going to the Himalayas; Radha was accompanying me. The train was stopped in the middle of the night in the jungle and the whole train was robbed. The robbers came to our compartment also.

I told them, "Don't disturb us. Take whatsoever you want."

So they carried away the two suitcases. I was worried about Radha, that she might get very much frightened, might become very much concerned about her things, but I was surprised. When they left she started laughing, "Ha, ha! Ha, ha!"

I said, "What is the matter, Radha? What's-a matta?"

She said, "I befooled them! I have saved your fifty-thousand-dollar diamond watch, I have saved my Rolex, I have saved my earrings, I have saved my gold and diamond ring, and all the valuables."

I said, "How did you manage?"

She said, "I kept all of them in my mouth."

I said, "That makes me feel very sad."

She said, "Why?"

I said, "If we had brought Sarjano with us, he would have saved the two suitcases! Next time we come to the Himalayas never forget: Sarjano has to accompany us!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER, DOES IT MEAN THE SAME TO WEAR A MALA OR A CROSS?

Jan, it does not mean the same -- they are polar opposites. The people who have become interested in the cross are pathological. They are not interested in Christ, they are interested in the cross. If they were really interested in Christ they would have also been interested in Buddha, in Lao Tzu, in Krishna, in Kabir. But they are not interested in Christ, they are interested in the cross.

Hence I don't call Christianity "Christianity," I call it "Crossianity." If Jesus had not been crucified there would have been no such thing as you find all over the world in the name of Christianity. These people became interested in death; this interest is morbid. They became interested in worshipping death. Jesus is secondary, the cross became primary. Because he was crucified, because he suffered, he caught their attention. There are people who are always interested in suffering, in misery, in death.

My interest is not death, my interest is life. I love life unconditionally. I celebrate death too, just because it is part of life -- not as death but as part of life, as the finishing touch, as the crescendo, as the ultimate flowering of life. If you have lived rightly, your death is a beautiful phenomenon. But my interest basically, intrinsically, is life.

The mala represents life, the cross represents death. The mala represents a certain art of making life a garland. The beads are the moments. Each bead has to be perfect; each moment has to be lived in its perfection. And there is a thread running through them which is invisible, passing through each bead; that thread is of eternity. Each moment is threaded with eternity.

Unless your life knows what eternity is your life will be just a heap of beads or a heap of flowers, but it will not be a garland, it will not be a mala. It will not have any inner harmony -- the beads will remain unrelated. It will be a chaos, it will not be a cosmos; there will be no order, no discipline. But the discipline should be invisible like the thread.

And how does one come to know eternity? The only way to know the thread is to go inside the bead. There, at the very center of the bead, you will find the thread passing. Going deep into each moment, going totally into it, you will find eternity. Each moment is part of an eternal procession, of an eternal celebration.

The mala represents time as beads, visible, and the thread as eternity, the invisible. There are one hundred and eight beads in the mala. One hundred and eight beads represent one hundred and eight methods of meditation; all the methods of meditation can be reduced to one hundred and eight -- one hundred and eight methods are the fundamental methods of meditation. Then they can have thousands with little differences, little changes -- joining two methods or three methods or a few parts of one method and a few parts of another method. One can make as many methods as possible, but the fundamental methods are one hundred and eight.

The mala has one hundred and eight beads and a locket with a picture of somebody... nobody knows who he is. Somebody anonymous, somebody who is more a nobody than a somebody; a man who has died long ago as a separate entity, who does not exist anymore as an 'I' but is only an open space. That is where you have to reach, that is where you have to arrive. That is your ultimate home.

The mala is not a cross. Christianity worships death and that is where it has gone wrong. It has lost the joy of life, the laughter, the humor. It has lost contact with Jesus. It goes on worshipping the crucified Jesus, but it is not capable of worshipping the alive Jesus.

And my effort here is to help you to worship life, to live so joyously, with such humor, that your life becomes a dance. I don't want you to become sad and serious -- sincere of course, but serious, never. I would like you to go deeper into existence. Dance with the flowers! Have dialogues with the stars! Look into people's eyes and love and don't hold back. The only unspiritual people are those who are holding back, who are living in a miserly way, who are living only partially, fragmentarily, who are not integrated.

And don't live an accidental life; let there be a thread running through it. The Sanskrit word for thread is SUTRA. That's why these great sayings of Buddha, Patanjali, Krishna, Mahavira are called sutras: these are threads. If you understand them your life will not remain just a heap, an accidental heap. You will not be just driftwood at the mercy of unconscious forces. Your life will become a conscious movement, your life will become an art. It will have a sense of direction, and each act will be connected with every other act of your life. You will not be accidental. If you are accidental you will be only a noise; if you are not accidental you can become music.

The mala represents music, it represents harmony. It shows that you have found the sutra, the thread that makes your life one whole, one piece. Life is beautiful when it is one piece; life is ugly when it is fragmentary -- when you are just a crowd and when the crowd is always fighting within you, when there is always a civil war.

Of course, the cross has influenced humanity very much, because millions of people find meaning in the cross -- because it fits with their lives. Their lives are almost on the cross: they are living in agony, they have never tasted what ecstasy is.

It is not an accident that Krishna's message has not reached millions. Just the other day I was telling you that Zarathustra has not reached millions for the simple reason that he loved

life. Jesus has reached millions not because of himself but because of an accident in his life. It is because of the Jews and the Romans: if they had not crucified him, if they had tolerated him, he would have died by himself and then nobody would have heard anything about him. All these churches and thousands of monks and nuns would not have been seen at all -- they gathered around the cross. The cross became significant because it synchronizes with something in their life. Their life is of suffering and the cross represents it. They are also on the cross. Their whole life is agony, their whole life is hell.

What I am saying is not going to appeal to many people. It is going to appeal to only a few intelligent ones, courageous ones, to only a few who are really healthy and whole. This is unfortunate, but this has been so up to now.

Whenever somebody comes here to teach life to you he seems far away; there seems to be no dialogue happening between him and you. He talks about dance and you don't even know how to walk! He talks about ecstasy and you don't know what that word means.

One of my sannyasins has just come from Greece. She has informed me that in Greece 'ecstasy' -- EKSTASIS -- means bus stop! That seems to be more meaningful. And in a sense it is a bus stop, in fact the terminus, the last stop. Beyond that there is no way to go -- the last bus stop. You hear the word 'ecstasy', the sound comes to you, but the meaning is missed. But when you hear the word 'suffering' it is not only the sound that comes to you, you know the meaning too. When you know what the cross is, you perfectly agree; your life agrees with it.

But your life is wrong. Your life is not yet life, you are not yet born. That's why Jesus goes on saying again and again: Unless you are born again....

My whole effort here is to give you a rebirth. The mala is not a cross.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE THE JOURNALISTS ALWAYS WRITING AGAINST YOU?

Sudarshan, feel happy that they are always writing; don't be worried about what they write. It they are writing that means something is happening here. And they can only write against because when you write something in favor you have to experience what is happening here; without experiencing it you cannot write a favorable report about it. You have to be here for a few months.

They come only for one day, they look around, they see the meditators -- but by seeing the meditators you can't see meditation. They see that something is happening and something so new for them that it does not fit with their idea of an ashram, of a monastery. Hence, naturally they turn against me, they become antagonistic.

If they are Hindus they are bound to be absolutely against me -- for the simple reason that this is not a Hindu ashram; it does not fit with their idea of an ashram. The Hindu ashram has to be very dull and dead. And here there is so much dance and so much song and so much joy and so much love, they are shocked. And things are so intense here.

For centuries they have created a certain ideal of the Hindu ashram. People should not be active there; inaction is worshipped. People should renounce life -- and here we rejoice life. How can they write in favor? To them it appears that I am destroying their whole ideal. To them it seems for centuries they have worshipped a certain ideal and I am sabotaging it. And in a way they are right.

I want to sabotage that stupid idea of an ashram: that it should be dead, people should be

inactive, people should be dull, uncreative, against life, against love, against everything that smells of joy -- they should be walking corpses!

And the Hindu idea of sannyas is that one should become a sannyasin only after seventy-five years. That means in India, nobody can become a sannyasin! The average age is thirty-six, so as far as the average man is concerned there seems to be no possibility of anybody ever becoming a sannyasin. Seventy-five years, then sannyas: the fourth stage of life, when death starts knocking on your doors, when one foot is already in the grave -- then you should become a sannyasin.

And here they see young people, so young they cannot believe their eyes. Why have these people become sannyasins? This is not the time for sannyas!

I am trying to create a totally new concept of sannyas. Because they are against life... of course, if you are against life seventy-five years seems to be the right time. Because life has already left you now you can renounce, at least you can enjoy the idea that you are renouncing life. Life has already left you -- what is the point of renunciation now? What are you renouncing? The whole idea is stupid. Then why not take sannyas when you are dead? Just wait a few days more, maybe one week. Why be in such a hurry? Just a little more!

In India when a man dies, they cover him with orange clothes. I don't know whom they are deceiving; the dead body is covered with the clothes of a sannyasin. And they chant the name of God when they are taking the dead body to cremate it. Now I don't know who is hearing their chanting -- that poor fellow is no more there. They are simply deceiving themselves.

Hindus are bound to be against me. Jainas come here, they are bound to be against me -- this is not a Jaina ashram. In fact, Jainas have always been against ashrams; there is no such thing as a Jaina ashram. They want their sannyasins to be wanderers. They are very much afraid that if a person stays in one place he may become attached to the place; to the house, to the people surrounding him. And they are so much afraid of life that it is better to keep moving. The Jaina monk has to stay not more than three days in one place; the fourth day he has to leave. So no attachments, no friendships, no love affairs are possible; at the most he becomes acquainted. In three days you cannot have intimacies with people. One day you come, in fact only one day you remain in the village, the third day you are preparing to leave. This is fear of life! And to me, a sannyasin should be fearless.

So when a Jaina comes here, seeing so many people living together with so much joy, with such love, in deep involvements with each other, in great intimacies, friendships, love affairs.... Much more love is happening in these six acres than may be happening all over the world. In fact, sometimes I wonder how much love six acres can contain! It seems the capacity to contain love is infinite.

And anybody who comes... if a Christian comes he can't find the idea of his monastery. There are Christian monasteries where women are not allowed; for one thousand years no woman has ever entered. Not even a small female baby, a two-month-old baby is allowed. What kind of people are living inside -- monks or monsters? They are afraid of a two-month-old baby. What can a poor, two-month-old baby do to them? They are afraid of themselves -- they may do something. They are boiling! And they are committing all kinds of perversions, they become perverted. If people are not allowed to be natural their energies become perverted.

All sexual perversions came out of the monasteries, remember it. They all have religious origins, they are very very spiritual and holy. All sexual perversions have their sources somewhere in religion. Now only monks are living in a monastery... how long do you think

they can avoid homosexuality? Only nuns are living in a nunnery; how long can they avoid lesbianism? -- impossible to avoid. It is natural, something is bound to happen.

So when these people come here they are somebody. It is very difficult to find a journalist who has no prejudices of his own; he comes with his prejudices. And this place is totally new, so naturally they are offended, outraged. And my statements are outrageous -- they are meant to be. They are electric shocks to these people. They get very much disturbed and they take revenge.

Remember one thing: if you report something good it never becomes news. Nobody is interested in good things; people are interested in something bad, something sensational. So they are in search of sensation. And you can find enough sensational things here, more than you can find anywhere else. You need not invent them -- we provide them!

Father Murphy was a priest in a very poor parish. He asked for suggestions how he could raise money for his church, and was told that horse-owners always had money.

He went to a horse auction, but he made a very poor buy as the horse turned out to be a donkey.

However, he thought he might enter the donkey in a race. The donkey came in third, and the next morning the headlines in the paper read, "Father Murphy's Ass Shows." The archbishop saw the paper and was very angry.

The next day the donkey came in first and the headlines read, "Father Murphy's Ass Out Front."

The archbishop was up in arms and figured something had to be done.

Father Murphy entered the donkey for a third time and it came in second. Now the newspaper read, "Father Murphy's Ass Back In Place." The archbishop thought this was too much so he forbade the priest to enter the donkey the next day, which inspired the editor to write the headline, "Archbishop Scratches Father Murphy's Ass."

Finally, the archbishop heard this and ordered Father Murphy to get rid of the donkey. But he was unable to sell it, so he gave it to Sister Agatha for a pet. When the archbishop heard this he ordered Sister Agatha to dispose of the animal at once. She sold it for ten dollars.

Next day the headlines read, "Sister Agatha Peddles Her Ass For Ten Dollars."

Don't be worried about the journalists. Enjoy whatsoever they write and help them to find things so they can go on writing. I am much more concerned right now that they should go on writing, because whether they write for or against they bring more and more people to me. And once a person comes here it is very difficult to escape! So I am just absolutely grateful to the journalists, whatsoever they are doing. They are doing such humanitarian work, such a great service to me!

So when they come here, don't feel antagonistic. Help them in every possible way.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM SITTING SILENTLY DOING NOTHING, AND THE WEEDS ARE GROWING
ALL AROUND ME.

Roderick, weeds are divine. Don't call them weeds. They are as spiritual as the buddhas. They partake of God as much as roses. Remove men from the earth -- will there be any

difference between weeds and roses? All these distinctions are made up by the mind.

You are not really sitting silently; otherwise, who is telling you weeds are growing? Your mind is still functioning, whispering things to you. It is your mind! If you are really silent there is no mind -- then whether weeds grow or roses grow it is all the same to you. What difference is there? Can't you enjoy weeds? They are beautiful people! See the weeds swaying, dancing in the wind, in the sun.... What do you think is lacking in them which roses have? Nothing is lacking. This is just an idea, and ideas change. It is possible one day that roses may go out of fashion, weeds may become an "in" thing.

A hundred years ago nobody had ever thought that cactuses would be loved by people, but now the cactus is "in" and the rose is "out." To talk about the rose looks old-fashioned, looks orthodox, conventional; to talk about cactuses is avant-garde, it shows that you are modern, contemporary. People are keeping cactuses in their bedrooms -- dangerous cactuses, poisonous cactuses, which can kill you! But they have come into fashion, and once something comes into fashion there are so many fools who start appreciating it.

People simply go on following whatsoever is made fashionable by a few clever and cunning people. Just a hundred years ago nobody would have liked Picasso's paintings, and now Picasso is the greatest artist -- not only of this century but of the whole history. What has happened? Just the fashion has changed. People get tired of one thing; they go on moving to the opposite extreme.

Roderick, there is nothing wrong in weeds! There is nothing wrong in anything. The idea of right and wrong means the mind is there. You are not sitting silently and you are not sitting doing nothing. You are discriminating, and that is action. You are labeling, and that is thinking. And you are judging.

Drop all judgment, all labeling, all discrimination... and just watch weeds growing. So what -- let them grow! When you don't have a mind at all, you are also a weed; so weeds growing around you, it is not something strange -- weeds surrounding a weed! Enjoy!

Once a Zen master was asked by a king -- because the master was a great painter -- to paint a picture of a bamboo.

The master said, "It will take time."

"How long?" asked the king.

The master said, "That is difficult to say, but at least two or three years."

The king said, "Are you mad or something? You are one of the greatest painters. I was thinking you could just draw it right now!"

He said, "That is not the problem, drawing a bamboo is not the problem -- but first I have to be a bamboo; otherwise how do I know what a bamboo is? I want to know the bamboo from the inside! So I will have to go and live in a bamboo grove. Now, one never knows how long it will take. Unless I know the bamboo from within I cannot paint it. That has been my practice my whole life: I paint only that which I have known from its deepest core."

The king said, "Okay, I will wait."

One year passed. He sent a few people to see what was happening, whether the man was alive or dead. They came back and said, "The man is alive, but we don't think that he is a man anymore -- he is a bamboo! He was swaying with the bamboos in the wind. We passed by his side; he didn't take any notice. We said, 'Hello!' He didn't hear. We wanted to talk to him. We looked at his eyes -- they were so empty that we became frightened; either he has gone mad or something has happened. And he can do anything, so we escaped. He may kill or, who knows? -- he may jump upon us! He is no more the same man."

The king himself went to see, and the master was swaying in the wind, in the sun. And the king asked, "Sir, what about my painting?" He didn't answer.

After three years he appeared at the court and he said, "Now bring the canvas and the paints. I am ready. And why were you people disturbing me again and again? If you had not disturbed me I would have come a little earlier. These fools from your court, they were saying things to me. They were saying, 'Hello!' Do you say hello to a bamboo? They disturbed the whole thing. It took months for me to again settle into being a bamboo and to forget that I am a man. And then you came and you said, 'Sir.' Is that the way to address a bamboo? 'When are you going to paint?' Has anybody ever heard that bamboos paint? You are a fool, you are surrounded by fools! I had told you that I would come whenever I was ready."

The canvas was brought, the brushes and the color, and within seconds he drew the bamboo. And it is said that the king wept for joy. He had never seen such a painting: it was so alive! It was no ordinary painting. It was not from the outside, it was from the bamboo -- as if a bamboo had sprouted on the canvas, not been painted.

Roderick, sit silently doing nothing, and let things happen -- whatsoever is happening. If weeds are growing, let them grow. They have the right to grow as much as you have the right to grow. And if you allow everything without any judgment, if you are nonjudgmental, you will grow to such pinnacles of joy and benediction that you cannot imagine right now.

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IT IS TERRIBLE WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT ITALIANS. TRUE, OF COURSE, BUT
TERRIBLE.

Adi, I know it is terrible, but what can I do? I love the Italians and I want to talk about them as much as I can. They are beautiful people. I hit only when I love. You should be worried about those whom I am not hitting. For example, I have not yet hit the Dutch. I am waiting -- when I have gathered enough love for them I am going to hit them too! It is my way of showing love and showering love.

Why don't Italians believe in reincarnation?

Well, look at it this way: who would want to come back to life as an Italian?

A woman with a baby in her arms was sitting in the waiting room at a railway station in Italy, sobbing bitterly. Up came a porter and asked her what the trouble was.

"Oh, dear me," she cried, "some people were in here and they were so rude to me about my son. I'm all upset -- they said he was so ugly!"

"There, there now, luv," said the porter soothingly. "Don't worry about it. I tell you what -- how about a nice cup of tea?"

"You are very kind," she said, wiping her eyes. "That would be very nice."

"And while I'm at it," he said, "how about a banana for your monkey?"

An Italian with a one foot high man sitting on his shoulder walked into a bar and ordered a scotch and soda. The barman was stunned but delivered the drink as ordered. Just as the fellow was about to drink it, the little man knocked it out of his hand. He ordered another

one, and again the little man knocked the drink onto the floor. This scene was repeated three times.

Finally, the bartender could stand it no longer. "What's going on here?" he asked.

"It is a long story," the Italian said, "but many years ago I was in Egypt and found a magic lamp. I rubbed it and a genie offered me three wishes. First I wished for ten million dollars. Then I wished for everlasting life."

"Sounds great," said the bartender. "What was your third wish?"

"I wished for a prick twelve inches long."

Get it? Remember if you come across a genie some time, never ask for the third wish. Look in the dictionary to find out the real meaning of "prick."

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL SHOCKED WHEN YOU USE THE WORD 'FUCK'. WHAT TO DO?

Sargamo, it is one of the most beautiful words. The English language should be proud of it. I don't think any other language has such a beautiful word.

One Tom from California has done some great research on it. I think he must be the famous Tom of Tom, Dick and Harry fame.

He says:

One of the most interesting words in the English language today is the word 'fuck'. It is one magical word: just by its sound it can describe pain, pleasure, hate and love. In language it falls into many grammatical categories. It can be used as a verb, both transitive (John fucked Mary) and intransitive (Mary was fucked by John), and as a noun (Mary is a fine fuck). It can be used as an adjective (Mary is fucking beautiful). As you can see there are not many words with the versatility of 'fuck'.

Besides the sexual meaning, there are also the following uses:

Fraud: I got fucked at the used car lot.

Ignorance: Fucked if I know.

Trouble: I guess I am fucked now!

Aggression: Fuck you!

Displeasure: What the fuck is going on here?

Difficulty: I can't understand this fucking job.

Incompetence: He is a fuck-off.

Suspicion: What the fuck are you doing?

Enjoyment: I had a fucking good time.

Request: Get the fuck out of here!

Hostility: I am going to knock your fucking head off!

Greeting: How the fuck are you?

Apathy: Who gives a fuck?

Innovation: Get a bigger fucking hammer.

Surprise: Fuck! You scared the shit out of me!

Anxiety: Today is really fucked.

And it is very healthy too. If every morning you do it as a Transcendental Meditation --

just when you get up, the first thing, repeat the mantra "Fuck you!" five times -- it clears the throat. That's how I keep my throat clear!
Enough for today.

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Chapter #5

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SEEKER!
DO NOT BE RECKLESS.
MEDITATE CONSTANTLY
OR YOU WILL SWALLOW FIRE
AND CRY OUT: "NO MORE!"

IF YOU ARE NOT WISE,
HOW CAN YOU STEADY THE MIND?
IF YOU CANNOT QUIETEN YOURSELF,
WHAT WILL YOU EVER LEARN?

HOW WILL YOU BECOME FREE?

WITH A QUIET MIND
COME INTO THAT EMPTY HOUSE, YOUR HEART,
AND FEEL THE JOY OF THE WAY
BEYOND THE WORLD.

LOOK WITHIN --
THE RISING AND THE FALLING.
WHAT HAPPINESS!
HOW SWEET TO BE FREE!

IT IS THE BEGINNING OF LIFE,
OF MASTERY AND PATIENCE,
OF GOOD FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY,
OF A PURE AND ACTIVE LIFE.

SO LIVE IN LOVE.

DO YOUR WORK.
MAKE AN END OF YOUR SORROWS.

FOR SEE HOW THE JASMINE
RELEASES AND LETS FALL
ITS WITHERED FLOWERS.

LET FALL WILLFULNESS AND HATRED.

ARE YOU QUIET?
QUIETEN YOUR BODY.
QUIETEN YOUR MIND.

YOU WANT NOTHING.
YOUR WORDS ARE STILL.
YOU ARE STILL.

BY YOUR OWN EFFORTS
WAKEN YOURSELF, WATCH YOURSELF.
AND LIVE JOYFULLY.

YOU ARE THE MASTER,
YOU ARE THE REFUGE.
AS A MERCHANT BREAKS IN A FINE HORSE,
MASTER YOURSELF.
HOW GLADLY YOU FOLLOW
THE WORDS OF THE AWAKENED.

HOW QUIETLY, HOW SURELY
YOU APPROACH THE HAPPY COUNTRY,
THE HEART OF STILLNESS.

HOWEVER YOUNG,
THE SEEKER WHO SETS OUT UPON THE WAY
SHINES BRIGHT OVER THE WORLD.

LIKE THE MOON,
COME OUT FROM BEHIND THE CLOUDS!
SHINE.

The Scots angler died, made his way to heaven, and was stopped at the gate by Saint Peter who said, "You have told too many lies to get in here!"
"Have a heart," replied the angler. "Remember you were a fisherman once yourself!"

Gautama the Buddha is reminding his bodhisattvas that the path that they have followed themselves, the very beginning of the path, they may have completely forgotten about by now. Who remembers the dreams in the morning when he is awake? Within seconds those dreams are forgotten.

The same happens when you become enlightened: all the misery, all the nightmares, all

the sorrows that you had suffered so much simply become so insignificant, so irrelevant that they disappear from your consciousness. They are no more part of your life story -- as if they had happened to somebody else and not to you. Hence Buddha is reminding his bodhisattvas how the journey starts from the very beginning; only then can these people be of help to others.

The first thing he says: Remember only to talk to seekers. There are many who are inquirers but who are not seekers, many who are curious but not seekers. The curious person is a little childish. Every child is curious -- curious about each and everything, curious about one thousand and one things, but not really interested in knowing. He asks one question; by the time you answer him he has started asking about something else. He is not listening to your answer at all, he is not interested in it anymore; it was a momentary phenomenon. He had just become attracted to something: he saw a flower and he asked about it, and then he heard the noise of an airplane and he started asking about airplanes, and then something else caught his eye....

A seeker means one for whom the inquiry is not only curiosity, not a childish phenomenon, but a mature inquiry, for whom it has become a question of life and death. Unless truth becomes a question of life and death you are not a seeker.

Buddha is saying to his bodhisattvas, his apostles: Talk only to seekers, address yourself only to seekers. Don't waste your time with childish people who are curious about each and everything. Their questions may look very great, but their hearts are not in their questions. They have asked just to ask; they are not interested in finding the answer and they are not ready to risk anything. If they can get the answer free, maybe they are ready to listen; but they are not ready to pay. And life's real questions are not to be solved in such a cheap way. You have to pay and you have to pay with your whole being. You have to get involved; it needs commitment.

Anybody can ask about God, but very few people are ready to risk anything, to go into the unknown, to go into the adventure -- and the adventure for God is the greatest adventure there is. And it demands; it is very demanding -- it demands your total commitment. It won't allow you any other involvement. It can't be just one involvement among many other involvements; it has to be the one and only involvement. Only then is there a hope that some day you may find the answer which liberates you. Hence he says:

SEEKER!
DO NOT BE RECKLESS.

And the first thing to be taught to these people who are seekers is not to be reckless. People are living very recklessly, people are living very accidentally. Their lives have no sense of direction. They don't know where they are going, from where they are coming, why they are doing a certain thing. Maybe others are doing it so they are imitating, but imitators are not seekers. Maybe others are going to the church or to the temple so they are also going. They are not really men but sheep.

A seeker has to be a lion. He has to learn to be free from the crowd psychology, from the mob mind. He has to learn ways of individuality, of independence. He has to think of what he is doing and why. He should not be just a victim of natural life forces; he should have a certain sense of direction. Only then is there a possibility of achieving, of coming back home, of reaching somewhere, of attaining contentment, fulfillment, flowering, fruitfulness. Otherwise life remains meaningless; it is just a jumble of unrelated events.

DO NOT BE RECKLESS. First thing: Do not be just curious. Second thing: Do not be reckless.

New York City was jammed for the convention. Every hotel and rooming house was full. Phillips was tired -- he simply had to find a place to sleep that night.

"Anything will do," he said to the hotel clerk.

"I can let you have a cot in the ballroom," replied the clerk, "But there's a woman in the opposite corner. If you don't make any noise she'll be none the wiser."

"Fine," said Phillips. He went to the ballroom but five minutes later came running out to the clerk.

"Say," he cried, "that woman there is dead!"

"I know," was the answer, "but how did YOU find out?"

Everybody is curious for no reason at all -- it was none of his business. Even he cannot answer why -- some unconscious instinct, maybe biology, maybe chemistry, but not his consciousness.

Who or what is deciding your life? -- your biology, your chemistry, your psychology, your hormones? Who is deciding your life? Are you? -- you as a conscious being?

A drunk walked into a bar in Glasgow and asked, "Was I in here last night?"

"Yes, you were," replied the barmaid.

"Did I spend much money?"

"About thirty pounds."

"Thank God -- I thought I'd lost it!"

Angus was staggering home after a night with his fishing pals when he came upon a scarecrow, arms outstretched.

"Hey, Jimmy," he said, "I refuse to believe you. There never was a trout that size."

A number of Scottish soldiers were court-martialed for wrecking a public house, and one of them was asked to explain to the court how the trouble had started.

"Well, sir," he said, "Private McSporrان called Private McDougall a liar, and Private Paterson hit him over the head with a chair. Private Fraser pulled out his dirk and cut a slice out of Private McDougall's leg. Two or three of Private McDougall's mates piled onto Private Fraser, and a couple of others started throwing glasses and tables around. One thing led to another and then the fighting started."

Buddha says: SEEKER! DO NOT BE RECKLESS.

MEDITATE CONSTANTLY.
OR YOU WILL SWALLOW FIRE
AND CRY OUT: "NO MORE!"

MEDITATE CONSTANTLY. The person who is a seeker will not really be interested in getting only philosophical answers from others; he will be interested in knowing on his own. He will not be interested in philosophy, he will be interested in religion. That is the difference between philosophy and religion. Philosophy is juggling with words, the art of hairsplitting, arguing endlessly about abstract ideas, arriving nowhere. Religion is more like science: it

experiments, it emphasizes experience. Science is the religion of the objective world, and religion is the science of the subjective world.

Philosophy is going to die one day; it is already on its deathbed. You can go to the universities and see: every year less and less people are turning to the departments of philosophy. Many philosophy departments are empty, deserted. People are going to science or to religion. Those who are interested in knowing the truth about the world are going to scientific inquiries, to physics, to chemistry, to mathematics, to biology. Or, people who are interested in their own interiority, in their own subjectivity, in their own consciousness, are moving towards religion, more and more towards religion.

Religion is the science of the inner. Philosophy is neither: it is neither the science of the outer nor the science of the inner; it is just in between. It only thinks; it thinks about everything -- about science, about religion -- but it only thinks. And just by thinking, nothing ever happens. You can make very clever answers, but they are not going to solve your real problems; the problems are real and the answers are just abstract. Real problems can be solved only by real answers.

Hence Buddha says: The seeker can be persuaded to meditate -- only the seeker can be persuaded to meditate. Meditation means you start changing your inner world. You start removing dust from the inner world, you start removing all that is unnecessary in the inner world. You remove all that clutter, all the rubbish you are full of. Meditation means emptying yourself of all that the society has put inside you so that you can have a clean, clear vision, so that you can have a mirrorlike quality. When a mirror is without any dust it reflects reality; so is the case with meditation.

Meditation means making your consciousness a mirror. Thoughts are like dust, they have to be removed. And thoughts contain everything belonging to the mind: desires, ambitions, memories, fantasies, dreams... all mindstuff is different forms of thoughts, different kinds, different layers of dust. And the dust is so thick that the mirror is not functioning at all -- hence you have to ask others. Once the dust is removed you need not ask anyone, you yourself can see. Existence has given you the magic mirror -- it is within you.

I have heard a beautiful parable; it must be a parable, it cannot be an historical phenomenon:

When Alexander the Great came to India he collected many valuable treasures. And when he was leaving he came across a fakir, a naked fakir. He asked him, "Do you see my treasures? Have you ever seen anybody with so many treasures?"

The fakir said, "All your treasures are nothing, but I can give you one thing that will really make you rich!"

Alexander could not imagine what this naked fakir could give him. In his begging bowl he had a small mirror. He gave the mirror to Alexander.

Alexander said, "This mirror will make me the richest man in the world? You must be mad!"

The fakir said, "First look in the mirror."

And Alexander looked into the mirror: it did not show his face -- it showed his inner being, it showed his interiority, it showed his subjectivity. His being was reflected in the mirror.

He touched the feet of the fakir and said, "You are right -- all my treasures are nothing before this mirror."

And it is said he kept that mirror continuously with him.

The parable is beautiful. That mirror represents meditation. The fakir must have given him some meditation because only meditation can make you aware of who you are.

But Buddha says meditation has to become something constant. Buddha brings a totally new vision of meditation to the world. Before Buddha, meditation was something that you had to do once or twice a day, one hour in the morning, one hour in the evening, and that was all. Buddha gave a totally new interpretation to the whole process of meditation. He said: This kind of meditation that you do one hour in the morning, one hour in the evening, you may do five times or four times a day, is not of much value. Meditation cannot be something that you can do apart from life just for one hour or fifteen minutes. Meditation has to become something synonymous with your life; it has to be like breathing. You cannot breathe one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening, otherwise the evening will never come. It has to be something like breathing: even while you are asleep the breathing continues. You may fall into a coma, but the breathing continues.

Buddha says meditation should become such a constant phenomenon; only then can it transform you. And he evolved a new technique of meditation.

His greatest contribution to the world is vipassana; no other teacher has given such a great gift to the world. Jesus is beautiful, Mahavira is beautiful, Lao Tzu is beautiful, Zarathustra is beautiful, but their contribution, compared to Buddha, is nothing. Even if they are all put together, then too Buddha's contribution is greater because he gave such a scientific method -- simple, yet so penetrating that once you are in tune with it, it becomes a constant factor in your life.

Then you need not do it; you have to do it only in the beginning. Once you have learned the knack of it, it remains with you; you need not do it. Then whatsoever you are doing, it is there. It becomes a backdrop to your life, a background to your life. You are walking, but you walk meditatively. You are eating, but you eat meditatively. You are sleeping, but you sleep meditatively. Remember, even the quality of sleep of a meditator is totally different from the quality of the sleep of a nonmeditator. Everything becomes different because a new factor has entered which changes the whole gestalt.

Vipassana simply means watching your breath, looking at your breath. It is not like YOGA PRANAYAMA: it is not changing your breath to a certain rhythm -- deep breathing, fast breathing. No, it does not change your breathing at all; it has nothing to do with the breathing. Breathing has only to be used as a device to watch because it is a constant phenomenon in you. You can simply watch it, and it is the most subtle phenomenon. If you can watch your breath then it will be easy for you to watch your thoughts.

One thing immensely great that Buddha contributed was the discovery of the relationship between breath and thought. He was the first man in the whole history of humanity who made it absolutely clear that breathing and thinking are deeply related. Breathing is the bodily part of thinking and thinking is the psychological part of breathing. They are not separate, they are two aspects of the same coin. He is the first man who talks of bodymind as one unity. He talks for the first time about man as a psychosomatic phenomenon. He does not talk about body and mind, he talks about bodymind. They are not two, hence no 'and' is needed to join them. They are already one -- bodymind -- not even a hyphen is needed; bodymind is one phenomenon. And each body process has its counterpart in your psychology and vice versa.

You can watch it, you can try an experiment. Just stop your breathing for a moment and you will be surprised: the moment you stop your breathing, your thinking stops. Or you can watch another thing: whenever your thinking is going too fast your breathing changes. For

example, if you are full of sexual lust and your thinking is getting too hot, your breathing will be different: it will not be rhythmic, it will lose its rhythm. It will be more chaotic, it will be unrhythmic.

When you are angry your breathing changes because your thinking has changed. When you are loving your breathing changes because your thinking has changed. When you are peaceful, at ease, at home, relaxed, your breathing is different. When you are restless, worried, in turmoil, in anguish, your breathing is different. Just by watching your breath you can know what kind of state is happening in your mind.

Meditators come across a point: when the mind really completely ceases, breathing also ceases. And then great fear arises -- don't be afraid. Many meditators have reported to me, "We became very much afraid, very much frightened, because suddenly we became aware that the breathing has stopped." Naturally, one thinks that when breathing stops death is close by. It is only a question of moments -- you are dying. Breathing stops in death; breathing also stops in deep meditation. Hence deep meditation and death have one thing similar: in both the breathing stops. Therefore, if a man knows meditation he has also known death. That's why the meditator becomes free of the fear of death: he knows breathing can stop and still he is.

Breathing is not life; life is a far bigger phenomenon. Breathing is only a connection with the body. The connection can be cut; that does not mean that life has ended. Life is still there; life does not end just by the disappearance of breathing.

Buddha says: Watch your breathing; let it be normal, as it is. Sitting silently, watch your breath. The sitting posture will also be helpful; the Buddha posture, the lotus posture, is very helpful. When your spine is erect and you are sitting in a lotus posture, your legs crossed, your spine is aligned with the gravitational forces, and the body is at its best relaxed state. Let the spine be erect and the body be loose, hanging on the spine -- not tense. The body should be loose, relaxed, the spine erect, so gravitation has the least pull on you.

Have you watched it? If you want to go to sleep you have to lie down, for the simple reason that when you are lying down flat on the ground you are in touch with the gravitational forces at the maximum, because all over the body the gravitational pull works, it pulls you. You immediately start falling asleep. It is difficult to fall asleep standing. The most difficult posture to fall asleep in is the lotus posture. The body is so relaxed there is no need to fall asleep, and the gravitational forces are at the minimum; hence they cannot pull you downwards; they can't make you heavy and dull and lethargic. You are bright, you are full of life. You are more intelligent in the lotus posture than you can ever be in any other posture. The body affects your mind.

Scientists now agree with this: that it is only because a few of the monkeys somehow... they have not been able to find the reason why and how it happened, and monkeys are monkeys -- it may have just happened out of curiosity, a few monkeys tried to stand on two legs and these are the monkeys who became the original men; they were the originators. That was the greatest innovation; nothing else has been greater than that. A few monkeys standing erect on their two legs created a great revolution; the revolution happened in the growth of the mind. The erect posture helped the mind to come out of sleep. It became more intelligent, it became more alert, it became more conscious.

Other animals who move on their four legs have not been able to develop intelligence, although many of them have a mind of almost the same capacity as man. For example, the elephant has a mind of almost the same capacity as man, but has not been able to develop it and I don't think it is ever going to happen. In circuses they try hard to teach the elephant to sit in a chair or to stand even for a few seconds on two feet, but the body is so heavy the

elephant cannot manage to be on two feet. Hence the brain remains clouded; the gravitational pull keeps it unconscious.

Hence this lotus posture is something valuable. It is not just a body phenomenon; it affects the mind, it changes the mind. Sit in a lotus posture -- the whole point is that your spine should be erect and should make a ninety-degree angle with the earth. That is the point where you are capable of being the most intelligent, the most alert, the least sleepy.

And then watch your breath, the natural breath. You need not breathe deeply, you don't change your breathing; you simply watch it as it is. But you will be surprised by one thing: the moment you start watching, it changes -- because even the fact of watching is a change and the breathing is no more the same.

Slight changes in your consciousness immediately affect your breathing. You will be able to see it; whenever you watch you will see your breathing has become a little deeper. If it becomes so of its own accord it is okay, but you are not to do it by your will. Watching your breath, slowly slowly you will be surprised that as your breath becomes calm and quiet your mind also becomes calm and quiet. And watching the breath will make you capable of watching the mind.

That is just the beginning, the first part of meditation, the physical part. And the second part is the psychological part. Then you can watch more subtle things in your mind -- thoughts, desires, memories.

And as you go deeper into watchfulness, a miracle starts happening: as you become watchful less and less traffic happens in the mind, more and more quiet, silence; more and more silent spaces, more and more gaps and intervals. Moments pass and you don't come across a single thought. Slowly slowly, minutes pass, hours pass....

And there is a certain arithmetic in it: if you can remain absolutely empty for forty-eight minutes, that very day you will become enlightened, that very moment you will become enlightened. But it is not a question of your effort; don't go on looking at the watch because each time you look, a thought has come. You have to again count from the very beginning; you are back to zero. There is no need for you to watch the time.

But this has been the experience in the East of all great meditators: that forty-eight minutes seems to be the ultimate point. If this much of a gap is possible, if for this much of a gap thinking stops and you remain alert, with no thought crossing your mind, you are capable of receiving God inside. You have become the host and the guest immediately comes.

IF YOU ARE NOT WISE,
HOW CAN YOU STEADY THE MIND?

You have to be very intelligent; only then can you steady the mind. And what does he mean by intelligence? Ordinarily we behave in a very unintelligent way: we behave according to beliefs; beliefs keep us unintelligent. We behave according to borrowed knowledge; that keeps us unintelligent.

Try to accept the challenges of life directly; don't act out of belief or knowledge. Don't follow the scriptures and the traditions. They are the root cause of making you stupid, because unless you face life directly, unless those challenges are encountered, your intelligence will not arise -- because there will be no opportunity for it to arise. Give it the opportunity. Life gives many opportunities but you go on missing the opportunities because you live on borrowed answers.

Face life and its questions and its realities on your own, even if your own responses are

not so great -- they cannot be. Of course you cannot respond like a buddha, but by borrowing some answer from Buddha you will never be intelligent enough to become a buddha yourself. Yes, you will commit many errors, many mistakes. Yes, you will go astray many times -- go, don't be worried! Life is meant for that, so that you can try. It is through trials, many errors, many mistakes, that one learns. When you learn by your own efforts you become intelligent. And only an intelligent person can see the beauty of meditation, can understand the significance of meditation.

IF YOU CANNOT QUIETEN YOURSELF,
WHAT WILL YOU EVER LEARN?

And all learning happens through meditation; it does not happen through study. That is accumulation of information, it is not learning. Always be alert about borrowed knowledge: howsoever precious it appears it is all false, pseudo -- for you. It is not pseudo for the man who has lived it. It is true for Buddha, true for Jesus, true for Krishna, but not for you. You will have to live....

Buddha also had the scriptures available. He could have read Krishna; the Gita was available. And he was well-educated -- he was the son of a king. All the scriptures must have been available to him and great scholars and great teachers were available to him. He could have recited the Gita every day; he could have learned the Gita so absolutely that he would have been able to repeat it just from memory, but then he would have missed buddhahood.

And in Krishna's time also the Vedas were available, but Krishna did not borrow knowledge from the Vedas. In Jesus' time the Old Testament was available, but Jesus tried to find out the truth for himself. This is something very essential to understand: truth has to be found by oneself. Only then is it liberating; otherwise it becomes a bondage -- a beautiful bondage, but a bondage all the same.

And if you cannot learn....

HOW WILL YOU BECOME FREE?

It is only by experiencing truth on your own that freedom happens. Freedom is the fragrance of the experience of truth.

WITH A QUIET MIND
COME INTO THAT EMPTY HOUSE, YOUR HEART,
AND FEEL THE JOY OF THE WAY
BEYOND THE WORLD.

Buddha says: With the silent mind, the quiet mind... COME INTO THAT EMPTY HOUSE, YOUR HEART.

Your heart is your real home; it is utterly empty. Your head is full of rubbish, your heart is totally empty. Move from the head to the heart! The whole process of meditation is a movement from the head to the heart, from the mind to no-mind.

COME INTO THAT EMPTY HOUSE, YOUR HEART, AND FEEL THE JOY OF THE WAY -- and you will be full of joy -- BEYOND THE WORLD. A joy that is not of this world, a fragrance that comes from the beyond.

LOOK WITHIN --

THE RISING AND THE FALLING.

The rising and falling of your breath: that is the way of looking within. Many have said: Look within. Socrates has said: Look within, know thyself, but nobody has given the exact method. Buddha gives you the exact method: the rising and the falling of the breath. It is through the breath that you are bridged. Breath is the bridge between your soul and your body. If you can watch your breath rising and falling, slowly slowly you will be able to see the body as separate from yourself and also the breath as separate from yourself, because the watcher cannot be the watched, the observer cannot be the observed. Suddenly one day you will realize that you are the witness of it all. And the witness is certainly transcendental to all that it witnesses. In that very moment freedom has happened to you. Then:

WHAT HAPPINESS!
HOW SWEET TO BE FREE!

IT IS THE BEGINNING OF LIFE....

Birth is not the beginning of life. This is the beginning of life, when you experience your witnessing soul. IT IS THE BEGINNING....

OF MASTERY AND PATIENCE,
OF GOOD FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY,
OF A PURE AND ACTIVE LIFE.

Meditate over these words. Buddhists have not understood these words at all. How can this man, Gautama the Buddha, be an escapist? He says: IT IS THE BEGINNING OF a new LIFE, OF MASTERY AND PATIENCE, OF GOOD FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY....

He is giving you a new world, a new way to love, a new way to be friendly; he is giving you new friends. In fact, only meditators can be friendly towards each other because they are not competitors. Nobody else can be friendly, they only pretend. How can competitors be friendly? Deep down they are enemies because everybody is coveting the same things. You are greedy for money, your friend is also greedy for money. How can you be friendly? Impossible. All friendship is bogus, phony.

You want to be the prime minister and your friend also wants to be the prime minister. Who does not want to be the prime minister? How can you be friendly? Hence they say in politics there is no friendship at all. A few are enemies openly, a few are enemies in a hidden way. That's why in politics every day changes happen: somebody who was a friend yesterday, today is an enemy; somebody who was an enemy yesterday, today is a friend. It is a strange world, the world of politics.

Machiavelli, in *THE PRINCE*, suggests to the politicians, "Never say anything to your friends that you would not like to be known by your enemies, because any friend can become your enemy any day." He also says, "Never say anything against your enemies that you would not like to say against your friends because any enemy can become a friend any day" -- then there will be difficulty. Then you will have to swallow something and it will be humiliating.

Politicians go on doing that: they go on spitting and swallowing it back again and again. They say one thing today, another thing tomorrow; they have to. In politics no friends are

possible.

Friends are possible only on the way, on the way towards God, because it is not a competition. You can have God, I can have God; there is no question that by your having God I will not be able to have God anymore. Millions of people can have God and there is no problem because God is infinite, truth is infinite. My having the truth does not mean that now you cannot have it. In fact, on the contrary, my having the truth means that you can also have it! If I can have it, why not you? Hence, on the way, there is a totally new kind of friendship.

... OF A PURE AND ACTIVE LIFE. How can Buddha be called an escapist? He says: ... OF A PURE AND ACTIVE LIFE. He means creativity, a creativity that comes out of meditative innocence, of meditative purity. And a real creator is possible only through meditation. Your so-called painters, ninety-nine percent of them, are not real painters. Your so-called poets are not poets, your so-called musicians are not musicians -- maybe technicians. They know how to play, they know how to compose, they know how to paint, but just knowing how to paint does not make you a creator.

A creator is a totally different phenomenon. The creator brings something of God into the world, something of the creator into the world. But how can you bring something of God into the world if you have not known God yourself?

A Buddha is a creator, a Jesus is a creator. Their words, their acts are the only proof that God exists. Their very presence is proof that God exists. Their presence is creative: in their very presence thousands of people are transformed. Buddha is not an escapist; he cannot be. No awakened person can be an escapist. Cowards escape, courageous people are creative.

SO LIVE IN LOVE -- these are Buddha's words, mind you:

SO LIVE IN LOVE.
DO YOUR WORK.
MAKE AN END OF YOUR SORROWS.

He is not against love, he is not against creativity, he is not against work either. DO YOUR WORK -- because unless you do the work that is close to your heart you will remain unfulfilled. And the meditator finds immediately what his work is. The meditator finds intrinsically that this is his work; he does not have to think about it. It is so clear and so loud that he knows that he has to be a musician or he has to be a poet or he has to be this or that. It comes so clear that there is no question of doubt. And then he starts working; that work is his meditation.

There are many people here who are afraid of work. They don't know that the work that is happening here is totally different from the work that you have come across in your life. That was something totally different. When I give you some work it is to help your growth. Until you become capable of finding your own work I will go on giving it to you -- only up to the moment when you are capable of finding it yourself. And any work that is being given here is nothing but a meditation for you. If it is not a meditation for you then you have not understood my message at all.

FOR SEE HOW THE JASMINE
RELEASES AND LETS FALL
ITS WITHERED FLOWERS.

LET FALL WILLFULNESS AND HATRED.

Buddha says: As the jasmine flowers fall when they have withered away or leaves fall from the trees when they die, dead leaves. Just like that, LET FALL WILLFULNESS AND HATRED. The first thing he says that has to be dropped -- easily, without effort, just like a withered jasmine flower falling of its own accord -- is willfulness, your will, your ego.

So sometimes I have to put you in a certain work where you have to drop your ego and you think it is a kind of punishment. It is not a kind of punishment; it is a challenge, it is a situation where you will have to drop the ego sooner or later because it will be creating misery again and again for you. It will make you clearly aware that your ego is causing your misery.

Just the other day, Anshumali wrote saying, "Beloved Master, working in Vrindavan under Deeksha seems to be a punishment." It is not, Anshumali. It is a reward, not a punishment! It is a punishment if you want to cling to your ego; if you let the ego fall, it is a reward. And then you will be able to see the beauty of the work, and you will be able to see the beauty of Deeksha too. She is a beautiful Italian mama! She loves her workers, she loves her people; she is utterly devoted. Of course, she loves so much that she shouts also, she screams also. Her love is such that she trusts that you will understand her screaming too. But she is a good device; she has been of immense help to many people.

There are one hundred therapy groups here, but Deeksha's is the best! Although it is not known as a therapy group -- it is a secret therapy group.

If you drop your willfulness, your ego, then hatred also drops because hatred is nothing but the shadow of your ego. If there is no ego there is no hatred; if there is ego, there is always hatred following it. Whosoever comes in the way... and everybody will come in the way because egos cannot adjust to each other. Egos are always in conflict, egos are always quarreling, they are quarrelsome, hence the hatred.

Drop the ego and see the beauty of egolessness. Then there is no hatred, no anger. You become so silent, your energy becomes so calm and quiet, that suddenly you start seeing the world in a different light, in a different perspective. Then this ordinary world is no longer ordinary -- it becomes sacred.

ARE YOU QUIET?
QUIETEN YOUR BODY.
QUIETEN YOUR MIND.

Buddha says: First start with the body and then move to the mind. Quieten your body by watching your breath, quieten your mind by watching your thoughts.

YOU WANT NOTHING.
YOUR WORDS ARE STILL.
YOU ARE STILL.

Then you will come to see that there is no desire. How can desire exist in a silent mind? Desire is a state of turmoil, desire is a state of unconsciousness, desire is mad. When you are silent, madness disappears.

Three times Jessie brought Sandy to the vicarage, hoping to be made man and wife, but each time the minister refused because of the groom-to-be's intoxication.

"Why do you persist in bringing him to me in such a state?" asked the minister.

"Please, Reverend," explained Jessie, "he won't come when he's sober!"

The moment you are sober, silent, you will not do many things that you are doing and you will start doing things that you have never thought of before. Your life will no more be a wastage; it will become creativity, tremendous creativity. Your life will not grow thorns, it will grow flowers. It is the same energy!

But the mind keeps you occupied in such stupid things, in such stupid details about stupid things. Just see what your mind goes on doing... and you will not need anyone to tell you that you are mad.

A little man walks into "The Perfect Stationers" -- an exclusive New York shop specializing in paper products. He is approached by an elegant salesman in a Brooks Brothers suit. "Can I help you, sir?" the salesman intones in a cultured voice.

"Yes, I would like some writing paper, please."

"Would you prefer lined or unlined paper, sir?"

"Oh, anything is fine. It doesn't matter."

"Then will you be writing with a fountain pen or a ballpoint?"

"I really don't know. Whatever comes to hand...."

"Would you like to have a thick paper or onion-skin paper, sir?"

"Look, anything is fine. Just give me any old packet!"

"Perhaps you would prefer one of the perfumed varieties?"

"If you like. But I have a bus to catch -- just give me some paper, PLEASE!"

"It will just take a moment now, sir. Would you like a hand-made paper in a special presentation box or a simple commercial brand?"

The little man's voice rises an octave. "Look, for the tenth time... any paper will do! Make it fast, would you?"

"Then perhaps you have a favorite color -- red, blue, yellow...?"

Just at that moment another man bursts into the shop. His eyes have dark circles underneath and his cheeks are wet with tears.

"Look," he sobs, "this tile is the color of my bathroom and this is the size of my toilet. I showed you my asshole yesterday. Now, could I please have some toilet paper?"

Just look at your mind... stupid things and stupid details ad infinitum! You go on and on -- when are you going to stop?... please! That's what Buddha is saying.

Feinberg, the funeral director, was lunching with his friend, Weinstein.

"I got a good bargain for you in a coffin," he said.

"I don't like to think about things like that. How much?"

"It's made of mahogany with silver handles and a lock. For you, only two thousand dollars."

"I'll think about it."

On his way home from work, Weinstein stopped at the Minkis Mortuary to compare prices.

"I can give you something nice," said the director. "I've got a mahogany coffin with silver handles and I'll even throw in a lock. The price is one thousand dollars."

Weinstein rushed over to Feinberg's and began screaming. "Some friend you are! I just saw the same coffin you wanted to sell me and it was a thousand dollars cheaper."

"Was it mahogany with silver handles and a lock?"

"Yes!" replied Weinstein.

"Did it have a silk lining?"

"I didn't look. I don't think so."

"You see!" said Feinberg. "In six months you'll need a new lining."

Not only about life but even about afterlife, the mind goes on preparing even for that. People decide about their wills, they decide about their epitaphs, they decide how their tombs have to be made, in what kind of marble. Man seems to be so utterly unintelligent and he goes on wasting his life on such things which don't make any sense at all. But you have to look into your own mind.

YOU WANT NOTHING. YOUR WORDS ARE STILL. YOU ARE STILL. Buddha says this is how one should be -- no desire, because all desires are futile. They are about the future; life is in the present. All desires distract you from the present, all desires distract you from life, all desires are destructive of life, all desires are postponements of life. Life is now and the desire takes you away, farther and farther away from now. And when we see that our life is misery we go on throwing the responsibility on others, and nobody is responsible except us.

"My good man," said the visitor to the prisoner, "how did you happen to come to this sad place?"

"Well, sir," replied the convicted man, "you see in me the unhappy victim of the unlucky number thirteen."

"Indeed!" said the visitor. "How was that?"

"Twelve jurymen and one judge, sir."

Nobody wants to take the blame on himself. Anything will do -- unlucky number, palmistry, fate, astrology... stars, poor stars are creating misery for Anshumali! Even if they search for Anshumali it will be difficult for them to find him; they cannot even find the earth -- the earth is so tiny. Our sun is twelve thousand times bigger than the earth and our sun is a very mediocre star. There are stars millions of times bigger than the sun; compared to those stars this earth is just a particle of dust, unnoticeable, negligible. It can be neglected, ignored. And there are millions of stars that science has counted and millions more must be beyond because our reach is limited, our instruments are limited. And these stars are deciding the fates of a clerk in the collector's office, of a peon in the railway station!

Man is so stupid, unbelievably stupid. He goes on throwing the responsibility on somebody else. Unless you stop this you will never become religious. A religious person is one who takes the responsibility upon himself.

The first thing that is making you miserable is your desiring, constant desiring for this and that. Stop that. And when there is no desire there are no thoughts either. The function of the thoughts is to help you desire; they are instrumental. If you don't have desires, thoughts are bound to disappear of their own accord. And when there are no desires, no thoughts... YOU ARE STILL. You are calm, collected, centered, rooted.

It was an early morning fire, and the young Italian reporter was lucky enough on arriving at the scene to get an account of it from one of the residents of the apartment house who had escaped.

"It was terrible," narrated the man. "Imagine walls crumbling about you, the flames of the fire practically licking your cheek in whatever direction you turned and the very iron of the bannisters smoking under your hands. But in the midst of it all, I want you to know, I kept quite cool and balanced."

"It's a shame, since you were so calm and cool," replied the reporter, "that you didn't think of putting your pants on."

The people who think they are quiet and calm are not quiet and calm, they are just believing that; they are just hoping that they are quiet and calm. Only very rarely is a person quiet and calm. It happens only at the ultimate peak of meditation, not before it. So don't deceive yourself.

BY YOUR OWN EFFORTS
WAKEN YOURSELF, WATCH YOURSELF.
AND LIVE JOYFULLY.

Accept the responsibility and that gives you great insight. If you are responsible for all your misery, if you are responsible for all your nightmares, then the other thing is also possible: you can wake up. If you are responsible for your sleep, you can wake up; if you are not responsible, some stars are responsible, then what can you do? You are just a victim and you have to suffer. Unless the stars change their mind, if they have any mind....

BY YOUR OWN EFFORTS WAKEN YOURSELF, WATCH YOURSELF. AND LIVE JOYFULLY. And people say Buddha is a pessimist? -- and he says: LIVE JOYFULLY.

Buddha says: Don't believe in a savior because that is the old mind, the same mind that wants to throw the responsibility on somebody else. Now Christians think Jesus saves. Hindus think that whenever the need arises, Krishna will come back; he will take another incarnation to save humanity. When are you going to feel your responsibility? And people don't think that this is just ugly, insulting, humiliating; it is falling below human dignity.

A Christian and a Jew were out walking. They came across a church and in front of it there was a big board with the words, "Jesus saves!"
The Jew said, "That's nothing -- Moses invests!"

Nobody can save you; don't wait for any savior. You can save yourself, that is true.

This is also one of Buddha's great insights into human misery, into human reality, that he says: Don't believe that somebody will save you. You are the cause of your misery, you can be the cause of your bliss.

YOU ARE THE MASTER,
YOU ARE THE REFUGE.
AS A MERCHANT BREAKS IN A FINE HORSE,
MASTER YOURSELF.

HOW GLADLY YOU FOLLOW
THE WORDS OF THE AWAKENED.

And if you meditate, if you become a little silent, a little alert, you will love these words because they have the taste of truth -- but only for those who are meditating.

HOW GLADLY YOU FOLLOW THE WORDS OF THE AWAKENED. Then all the awakened ones suddenly become your contemporaries. Then only can you understand Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Mahavira, Lao Tzu. Then only, when you meditate, suddenly mysteries open up, closed doors open and things which were never clear to you suddenly become clear. But it happens through meditation and there is no other way. Not by studying, not by gathering more and more knowledge, not by arguing, not by philosophizing, but only by becoming more and more silent. In utter silence, God speaks to you through all the awakened ones.

HOW QUIETLY, HOW SURELY
YOU APPROACH THE HAPPY COUNTRY,
THE HEART OF STILLNESS.

And then your steps have a confidence because all the buddhas are witnesses to you. As you start tasting the joys of meditation, as you start becoming alert to the beauties of meditation, as flowers start blossoming inside you, all the buddhas become witnesses to you. You know you are on the right track; great confidence arises in you.

HOW QUIETLY, HOW SURELY YOU APPROACH THE HAPPY COUNTRY, THE HEART OF STILLNESS.

HOWEVER YOUNG,
THE SEEKER WHO SETS OUT UPON THE WAY
SHINES BRIGHT OVER THE WORLD.

And it is not a question of age. Buddha was the first to initiate young people into sannyas. Otherwise, in India the tradition was that only very very old people, older than seventy-five, were allowed to take sannyas. Sannyas was for the old people. Buddha created a revolution: he initiated young people.

And my own experience is: the younger you are, the better, because as you become older you gather more and more rust, more and more dust. As you become older you become more and more burdened with experience, knowledge and all kinds of stupid things. As you become older you start losing the vigor, the energy, the courage to experiment with the unknown, to explore the unknown. As you become older you become so afraid of death that out of fear you go to God, and those who go out of fear to God never reach God. Fear is not a bridge, it is a wall. Those who go towards God inquiring for truth out of love for truth, only they are bridged. It needs a certain youth, a certain courage, a certain capacity to take risks. It needs energy, freshness; because religion basically is rebellion.

Buddha says: HOWEVER YOUNG.... Don't be worried about that. Maturity has nothing to do with age; growing old is not necessarily growing up. One can be young and grown-up and one can be very old and very childish. Age and maturity have no necessary link. Maturity comes through meditation. Aging is an ordinary process; everybody ages. Animals age, trees age, people age; that has nothing to do with transformation.

HOWEVER YOUNG, THE SEEKER WHO SETS OUT UPON THE WAY SHINES BRIGHT OVER THE WORLD.

LIKE THE MOON,
COME OUT FROM BEHIND THE CLOUDS!
SHINE.

Buddha says to his bodhisattvas, go and tell the seekers: LIKE THE MOON, COME OUT FROM BEHIND THE CLOUDS! SHINE.

The same I say to you: LIKE THE MOON, COME OUT FROM BEHIND THE CLOUDS! SHINE.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #6

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN I HAD DIVORCED TWO YEARS AGO.
IS IT POSSIBLE?

Shraddhan, man is almost a machine. Man is not yet man; he functions unconsciously, he lives in sleep. Hence everything is possible. In fact, you always fall in love with the same woman, even though apparently you fall in love with somebody else. The type is the same because your liking is the same, your mind is the same, your choice is the same.

Just watch people, watch their love affairs, and you will be surprised. It is always the same man or the same woman -- yes, with a different face or with a different mask, different clothes, different shape and size. But these differences are not real differences.

Unless you are new how can you fall in love with somebody new? Who is going to choose? How is one going to choose? The same mind will like the same type of face, the same eyes, the same color, the same shape, the form, the way the woman walks, the way she talks. Again within a few days you will be tired, just as you were tired before. Again you will find you are trapped, imprisoned, and the woman will also find the same thing. But man lives in such an unconscious state that you cannot expect more than that.

If man is conscious, then many things become impossible. In the first place, falling in love itself becomes impossible. You start rising in love, not falling in love; the very quality of your love becomes totally different. It is no more a relationship, it is more a state of your

being. You are full of love, you share your love, but there is no demand on your part. It is no longer a business, it is no longer conditional, it asks nothing. It is simply thankful that somebody accepted, that somebody did not reject your love. You feel grateful. It is not a bondage for the other, it does not enslave the other. It is not possessive; it is absolutely nonpossessive, unconditional, undemanding. It gives freedom. And when love gives freedom, lovers start soaring high, they start moving towards God. Love becomes a door to the divine.

Right now love simply drags you downwards. 'Falling in love' is a meaningful phrase -- you certainly fall, you gravitate downwards. In the beginning you feel great, but only in the beginning. That is just infatuation, because you are hoping something new is going to happen. In the beginning you are excited, it seems a great adventure, but soon you find it is the same old, rotten thing -- nothing special, nothing new. Just the partners have changed, but the game is the same -- and played with the same violence, with the same ugliness.

Shraddhan, it is not only you who have fallen in love with the same woman; everybody is doing that. In the ordinary, unconscious state of humanity more than that cannot be hoped for. You were fortunate that you got divorced, but it is difficult to live alone unless you know the beauties of being alone.

The moment you are alone you start suffering from loneliness, you start hankering for the company of the other. And then anybody will do, even the same woman that you had divorced; it is better than being lonely. Even if it is miserable, people prefer misery for company rather than loneliness.

Unless you know the joys of meditation you cannot avoid falling in love. Once you start enjoying your own being, the joy, the space, the absolute freedom, the unhindered consciousness, nobody occupying your attention, nobody trying to catch your attention, nobody impinging on your freedom, interfering with your freedom.... When you start enjoying your aloneness you have become a meditator. Yes, love will also be possible after that, but a totally different kind of love.

You must have been suffering from loneliness and, finding the same woman again, you may have thought it is better to be with her than to be lonely. And you must have forgotten all the miseries -- people's memories are very short.

And this has to be understood: the mind tends to forget the miserable part, it tends to remember the pleasurable part. That is one of the strategies of the mind to remain in control, to remain your master. It always tends to forget the misery; it goes on magnifying, enhancing, decorating the pleasurable part. Reality is totally different, but the mind lives in imagination.

And your memories are not reliable at all because your memories are fictitious. You just think how beautiful it was, you have forgotten all the misery; you have chosen only a few moments that may have been beautiful. There must have been a few moments which were beautiful, but only a few moments, few and far between. And they cannot be as beautiful as you were thinking; otherwise what was the need to divorce the woman? The misery must have been much more, the pain must have been too much, unbearable. You must have suffered too much, the woman must have suffered too much. It is not a question of the woman being at fault or you being at fault; it is simply that two unconscious people being together are bound to create misery for each other.

If you cannot be happy alone, how can you create happiness for anybody else? You yourself are not happy, how can you give happiness to the other? You can give only that which you have. You are miserable -- you can pretend that you are not miserable, but for how long? The honeymoon cannot last forever. Within a week or at the most two weeks it is finished, and then you know that both are miserable people. And when two miserable people

live together, misery is not only doubled, remember, it is multiplied.

But you forget all that. Later on you efface those parts which were miserable, you preserve the beautiful moments. And not only do you preserve them, you go on decorating them, painting them, again and again. Slowly slowly they have no relationship with the reality. Your past is fictitious, your future is fictitious; only your present is real. But you don't live in the present at all; either you live in the past or you live in the future.

And why has this question arisen, Shraddhan? Misery must have started again! That's why you are asking, "Is it possible?" You have done it, and you are asking me, "Is it possible?" You yourself cannot believe what you have done.

When people are together they want to be alone; when they are alone they want to be together. People are impossible!

Middle-aged Rizzoli sat on the front steps weeping bitterly.

"What's-a matta for you?" asked his neighbor, Pasquale.

"Bonnaocchi's wife-a just-a die," said Rizzoli, wiping his tears.

"So what?" said his neighbor, "She was-a no blood-a relative of yours."

"I know that," said Rizzoli. "It is-a just-a that everybody seems-a to have-a good luck but-a me!"

When you are with someone, immediately a thousand and one problems arise which were not there before. When you are alone those problems disappear, but a new problem arises: the loneliness seems to be so empty. You feel at a loss, you don't know what to do. Soon you start forgetting all the misery that was coming out of your relationship; you start hankering for another relationship. You think, "Maybe this time it is going to be different." Maybe she has changed, maybe you have changed. Maybe both of you have learned from the experience.

Harry and his girl, Francesca, were on the couch watching an old Roy Rogers movie on TV. As Roy rode through a pass, Harry said, "I will bet you a screw his horse steps in a gopher hole and falls."

"Okay," said Francesca, "you're on!"

Sure enough, the horse stumbled.

After the bet was paid in full Harry said, "I oughta tell you I saw the movie before. That's how I knew."

"So did I," said the Italian girl, "but I didn't think-a a horse-a be dumb-a enough to fall-a in the same hole twice-a!"

But man is more dumb.

Now make the best out of it. When you have fallen in the hole, try to make a home there! You are an American, and the only religion the American believes in is: Try and try and try again.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I CANNOT UNDERSTAND YOU; I HAVE TRIED HARD BUT FAILED. WHAT
SHOULD I DO NOW?

Govindo, is there a need to understand me? What is understanding? It is an intellectual

effort. What I am trying to communicate to you has nothing to do with the intellect. You can feel it, but you cannot understand it. You can live it, and only by living it will you be able to understand it.

But people try just the opposite -- first they want to understand. The idea is: Unless we understand a thing, how can we try it, how can we live it? It is logical that first one should understand and only then should one try to live.

But life is not logical; life is far deeper than logic, and many times life is absolutely illogical. If you try to cling to logic you will miss many things, and those many things are the most precious. You will miss love, you will miss meditation, you will miss joy, you will miss God, you will miss freedom. You will miss all that makes life significant, that gives life beauty, splendor. You will miss the presence of godliness that surrounds you. Logic is a barrier, not a bridge.

And Govindo, you say, "I cannot understand you." You must be trying from the head. It is a heart-to-heart communion. If you want to misunderstand me then the head is the right instrument; then you can go on misunderstanding me forever and forever. But if you want to understand me, then you have to forget all about your old patterns of understanding things. It is not mathematics that I am teaching here, it is not philosophy that I am teaching here.

I am teaching something absolutely existential. You have to live it, you have to take the quantum leap. You have been told again and again that before you take the jump, think twice. And what I am saying to you is: Take the jump first and then think as many times as you want, because then thinking cannot do anything, it cannot do any harm. But let the jump happen first.

Meditation has to be experienced. If you try to figure it out, what it is, you will miss the point because it is not a question of mind at all. Meditation means a state of no-mind. I am constantly pulling you towards the state of no-mind, in every possible way.

What I am doing here is absurd, it is not logical. You will have to put logic aside; otherwise I will say one thing and you will understand something else.

The judge asked the philosopher who was produced in court, "Now tell me, sir, why did you park your car where you did?"

The professor said, "There was a sign saying, FINE FOR PARKING."

Put your intellect aside. And remember, I am not telling you to put your intelligence aside. On the contrary, if you can put the intellect aside you will be far more intelligent because intelligence and intellectuality are not synonymous, they are antagonistic. Intelligence is a clarity; intellectuality is nothing but a clouded state. Intellectuality means you are too knowledgeable; your knowledge goes on interfering. Your mind is continuously interpreting, your mind is judging.

Listen to me without any judgment. I am not saying agree with me -- there is no question of agreement or disagreement -- just listen.

When you go to the mountains and you listen to the sound of a waterfall, do you agree with it or disagree with it? You simply listen! When you listen to beautiful music, do you agree or do you disagree? There is no question of agreement or disagreement; listening is nonjudgmental.

Hence the critics go on missing many things. If a critic goes to listen to music, his listening is not total; he is constantly comparing, judging, interpreting. You have to be very noncritical. You have to be just open, vulnerable, receptive, silent; so that whatsoever is

happening can penetrate to the deepest core of your being.

If you are full of your own mind, Govindo, you are going to misunderstand me; that is bound to happen.

Miss Zockwoski, an attractive redhead, got on a crowded bus and stood near a young fellow.

The lad, thinking of giving his seat to her, looked up and said, "How far?" "You got your nerve!" snapped the Polish girl. "Would I ask you how long?"

If you are carrying something in your mind, if you are preoccupied, then whatsoever you hear is not what is being said, it is what you are capable of hearing.

Quizmaster: "Lady, for fifty dollars, tell me who was the first man on earth?"

Lady: "Adam."

Quizmaster: "Right. Now for two hundred dollars tell me Eve's first words when she met Adam."

Lady (stuck for an answer, turns to the quizmaster and says): "Gee, that's a hard one, isn't it?"

Quizmaster: "Give this lady two hundred dollars!"

Govindo, don't remain preoccupied with your own thoughts. You must have come with great knowledge, you must have come with conceptions of your own and you are listening through a jungle of your own ideas.

What I am saying is very simple, utterly simple. My statements are absolutely ordinary. I am not a holy man, I am not a saint. I am far more ordinary than you are! I have nothing special about me. I don't exist at all, how can I be special? So my statements are very simple -- a child can understand them. But you can go on missing.

On a Third Avenue bus in Manhattan, a very prim spinster was shocked overhearing Scarpetti, the immigrant, saying to his friend, "Emma come-a first, I come-a next, two assa come-a together, I come-a again, two assa come-a together again, I come-a once-a more, pee-pee twice, then I come-a for the last-a time."

When Scarpetti was finished, the crimson-faced old maid turned to a policeman sitting nearby. "Aren't you going to arrest that terrible old man?" she whispered.

"Why?" asked the policeman. "For spelling 'Mississippi'?"

Let me repeat: "Emma come-a first, I come-a next, two assa come-a together, I come-a again, two assa come-a together again, I come-a once-a more, pee-pee twice, then I come-a for the last-a time."

You ask me, "What should I do? I have tried hard but failed." Now please don't try hard. In fact, stop trying, drop trying. Just listen for the sheer joy of listening. The wind passing through the pine trees... listen. The sound of running water... listen. The birds singing in the morning... listen. Don't try to understand. And just by listening something will start reaching your heart. A song, a dance will start happening. Your heart will start opening up like a flower and great fragrance will be released -- and that will be real understanding.

Govindo, you have been unnecessarily trying hard. Relax with me, don't try hard. If you

try hard you will be tense -- and there is no possibility of understanding me through tension. Relax, rest. I am here to teach you relaxation and total rest.

Understanding is going to happen but not through the head, it is going to happen through the heart -- not through logic but through love.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY IS CREATIVITY SO PAINFUL?

Prem Sarva, creativity is the highest peak of your consciousness; hence it is painful, it is arduous. You are going uphill. To be uncreative is very comfortable; it is a downward journey. You need not do anything, nothing is needed on your part; just the gravitational pull is enough. When you are coming down from the hill towards the plains you can just turn your car engine off, no gas is needed; the car will go on rolling down. But if you are going uphill then effort is needed, great effort is needed.

Creativity needs the greatest effort because many things have to be dropped when you are moving upwards; unnecessary weights have to be dropped. And you are carrying so much luggage; it is all unnecessary, it is useless. But people go on collecting, people are great collectors. They will collect any kind of rubbish, hoping that maybe some day it will prove of some use. They are greedy and they feel empty so they go on stuffing themselves with every kind of thing. You are so full of ego and ego is a great weight. You cannot move upwards. You will have to put the ego aside -- and that is the greatest pain.

To be a creator means you drop the very idea that "I am separate from existence." Creation happens only when you are one with the existence. Creation happens only when you are so in tune with the creator that there is no disturbance from your side. And the greatest disturbance comes from the ego. It nourishes itself on disturbance, it lives on disturbance. Ego means the idea that "I am separate." And if you think you are separate, you are living in a lie -- and creativity flows out of the experience of truth.

You have to know the truth, that you are not separate. No man is an island, we are all part of one vast continent. The whole existence is one, it is one organic unity; hence all that is great has come out only in those moments when the creator was dissolved into the whole. Great paintings, great poems, great music, great dance, all happen only when you are dissolved, when you are no more. If you are, suddenly you become the block, you stop the flow. Then God cannot use you as a flute, he cannot sing through you. The flute has to be just a hollow bamboo, just an open space, just a vehicle. The great poets, the great musicians, the great dancers, are all vehicles. They don't dance, they are being danced. They don't sing, some unknown energy sings through them.

That's why creativity is painful, because nobody wants to melt and merge and dissolve. We cling to our identities. In fact, we want to be creative so that we can hang a few more awards around our egos -- so the ego can become more famous, so that you can say, "I am somebody special. I am a great poet or a great composer or a great author" -- or something. And that's the greatest problem to be faced by any creator: that he has to drop his ego.

And in the beginning it is for the ego that you want to be creative. It is a very paradoxical process: you have to drop the very ego that was the impetus in the beginning, that wanted to be famous, that wanted to leave its name resounding down the corridors of time, that wanted to make history. That very same ego becomes the cause of stopping the flow of unknown

energies in you. Otherwise God is always pouring; you have just to be open, available. You are not to be separate.

It hurts in the beginning; it hurts more if you are resisting. If you are not resisting much it hurts less; if you are not resisting at all it doesn't hurt at all. Then dropping the ego can be one of the most joyous acts.

That's what sannyas is all about. The whole message is based on this single phenomenon: dropping the ego joyously. It is not a question of surrendering your ego to me. Ego is not something that you can surrender; it is just a fiction, it is not a reality. So when the master says, "Surrender your ego to me," he is simply giving you a device, because you live with the idea that ego is very substantial. He knows it is nothing, so he says, "Surrender it to me, give it to me, and you be free of it." Not that you are giving anything -- there is nothing to give; not that he is receiving anything -- there is nothing to receive. But to help you to get rid of a false notion, a device is created. Once you have dropped the idea, suddenly you see the whole thing: nothing has been given, nothing has been taken. You are the same, only the old wrong notion has disappeared. People are very reluctant to surrender.

Just the other day one sannyasin wrote to me saying, "I can do everything you are saying, but I cannot surrender." Then how can you do everything that I am saying? That is the first thing that I am saying! And he says, "I can do everything you are saying, but I cannot surrender." And he is thinking he is making a very clear statement. That is the only thing that I am saying: Surrender the ego. And it is not a question of surrendering it to me -- surrender it to a tree, but surrender. Surrender it to the river, go and drown it in the river. Burn it, bury it, cremate it! Do whatsoever you want to do, but be finished with it.

I am not interested in collecting your egos. What will I do with so many egos? If you are suffering so much with one, I will be in the seventh hell with so many egos! I am not an ego collector. It is just a device, a simple device. You say, "Where can I put my ego?" I say, "Okay, give it to me," because I know that there is nothing to give, but you will be happy in giving it. At least you will feel great that you have surrendered; at least you have given your ego into the right hands.

But this sannyasin says, "I cannot surrender." And people coming from the West, particularly, find it very difficult.

This is something which has to be understood: the Western education, the Western psychology, all emphasize ego; they all emphasize, "Enhance the ego, strengthen the ego." In different names the ego is strengthened. Willpower -- it is nothing but another name for ego. The whole idea is that man has to have an ego of steel, unbendable, strong, rocklike, hard, because life is a constant struggle for survival. You have to fight, you have to conquer.

Even a man like Bertrand Russell writes a book on science and calls it CONQUEST OF NATURE. The whole idea, the Western idea, is how to conquer; even nature has to be conquered. And who are you? -- a part of nature. A part is trying to conquer the whole. It is like your left hand trying to conquer your whole body. Is it possible? It is ridiculous. Science has not conquered nature, but in the very effort to conquer it, it has destroyed much.

In the East we have a totally different idea: nature has to be understood. The law -- what Buddha calls dhamma, the fundamental law of life -- has to be understood so that you can be in tune with it. It is not a question of conquering but of being in step with it, being in harmony with it. To be harmonious with nature is to be blissful.

If the West has lost all bliss, all peace, nothing is responsible except this stupid idea of conquering nature. Nature has not to be conquered. But the same idea persists in many ways -- in science, and even so-called religious people go on talking about willpower. Hundreds of

books have been written on willpower. It is a sheer wastage, and not only a wastage but it is poisoning people's minds. People like Dale Carnegie and Napoleon Hill go on poisoning: HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE. Deep down the idea is the same: how to win, how to influence. Napoleon Hill has written a book: THINK AND GROW RICH. And what is the secret of growing rich? When you look, you will find it is willpower; the whole secret, the magic secret is willpower. But willpower is only another name for ego power -- and ego is impotent, there is no power in it. So people go on struggling unnecessarily, fighting with each other, competing with each other, and the end result is that everybody is miserable. Hence for the Western mind it seems very difficult to surrender.

The situation is not better in the East either. In the East for thousands of years it has been taught that surrender is the key, so people are very easily ready to surrender, so easily ready that it has become a simple formality; it has no significance. The Eastern man can touch the feet of the master with no intention of surrender. He touches the feet of each and everybody; that is just formal. It is like shaking hands, it does not mean anything; it is like saying hello. It has no meaning in it, it is formal. It is a kind of greeting to elderly people, to anybody who is respected by others, to anybody who is known as religious, holy, saintly. People touch the feet of their fathers, their mothers, their elderly relatives; it is just a conditioning.

So the Eastern person is in a different difficulty. His difficulty is that he does not know what surrender is; he has not enough ego to surrender. And the Western man has too much ego; hence he feels resistant. But on the whole the Western man is in a better position, because if he understands the point and he consciously surrenders the ego, his surrender goes far deeper than the Eastern man's surrender.

That is my experience of thousands of sannyasins from the East and from the West. The Western sannyasin's surrender is far more total. Of course it is difficult for him, it takes longer for him, but whenever it happens, it really happens. The Eastern man's surrender takes no time; he is always willing, he is ready, even before you have asked, but it does not change him. He has been touching so many people's feet; in fact, he has started feeling a new, subtle kind of ego, "I am so humble that I am ready to surrender. I am so surrendered." But that 'I' persists now in a far more subtle way.

You ask me, Sarva, "Why is creativity so painful?"

It is because of the ego. And then there are other problems also. If you are too knowledgeable it will be difficult for you to be creative.

In Zen they have an ancient tradition. They say if you want to become a painter, for twelve years learn as perfectly as possible the technique of how to paint, and then for twelve years forget all about the technique and painting; do something else. Turn your back on painting completely; forget all about it, as if you have nothing to do with it. And then one day start painting again.

This is something significant. For twelve years you have to learn the technique, because without the technique your painting will be childish; but if it is just the technique, then technically it will be perfect but it will not have any life, it will not be creative. So you have to learn the technique, let it soak in and then forget all about it so it becomes part of your blood, of your bones, of your marrow. And then after twelve years, one day suddenly start painting again. Now you don't know the technique. In a way you know, existentially it has become part of you; it is no longer knowledge. So your painting will not be just technical and it will not be childish either.

First learn the technique and then unlearn the technique. Only then one day does creativity explode. First learn the technique of how to dance, then forget all about technique

and become spontaneous. Then only....

And there are two types of people -- one who will think that there is no need to learn the technique: "I want to be a creative person, not a technician." Then their painting, their music, their dance, will remain just a childish effort, amateurish; cannot be of much value. And then there are the opposite people who will learn the technique as much as they can and then they are caught in the technique. They paint perfectly but something is missing: the soul is missing, the spirit is missing; it is a dead corpse. So you have to drop all knowledgeability. You have to unlearn so again you can become fresh, innocent.

And third: if you are trying to be creative with a certain hidden motive you will never find the right direction for your energies, because if painters are famous then there will be many painters. For example, in France there are many painters. In India you will not find so many painters, but many saints -- just whatsoever is the fashion. In France painting is fashionable; the people who are thought to be intelligent should be painters. In India they should be saints -- the same fools! If they were born in France they would be painting; in India the same fools have become saints.

In each country the fashion is different, and at different times. For example, in India no saint will ever think of painting, but in Japan all the saints try to paint. They learn calligraphy and painting -- just the fashion.

When you are living according to a certain prevalent fashion, that simply means you want to be famous, you want to be accepted by the tradition and by the people. You are not inquiring about your real potential; you are far more interested in other people's opinions. You have to drop that too. Don't be worried about other people's opinions; simply find out what feels good for you. Nobody may ever appreciate it -- so what? You may not become famous -- so what? Don't be worried about it. The reward is not in being famous; the reward is in being involved, totally involved in creativity. The reward is in the act itself; it is not beyond the act, it is not after the act. It is not when you have painted the painting and people have appreciated it and it is being exhibited all over the world. No, the reward is when you are painting it, when you are utterly absorbed in it. That silence, that joy, that energy, that moment when you are not and God is: that is the reward.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT HAPPENS? I AM AN ITALIAN AND YET NOT ENLIGHTENED.

Anand Shraavan, it is enough to be an Italian; enlightenment is no longer needed. Enlightenment is for others who are not Italians. You have the first prize -- enlightenment is the second prize! You should not be greedy for that. To be an Italian is such a great phenomenon; that's why no Italian has ever become enlightened. And I don't think it is ever going to happen, for the simple reason that Italians are born enlightened. Drop this greed. What will you do with enlightenment? Spaghetti is enough! Enjoy it to your heart's content. Leave enlightenment to poor Indians; they don't have anything else. That's why in India so many enlightened people have happened: when you don't have anything else at least you can have enlightenment.

And enlightenment needs a few things which are basically missing in Italians. It needs intelligence. Where are you going to get it? It is not a commodity; you cannot find it in the marketplace, you cannot purchase it. It is not available in the outside world. And Italians are

utterly extrovert, and enlightenment happens somewhere inside. It needs great understanding -- and Italians are very skillful in misunderstanding.

One summer in New York a gorilla escaped from a traveling circus. As Bronzini was walking down Broadway the ape suddenly appeared and sidled up beside the Italian.

An astonished police officer directing traffic rushed over to the unusual sight of Bronzini and the gorilla.

"Hey," said the cop, "what are you doing with that ape?"

"I don't know," said Bronzini, "He just-a come up and-a take-a walk-a with me!"

"You better take that ape to the zoo!"

"Okay, boss," said the Italian.

The next day the same policeman spotted Bronzini and the gorilla walking hand in hand along Park Avenue. The cop was livid. "Just a minute," he shouted to Bronzini, "I told you yesterday to take that ape to the zoo!"

"I did," said the Italian, "and he like-a it so much, today I'm-a take-a him to the moving picture show!"

Italians are so earthy, they are pure Zorbas! Except for me, nobody is going to accept them as sannyasins. But I love to do absurd things. I want to do this miracle: to make a few Italians enlightened. There is not much hope -- I am hoping against hope -- but there is nothing to lose. They need a good try.

They are very bodily people, utterly body-oriented. The Romans have always been the most physical people on the earth. That has a beauty of its own, because the people who think they are spiritual become in many ways eccentric, crazy, insane, very egoistic -- of course, in a very pious way. They are always thinking they are "holier-than-thou." And they are wishy-washy. They talk about great things, but their life becomes ugly.

That has happened to the East: they talk about God -- and the bread and butter is missing. And without bread and butter there is no God, no possibility of God.

So nothing is wrong in being body-oriented; one should be rooted in the body. One should be a Zorba, but one should not remain stuck there. One should go a little higher. Zorba should also become a Buddha. Then there is fulfillment; both are fulfilled, the body and the soul.

Italians are too body-oriented and they are stuck there.

Granaldi's wife had just died and he was making an awful scene at the graveside. Over and over he kept tearing at his hair and yelling, "What-a am I gonna do? What I am-a gonna do? What-a am I gonna do?"

The parish priest gently took Granaldi's arm and tried to console him. "My son, I know you have suffered a terrible loss, but you will get over it in time," he said, leading Granaldi away from the cemetery.

"Oh, what-a am I gonna do?" wailed Granaldi. "What I am-a gonna do?"

"Try to control yourself," said the priest. "Months will pass, you will get over your grief, and then in a year or two you will meet some fine young woman and marry her and everything will be fine."

"Yeah, Father, I know all that!" said the Italian. "But what-a am I gonna do tonight?"

The Italians have to be freed from their excessive body-orientation. Enlightenment is the

ultimate flowering of consciousness. It can happen only when you are rooted in the body, but it cannot happen only with the body. You have to move inwards, you have to transcend the body too. Your roots should be in the body and your wings should be in the soul.

Shravan, don't be worried. It has not happened yet, but it can happen. There are so many Italians here; their surrender is deeper than anybody else's. Their commitment is also deeper than anybody else's. For the first time so many Italians are trying to move deeper into meditation; something is bound to happen out of it. But they find something in me that they cannot find anywhere else. They can find a connection with me because I am not against the body. I am not against anything. I don't think there is any problem if you love spaghetti -- you can still be spiritual! There is no antagonism.

For me even sex and samadhi are related, together. For me gossiping and gospels are not different -- somewhere deep down they are aspects of the same coin. Hence Italians find a deep affinity with me. They cannot be interested in any other spiritual man, but I am not a spiritual man in the ordinary sense. I am a whole man, I am not holy.

Locatelli, Swenson and O'Hara were sitting in the corner saloon. "There's no doubt about it," said Swenson, "Italian broads are the greatest!"

"Yeah," agreed O'Hara, "I would like to spend a nice long weekend with Gina Lollobrigida."

"Me," said Swenson, "I will take Sophia Loren."

"That's-a very nice," said Locatelli, "but I wanna Virginia Pipe-a Line-a!"

"Never heard of her!" said Swenson.

"Who is she?" asked O'Hara.

"Why, she is-a just-a the greatest Italian girl of them all. She even make-a the headlines in-a newspaper," said Locatelli. "See, here it is on-a page-a one." And there was a headline: "Five Die Laying Virginia Pipeline."

Don't be worried, Shravan, I am here to help you. This time maybe you cannot escape. So many Italians are caught in the net, a few of them are bound to become buddhas. Don't be worried, enlightenment is going to happen to many people -- Italians included!

And the last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
AND WHAT ABOUT THE POLACKS?

Purnananda, my God, are you a Polack? I was aware that one of my sannyasins, Anando, was a Polack, but I was not talking about Polacks because one Polack cannot do much. But two Polacks are too much; then there is danger! Polacks are great people, even greater than the Italians. Italians are nothing compared to the Polacks! You see, they were searching for a pope, they could not find one in Italy -- they had to choose a Polack. If you are searching for a fool you have to go to Poland.

Swami Anando has contributed this authentic letter from his Polish mother:

Dear Son,

Just a few lines to let you know that I be still alive. I writing this letter slowly because I know you not able to read fast.

You won't know the house when you get home. We moved.

There be a washing machine in the house when we move in, but it not working too good.

Last week I put fourteen shirts into it, pull the chain, and I not see the shirts since.

Your sister Hanna had baby this morning. I not find out yet whether it be boy or girl, so I not know whether you be an aunt or an uncle.

Your uncle Leopold drown last week in a vat of whisky. Some of the men dived in to save him, but he fight them off hard. We cremated his body, but it took three days to put out the fire.

Your father not have much to drink at Christmas. I put a bottle of Castor oil in his pint of beer. It keep him going until New Year's Day.

It only rain twice last week. First for three day and then for four day.

Try to learn write me soon.

Your loving mother,

XXX

P.S. I be going to send you ten dollars, but I already seal the envelope.

Polacks are great people -- more Polacks are needed here! But it is difficult for poor Polacks to come because their country is dominated by the communists.

Just a few days ago I received a letter saying they would like to start a center somewhere in Poland. They would like the center to remain hidden; I don't think they will be able to manage it! They even want to become sannyasins but they will be caught.

In Russia there are a few sannyasins. They cannot wear orange, they cannot wear the mala, but they have been managing well. They have their malas, they have made arrangements for the malas to reach them. Now, this letter from Poland: they want malas and they want books -- but they have not given their address!

Johnson went to the zoo to see Samson and Lionel, billed as the two most vicious lions in the world. There was no doubt about Samson, the smaller one, for if even a feather came within his reach he would pounce on it and rip it to shreds. But Lionel, the other, larger lion, did nothing but lie against some rocks licking between his hind legs.

Johnson asked the zookeeper how come Lionel was advertised as being so savage.

"Even though he is just lying there licking his sensitive areas," explained the zookeeper, "Lionel is more ferocious than the other one. In fact, not twenty minutes ago he ate a Polack that fell into the cage."

"Then why is he licking himself like that?"

"Oh," said the zookeeper, "he is trying to get the taste out of his mouth!"

Purnananda, meet Anando. Try to find out -- there may be a few other Polacks also trying to hide themselves, because they know once they are known I will be after them. Now you can declare whosoever is a Polack because I will be after them anyhow! So you can declare whoever is a Polack. You can make a small society of the Polacks.

In the new commune it will be good to have small communities, separate communities, of Italians, Polacks, of Germans.... There will be a few difficulties.

Gayan wrote to me this morning saying, "Beloved Master, you may not be aware, but now I have to tell you that I am half Italian -- the fault was my father's, he was Italian -- and half German; that fault is my mother's, she was German."

There will be some difficulty for people like Gayan, but we can make arrangements: they can live on the boundary line, half in the Italian commune and half in the German commune. And I don't think there will be people who are German and Italian and Polack, all three; that

will be difficult, very difficult.

Miss Zabriski walked into a physician's office and said, "I would like to get a vassilation."
"Miss," said the M.D., "I think what you are talking about is a vaccination."

"Yeah," said the Polish girl, "and I don't want you to give it to me on my arm because I wear a sleepless nightgown."

"You mean sleeveless nightgown?"

"And I don't want it on my thigh because I have a zucchini bathing suit."

"You mean bikini?"

"And I don't want you to vaccinate me on my Virginia."

"You mean vagina?"

"Alright," shouted the girl. "Virginia, vagina, just as long as I don't get small cox!"

Enough for today.

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Chapter #7

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WANTING NOTHING
WITH ALL YOUR HEART
STOP THE STREAM.

WHEN THE WORLD DISSOLVES
EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR.

GO BEYOND
THIS WAY OR THAT WAY,
TO THE FARTHER SHORE
WHERE THE WORLD DISSOLVES
AND EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR.

BEYOND THIS SHORE
AND THE FARTHER SHORE,
BEYOND THE BEYOND,
WHERE THERE IS NO BEGINNING,
NO END.

WITHOUT FEAR, GO.

MEDITATE.
LIVE PURELY.
BE QUIET.
DO YOUR WORK, WITH MASTERY.

BY DAY THE SUN SHINES,
AND THE WARRIOR IN HIS ARMOR SHINES.
BY NIGHT THE MOON SHINES,
AND THE MASTER SHINES IN MEDITATION.

BUT DAY AND NIGHT
THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE
SHINES IN THE RADIANCE OF THE SPIRIT.

"Look, Captain Columbus, land! We've discovered land!"
"Wonderful! Cable Queen Isabella immediately!"
"But, Captain, the cable hasn't been invented yet!"
"Mamma mia! Do I have-a to do everything myself-a!"

Science is a tradition, it does not depend on one man's discovery. It is a continuity; many people have contributed, still many will go on contributing. Then too it is never going to be complete; something will always remain to be discovered. It is a social phenomenon. Without Newton there is no possibility of Albert Einstein; without Albert Einstein there will be no possibility of anybody else to find something beyond the concept of relativity. Science is interdependent; it is not one man's work. Much has to be accepted from others, much has to be borrowed; it is inheritance. Hence science depends on the past, it is rooted in the past.

Religion is totally different: every individual has to discover on his own. Religion is not a tradition and can never be a tradition. You cannot borrow insights from somebody else; the insight has to be authentically yours. Only then is it significant. You can see only through your own eyes, you can understand only through your own meditation, you can experience only through the flowering of your own heart.

And there is no question of dependence. If there had been no Buddha you could still be awakened, if there had been no Christ you could still be enlightened. Your enlightenment is absolutely your own, it is individual. That's the beauty of religion; that's why religion cannot be taught. Science can be taught; religion has to be discovered again and again by each and every individual, by each and every seeker. The path of science is like walking on the earth; you leave your footprints. Buddha has said: The path of religion is like birds flying into the sky -- they don't leave any footprints... so nobody can follow a buddha.

You can love a Buddha, but you cannot follow him. You can love a Christ, but you cannot follow him. Yes, your love will help you, will help you to understand, will give you courage to inquire, will strengthen your spirit to go into the unknown. It will be a tremendous help because the journey is without any maps and you are going into the ocean. The other shore, the farther shore is not visible; there is no guarantee that you will ever reach it. By loving a Buddha, a Christ, a Zarathustra, a Krishna, a Lao Tzu, a deep trust arises in you about the farther shore -- that it exists: "If I search with my total being there is a possibility I may discover it." But the risk is great and everything has to be done by you. You have to go

alone. You have to be totally alone; nobody can accompany you on the way.

The master can show you the path, but he cannot go with you. He can push you, he can encourage you, he can help in many ways, but still you have to go alone. You have to discover everything, each detail of the truth, again.

In science it is totally different: once a truth is discovered it is discovered for the whole of humanity. Once electricity is discovered there is no need for everybody to discover it again and again. That will be stupid, utterly stupid. Once discovered it becomes part of the whole humanity's heritage.

But it is not true about the inner, subjective truth. Thousands of times it has been discovered, but when it comes as a question, as an inquiry for you to discover it, you have to go again from ABC, as if you are the first, as if nobody has preceded you. You have to break the ice, you have to move in the virgin land.

This is a great challenge. Cowards shrink from it, but courageous people feel tremendously attracted. Courageous people find it almost like a magnetic force pulling them. Hence Buddha always talks about fearlessness. He says: **WITHOUT FEAR, GO.**

Other religions, particularly the organized religions, are rooted in fear. If Buddha had written the ancient parable of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from heaven he would have written it in a totally different way. He would have appreciated Adam and Eve. He would not have called it the original sin, he would have called it the original virtue -- that they rebelled, that they were not afraid of God and the punishment, that they were fearless people.

He would not have condemned them, that much is certain; he would have praised them immensely. It was a challenge to their spirit, to their very soul, to have been told, "Don't eat from this tree, the tree of knowledge, because if you eat from this tree you will be punished, tremendously punished -- not only you but your progeny also will be punished for ever and ever."

And the punishment was going to be great. God had said to Adam and Eve, "If you eat from the tree of knowledge, if you eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, you will become mortal. Right now you are immortal." Death was going to be the punishment. What more punishment can there be? Death is the ultimate in punishment.

Buddha would have appreciated them. If Adam and Eve had not rebelled, had not eaten from the tree of knowledge, there would have been no humanity -- and there would have been no Christ, no Buddha, no Zarathustra, no Lao Tzu. Adam and Eve would be still roaming naked like animals in the Garden of Eden. There would have been nothing like humanity. This consciousness, this awareness, this inquiry -- nothing would have been there. The whole credit goes to Adam and Eve.

And the serpent would not have been the Devil. In Buddha's story, the serpent must have been an ancient buddha provoking Adam and Eve, "Go without fear and eat the fruit and don't be afraid, don't be cowards!" In the East the serpent has always represented wisdom. Jesus also says: Be ye as wise as serpents. The serpent in the East represents the inherent power, the seed power of your ultimate flowering; it is your potential. Hence KUNDALINI is called serpent power.

Kundalini means the serpent lying there fast asleep; it has to be awakened. Once it wakes up it starts rising upwards. When it reaches to the ultimate center of your being -- SAHASRAR -- the last center, the last rung of the ladder, you have arrived home. The serpent is not a representative, a disguised form, of the Devil. Buddha would have written the whole story in a totally different way.

But Christianity, Judaism, both are fear-oriented; so is Islam, so is Hinduism. Only two

religions in the world, Buddhism and Jainism, are not; otherwise all other religions are fear-oriented. Only these two religions are rooted in fearlessness, and I cannot see how a religion can be fear-oriented. In all the languages of the world we have words like 'God-fearing' for religious people; that is utter nonsense. A religious person is not God-fearing, he is God-loving -- and love and fear don't exist together. If you love somebody you are not afraid; if you are afraid you cannot love.

Love does not exist in the world for the simple reason that we have been trying to create love through fear. The father, the mother, the priest, the politician, they all are trying to create fear in you. The mother says, "Listen to me, otherwise you will suffer!" The father says, "I am powerful." In a thousand and one ways he proves his power over the helpless child and then says to the child, "Love me -- I am your father!" Of course the child has to pretend, because he is dependent, he is helpless. He loves the mother out of fear; his love is pseudo. He loves the father out of fear; it is only a pretension, it is hypocrisy. He loves God out of fear -- the fear of hell, the fear of being punished, the fear of being tortured.

And do you know? Christianity believes that if you commit sins you will suffer in hell forever. That seems such an absurd concept. How many sins can a man commit in one small life? And Christianity believes in only one life. If Hindus were thinking that you will suffer for a long time in hell one could understand the arithmetic because they believe in millions of lives, so you can commit as many sins as you like. Of course, the suffering will be in the same proportion, the punishment will be in the same proportion. But Christianity proposes an eternal hell. And what sins can you commit? You can smoke cigarettes and then in hell you will be thrown in fire and you will smoke forever and forever! Or you can be an alcoholic, but how much can you drink in one small life? Out of seventy years one third goes into sleep; you can't commit any sin in your sleep unless your dreams are also counted. Another one third goes into the offices, into the factories, into the fields, into the shops.... How much time have you got to commit sins? Just count all the days -- you will not find much time. And your sins will be just trivia. Yes, you can fall in love with your neighbor's wife, but for that you will be suffering for ever and ever? It is utterly unjust, unfair! Maybe three or four years' imprisonment in hell will do, but eternity? Can you conceive of eternity? It will never end, the suffering will be unending!

This is just to create fear. And people love God out of this fear, they pray out of this fear.

Buddha is against fear; fear is the original sin according to him. He believes in fearlessness -- he believes, and he believes rightly; it is his experience. It is my experience too, that true love happens only when fear disappears completely.

A true religion has not happened in the world because we have been trying to create a cheap religion based on fear. True love has not happened in the world. The wife is afraid of the husband, hence she pretends to love; the husband is afraid of the wife, hence he goes on saying, "Darling, I love you!" as many times as possible.

That's what Dale Carnegie suggests to all the husbands: "Whether you love her or not, that is not the point. Repeat it as many times in the day as possible, as many opportunities as there are. Once or twice from the office phone your wife just to say 'I love you.'" And this is all out of fear.

Because of fear the world is missing the roses of love. Love can happen -- every man is born with infinite capacity for love -- but fear cripples everybody, paralyzes everybody.

Buddha says to his bodhisattvas: Go and teach people these few fundamental things. The first thing he says:

WANTING NOTHING
WITH ALL YOUR HEART
STOP THE STREAM.

These sayings are his code words; you will have to understand his code words. In those old days things had to be remembered, so only very small sutras, very condensed sutras were given. Each sutra is expressed in a code language; you have to decode it. You have to translate it into contemporary language; otherwise you will miss the significance of it.

WANTING NOTHING.... How is it possible -- wanting nothing? That is the most fundamental truth in Buddha's teachings. He is not saying don't want anything, remember; that will be a misunderstanding. He is saying: WANTING NOTHING WITH ALL YOUR HEART STOP THE STREAM.

By "the stream" he means the mind. He always calls the mind the stream because it goes on flowing; whether you are awake or asleep it goes on flowing. It is the stream of thoughts.

In the modern world, William James, one of the great psychologists, used for the first time a Buddhist expression for the mind; he called it "stream of consciousness." Buddha says it is like a river constantly flowing. How can you stop it? The old methods are to repress, to control, but they have failed, utterly failed; they had failed even in Buddha's time.

In a sense Buddha is the first psychologist of the world, not Sigmund Freud. And Buddha's insight into the mind is far deeper than all your psychologists put together. There is no way to get rid of the constant overpowering flood of mind energy, of mindstuff, just by controlling it or by repressing it. Repression is absolutely destructive. If you repress something it will come up again and again and you will have to repress it again and again. Your whole life will become a kind of civil war; you will be constantly fighting with yourself. And the fight is going to be unending because you cannot destroy the mind in this way; this is not the way to get rid of the mind. In fact, you are giving mind great energy by fighting with it.

Mind can be given energy in two ways: either by fighting with it or by indulging in it. One leads to repression, the other leads to identification, and both go on nourishing the mind. The stream becomes bigger and bigger.

You can repress -- repression is easy -- and the whole of humanity has learned to repress because you always fall for the easy. Repression is not a difficult thing. Anger arises: you can sit upon it, you can go on smiling a false smile, and sooner or later you will forget about it. But it is there boiling within you and you are accumulating every day more and more anger. Anger has a beauty of its own if it is spontaneous, but you are accumulating anger which will become irrelevant, it will not be spontaneous.

Something may have happened ten years ago; now it has no reference to reality, no context -- and suddenly you explode. You look insane. That's how people go insane. If they had been angry ten years before when the right context was there, nobody would have called them insane, but for ten years they were sitting on it; then it became too much. And then for ten years continuously they were accumulating more and more anger. Every day they were repressing, they were sitting on a volcano; sooner or later it was going to erupt. Either that, or you have to become so dead and dull, so unalive that nothing can erupt. You have to withdraw yourself so totally from life, into a monastery, you have to become so insensitive to life that people can go on insulting you and you gather such a thick skin that nothing penetrates you....

Giovanni was sentenced to jail for having made love with his wife's body a few hours after her death. "Do you have anything to say in your own defense?" asked the judge. "Honest, Mista Your Honor," replied the Italian, "I didn't know she was-a dead. She has-a been like-a that for the last-a twenty years!"

There are millions of people who are not really alive -- afraid of being alive because if they are alive then their anger, their lust, their greed, all become alive. To keep them repressed they have to remain at the minimum; they never live at the maximum. And not to live at the maximum is to miss God, is to miss all -- all the beauties and the benedictions of life.

You should live at the maximum; only then do you come to know the tremendous beauty of existence. Only from that height do you become aware of the immense splendor, of the constant celebration that goes on and on. But you cannot live to the maximum; you are afraid because if you live so totally then all that you have repressed will come up.

Millions of people have decided for a dead life; before they really die they are dead. They live only for the minimum, to earn a livelihood; not to live but just to vegetate. They are so afraid -- the priests have made them so afraid.

Buddha is against repression. And if you repress something it will start finding some other way to come up, some perverted way. That's why I say that all sexual perversions have religious origins, for the simple reason that all religions have been against sexuality.

Sex has to be transformed, not repressed. It is pure energy, it is fire! But you need not burn your house with the fire. You can heat your house when it is too cold, you can make your house full of light when it is dark. It is the same fire which becomes light, which becomes heat, but it can also burn your house. You have to be very alert, careful, cautious.

Your life energies are neutral: they can harm you, they can help you; it all depends on you. Don't condemn them. You are responsible -- and only you!

But people go on condemning sex as if sex has something to do with you. Sex has nothing to do with you; sex is pure energy. But if you repress it it will become a perversion; then it will find ways. If you close the natural way, then it comes through some unnatural way. And you are the same stupid person, you have not changed at all; your understanding has not grown up.

Mulla Nasruddin came from his village to the big city, and a rich friend invited him to his box at the opera.

Said the friend, "We will be sitting close to other people, so be sure to change your socks before you come!"

A short time after they entered their opera seats, the neighbors started turning their noses up at the bad smell.

"I told you to change your socks," said the friend to Mulla.

"I most certainly did," said Nasruddin. "And furthermore I knew you wouldn't believe me, so I brought the old socks right here in my pocket to prove it!"

If you are the same old stupid guy it does not matter what you do with your sex, with your greed, with your jealousy. They will be coming back in some other form, by some other route; they will become even more subtle.

Buddha says what is needed is more awareness, more understanding -- neither repression nor control. If you can become aware of your desires, if you can watch your desires, then a

miracle happens, the greatest miracle of all. The moment you become aware of your desires you can easily see that no desire can ever be fulfilled; its very nature is unfulfillable. Every desire is just a hankering for something which cannot be, every desire means more and more and more. Now, how can you fulfill this constant hankering for more? You can have all the wealth of the world, still the desire will be there.

I have heard that when Diogenes said to Alexander the Great, "Have you ever thought about one thing? -- although it is a very remote possibility, have you thought about it? You may really conquer the whole world -- then what? There is no other world to conquer, there is only one world. If you really succeed -- have you ever pondered over the matter? -- then what will you do?"

And it is said that Alexander became very sad. Diogenes laughed and he said, "Look! You have not yet conquered it, but the very idea that if you conquer the whole world... what are you going to do next? -- because there is no other world. You will be quite at a loss, because the mind will ask for more. It is not going to be satisfied with this world only -- it is not going to be satisfied."

Mind means discontent; it is its very nature. Desires are only manifestations of this discontent. When you watch your desires you slowly slowly become aware of the futility of desiring, you become aware of the absurd nature of desiring. You become aware that by their very nature desires are unfulfillable. Seeing this, a transformation happens, a miracle happens, a radical change sets in; but by seeing this -- not by repression, not by control but by understanding.

A violinist was convinced he could use his art in music to tame wild animals. So, violin in hand, he traveled to the heart of the African jungle to prove it.

He had no sooner begun to play than the jungle clearing was filled with animals of all kinds gathering to hear him play. Birds, lions, hippos, elephants -- all stood round entranced by his beautiful music.

Just then a crocodile crept out of the nearby river and into the clearing and -- snap! -- gobbled up the violinist.

The other animals were extremely irate. "What on earth did you do that for?" they demanded. "We were enjoying that."

"Eh?" said the crocodile, cupping its hand to its ear.

The mind is absolutely deaf; it goes on and on doing the same stupid things, never seeing, never listening to the message. Every desire brings you to a point where a radical change can happen, but the mind can neither see nor can it hear. It is blind, it is deaf. As one desire fails it simply jumps on another desire. If one desire fails, the mind thinks, "If this desire has failed that does not mean that all other desires are going to fail." It goes on hoping that there must be some desires which can be fulfilled, maybe not this time but next time; if not today then tomorrow; if not in this life then in the life after death, in heaven. But the mind goes on and on thinking in the same old rut.

At the scene of a bank raid the police sergeant came running up to his inspector and said, "He got away, sir!"

The inspector was furious. "But I told you to put a man on all the exits!" he roared. "How

could he have got away?"

"He left by one of the entrances, sir!"

The mind always finds a way to convince you again of the same stupid game. Buddha says watch it. It is only through watchfulness that wanting nothing happens.

And your watchfulness has to be with all your heart; it should not be partial, otherwise it is not going to work -- because if you only watch partially then the part that has not been involved will go on doing the old tricks, the old strategies. Your whole heart has to be watchful so no dark spot is left in you, so your whole being becomes aware of the absurdity of desiring.

Jimmy Carter was visiting one of the largest institutions for the mentally unbalanced. He finished inspecting the main building and wanted to see the Farm Section. His chauffeur was not around so the president boarded the regular bus.

In a few minutes the keeper brought on some inmates. When they were seated he began counting, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5...." He got to the president and said, "Who are you?"

Mr. Carter said, "Why, I'm the president of the United States!"

The keeper said, "6, 7, 8...."

It does not matter who you are, where you are. If you are still desiring you are mad: "6, 7, 8...." You are insane. In fact, unless you are insane enough, how can you try so hard to be the president of a country? For years people try to become the president of a country; almost their whole life is devoted to a single goal, to be the president of a country. And what is attained? With the same energy they could have become buddhas, with the same effort they could have become awakened. But we put our energies to such wrong goals -- money, power, prestige -- and they all lead to insanity.

Desiring is insane. Enjoy life! -- but don't be too much bothered about tomorrows. Don't sacrifice your today for tomorrows; otherwise you will always go on missing all the opportunities which open up for your inner growth.

WANTING NOTHING WITH ALL YOUR HEART STOP THE STREAM.

Watch. Try to understand the very nature of desiring, and in that very understanding there comes a stop of its own accord. The stream simply disappears, evaporates, as if it has never been there. And the moment you are free of the mind you are free of all misery, of all discontent.

WHEN THE WORLD DISSOLVES
EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR.

With the dissolution of the mind, the whole world that the mind has created around itself also dissolves, obviously -- it depended on the mind, it was mind's projection. Not that the trees will disappear and the roses will disappear... roses will be far rosier and trees will be far greener. People will be far more beautiful; even pebbles on the seashore will be like diamonds. Everything will become precious.

This world, the real world, is not going to disappear with your mind, but you are living in a totally different private world: the world of your desires. You don't see the real world, you only see your own private world projected on the real world. The real world is simply being used as a screen on which you go on projecting your desires. You never see that which is;

you only go on seeing that which you desire.

It is said that the shoemaker never looks at people's faces, he always looks at their shoes. Of course he is not concerned with their faces, he has nothing to do with their faces; he is concerned with their shoes. And by seeing the shoes he knows about the person; the shoe contains all the messages for him: whether the person is rich or poor, successful or unsuccessful. The shoe will say everything: the shape of the shoe, the newness, the oldness, the tiredness of the shoe; everything will say what kind of man this is. The shoe, analyzed by a shoemaker, will give you a perfect analysis of the man. There is no need to go to a psychoanalyst, you can go to the shoemaker, leave the shoe with him. And he can make a chart about you: what kind of man you are, what is happening in your life.

The tailors never see you, they only see your clothes. They decide from your clothes. People see only that which they desire and they project their desire. If somebody is full of lust even an ugly woman may look beautiful.

Mulla Nasruddin goes to a hill station once in a while; he has a bungalow there. Sometimes he says, "I am going for three weeks," and comes back after only ten days. It happened many times so I asked him, "You never follow your decision. You say, 'I am going for three weeks,' then you are back within a week. Sometimes you say, 'I am going for five weeks,' and you are back in ten days. What is the matter?"

He laughed; he said, "I have a criterion and I cannot decide from here. You know that I have got a bungalow in the hill station -- well, I have kept one woman there to look after the bungalow. She is the ugliest woman you can conceive of and how long I am going to stay is determined by that woman."

I said, "I don't understand."

He said, "Let me explain. She is so repulsive, so disgusting, but when I go there, after two or three days she is not so repulsive, so disgusting. After four or five days I even start seeing something beautiful in her. By the seventh or eighth day she starts looking really beautiful. The moment I see that a desire for her is arising in me, I escape -- that's how I decide. That means now it is time for me to leave. I know that she is ugly, but my eyes are deceiving me now, now they are projecting. Now my unfulfilled sexual lust is being projected on her; she is not what she is appearing to me. Then I start escaping -- I am going insane. Then I immediately rush back home; it is time to go home, otherwise there is danger. And I don't want to make love to that disgusting woman. I know perfectly well she is disgusting, but there comes a time, somewhere between seven and ten days, when she starts looking so beautiful, as if she is a Sophia Loren."

You experience this again and again, but you don't understand. When for the first time you fall in love with a woman or a man, the other looks almost like a god or a goddess; that is your projection. Soon you will be disillusioned. The fault lies with you, not with the other. It is not that the other has cheated you; the other has not done anything. You were starving, you were hankering, you were living with a repressed desire and that desire created an illusion for you. You fell in love, you saw something which was not there. Lovers go on seeing things which are not there, nobody else sees them; that's why lovers are thought mad by everybody else. They themselves will think they were mad after two or three weeks, but when they are in love for the first time they think they have discovered the woman they are made for -- that they are made for each other.

Here, I go on receiving letters. One woman sannyasin finds somebody almost every

month and she writes to me and she forgets all about the fact that she has been writing it for at least three years: "Beloved Master, it seems we are made for each other." She has no idea that she has written this at least fifty times! But when she is infatuated with somebody she forgets everything else.

I reminded her. She said, "The other times I may have been wrong, but this time, believe me, we are made for each other!" And within two or three weeks these people who are made for each other are finished.

In fact, nobody is made for anybody else; everybody is made for himself or herself. Nobody is made for anybody -- God never makes you in pairs! Drop that whole nonsense. He simply makes individuals.

In the East we have stories -- they must be stories, they cannot be history. In Jaina scriptures it is said that in the beginning when the world started, God used to make men and women together. Each mother used to give birth to twins, one girl, one boy; they were going to be husband and wife. They were not sister and brother -- they were made for each other! That must be a wish fulfillment. Man has always been thinking, "There must be someone with whom I am going to fit absolutely. Somewhere someone must exist who is just for me and I am for her." There is nobody just for you or you for anybody. God creates only individuals, God believes in individuality -- he is an individualist.

In fact, marriage is a human invention, God does not believe in marriage. He himself is alone without a wife; you can see -- the point is so clear. Otherwise he would at least have married the Holy Ghost! The Holy Ghost can be turned into a woman or a man -- a ghost is a ghost! He does not have any body; he could have given it a body. If he can create the whole world, can't he create a woman for himself? He was so generous with man -- he gave man first a woman, Lilith. And Lilith was really a beautiful woman, but the first night there was a pillow fight -- the first liberated woman! The Women's Liberation movement started with Lilith. And the fight was because God had given them only a single bed and both wanted to sleep on it and it was not big enough for two persons. Lilith simply rejected the idea that she should sleep on the floor. She said, "If you want to sleep on the floor you can!"

Adam felt very insulted -- a man, and sleeping on the floor, and the woman sleeping in the bed? In the middle of the night they knocked on God's door and said, "You have to settle it."

God also seems to be very strange -- it was such a simple thing. He could have called Asheesh: "Make a double bed!" That's what I would have done. Why make so much fuss about it? Or if Asheesh was going to take a long time -- as he usually does -- he could have removed the bed: "Both of you can sleep on the floor, be equal!" He could have sent Deeksha to remove it; she would have removed everything, even the floor! But God's ways are strange.

He dissolved Lilith. He said, "You disappear. You will not be able to work it out." Then he made Eve, taking a rib out of Adam so that she would be a part of Adam. That is an ugly act, that is very antifeminist. And since then God has been a male chauvinist pig!

Nobody is made for anybody else, hence no two persons can fit absolutely. All your ideas about fitting with the other are illusions, and they are shattered sooner or later. Either you have to compromise or you have to separate. But nobody is made for the other.

Those who understand, they start accepting the uniqueness of the other, they start respecting the uniqueness of the other. They know they are different, yet they have decided to be together. And it is beautiful that they are different because that variety gives richness to

life.

But you go on creating a world around yourself, an illusory world. Buddha is talking about that world when he says: WHEN THE WORLD DISSOLVES -- he means when the mind dissolves with all its projections -- EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR.

When all your projections are gone you have a clarity, an immense clarity, no clouds in your consciousness. You can see through and through. That seeing is freedom, that seeing is salvation, that seeing is nirvana, that seeing is coming home.

GO BEYOND....

Go to that seeing. Go beyond the mind, go beyond the known, because the mind consists of the known. And go beyond the knowable because whatsoever is knowable will sooner or later become known and will again create the mind. So go beyond the known -- known means that which has already become your mind -- and the knowable -- that which is potentially going to become your mind sooner or later. Go beyond the known and the knowable so that you can enter into the unknowable, into the mysterious. The beyond represents the mysterious.

THIS WAY OR THAT WAY....

Buddha is not a fanatic; he says it doesn't matter which way you follow. Remember: you have to go beyond the mind. Follow any way! This is his beauty -- it is very rare. You will not find this quality in religious fanatics; he is not a fanatic at all. He says it is immaterial what way you follow, whether you swim to the other shore or you go by a boat or a steamship or how you manage... that is up to you. Go to the other shore; that is the point. Every path is valid if it leads to the other shore, every path is valid if it leads you beyond the mind.

And there are only two paths. One is awareness, meditation -- Buddha's path. And the other is love, devotion, the path of the Sufis. There are basically only two paths, but Buddha is very clear. He says: THIS WAY OR THAT WAY....

By "this way" he means his path; by "that way" he means the path of love, of devotion. That is not his path, but he does not prohibit you. He does not say that you cannot reach by the other path. He does not say, "My path is the only path." He does not say, he does not claim, "Only those who come with me will reach and everyone else will fall into hell." No! He says, "You can follow other paths too. Just keep one thing in your consciousness -- that you have to go beyond."

TO THE FARTHER SHORE
WHERE THE WORLD DISSOLVES
AND EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR.

BEYOND THIS SHORE
AND THE FARTHER SHORE,
BEYOND THE BEYOND,
WHERE THERE IS NO BEGINNING,
NO END.

"Beyond the beyond" is Buddha's expression for God; he never uses the word 'God'. But "beyond the beyond" is exactly what the word 'God' represents. Why does he say "beyond the beyond"? Is it not

enough to call it "the beyond"? It is not, because when you say "the beyond" it seems you have comprehended it; it means your mind has comprehended. When you say "the other shore" it means that it is the other shore, but it is something like this shore; at least it is also a shore so it must be something like this -- maybe a little bit different, more beautiful, with more trees, with more greenery, with more beautiful flowers and fragrance -- but a shore is a shore.

"This shore" and "that shore" your mind can comprehend. Hence he says: Anything that is comprehensible to the mind has to be left behind. The beyond is incomprehensible.

BEYOND THIS SHORE AND THE FARTHER SHORE -- you have to go beyond both the shores -- BEYOND THE BEYOND, WHERE THERE IS NO BEGINNING, NO END.

When a man came to Buddha -- he had been practicing meditation for years -- he said, "You have told me, 'Attain to nothing,' and I have attained it. Now what else do I have to do?"

Buddha said, "Now throw it away! Go out and throw it away!"

He was puzzled. He said, "I have spent years in attaining it!"

Buddha said, "The only purpose in attaining it is to throw it -- then only will you be really in a state of nothing; otherwise, this nothing has become something -- you have attained it. It is not real nothing. How can you attain real nothing? Real nothing is not attainable, it is not graspable. It is beyond grasp, it is beyond comprehension. So go out and throw it!"

A king came to Buddha with many diamonds in one hand, very precious, very rare, and with a lotus flower in the other hand, out of season. He wanted to offer the diamonds. Buddha said, "Drop it!" So he dropped the diamonds -- reluctantly, because it was such a great treasure -- thinking, "This man does not understand what he is saying." But ten thousand monks are there and now not to drop them will look miserly and people will laugh and they will say, "If you have come to offer him something and he orders, 'Drop it!' then drop it! You have offered them to him, now it is his business what to do with them." So he dropped them, but very reluctantly.

Then he offered the lotus flower. Buddha said, "Drop it!" He dropped that flower too. Now he was standing with empty hands and Buddha said, "Drop it!" Now the king was at a loss. He said, "Sir, I don't have anything to drop; my hands are utterly empty." Buddha said, "Then DROP it!" Now the king thought, "This man is crazy! I am saying my hands are empty, still he says 'Drop it!'"

One of Buddha's bodhisattvas, Manjushree, laughed and he said, "Sir, you don't understand my master. He is saying, 'Don't carry this idea of emptiness, drop that too -- because the idea of emptiness is enough to fill yourself; the idea of emptiness is enough to create a mind.' Buddha is saying, 'Drop ALL unconditionally. And when you have dropped all, don't carry this idea that now nothing is left. Drop that too so you have nothing to claim.'"

That is the meaning of going beyond the beyond. That is the ultimate state of nirvana -- when the ego, the mind, the personality, all cease to exist and you disappear into the mysterious, into the miraculous, into the universal.

WITHOUT FEAR, GO.

MEDITATE.

This is what meditation is all about: watching your desires, understanding their nature...

and letting them fall like dry leaves from the trees in the autumn.

LIVE PURELY.

And when meditation has happened and desire has disappeared, then live out of that innocence. Right now you are living out of desires. You desire this, you desire that, and sometimes you desire even God, sometimes you desire nirvana, sometimes you desire even meditation, but you live out of desires.

There is another kind of life -- the real life -- which is lived through innocence, without desiring. So whatsoever comes on the way you enjoy, you rejoice, but you don't desire.

LIVE PURELY -- that's what Buddha calls a pure life: a life which is not lived out of desires.

BE QUIET.

Naturally you will be quiet -- when there is no desire left there is no turmoil left.

DO YOUR WORK, WITH MASTERY.

Then whatsoever you are doing, whatsoever you enjoy doing, do it with mastery and skill. He loved skill very much, he loved excellence, he loved perfection. He was not a perfectionist, remember, because he was not a neurotic person, but he loved perfection. Do everything with your totality. Whatsoever you are doing, do it with such love, with such commitment and involvement that for the moment that is your whole life.

Once Vincent van Gogh was asked by somebody, "Which is your best painting?"

He was doing a painting. He said, "This one -- this is the best."

After a few months the man asked again -- he was painting something else -- he asked, "Which is your best painting?"

He said, "This one."

The man said, "But this is not right. Just a few months ago you said about some other painting that that was your best."

Vincent van Gogh said, "Whatsoever I am doing at the moment is the best. It is always this, it is never that. It is always now, it is never then."

This is the way of perfection, the way of excellence, the way of skill, mastery. Whatsoever you are doing, do it as if it is a question of life and death. Put your total energy into it, and it will give you tremendous bliss. Don't be halfhearted. Only then does creativity bloom, only then do you become a participant in God the creator.

BY DAY THE SUN SHINES,
AND THE WARRIOR IN HIS ARMOR SHINES.
BY NIGHT THE MOON SHINES,
AND THE MASTER SHINES IN MEDITATION.

These are code words. The sun represents the warrior. The sun is hot energy; the sun is violent energy. The moon represents the meditator, the mystic; it is cool energy. It is the same

energy, remember -- it is the same energy, it is not a different energy. But passing through the moon the sunrays become cool; that is the miracle of the moon, the alchemical change that happens through the moon. The moon simply reflects sunrays; it is a mirror. But just by passing through the moon a radical change happens: the rays which are hot, violent, become silent, cool, peaceful.

The sun represents the warrior, the fighter, the soldier. The moon represents the sannyasin, the meditator, the mystic.

Buddha says: BY DAY THE SUN SHINES, AND THE WARRIOR IN HIS ARMOR SHINES.

The day belongs to the warrior, the sun belongs to the warrior. The warrior means one who is trying to conquer others, who is trying to become a master of others. That is a stupid effort, but it is cheaper. It is easy to enslave somebody else, it is always easy to find somebody who is weaker than you, it is easy to impose yourself upon somebody.

But the mystic, the meditator is moving in a totally different direction -- he is moving in his interiority. He is trying to be a master of himself, not of others but of himself -- and that is true mastery. The first effort is stupid.

And the world has been dominated by the soldiers for centuries, that's why the world is in such a mess. The world needs more and more sannyasins because each sannyasin becomes a moon: he transforms the violent energy of the world into a cool pool of energy. The world needs to be full of sannyasins, only then can we have a world which forgets the ways of war and learns the language of peace and love. The world needs many sannyasins as transformers of energy.

That's exactly what is meant by a buddhafield: where many sannyasins are together and create such a great transforming force that all kinds of energies passing through the buddhafield become cool, become feminine, become more like flowers and less like rocks. They lose their hardness, they become delicate -- delicate like rose petals.

BY NIGHT THE MOON SHINES.... The night is the time of the mystic, the day is the time of the warrior. The night represents a change in the whole atmosphere. It is easier to meditate in the night than in the day. Meditation is far closer to sleep than to any other activity, with only one difference: in sleep you fall unconscious, in meditation you remain conscious, but with the same relaxation. In the day it is difficult to sleep; if you want to sleep in the day you have to close the doors and the windows and pull all the curtains so it becomes dark. If sunrays are coming they won't allow you to sleep; sunrays activate your energies. Night helps you to rest and relax. It is the time of the mystic.

Sannyasins should use the time of night more and more for meditation. You can go deeper, and easily, because the winds are blowing that way; you can move with the winds with less effort. In the day you are moving against the winds. In the day active meditations are good; dynamic meditation is good in the day, dancing meditation is good in the day. But in the night vipassana, silent meditations, just sitting and doing nothing, just relaxing because the whole atmosphere is relaxing.... The sun has gone down, the trees have fallen asleep; it is a totally different quality of energy that surrounds you in the night. It is easy to meditate.

Buddha says: THE MASTER SHINES IN MEDITATION in the night.

By "the master" he means one who is trying to be a master of himself; by "warrior" he means one who is trying to be a master of others. But once you have attained, once you have become enlightened, then there is no question of day and night, no question of sun and moon.

BUT DAY AND NIGHT
THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE

SHINES IN THE RADIANCE OF THE SPIRIT.

The buddha, the awakened, the enlightened one shines both in the night and in the day; there is no difference for him. Once you have become awakened, then nothing makes any difference. But till that happens use the night atmosphere more and more for meditation.

And when the moon is there in the night it is far easier to meditate. The full-moon night is the best for meditation. Many people who have become buddhas have attained their enlightenment on the full-moon night, even Buddha himself. It may have been a coincidence, but it is significant to remember: he was born on the full-moon night, he became enlightened on the full-moon night and he died on the full-moon night. Something in the full moon seemed to be synchronizing with his energy.

Use it. Be alert and use every possibility to help you go in. Once you are awakened, then there is no problem. Then you can be at ease, at rest, at peace, anywhere.

Somebody asked Buddha, "When you die will you go to heaven?"

Buddha said, "Don't ask nonsense questions. Wherever a buddha is there is heaven. Buddhas don't go to heaven; wherever a buddha goes, heaven goes there."

This is much closer to the truth, far more beautiful; the very statement is significant. There is no question of enlightened ones going to paradise -- enlightened ones live in paradise wherever they are. You can send them to hell -- if there is a hell -- and the hell will be transformed. By their very presence the hell will become a buddhafield. By their very presence the energies of hell will go through a transformation.

Once it happened:

A Christian priest was delivering a sermon one Sunday and he said, "Those who don't believe in God and live immoral lives will go to hell; those who believe in God and live moral lives will go to heaven."

A man stood up and asked, "A question has arisen in me. The question is: Those who don't believe in God and live a moral life, where will they go? Those who believe in God and live immoral lives, where will they go?"

The priest was at a loss; he had not thought about it. The question was tricky. He said, "Please give me time to ponder over it. After seven days I will answer, next Sunday."

Those seven days were real hell for him. He tried to figure it out, but it was impossible to figure it out. If he says, "Those who don't believe in God and are moral still go to heaven," then the man will say, "Why believe in God? Why bother about God at all? Just being moral is enough." He thought, "And if I say the people who don't believe in God and are moral have to go to hell, then morality loses all relevance. Then why be moral? Just believing in God is enough. Believe in God and live as immorally as possible. Why miss that opportunity?" He was driving himself crazy, he could not sleep. Continuously he was thinking and consulting books, but there was no answer coming.

Sunday came; he came a little early to the church to pray to Jesus. "Help me!" he prayed to Jesus. The whole night he had not slept so while he was praying he fell asleep, and he dreamed a beautiful dream, a very significant dream. He saw that he was in a train. He asked where the train was going and the other passengers said, "The train is going to heaven."

He said, "This is very good! That's what I wanted to see -- see with my own eyes. Socrates never believed in God, but he lived a moral life. Buddha never believed in God, but

he lived one of the purest lives. Mahavira never believed in God, but who can surpass Mahavira in his moral life? If I can find these three people there, then the question is solved; if I don't find them there, then too the question is solved."

The train reached heaven; he was very much surprised. Seeing heaven, he could not believe it -- it looked more like hell! Of course the board said it was heaven, but it had not been painted, it seems, for centuries. So much dust had collected, everything was dirty. It looked like a desert: no greenery, no trees, no roses, no lotuses. He came across a few saints who looked almost dead, somehow dragging themselves. Dust had also gathered on them as if they had forgotten how to take a bath, as if nobody took baths in heaven.

He asked, "Is Socrates here? Is Buddha here? Is Mahavira here?"

Those saints said, "Never heard of these people."

He rushed to the inquiry office. He inquired, "Is there a train that goes to hell?"

They said, "Yes, it is leaving immediately. You can catch it right now."

And he rushed in the train towards hell, and as hell came closer he was again in for a great surprise: so much fragrance, so much greenery, so many flowers, so many beautiful birds, and singing and dancing. He said, "What is the matter?" And everybody looked so joyous, so radiant. He asked people on the station, "Is this really hell? Is THIS hell?"

They said, "Yes, this is hell, and nobody can believe this is hell. Since these three people -- Socrates, Buddha and Mahavira -- arrived, everything changed. They have transformed the whole scene. Just the name is hell now -- it is really heaven. And the other place is only heaven in name; it has become hell."

I agree absolutely with the dream. I can visualize that your so-called saints, wherever they are, will create hell. But if a man like Buddha or Socrates or Mahavira or Jesus or Lao Tzu or Zarathustra is in hell, then hell has to change. It is not a question of the place; the question is of who is there.

BUT DAY AND NIGHT THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE SHINES IN THE RADIANCE OF THE SPIRIT.

You can say hell or heaven... THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE SHINES IN THE RADIANCE OF THE SPIRIT. Wherever he is he creates a new world, he creates a totally new energy. He is an alchemical transformer.

First, don't be soldiers, be sannyasins, because that is how one day you can become buddhas. Move towards self-mastery. Use all devices, methods, to become a master of your own self. And then one day, when the mind has disappeared with all its illusions and you have attained to clarity, when you can see that which is as it is, you are a buddha. Then wherever you are there is paradise.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #8

Chapter title: Laughter: love, joy, gratitude

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT ALL A JOKE? BUT I DON'T GET IT.

Vimalkirti, it certainly is a joke, but you cannot get it. You are German, and not only an ordinary German -- you are the great-grandchild of the German emperor! Just think of the old man in his grave: he must be tossing and turning, seeing you in orange, cleaning floors in Poona! What do you think? -- is it not a joke? Could your great-grandfather ever have imagined or dreamed that this was going to happen to his own children one day? Impossible that he would have ever dreamed about it -- but it has happened.

You have been told for centuries that life is a serious affair; it has become a deep conditioning. Otherwise life is really a joke. It is playfulness, it is LEELA. It all depends on how you take it. If you take it seriously it becomes serious, but then you suffer -- you suffer from your own idea. Life becomes heavy, it becomes a weight, a mountain on your chest; you are crushed underneath it. Life loses all joy, all laughter. You simply drag, you don't live. How can one live without laughter?

It is man who is the only animal on earth who knows how to laugh. Laughter is the only thing that is special to human beings, not reason but laughter. Animals can also reason -- they reason in their own way -- but they cannot joke, they cannot laugh, they cannot see the humorous side; that is impossible for them. All animals are serious people and all serious people are animals! The moment you get rid of your seriousness you get rid of your animality.

Hence I have no respect for your saints. They are very serious, far more serious than the donkeys, far more serious than the buffaloes. They have fallen, they have not risen. Your saints are serious, your politicians are serious, your revolutionaries are serious, your scientists are serious. They are all taking life as if somehow one has to pass through it -- not dance. The very concept of dance is far away from them. They cannot even walk, they drag. They don't live, they only slowly die. They are all waiting for death to relieve them of the pain and the suffering of life.

It is very rare to find a human being who has not contemplated committing suicide once or twice. On average, four times in his life every human being thinks of committing suicide. He does not do it, that is another matter. Maybe he has no guts to do it, maybe he is afraid of what is going to happen after death. Who knows? It may be far worse than life itself. At least life is known, familiar; it is risky to move into the unknown.

Indians don't commit suicide much because they believe that they will be sent back again, so what is the point? -- millions of times you have to be born. All Indian religions seek and search not for God, remember, but for freedom from life, freedom from the circle of birth and death. How can these people rejoice and how can these people be thankful to God? They are complaining and their complaining is very loud. They are saying, "We don't want to be born.

We never wanted to be born. Why didn't you ask us first? It is unfair! It is not a gift, it is unfair to send us into a life which we had never asked for. And it is unfair to go on sending us into a life which is nothing but misery."

But life is not misery. It is our approach, it is our way of looking at it that has made it ugly. Our vision is distorted, not life itself. Our mirror is distorted, not life itself. Because our mirror is distorted, life appears distorted.

Vimalkirti, to me it is all a joke. And I am not joking -- I am really serious about it! You say, "But I don't get it."

I have heard that in Germany people are not allowed to tell jokes on Saturday evenings. Why? -- because they might burst out laughing in church on Sunday morning. It takes time for them to understand! And you are the great-grandchild of the German emperor, it may take a little longer for you! But if you are here you are bound to get it. Don't be worried. Life is so full of hilarious moments that it is almost impossible to miss them. It is a miracle how people go on missing them; otherwise you will come across jokes everywhere.

When Winston Churchill was appointed prime minister for the first time -- he was tired from the election campaign and all the politics that had gone before and all the struggle to reach the top -- his wife thought it would be good to call a friend who knew many beautiful jokes so he could tell a few jokes to Winston Churchill. "That will relax him, help him to laugh a little. He has been so serious for so many days and he looks so tired."

The friend was called; he came with all the latest jokes. He asked Winston Churchill, "Would you like to know the latest jokes?"

Churchill looked at him and said, "Please, no more -- I have appointed them all in my cabinet!"

If you look around, if you are watchful enough, then you are bound to stumble again into something so beautiful and so ridiculous. The very idea of creating the world and creating you all is such a cosmic joke! God must have a sense of humor.

An old rabbi was dying and somebody asked him... because they were afraid for the old rabbi. He was not very religious, not very virtuous; in fact, he was just the opposite. They were worried. They asked him, "Are you ready to meet God?"

He opened his eyes and said, "Yes, that's what I am doing -- I am just trying to remember a few beautiful jokes to tell him. He must be getting tired of all those long faces, sad saints. He will really enjoy a few jokes, a few gossips about the earth."

And I absolutely agree with this old rabbi. If you meet God, don't fall on your knees and start praying -- he is tired of all that! Tell him a beautiful joke. That will be a deeper communion with him. Let him have a good laugh. In that laughter there will be a revelation. Vimalkirti, a few jokes for you:

Karpuik was rushed to the emergency room of the city hospital. The doctor on duty was amazed to discover that Karpuik had scalded his scrotum. "How did it happen?" he asked. "I was making tea," replied the Polack, "and the directions said, 'Soak bag in hot water.'"

Pilzudski took his wife to the doctor and complained that he could not have intercourse with her because she was too tight.

"Alright," said the doctor, "let's test it!"

The sawbones put the wife on the table, applied some vaseline to his instrument and entered Pilzudski's wife easily.

"Hey," said the Polack, as he watched the doctor pumping away, "if it not be for the medicine I think you be screwing my wife!"

There once was a pious young priest,
who lived almost fully on yeast;
"For," he said, "it is plain
that we'll all rise again,
and I want to get started at least!"

My approach towards life is that of laughter. And laughter contains love, laughter contains joy and laughter contains gratitude. Laughter contains a tremendous thankfulness towards God.

When you are really in deep belly laughter, your ego disappears. It happens very rarely in any other activity, but in laughter it is bound to happen. If the laughter is total the ego cannot exist; nothing kills the ego like laughter. That's why all egoists are serious. Ego can exist only in seriousness; ego lives, feeds on seriousness. And serious people are dangerous people.

We have to destroy all kinds of seriousness in the world. Temples should be full of laughter and song and dance and celebration. That's how trees are, stars are, rivers are, oceans are. The whole existence, except man, is in a nonserious state; only man seems to be very serious. No child is born serious, remember, but we destroy the innocence of the child. We destroy his qualities of wonder and awe, we destroy his laughter, we destroy everything that is beautiful and valuable, and instead we give him a load to carry on his head -- of knowledge, of theology, of philosophy. The more and more he becomes educated by us, the more and more he loses all sense of humor. He can't see any humor in existence because he starts living through his knowledge; he knows everything. Because of his knowledgeability all wonder is destroyed. Because of his knowledgeability, the greatest religious quality -- awe -- is killed.

A young man at college, named Breeze,
weighed down by B.A.s and M.D.s,
collapsed from the strain;
said his doctor, "It's plain
you are killing yourself by degrees!"

By the time you come back from the university you are almost dead. Your state is pathological. You are ill -- ill with knowledge, suffocated by knowledge. And you cannot laugh; that is only for children and madmen.

And my whole effort here, Vimalkirti, is to make you both simultaneously: to make you childlike and to make you utterly mad. If these two things happen, then only are you a sannyasin. My only commandment is laughter!... and everything else will follow. If you can love and if you can laugh, totally, wholeheartedly, your life will become such a bliss and a benediction, not only to yourself but to everyone else. You will be a blessing to the world.

You have to drop all seriousness. You have to drop this seriousness because it has been forced upon you; this is not your nature. You did not come serious into the world, you came

laughing. Each child is bubbling with joy and by the time he is four he starts dying. The age of four for the boys and the age of three for the girls is the time when death starts occurring. Girls are always ahead of boys in every way; even in this matter they are one year ahead.

And once death settles in you, it kills you slowly slowly. It is not that you die suddenly when you are seventy or eighty; that is only the completion of a process that started at the age of three or four. Have you ever noticed the fact that if you try to remember backwards you cannot pass the barrier of the age of three? At the most you can remember when you were three years old; beyond that all is blank. Why? You were here, certainly, and those three years were not blank at all; in fact they were more full of experience than any other year of your life is ever going to be. Each moment was full of experiences. You were constantly exploring life, people, everything; you were constantly in inquiry.

In one university they were doing an experiment. The experiment was... that children seem to be so active -- from where do they get so much energy? Their bodies are so small and their bodies are so delicate -- they are just like flowers, fragile -- but they seem to be so energetic, so vital, so overflowing with energy. From where do they get so much energy?

So they tried an experiment. They arranged that a very strong man would follow a child, and he would do exactly whatsoever the child was doing. And they were going to pay him; whatsoever he wanted they were going to pay him. He was a really big man, a wrestler, a famous wrestler, so he was not worried about following a child. What can a child do? But within four hours he was flat on the ground, because once the child knew that he was imitating him, the child jumped and the child ran and the child rolled on the floor and the child laughed uproariously.... And the child did so many things that the wrestler, within four hours, was finished!

He said, "Never in my life have I been so tired. I have been fighting my whole life, I have fought great fights, I have been always a winner. This is my first defeat!"

And that small child was not tired at all; he was still ready, he was still challenging the man. He said, "Come on! Let us have a little more fun! Are you finished? Why are you lying down on the ground?"

Every child is born with such great energy, but we destroy it. We paralyze every child, we cripple every child. And our churches and our temples and our priests have done the greatest wrong to humanity. They are the greatest criminals in the world, they are the real sinners. They have sinned against humanity -- they have paralyzed every human being. You don't know who you would have been if you had been allowed total freedom from the very beginning -- if your laughter had been free, your love had been free, your joy had been free, and you had not been hindered, interfered with, distorted, manipulated, forced, channeled in certain directions....

No child is interested in money, because no child is foolish. No child is interested in being the president of a country or the prime minister, because no child is so stupid. His interests are far more natural. He is interested in the flowers, he is interested in the butterflies, he is interested in the pebbles on the seashore. He is interested in dancing under the stars, in dancing in the sun, in dancing in the wind. He is interested in climbing the tree or in climbing the mountain. He is interested in swimming the river or in going into the ocean.

His interests are totally different, but we divert all his energies. We say, "No need to climb the tree, no need to climb the mountain. Climb the ladder of success!" -- which is an absolutely mediocre process, which is an absolutely unintelligent process. "Climb the ladder of success. Be more rich than others. Be competitive. Be jealous. Be possessive. Fight!" -- a fight for things which are meaningless. Then you lose your joy, then you lose your laughter.

Then life seems more like a nightmare than like a beautiful joke.

Vimalkirti, it is a cosmic joke.

And my vision is that the future religiousness is bound to be rooted more in life than in death, more in laughter than in sadness, more in dance than in dragging your life.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY, DESPITE APPEARANCES, IS THE VOID MORE TANGIBLE THAN THE FORM,
CONSCIOUSNESS MORE THAN THOUGHT, SILENCE MORE THAN THE WORD?

Deva Bruce, the void is the source of all forms. The void is eternal, forms are temporary. Forms are like ripples in the lake, the void is the lake itself. Forms come and go, the void remains. Forms are only appearances, the void is the reality.

Hence Buddha calls reality SHUNYA. Shunya means the ultimate void. Yes, it is far more tangible than your so-called real things, because these real things come from the void and will go back down to the void. The void is the source and the goal. Everything comes out of nothingness and disappears back into nothingness.

Hence, remember, nothingness does not mean that it is nothing; nothingness simply means that it is all. Nothingness means "no-thingness." Things are forms; nothingness is a formless energy. It can manifest in millions of forms, and it can only manifest in millions of forms because it has no form of its own. It is fluid, it is available for any form, it has no resistance to any form. It can express itself in millions of ways because it has no obsession, it has no fixation. It can bloom as a rose, it can bloom as a lotus. It can be a song, it can be a dance, it can be silence. All is possible because nothingness simply means that no form has yet been taken. Once a form is taken, things become limited, alternatives become limited. Once a form is taken you are not totally free; your form becomes your bondage. Hence, meditation is an entry into nothingness.

The Western religions have missed the point completely. Even their God has a form; God cannot have a form. To give God a form is anthropocentric, it is projecting our own form onto God.

If horses were philosophers -- and who knows, a few horses may be -- then God would be a horse, a beautiful horse, with all the great qualities of a horse. Horses cannot think of God as a man, impossible. Man has not been good to the horses at all. They can think of the Devil as man, but not of God as man. Man thinks of God as man.

The Bible says God created man in his own image. The truth is just the contrary: man creates God in his own image. Hence the Negro God will have a Negro form, the Hindu God will have a Hindu form, the Chinese God will have a Chinese form. The Chinese God cannot have a Hindu form; it is impossible. The Chinese cannot think that God can have another form than the Chinese -- of course, the most beautiful Chinese form, but it is going to be Chinese. These are our ideas projected onto God.

God is not a form, God is formlessness. God is absolute nothingness, God is total void. Out of that voidness everything arises -- trees, people, mountains, earths, stars, creations. They come, for the time being they are there, and then they again disappear into the ultimate void. That is the beginning and the end; it is before the beginning and after the end. Buddha calls it the beyond, the ultimate beyond, beyond the beyond.

You ask me, Bruce, "Why, despite appearances, is the void more tangible than the form,

consciousness more than thought, silence more than the word?"

Consciousness is God because consciousness is nothingness. Thought is a world; hence Buddha calls mind "the world." The moment a thought arises, a wave has arisen in the lake of consciousness, a form has arisen, and the form is only temporal, momentary. Soon it will disappear; it is not going to abide, it is not eternal. Don't cling to it. Watch it come in and watch it go out. Watch it arising and watch it disappearing, but don't cling to it. Remember consciousness, in which it arises and in which it dissolves again. That is your reality, that is your truth. The thought can be good, the thought can be bad, but good or bad it makes no difference. A thought is a thought; it is not eternal -- and that is the only criterion of reality.

That's how the mystics have always been judging reality: whatsoever is eternal is real and whatsoever is momentary is only a dream phenomenon. There is no difference between the dream that you see in the night and the dream that you see in the day, the dream that you see with closed eyes and the dream that you see with open eyes. Yes, there is a little difference: one dream is absolutely private. In the night with closed eyes you see a private dream; in the day with open eyes you see a collective dream, an objective dream. There are many participants in it, hence it gives you the feeling as if it is real. It is not so. What happens when you fall asleep? You forget all about the day.

It is said about Chuang Tzu that one morning he woke up and started laughing. His disciples gathered together and they asked, "What is the matter?"

Chuang Tzu said, "I have come across a problem that I cannot solve. Help me to solve it."

That was the first time that he was asking the help of the disciples to solve a problem. Otherwise he was always solving their problems.

The disciples said, "It must be a really great, complicated problem -- you tell us."

He said, "The problem is simple, but in a way very complicated -- and I don't think it can be solved, it seems insoluble. That's why I am laughing. I have looked at it from every side; it seems absolutely insoluble. The problem is, in the night I dreamed that I had become a butterfly."

The disciples said, "That's nothing. We all dream all kinds of things -- dreams are dreams. Now you are awake the dream is finished. Why make so much fuss about a dream?"

He said, "I am not making much fuss about a dream. The problem is: if Chuang Tzu can dream that he is a butterfly -- now the problem arises -- the butterfly may have fallen asleep and is dreaming that she is Chuang Tzu! Now what is what? Am I Chuang Tzu who dreamed about the butterfly or am I the butterfly who is dreaming of being Chuang Tzu?"

In fact there is no difference. The butterfly is also a form and Chuang Tzu is also a form. One form arose when you were asleep, another form arose when you were awake, but both are forms. Chuang Tzu is neither -- he is neither the butterfly nor Chuang Tzu. He is the consciousness, he is the awareness; the awareness of the dream, the awareness of the butterfly and Chuang Tzu. That awareness he is. And that awareness is far more real, the only reality in fact. No thought is real.

And the same is true about silence. Words arise in the lake of silence, beautiful words, but they are just forms. Hence the insistence of all the mystics: move from words to wordlessness, move from sound to silence, move from form to formlessness, move from thought to consciousness. Don't get entangled with the forms, thoughts, words. That's what meditation is all about.

Don't get identified with all that arises in you and disappears. Remain centered in that

which never appears and never disappears, which is always there. Remain centered in the abiding reality of your being, and you will know the greatest bliss possible and you will know the truth that liberates. You will know freedom from all forms -- because all forms create bondage. You will know you are neither a man nor a woman, neither white nor black, neither this nor that -- NETI, NETI. You will know that you are only the pure awareness which has no name, no form.

That's what Buddha says: You don't have any form and you don't have any name. Don't hanker for that which you are not, because hankering for that which you are not is creating misery for yourself, is creating unnecessary pain for yourself. Just be that which you are and have always been and will always be. Don't try to become -- be! And that you already are. It is not a question of becoming, it is not a question of desiring, it is not a question of reaching somewhere. You are already there, you have always been there. Just wake up! Wake up from the dreams, all the dreams -- night dreams, daydreams. Wake up from all the forms and abide in the formless.

And all the awakened ones say the same thing: Knowing that formlessness, knowing that eternity, your life is fulfilled. You will attain to tremendous contentment and bliss and benediction.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM GREEK AND I LOVE GARLIC. MY GIRLFRIEND CAN'T STAND IT, SHE IS BRITISH. SHE CALLS ME PRIMITIVE. WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME?

Devo, nothing is wrong with you, nothing is wrong with garlic either, but garlic is going to create a few problems for you. And the problem that you have come across is not really a great problem; soon you will have to face greater problems. The British lady at the most may leave you; that is not a problem -- that will be getting out of the problem!

Find some woman -- be free of ladies! A woman is beautiful, a lady is a problem. And it is very difficult to find a British woman -- I have not come across one yet. They are all ladies. The men may not all be lords, but the women are all ladies.

An Englishman and his wife were strolling around their West Indian estate when they came across a black girl and boy making love in the bushes.

"My gracious!" exclaimed the British lady to her husband. "They do it just like human beings!"

If she thinks you are primitive that is nothing -- at least she thinks you are a human being! Or maybe she does not think that you are a human being, but she cannot say it. It is so unmannerly to say to you that you are not a human being so she says you are primitive. That is not a great danger -- at the most the lady will leave you. You continue eating garlic. If there is going to be a choice between a British lady and garlic, prefer garlic; it is far healthier. But the real problem will come later on -- once the British lady has left you, then you will be in trouble.

Did you hear about the Gypsy girl who had to give up wearing garlic around her neck?
It kept the vampires away alright, but it attracted too many Italians.

So if you want to drop garlic, drop it when the British lady has left you; meanwhile she will protect you from the Italians. Every man needs a woman as a protection; otherwise he is so helpless. Once the other women see that one woman is protecting you they don't bother you. The moment they see you are unprotected they all jump upon you!

So first use garlic to get rid of the British lady, then immediately stop garlic; otherwise Italians will start coming. And it is easy to get rid of a British lady; it is next to impossible to get rid of Italian women because they are not ladies. They are true women and they will create so much trouble for you. They help only in one thing: they make you so much aware of the trouble that love brings, or that comes in the wake of love, that you start thinking of religion, God, meditation. All these great things would not have been possible without women. The people who started thinking about all these great things were people who were tortured by women. These were their escapes, escape routes, so they could tolerate whatsoever was happening around. They could hope for a paradise somewhere after death. They lost all hope in life because they knew wherever they went some woman was going to create trouble for them.

It seems God sent man alone first. He made Adam, but if man had been alone here he would never have thought of God. He made woman -- the woman is a constant reminder. She never leaves you at ease, she forces you to believe in hell. And once you believe in hell you have to believe in heaven too.

Devo, nothing is wrong with you, but if you want to live with garlic you have to renounce life. The British lady may be right in a sense: you have to be primitive, you have to go to the caves, as far away from humanity as possible. Garlic is simply dangerous for any communion, for any communication. It is very medicinal; it will keep you healthy and it will keep you alive longer than you would have lived without it. Or maybe because you will have to live alone your life will look longer!

If you want more advice about garlic you can ask Maitreya -- he is the expert about garlic and all its great qualities. I have never tasted it, so whatsoever I am saying is not very reliable. And I have never allowed any primitive to be close to me. You know my sniffers! No people who eat garlic will ever be able to come close to me! Garlic is good but a little inhuman: it is good for you, but bad for everybody else.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN INNOCENCE IN AN ADULT HAPPEN WITHOUT AWARENESS?

Anand Manuel, it is impossible for innocence to happen to an adult without awareness. Awareness is the only method that can help you to destroy all the conditionings that the society has imposed on you. Society has hypnotized you, but the hypnosis is done in such a subtle way, for such a long time, and it starts when you are so small, that you never become aware of it. You are hypnotized with the milk of your mother, you are given all kinds of conditionings, and those conditionings destroy your innocence.

Unless you become aware, you will not be able to see that you are a conditioned human being, that you are living with borrowed ideas -- ideas which have been imposed by others on you against your will -- that you are almost a prisoner. Not that you live in a prison, but you live in an ideology which is a subtle prison. You are a Hindu -- how can you be innocent? You are a Christian -- how can you be innocent? The ideology keeps you away from

innocence; it makes you knowledgeable, and knowledgeability is the only thing that destroys innocence. It takes all wonder away from you.

There are millions of people who don't feel any wonder in life. They will see a roseflower and yet they will not see anything -- no beauty, no awe. They will not even stop for a single moment. The rose seems to have no message for them, as if they have not seen it at all.

Every day you pass by beautiful trees, birds singing in the early morning sun, flowers releasing their fragrance, but you are a robot. You go on chattering inside your mind, yakkety-yakkety-yak... you go on and on. And what you are chattering inside has been put inside you. Your mind has been used like a computer: just as they feed a computer they have fed you.

In communist Russia they will feed you with communism. They will also teach you the holy trinity, their own holy trinity. They will teach you their own Bible, they will teach you their own religion. Communism is a religion, a substitute for other religions. Marx, Engels, Lenin, that is their trinity; DAS KAPITAL is their Bible. And they believe in all these things as fanatically as any Catholic, any Hindu, any Mohammedan. The Mohammedan believes in Kaaba and the communist believes in the Kremlin. The objects differ, but the belief is there. Both are knowledgeable, both have lost their purity, their innocence, their childlike quality.

Once you are full of knowledge you think you know all the answers. You don't know anything because unless you know yourself, nothing is known. And the beauty of self-knowledge is that it deepens the mystery of life, it does not demystify it; it makes it more mysterious, more miraculous. The person of wisdom, one who has dug deep into his own consciousness, becomes more and more full of wonder and awe. But the ordinarily knowledgeable person goes on living in absolute unawareness; nothing makes him wonder. He knows all the answers.

A dog walked into a restaurant and ordered a steak.

"How would you like it cooked?" asked the waiter.

"I like it well done, with crushed cherries on top. Then put some marinated tomatoes on it and soak it in pepper."

The waiter brought the food.

"Did you enjoy your dinner?" the waiter asked when he was finished.

"Very much," answered the dog. "By the way, don't you think this is all very odd?"

"No," answered the waiter, "I like my steak the same way."

The waiter knows too much about the steak -- he is not looking at the dog at all.

It was two o'clock in the morning and Gedalia the goniff was trying to break into a house. He tried all the doors and windows but he could not pry any of them open. Cautiously he climbed up to the second-floor balcony. Peering through a locked window, he saw a baby in its crib. By this time he was quite desperate so he decided to enlist the aid of the infant.

"Hoo-hoo, bay-bee," he called softly. "Itsy-bitsy boo-boo, is oo gonna open window for nice mansi-wansie, hmm?"

"Open the window?" yelled the baby. "Why, ya dumb schnook, I can't even walk yet!"

The baby cannot walk, but he has become knowledgeable, he can talk.

You have all become knowledgeable. You know nothing and yet you are full of knowledge. Your knowledge simply covers your ignorance, it does not make you wise. It

simply makes your foolishness a little decorated, a little polished.

A troubled young man went to see a doctor. The doctor told him to take off his clothes for an examination, then said, "Ah, you have orange candle wax in your navel? -- I know about this problem. Just the other day a girl came to see me; she also had wax in her navel -- because her boyfriend likes to eat by candle-light. Does your girlfriend like to eat by candlelight too?"

"No," said the man, "she needs the candle to find it."

Just look at things, don't bring your knowledge in, and you may be always in for a surprise.

You ask me, "Can innocence in an adult happen without awareness?"

It is impossible. The beginning of innocence in an adult is to be aware that you are conditioned. Millions of people are not aware that they are conditioned. If you don't know that you are in a prison, why should you try to get out of it in the first place?

Just the other day I came across a newspaper. The editor must have been here, he must have listened to one of my discourses. He comments that whatsoever I said was against Indian culture -- as if that is enough to criticize me, that it was against Indian culture! He takes it for granted that anything that is against Indian culture is bound to be wrong. But who has said that I am not against Indian culture? I am against all rotten things -- Indian, non-Indian, it makes no difference! I am against the very idea of Indian culture and Chinese culture and Japanese culture. I am against the very idea of dividing humanity and I am against the past. I am not here supporting Indian culture. So that is not a criticism of me -- in fact, that is a compliment!

I am against all that is dead. One should not carry dead bodies for ever and ever, they should be buried or burned. I don't believe in any culture and I don't believe in any country and I don't believe in any race and I don't believe in any religion.

I believe in religiousness, I believe in culturedness, I believe in humanity. But humanity is not Indian, religiousness is not Christian or Hindu or Mohammedan, culturedness has nothing to do with any country. It is a grace that comes through meditation, through awareness. It is a beauty that happens to you when you become rooted in your consciousness, when you are settled in your consciousness, when nothing can distract you from your consciousness.

Yes, every person has to become a child again, but how is he going to become a child again? Except through becoming aware there is no other way. First, become aware of your conditionings -- and there are a thousand and one layers of conditionings -- and when you are aware, then slowly slowly disentangle yourself from all the conditioning. Drop those conditionings, become dehypnotized, so no layer of dust remains on the mirror of your being. When there is no layer of dust on the mirror of your being, you will be able to reflect that which is -- and that is God and that is truth and that is nirvana.

But you are asking the question so that you can avoid awareness. You would like to find some shortcut to innocence. There is no shortcut; awareness cannot be avoided. Awareness is the only method -- let me repeat, the ONLY method -- which can cut from the very roots all the conditionings and can make you free from the prison in which you are living. And it is only a question of becoming more and more aware; nothing else can help you. I cannot do it for you, nobody else can do it for you. If somebody else does it for you, you will be reconditioned again. Remember it, you have to be unconditioned, not reconditioned. That's

what happens: a Christian becomes a Hindu; of course he becomes unconditioned as a Christian, but he becomes reconditioned as a Hindu.

My effort here is to uncondition you, to help you to be unconditioned, and not to recondition you again. My effort is to leave you in total freedom; then you have to decide what to do with your life. You are the master of your life; I can simply give you a few indications of how to get rid of all the nonsense that has been forced upon you. Once you are free from all that nonsense, I am not going to give you any positive instructions about what to do or what not to do, because that will be a reconditioning again.

So awareness will help you in two ways: first it will help you to become unconditioned and then it will help you to find ways and means to live your life. It will be the only way to uncondition and the only way to find a new style of life, a new vision of life.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM LEAVING SOON ON A TRIP WITH RADHA. BEFORE HEARING ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF TRAVELING WITH HER I FELT CONFIDENT AND SAFE ABOUT OUR LUGGAGE, BUT NOW DO YOU THINK I NEED SARJANO ALSO TO COME ALONG WITH US?

Anand Amito, no, categorically no! Sarjano may help to save your boxes and bags, but what about Radha? Radha will be in danger. It is better to risk the suitcases -- you will not be able to save Radha from Sarjano. Avoid Sarjano, even if he wants to come. Certainly he will help you to save the suitcases, but Radha will be gone.

So it is up to you. If you are too much attached to your suitcases, then you can take Sarjano with you; otherwise, that incident is not going to happen every time. And it was a fictitious journey that I talked about -- you are going on a real journey. On a real journey things like that don't happen....

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DO YOU REALLY KNOW ITALIAN? THEN PLEASE TELL ME WHAT THE ITALIAN WORD IS FOR REFRIGERATOR AND ALSO THE ITALIAN WORD FOR A PRETTY GIRL.

Satyam, I don't know that much Italian, but I will try my best. The Italian word for refrigerator is 'ice-a box', and the Italian word for a pretty girl is 'nice-a box'!

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR SOMEONE FROM AMERICA? WHAT ABOUT ONE WHO COMES FROM CALIFORNIA, BUT IS ENGLISH AND GERMAN; HAS A SCOTTISH STEPFATHER AND A JEWISH MOTHER; LOOKS SWEDISH AND FEELS ITALIAN?
P.S.: AND LIVES WITH A NEW YORK JEWISH-RUSSIAN POLACK!

Anupama, you are in quite a mess! Enlightenment is absolutely sure!

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #9

Chapter title: What mischief!

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A MASTER GIVES UP MISCHIEF.
HE IS SERENE.
HE LEAVES EVERYTHING BEHIND HIM.

HE DOES NOT TAKE OFFENSE
AND HE DOES NOT GIVE IT.
HE NEVER RETURNS EVIL FOR EVIL.

ALAS FOR THE MAN
WHO RAISES HIS HAND AGAINST ANOTHER,
AND EVEN MORE FOR HIM
WHO RETURNS THE BLOW.

RESIST THE PLEASURES OF LIFE
AND THE DESIRE TO HURT --
TILL SORROWS VANISH.

NEVER OFFEND
BY WHAT YOU THINK OR SAY OR DO.

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE
AND SHOWS YOU THE WAY.
HONOR THE FIRE OF HIS SACRIFICE.

MATTED HAIR OR FAMILY OR CASTE
DO NOT MAKE A MASTER
BUT THE TRUTH AND GOODNESS
WITH WHICH HE IS BLESSED.

YOUR HAIR IS TANGLED
AND YOU SIT ON A DEERSKIN.

WHAT FOLLY!
WHEN INSIDE YOU ARE RAGGED WITH LUST.

THE MASTER'S CLOTHES ARE IN TATTERS.
HIS VEINS STAND OUT,
HE IS WASTING AWAY.
ALONE IN THE FOREST
HE SITS AND MEDITATES.

Hank was riding the range, a-singing and a-humming. Suddenly his horse reared and stopped. In front of them was a huge snake. Hank drew his gun and was about to fire when the snake cried, "Don't shoot! If you spare my life I have the power to grant you any three wishes you make!"

"Okay," said Hank, figuring he had nothing to lose. "My first wish is a handsome face like Paul Newman. Second I want a muscular body like Muhammad Ali. And my last wish is to be equipped like my horse here!"

"Granted!" said the snake. "When you wake up tomorrow you will have all these things."

Next morning Hank awoke and rushed to the mirror. Sure enough, he had a face like Paul Newman and to his delight he saw a pair of massive shoulders and arms like Muhammad Ali. Then glancing down in great excitement he let out a blood-curdling howl, "My God, I clean forgot!" he babbled. "Yesterday I was riding Nellie!"

Man lives almost in a kind of deep sleep. He is not aware who he is, what he is doing, what he is thinking, where he is going, why he is going. His whole life is the life of a somnambulist, a sleepwalker. He is utterly unconscious. Out of this unconsciousness arise a thousand and one mischiefs; not that he knowingly wants to do them, he cannot avoid them. It is not a question of his decision to stop being mischievous; it is a question of his awareness. If he is aware, mischiefs disappear as darkness disappears when you bring light in. If he is not aware he may think he is doing something good, he may believe with his whole heart that he is doing something good, but he will be doing something mischievous. The total outcome of his life is going to be more chaos in the world.

You can watch the do-gooders: they all try to help, they all try to serve; they make it a point that their whole life should be one of service. So many public servants in the world, so many missionaries, so many social reformers, so many great revolutionaries -- and look at the shape the world is in. Can it be more in a mess? This is the outcome of all your great efforts, of all your great saints. The tree is known by the fruit, and all your religions and all your saints and holy men can only be known by the world that they have helped to create. It is the most ugly world possible.

Not that God is responsible -- God has made a beautiful world. His world is immensely beautiful: the trees, the flowers, the rivers, the mountains, the stars. But the world that man has made, the social structures that man has created are all ugly, violent, utterly mischievous. But everything bad can be done in the name of good.

Adolf Hitler was not consciously trying to do evil, remember it. He was not knowingly destructive; he was thinking he was trying to help humanity. He was thinking he was trying to bring a better human being into the world -- the superman. He believed deeply in Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy of the superman and he also believed that the Germans were the really superhuman beings, that they were entitled to rule the world.

And it was not that he was deceiving anybody; he was utterly convinced of the fact. It

was not a fiction for him, it was a fact that the German race is the real Aryan race, that the Nordics are the purest people in the world. He could influence millions of very intelligent people for the simple reason that he was convinced of what he was saying and doing. His conviction was hypnotizing. He was not a man of great intelligence, he was utterly mediocre, but one thing was there: he was convinced that only through him could the world be made a better place to live in. By murdering millions of Jews, he was not thinking that he was doing any violence -- he was serving humanity, he was getting rid of the enemies of humanity. And it was not a question of his befooling anybody -- he was so unconscious that he himself was befooled by his own convictions.

Adolf Hitler did great mischief -- all the politicians do. And they always do it behind beautiful slogans: socialism, democracy, freedom, equality and whatnot. They are all trying to improve upon the world, but the total result is more and more confusion and chaos. The world would be a far better place if we could be alert enough not to listen to these lunatics. But we are also asleep. What they say appeals to us; it has a great magnetic quality in it.

In fact, a Buddha is bound to be misunderstood, not Adolf Hitler; a Jesus is bound to be misunderstood, but not Joseph Stalin. Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, they speak the language that you understand. They are just people like you; they live in the same kind of sleep. Hence there is a communication between you and them which is missing between you and a Buddha, between you and a Lao Tzu.

Buddha stands on the Everest and you live in the dark valleys far below. You don't look up, you have forgotten how to look up. You crawl in the mud. Those who are crawling by your side can be understood more easily by you. They speak your language, they speak your idiom; they are perfectly in tune with you. They are not different people. But a Buddha, a Krishna, a Mohammed, these are different people. They speak a different language, from a different height, from a different vision -- although they use the same words. But they give different meanings to your words, and you are going to miss those meanings.

Meditate over this:

"Why won't you, honey?"

"I'm too tired."

"Ah, come on...."

"Leave me alone!"

"I won't be able to sleep!"

"Well, I can't sleep now."

"Please."

"Why -- in the middle of the night?"

"Because I'm hot."

"You get hot at the damndest times!"

"You don't love me!"

"Yes, I do...."

"If you loved me you would do it."

"Well, damn it -- alright."

"What's the matter?"

"I can't find it."

"That feels better."

"It should be -- it's all the way up."

"That's enough; thanks, dear."

"Next time, open the damned window yourself!"

And all the time, what were you thinking?

Buddha says:

A MASTER GIVES UP MISCHIEF.

... Because a master gives up mind. Mind is mischief; there is no other mischief. Mind is the source of all mischief. A master is a master only because he has ceased to be dominated by the mind. A master is a master of himself; he is no longer unconscious. Whatsoever he does, he does it knowingly. Whatsoever he is, he is perfectly aware about it. His life is not accidental. His every act is rooted in consciousness, it is intentional.

We live in the mind. The mind can even become a saint, can pretend to be holy, but it will not be. It is impossible; it is not in the very nature of the mind to be holy. Just look at the history of religions -- they are full of bloodshed. In fact more crimes have been committed in the name of religions than in the name of anything else. More people have been killed, butchered in the name of religion, God, truth, Christianity, Islam, than in the name of political ideologies even. Religion tops the list. Religion has been far more mischievous; it has even defeated the politicians. It could defeat them for the simple reason that the politician cannot hide himself for very long; sooner or later he is exposed. But the religious person can hide himself for centuries and you will never know.

The people who crucified Jesus have not even yet understood that they committed a sin. I have not come across a single Jew who accepts it consciously, that it was a crime to crucify Jesus. And it is not that there are not good Jews, not that there are not saintly Jews, not that there are not learned rabbis... there are very pious people. Even a man like Martin Buber could not gather the courage to say, "We have committed a crime in the past." No, that seems impossible. The crime was on Jesus' part because he tried to declare himself the Son of God. That is the crime: that he tried to project his image as the messiah, as the messenger of God. That was the crime and he was rightly punished -- Jews are absolutely convinced of that.

Two thousand years have passed; I have not come across a single book written by a Jew who can accept that "We committed a mistake." It seems impossible. They can't see it because the crime was committed in the name of religion.

Thousands of Christians have been killed by Mohammedans, and vice versa. And these wars have been called JIHADS -- holy wars. Now, no war is ever holy, no war is a jihad; all wars are unholy. What excuse you find, that is another matter; that is just an excuse to fight. You want to fight, you want to kill and destroy. You find good excuses, beautiful excuses -- holy wars... and millions of people destroyed.

In these holy wars millions of women were raped; now, that rape is holy. If murder is holy, why not rape? That too is holy -- it is done in the name of religion. Everything that is done in the name of religion is good.

Your saints, who look so holy and pious, are the causes of all this nonsense, of all this nuisance in the world. When are we going to get rid of all this stupidity? Is man not yet mature enough? Has not the time come yet that we should get rid of all this foolishness that has remained overwhelmingly powerful down the ages? Is not the time ripe to disconnect ourselves from the past?

But the only way to disconnect yourself from the past is to disconnect yourself from your

mind because your mind is the past. Mind means the known, the past. Mind is history, mind is time. Mind is Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan, mind is Indian, German, Chinese. And unless you get out of the hold of the mind, whatsoever you do is going to be mischievous. It may or may not appear mischievous to you -- that is another matter -- but it is going to be mischievous. Out of mind nothing good can ever happen.

Good is a by-product of meditation, and bad, a by-product of mind.

A man said to Mulla Nasruddin, "How is your great friend, the lawyer?"

Mulla said, "I'm afraid he is lying at death's door."

"These lawyers! At death's door and still lying?"

That's the state of the mind: it goes on lying even at death's door. In fact, as death comes closer to you you start lying more and more, you start deceiving yourself with many more fictions, you start creating myths around you of God, of heaven, of hell. You start creating dreams and you start living in dreams because your whole life is shattered. You have wasted the opportunity. You have not been creative, you have been destructive.

And remember, nobody can be neutral. Either you create something in life or you destroy; either you live in the mind or you live beyond the mind. If you live beyond the mind you become creative. To be in meditation is to be creative. Then whatsoever you do is beautiful; it brings more glory, more blessings to the world. Otherwise whatsoever you do is going to make the world more ugly.

The table and the chair were profoundly in love. They decided to get married and in due course they had a new arrival.

"What shall we christen him?" asked the chair.

"Chable," was the other's logical reply.

Of course the child of a table and a chair should be called a chable. And that's what people are doing: they go on producing chables. That seems to be their only productivity: all that they can do is produce more children.

A woman was telling me, "I hate my husband! From my very guts," she was saying, "I hate my husband! I am afraid some day I may kill him, may poison him!"

I said, "If you hate him so much, then how come you have eighteen children?"

She said, "I was trying to create such a crowd that he would get lost in it."

People hate and still they go on reproducing because their productivity knows no other way.

Rena went into the city clerk's office to report the birth of her sixth child.

"But, miss, this is your sixth child by the same father," said the clerk. "Why don't you marry him?"

"Are you jivin'?" replied Rena. "I don't even like the sonofabitch!"

But people have to do something; they can't just sit. They have to find something to remain occupied with. That's how all the mischiefs arise in the world.

Buddha says: A MASTER GIVES UP MISCHIEF.

HE IS SERENE.

Serenity is the flavor of meditation, serenity is the fragrance of meditation. He is so serene, so silent that he can be absolutely empty, with no desire to do anything. When all desire to remain occupied disappears, then only can something good happen through you, then God can happen through you -- and good only happens through you when God happens through you. Good is nothing but God flowing through you.

HE IS SERENE.

HE LEAVES EVERYTHING BEHIND HIM.

He leaves the past, he leaves his mind, he leaves his memories, he leaves his tradition. He is not a conformist, he cannot be a conformist. No master has ever been a conformist; that would be a contradiction in terms. He is always a rebel. He is pure rebellion. He dies every moment to the past; he never collects the past. Hence he remains always fresh, as fresh as the dewdrops in the early morning sun, as fresh as the lotus leaf, as fresh as the petals of a rose. He is always fresh, he is always young; he never grows old. He grows up, but he never grows old. The body of course grows old, but his consciousness remains absolutely fresh; it never gathers any dust or rust. And he is so serene that he can sit alone for eternity with nothing to do -- still he will be absolutely blissful. He will enjoy his serenity.

This serenity cannot be cultivated from the outside; this serenity comes only when you have become a watcher of the mind, when you have become a witness of the mind and through witnessing you have transcended the mind. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, a serenity explodes from all directions. It showers on you like flowers and it goes on showering. Your life then is a life of virtue. It is not a question of cultivating it, it is not a question of creating it -- it is a consequence of meditation.

This point should be remembered again and again; never forget it, because it has been forgotten millions of times. Again and again a buddha comes to remind you but you go on forgetting it, for the simple reason that a cultivated serenity is cheap. You can look serene, you can make a serene face; you can act it, you can be a good actor, you can be very efficient, but that will be nothing but hypocrisy. Deep down you will be boiling; deep down inside you there will be hell. And from the outside you have perfumed yourself and inside you are stinking. Inside you are clinging to all your misery, to your past, to all that is dead, to all that is rotten, to all that should be burned; you are clinging to it. And those who cling to dead corpses slowly slowly become dead themselves; those who live with corpses become corpses themselves. On the surface you may smile, you may laugh; deep down there are only tears -- tears of pain.

But this strange fact about man has to be understood: that he clings to the past. Even if the past is ugly he clings to the past, even though he has only suffered. Why does he cling to the past? -- because the past gives him a definition, the past gives him an identity, the past gives him an idea of who he is.

After six weeks away on business the married executive entered a West Side brothel in Chicago. He walked up to the madam, handed her a hundred-dollar bill and said, "I want the worst screw in the house!"

"But sir," answered the madam, "one hundred dollars will buy you our best."

"No," demanded the businessman, "I want the worst available."

"I can't let you do this," the woman pleaded. "You're entitled to the top of the line."

"Listen, lady," said the man, "I'm not horny, just homesick!"

Watch your mind, how you cling to the past. There is nothing to cling to -- just dry bones, skeletons, but you are holding onto them as if they are your very life. And because you are holding them, your hands are not empty to hold anything else; because you are looking towards the past you cannot see the present and you cannot enjoy the beauty of it, the joy of it. You cannot enter into the present -- and the present is the door to God. The past is no more.

And God is never past, God is always present. God is never future either, God is always present. You cannot say "God was," you cannot say "God will be," you can only say "God is." In fact to say "God is" is a repetition because God means isness; isness and God are synonymous.

Buddha says: HE LEAVES EVERYTHING BEHIND HIM.

The master cannot be a Hindu, cannot be a Buddhist, cannot be a Christian. The master is simply a master; these names are of the slaves. Somebody is a slave in the name of Christianity and somebody is a slave in the name of Hinduism. These are all slaves; they don't know what freedom is. They are clinging to such utter nonsense, but they are clinging so hard that they can't see anything else. Their eyes are full of the dust of the past. They are blind because of the past; they are blind for no other reason.

You are not missing God because you are sinners; you are missing God because you are past-oriented. And God is available only now... here. God knows only one time, now, and only one place, here. And you are never now and you are never here; you are always somewhere else. 'Then' and 'there' are significant words for you; 'now' and 'here' are almost meaningless to you.

The master lives now and lives here. HE LEAVES EVERYTHING BEHIND HIM. He goes on destroying the bridges he has crossed.

HE DOES NOT TAKE OFFENSE
AND HE DOES NOT GIVE IT.
HE NEVER RETURNS EVIL FOR EVIL.

Obviously, if somebody insults him he does not take it. You cannot insult a master, that is impossible. How can you insult a man who does not take it? To insult a man two things are needed: somebody to insult him and his readiness to take it.

Once Buddha was insulted very much by a few people. They abused him badly. He listened silently and then he said, "Have you anything more to say? -- because I have to reach the other village in time. People must be waiting there. If you still have something else to say, when I come back I will be coming by the same route and I will inform you and I will keep a special time for you, so you can come and say whatsoever you like."

Those people were very much puzzled. They said, "We are not saying something, we are insulting you!"

Buddha laughed. He said, "For that you have come a little late. You should have come at least ten years ago. Now I am not so foolish. You can insult, that is your freedom, but whether to take it or not that is my freedom. I am not taking it."

And he said to them, "In the other village which I just passed before yours, people came with sweets to offer me. I thanked them. I said, 'I don't need sweets and I don't eat sweets.' What do you think they must have done with the sweets?"

Somebody from the crowd said, "They must have taken them back home."

Buddha said, "Now what will you do? You will have to take your insults back home. I don't take your insults -- there is no other way, you have to take them back."

When you feel insulted you have participated with the person. But you are not conscious, so anybody can push your buttons. You function like a machine: push the button and you are on; push the button and you are off. Anybody can enrage you, anybody can make you smile and laugh, anybody can make you cry and weep. Anybody, any stupid fellow can do that! One just needs to know where the buttons are -- and almost always they are in the same places. It is very rare to find a person whose buttons are in different places.

A Polack was driving his Volkswagen, when suddenly it stopped for some reason. He went to look -- maybe there was some trouble in the engine -- but he could not find the engine. So he thought, "My God, my engine has been stolen!"

Just then another Polack stopped by his side. He said, "Is there some trouble?"

The first man said, "Yes, it seems my engine has been stolen."

The man said, "Don't be worried. This morning I was looking at the back of my car -- there is a spare engine. You can take it!"

Now in a Volkswagen the engine is not in the usual place; it is at the back, not in the front. But God has not yet learned anything from the Volkswagen -- he still makes the same engine with the same buttons, maybe a little bit different here and there, just a little change. Anybody can find... just a little groping and you can find anybody else's button. If you know your buttons you know everybody else's buttons.

You will be in a difficulty only with a buddha, because you can go on pushing his buttons and nothing will happen because he is no more identified with his mechanism. He will watch you pushing his buttons and he will enjoy the exercise that you are giving him, but that's all.

HE DOES NOT TAKE OFFENSE AND HE DOES NOT GIVE IT. HE NEVER RETURNS EVIL FOR EVIL. He understands humanity so deeply. By understanding himself he has understood the miserable state of all human beings. He feels sorry for people; he is compassionate. He does not return evil for evil for the simple reason that he does not feel offended in the first place. Secondly, he feels sorry for you; he does not feel antagonistic towards you.

Once it happened in Baroda:

I was talking to a big crowd. Somebody sitting just in the front row became so disturbed by what I was saying, he became so disturbed by it he went out of control, he lost his senses. He threw one of his shoes at me. At that moment I remembered that I used to play volleyball when I was a student, so I caught hold of his shoe in the middle and asked him for the other one. He was at a loss.

I said, "You throw the other one too! What am I going to do with one? If you want to present something...." He waited. I said, "Why are you waiting? Throw the other one too, because this way neither will I be able to use the shoe nor will you be able to use it. And I am not going to return it, because evil should not be returned for evil! So you please give the

other one too."

He was so shocked because he could not believe it... first, what he had done he could not believe -- he was a very good man, a scholar, a well-known Sanskrit scholar, a pundit. He was not expected to behave like that, but it had happened -- people are so unconscious. If I had acted the way he was unconsciously expecting, then everything would have been okay. But I asked for the other shoe, and that shocked him very much. He was dazed.

I told somebody who was sitting by his side, "You pull off his other shoe. I am not letting him off, I want both the shoes. In fact, I was thinking of purchasing some shoes, and this man seems to be so generous!" And the shoe was really new.

The man came in the night, fell at my feet, and asked to be forgiven. I said, "You forget all about it, there is no question... I was not angry, so why should I forgive you? To forgive, one first has to be angry. I was not angry, I enjoyed the scene. In fact, it was something so beautiful that many people who had fallen asleep were suddenly awakened! I was thinking on the way that it is a good idea, that I should plant a few of my followers, so once in a while they can throw a shoe so all the sleepers wake up. At least for a few moments they will remain alert because something is happening! I am thankful to you."

For years he went on writing to me, "Please forgive me! Unless you forgive me I will go on writing."

But I told him, "First I have to be angry. Forgiving you simply means that I accept that I was angry. How can I forgive you? You forgive me, because I am unable to be angry with you, unable to forgive you -- you forgive me!"

I don't know whether he has forgiven me or not, but he has forgotten me. Now he writes no more.

ALAS FOR THE MAN, Buddha says,
WHO RAISES HIS HAND AGAINST ANOTHER,
AND EVEN MORE FOR HIM
WHO RETURNS THE BLOW.

Why ALAS FOR THE MAN WHO RAISES HIS HAND AGAINST ANOTHER...? Because he is raising his hand against himself, because there is no one who is other. All existence is one. When you hit somebody you are hitting yourself. You are simply being childish. It is the same reality: I am one of its waves, you are another of its waves. One wave hitting another wave in the ocean -- they are both hitting themselves.

ALAS FOR THE MAN WHO RAISES HIS HAND AGAINST ANOTHER, AND EVEN MORE FOR HIM WHO RETURNS THE BLOW. Why more for him? -- because then he creates a vicious circle. And that's how we are living, in many many vicious circles. People go on fighting; once something starts then it seems there is no end to it. You do something in revenge and the other has to wait for his opportunity to do something against you, then you do something against him, and so on and so forth. It goes on from one life to another life, it continues.

The wise person is one, the master is one, who stops all these vicious circles.

Once a man came and spat on Buddha's face, he was so angry. Buddha asked him, "Is that all or do you want to do something more? Please do it and finish it."

The man asked, "What do you mean -- 'Please do it and finish it'?"

Buddha said, "In a past life I had insulted you and now the time has come when the

vicious circle can be closed. Now you insult me and I will not return anything; I will simply accept it and close the circle -- it is just to close the accounts with you. I was waiting for you; in fact, the day I came into this town I was hoping that you would come and you would do something and the accounts could be closed. This is my last vicious circle; I have closed all others. Now I am out of all vicious circles. I am thankful to you; otherwise something was hanging in the air -- only one thread, but something was hanging in the air, something incomplete.

"Now the circle is complete and I don't want to continue it anymore. Now it is up to me to continue or not to continue. Now I am the master; up to now you were the master. By spitting on my face your mastery is gone; now I am the master and I don't want to continue this vicious circle anymore. This is my last life and I want to close all accounts with everyone -- good accounts, bad accounts, all kinds of accounts have to be closed -- so that I can disappear into the ultimate with no strings attached to the world. I am immensely happy," Buddha said to him.

RESIST THE PLEASURES OF LIFE
AND THE DESIRE TO HURT --
TILL SORROWS VANISH.

Pleasure is dependent on others, and whatsoever is dependent on others will make you a slave, will create a bondage. And Buddha's ultimate goal is freedom, nirvana -- freedom from all bondage.

Hence all the awakened ones have been saying: Search for bliss. Don't waste your time in ordinary pleasures. In the first place they are momentary; in the second place every pleasure brings pain. Pain is the other side of the same coin. It brings pain in the same proportion; the greater the pleasure, the greater the pain. So when you are enjoying something, be aware: soon the pain will follow; it is inevitable. Just as the day follows the night and the night follows the day, pain and pleasure follow each other. They are not separate, they are inseparable.

First, pleasures are momentary, they are just soap-bubbles. To waste your precious life for them is simply stupid, unintelligent. Second, every pleasure brings pain. But people are so foolish that they never look at the association. They think pain has come from some other source, they think pleasures can be forever. Again and again they are ditched by their pleasures into pain; again and again they go on thinking that there were some reasons why this pleasure was destroyed.

Whether reasons were there or not is irrelevant; every pleasure is momentary, it is going to disappear, and in its wake the pain.... You can rationalize it; that rationalization will only help you to continue in the same old rut. But see the fact. Seeing the truth is a great liberation; seeing that every pleasure is inevitably a bringer of pain, you will be freed from both.

And third: it is the same energy that is involved in pleasure which has to move towards bliss. Pleasure is dependent on others; bliss is totally independent, it is your own. It arises within your being, it is your self-nature; hence you are not dependent on anybody. And because it is your self-nature it is forever. There is no contrary, there is no opposite to bliss.

Happiness is just in between pleasure and bliss. In happiness something is independent and something is dependent; it is a mixture of both. Hence the man who lives in sheer pleasure is in a better condition in a way; he is healthy, as healthy as animals are. Animals

live in sheer pleasure: when the pain comes they suffer, when the pleasure comes they enjoy. They go on rotating between pleasure and pain. The man who lives only in pleasures -- a Don Juan -- he is in a way healthy, normal, because he is part of the animal world; he is not yet human. In a way his life is clear, it has no complexity.

But the man who lives in happiness or tries to find happiness, lives for happiness, is far more confused because he is nowhere. He is neither the animal nor yet the divine; he is in a limbo. He is riding on two horses; he will be in very great difficulty. And that's where almost all human beings are. It is very rare to find a human being who lives purely in pleasure -- it is rare to find a Zorba the Greek who lives purely in pleasure. He is clear, there is no confusion in him. He simply walks on the earth; he has no idea of flying in the sky. He has accepted the law of gravitation and he knows no other law.

The man who lives for happiness, who knows the beauty of music, who knows the beauty of paintings, art, who knows something higher than the animals can know, is far more confused; he is in far more of a mess... because while you are listening to great music something is contributed by the music which is outside and something is contributed by the music which is inside; it is a meeting of two polarities. You are hanging in the middle and both are pulling you in separate directions. You will find more anxiety in your life.

That's why poor people are less in anguish than rich people. Rich countries live in anguish because they have enough pleasure; they are fed up with it. Now they want something higher, and with the higher the problems arise.

The animal part is well settled because it is your heritage of millions of years. It is in your chemistry, in your biology, in your physiology. Everything is settled, instinctive. You need not be aware, you need not do anything. But if you seek and search for happiness then you are going into a more shadowy world which is less substantial -- higher but more shadowy.

And the third goal is bliss, which again is very clear, as clear as the first, in fact far more clear than the first because the first has a clarity, but the clarity is of a much lower kind. The third has a clarity of the highest quality. Only the awakened one knows the clarity of the third.

Buddha says: RESIST THE PLEASURES OF LIFE.... Become a little more mature. Don't be childish, don't remain animals. Put your energies towards the highest goal in life -- let bliss be your goal.

And people who live in pleasures also have one thing more in their life, and that is the desire to hurt others, because pleasures create competition. If you want more money, of course you have to snatch it from somebody else. If you want power, then somebody else will lose power. If you want to be the president, then somebody else will not be the president. Hence it is a constant struggle. You have to hurt many to succeed. You have to be very destructive, inhumanly destructive.

It is only the goal of bliss which can be nonviolent; otherwise pleasures are going to be violent.

Buddha says: RESIST THE PLEASURES OF LIFE AND THE DESIRE TO HURT -- TILL SORROWS VANISH. Be alert. He is not saying repress, he cannot say that. Be aware -- so that pleasures don't pull you downwards, so that slowly slowly you are freed from your animal heritage, so that slowly slowly you can transcend your biology.

And avoid the desire to hurt others. There is a certain joy in hurting others. We go on hurting people; it gives you the feeling of power. It helps you to feel that you are powerful when you can hurt somebody. It is a very ugly desire, egoistic, but everybody does that. Watch yourself, in how many ways you hurt people. You may not be doing anything in

particular to hurt them, but your gesture may be enough. People walk in such a way, talk in such a way, that others are hurt. And nobody can blame them because what they are doing is so subtle. They use words which can hurt, and they use them with such skill that you cannot blame them. They can always find a way to rationalize.

A black gentleman was arrested for shooting a man. The next morning he was brought into court.

"Why did you shoot that man?" asked the judge.

"Because he called me a black sonofabitch!"

"You didn't have any business shooting a man for that!"

"Well, Your Honor, what would you have done if he called you that?"

"Oh, he wouldn't have called me that!"

"I know, Judge, but suppose he had called you the kind of a sonofabitch you are, then? Of course he cannot call you 'a black sonofabitch' -- you are not black -- but the kind of a sonofabitch you are, if he had called you that, what then?"

People can go on finding ways skillfully.... One has to remain aware until all sorrows vanish.

NEVER OFFEND
BY WHAT YOU THINK OR SAY OR DO.

That does not mean, remember, that people will not be offended. They may still be offended, but it should not be an intention on your part. Buddha is not saying that nobody will be offended by the master, because thousands were offended by Buddha himself. Certainly many were offended by Jesus; otherwise why should he have been crucified?

Buddha is saying: NEVER OFFEND BY WHAT YOU THINK OR SAY OR DO. It should not be your intention. Still, it is going to happen: whenever the master speaks it is almost inevitable that many will be offended because they will understand in their own way what he is saying. They will not hear what he is saying; they will hear only what they can hear. They are going to misunderstand him. That is absolutely inevitable, it cannot be avoided.

It was late afternoon in a small town. Joe, the owner of the local beer parlor, was lazily polishing glassware when his friend, Mickey, came running in.

"Joe," he shouted, "get over to your house real quick. I just stopped off to see if you were home and I heard a stranger's voice in your bedroom. So I looked in the window and, gosh, I hate to tell you this, but your wife is in bed with another man!"

"Is that so?" said Joe, matter-of-factly. "What does this guy look like?"

"Oh, he is tall and completely bald."

"And did he have a thick red mustache?" asked Joe.

"Right! Right!" yelled Mickey.

"Did you notice if he had a gold front tooth?"

"Damn it, man, you're right!"

"Must be that jackass, Dick Roberts," said Joe. "He'll screw anything!"

Now, when you are talking to a husband about his wife it is a totally different matter. He

does not care, he is no longer interested, he is fed up, he is finished. You may be excited that something has to be done, but the husband will hear through his experience of being a husband to the woman; he cannot put that experience aside.

I am saying something to you; you will hear it through your experiences, through your memories, through your ways of interpreting things. Nobody knows what you are going to gather out of it; that will be more your own than mine. I may have triggered the process, that's all, but you will be the creator of the whole phenomenon.

Hence, remember, the master never offends, still people are offended.

Buddha says:

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE.

That has been one of the most beautiful things in the East -- that flower has bloomed in the East -- the East can be proud of it: we have always honored the man who is awake. In other parts of the world, particularly in the West, the expert is honored, the technician is honored, the scientist is honored, the man who can do many things is honored. But the man who is conscious is not considered at all just for his consciousness.

Gurdjieff was not honored at all. In the East he would have been a buddha; in the West he was not honored at all -- insulted in every possible way, for the simple reason that the West has no idea how to honor the awakened man, because the awakened man fulfills no utilitarian purpose. If your machine is broken he cannot be of any help; he cannot mend your car... he cannot help you in any way in the world. In fact, all that he can do is help you to get rid of the world. And nobody wants to get rid of the world; everybody wants to be in possession of the world. Hence the expert is honored in the West; in the East the expert has not been honored, never. The expert is okay -- he is a servant, he serves, he is paid for it. But we have honored the buddha.

To honor a buddha is to honor a roseflower, which has no utilitarian purpose. You cannot eat it. If it is a question of starvation, roses won't help; wheat will be far better. If it is a question of choice between wheat and roses you are going to choose wheat. What are you going to do with roses? A buddha is like a rose: you can appreciate the beauty, you can dance around the rose, you can sing songs to it, you can look at the rose and praise the Lord, but what else? It cannot fill your hungry stomach, it cannot help you to succeed in the world, it cannot make you a great warrior. If you carry a roseflower you will not become Alexander the Great; a sword is needed, not a rose.

But the expert is as much asleep as you are; there is no difference, no qualitative difference. Hence in the East the expert is paid but he commands no honor.

A motion picture actor told his psychiatrist, "I'm attracted to men instead of women."

The shrink replied, "You've come to the right place, handsome!"

Now the shrink cannot be honored in the East; in the West he has become one of the most honored people. He has even defeated the priests. Now priests are learning how to be shrinks; priests are going to the universities to learn psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, psychosynthesis and all kinds of nonsense, because now they know the profession of the priest is finished; they have to add something more to its glamor. And they see the shrink is getting higher and higher; he is the most highly paid person in the West. In the East nobody will think anything special about a shrink. Yes, he cannot be more than a motor mechanic, maybe he is a mind

mechanic -- he is also a plumber. You pay him, but honor is totally different.

Honor is due only where payment won't do. Where you cannot pay, where there is no possibility of paying back, then honor. Honor is the acceptance of the fact that it is impossible to pay back; the debt cannot be paid.

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE
AND SHOWS YOU THE WAY.
HONOR THE FIRE OF HIS SACRIFICE.

The buddhas show you the way. You have to walk, you have to go; buddhas only point. They don't give you detailed directions because each individual is so unique and different that no detailed directions can be given. Only vague instructions, only indicators, pointers, hints at the most -- not orders, not commandments....

I have heard the story about the Ten Commandments. Of course God had asked the Indians first, "Would you like to have a few commandments?" They said, "No, not at all."

Then he asked the French and they said, "We want to live in freedom, we don't want any hindrances."

And he went on asking and nobody was ready. Finally he asked Moses, "Would you like a few commandments?"

He said, "How much?"

And God said, "Free, absolutely free!"

He said, "Then I will have ten!"

HONOR THE MAN WHO IS AWAKE AND SHOWS YOU THE WAY. He does not command you; he does not tell you, "Do this and don't do that." He simply gives you a few hints here and there -- and keeps you free, allows you total freedom. He is not to be imitated or followed; he is only to be understood. You have to learn from the awakened person the beauty, the bliss of being awakened, that's all, and then you have to search on your own. It is always an individual search, a private exploration. Truth cannot be transferred from one hand to another; it is untransferable.

HONOR THE FIRE OF HIS SACRIFICE.... And why should a buddha be honored? -- because of the fire of his sacrifice. It is impossible for you to understand the sacrifice of a buddha because it is absolutely invisible to you. You will know it only when you become a buddha. What he has known cannot be put into words, still he tries; it is a constant sacrifice.

What he has known is beyond the mind, yet he tries in every possible way to make you understand it, to help you understand it. He puts all his energy into making the incomprehensible comprehensible. His sacrifice is great. He takes so much trouble -- for no reason at all, because he is not going to gain anything out of it. His work is finished! His ship has arrived. He can leave the body any moment, any moment he decides, still he goes on living in the body -- which is a confinement, which is a bondage. Still he goes on suffering in the body for the simple reason that he would like to convey the unconveyable. His compassion is infinite.

Ramakrishna suffered from cancer. Many times his disciples said to him, "Paramahansadeva, if it is too much of a pain, we will be very sad, miserable, but you please leave your body."

He said, "It is all the same whether the body has cancer or does not have cancer. To be in

the body now is a suffering; even if it is healthy it is a suffering because now I can be as vast as the sky. But for you I will cling to the body a little longer."

And the master has to find ways and means to cling to the body because all the old associations are broken, all the old connections are broken. He has to forge new connections, which is really one of the most difficult things in existence.

Ramakrishna was very much interested in food, so much so that his wife was always feeling embarrassed. He would be talking to his disciples and suddenly in the middle of it he would rush to the kitchen and ask Sharda, "What are you cooking?"

It is just like if suddenly, in the middle of the lecture, I rush to the kitchen and ask Vivek, "What are you cooking?" and then come back again, and you have to wait!

Sharda said many times, "This is not right. What will the people think?"

Ramakrishna always laughed and never answered. One day Sharda persisted: "You answer me! There is something strange about it." Whenever she brought his food he would stand up; he was so eager to know. He would remove the cloth and look into the THALI. People were always sitting there and they would start laughing and giggling: "What kind of God-realized man is this?"

One day Sharda persisted, then Ramakrishna said, "If you want to know the truth I will tell you: this is the only way I am clinging to the body. I have created a false desire for food. And remember, the day I show no interest in food then that is the end. Only three days more will I live after that."

Sharda did not pay much attention to it -- who pays much attention to such people? They go on talking about things, so many things; you listen and you don't pay much attention.

But one day Sharda came in with the thali... Ramakrishna did not stand up. Not only that: he was looking at the door, he turned his back towards Sharda and started looking out of the window in the other direction. Sharda suddenly remembered -- the thali fell from her hands.

Ramakrishna said, "So now you understand; that day you missed. Now only three days more...." And exactly on the third day he died.

Only when you become enlightened, awakened, will you know how a man who has come home still goes on living in the caravanserai -- dirty, ugly -- and still goes on helping people who are insane. HONOR THE FIRE OF HIS SACRIFICE.... Hence, Buddha says, honor him.

MATTED HAIR OR FAMILY OR CASTE
DO NOT MAKE A MASTER
BUT THE TRUTH AND GOODNESS
WITH WHICH HE IS BLESSED.

YOUR HAIR IS TANGLED
AND YOU SIT ON A DEERSKIN.
WHAT FOLLY!
WHEN INSIDE YOU ARE RAGGED WITH LUST.

Character is not a decisive factor. You can cultivate a beautiful facade around yourself, but the really decisive factor is your inside.

THE MASTER'S CLOTHES ARE IN TATTERS.
HIS VEINS STAND OUT,
HE IS WASTING AWAY.
ALONE IN THE FOREST
HE SITS AND MEDITATES.

For years Buddha was meditating in the forest, alone, not caring about his clothes, not caring about his body, not caring about anything else except his meditation; except for one thing all was dropped from his consciousness: how to reach the center. Once you have reached it then there is no problem, but before you can reach it, it has to be a one-pointed search. You have to be concentratedly concerned about only one thing, excluding everything else. Unless your search is so total, so whole, so wholehearted, you will not succeed in it.
ALONE IN THE FOREST HE SITS AND MEDITATES.

Wherever you are, learn to be alone, sit alone. It is difficult, the most difficult thing in the world, because when you are alone the mind starts dying. It cannot exist in aloneness, it needs company. Hence whenever you are alone the mind says, "Do something, go somewhere. Turn on the TV or the radio." The mind wants company, engagement, occupation.

If you can be just alone... sitting silently doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself. One day your inner being blooms into a one-thousand-petaled lotus. That day you have also become a buddha, and only then will you be able to understand the meaning of Jesus' life, the meaning of Buddha's sayings, the meaning of Lao Tzu, Zarathustra. Before that whatsoever you try to understand is just your mind interpreting, and that interpretation has been one of the greatest causes of mischief.

Drop the mind -- the only thing to be renounced in the world is the mind -- and move towards the no-mind, the inner silence and serenity. Know yourself in your absolute aloneness and your life will be fulfilled, your life will be blessed: blessed with eternal bliss, blessed with truth, blessed with freedom.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 11

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Laugh your way to God

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
TO BECOME ENLIGHTENED, DO YOU NEED TO BE JEWISH OR DOES IT JUST
HELP?

Amitabh, religion has been missing one very fundamental quality: the sense of humor. It has been very unfortunate because it has made religion sick.

The sense of humor is part, an essential part, of the wholeness of man. It keeps him healthy, it keeps him young, it keeps him fresh. And for centuries the sad people have dominated religion. They have expelled laughter -- from the churches, from the mosques, from the temples. The day laughter enters back into the holy places they will be really holy, because they will be whole. Laughter is the only quality that distinguishes man from other animals. Only man can see the ridiculous, the absurd. Only he has the capacity and the consciousness to be aware of the cosmic joke that existence is. It IS a cosmic joke; it is not a serious affair.

Seriousness is a disease, but seriousness has been praised, respected, honored. It was absolutely essential to be serious to be a saint; hence only pathological people became interested in religion, people who were incapable of laughter. And people who are incapable of laughter are subhuman, they are not human yet -- what to say about their being divine? That is impossible -- they have not yet become human. And to be human is the bridge between the animal and the divine. Hence I have tremendous respect for the sense of humor, for laughter.

Laughter is far more sacred than prayer, because prayer can be done by any stupid person; it does not require much intelligence. Laughter requires intelligence, it requires presence of mind, a quickness of seeing into things. A joke cannot be explained: either you understand it or you miss it. If it is explained it loses the whole point; hence no joke can be explained. Either immediately you get it.... If you don't get it immediately then you can try to find out the meaning of it; you will find out the meaning, but the joke will not be there. It was in the immediacy.

Humor needs presence, utter presence. It is not a question of analysis, it is a question of insight.

Amitabh, as far as humor is concerned, to be a little bit Jewish is very good -- everybody should be a little bit Jewish! For enlightenment it will prepare the ground, it will make you more alive. Enlightenment is becoming totally alive. Laughter brings life to you.

And if you can laugh totally there are a few more things to be understood. In deep laughter the ego disappears, it is not found at all. You can't have both laughter and the ego. If the ego is there it will keep you serious. All egoists are serious people, and all serious people are egoists.

To be able to laugh, you need to be like a child -- egoless. And when you laugh, suddenly laughter is there, you are not. You come back when the laughter is gone. When the laughter is disappearing far away, when it is subsiding, you come back, the ego comes back. But in the very moment of laughter you have a glimpse of egolessness.

There are only two activities in which you can feel egolessness easily. One is laughter, another is dancing. Dancing is a physiological method, a bodily method to feel egolessness. When the dancer is lost in his dance he is no more -- there is only dance. Laughter is a little

more subtle than dance, it is a little more inner, but it has also the same fragrance. When you laugh.... It has to be a belly laughter. It should not be just superficial, it should not be just polite, it should not be just a mannerism.

I have heard:

One typist was leaving her job. This was her last day in the office, and the boss was telling the old jokes that he had always been telling. Everybody was laughing, except the typist. The boss asked, "What is the matter with you? Can't you get the jokes?"

She said, "I got them long ago. You've been repeating them a thousand and one times, but I need not laugh anymore. Anyway tomorrow I am leaving. These fools are laughing because they have to laugh -- you are the boss. So whether the joke is worth laughing at or not doesn't matter. They have to laugh, it is part of their duty. But I'm leaving, what can you do to me? I'm not laughing, you cannot make me laugh at all those rotten jokes."

If you laugh out of duty or out of a sense of mannerism, out of politeness, then it is not a belly laughter, then it is just superficial; on the circumference, you are managing it. You will not understand what I am saying about laughter then.

Laugh so that your whole body, your whole being becomes involved, and suddenly there will be a glimpse. For the moment the past disappears, the future disappears, the ego disappears, everything disappears -- there is only laughter. And in that moment of laughter you will be able to see the whole existence laughing.

Indians don't have the sense of laughter. In India we don't have any Indian jokes. All the jokes that are told in India are borrowed, there is no such thing as an Indian joke. Indians are serious people, very religious people, holy people. How can they descend to such low things as joking? They talk about God, they talk about moksha, they talk about nirvana... they can't laugh. These are not laughing matters! You cannot laugh about God. But if you can't laugh about God you will never understand God.

The Indian statues of Buddha are totally different from the Chinese or the Japanese statues of Buddha. You must have noted the difference; the difference is great. The Indian Buddha has a very athletic body. His belly is very small, almost nonexistent. He never had a belly laugh. If there is no belly how can you have a belly laugh? But the Chinese Buddha has a big belly, and not only a belly -- even on the statue you can see ripples of laughter on the belly. Even in marble you can see he is laughing, the belly is laughing.

No Indian will agree with the Chinese statue. He will say, "This is not right, Buddha was not like this, with such a big belly...." The Chinese Buddha looks like a clown -- but I have great respect for the Chinese Buddha. The Chinese Buddha has absorbed Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu. He is pregnant with Lao Tzu, that's why that big belly. Inside his belly there is Lao Tzu. And you cannot keep Lao Tzu quiet. He must be laughing and kicking and doing things; hence the ripples on the belly.

Lao Tzu has the sense of humor. Maybe because of that Lao Tzu could not become the founder of a great religion. There exists no religion in his name. Yes, a few rare people have followed his path, but there is no organized church, for the simple reason that Lao Tzu seems so nonserious. He used to ride on a buffalo. Now, can't you find a horse? Anybody could have afforded at least a donkey -- but a buffalo...? And that too, not in the right position, but sitting backwards! The buffalo is going one way and Lao Tzu is looking the other way. He must have created laughter wherever he passed. People must have gathered to see the scene, what is happening.

And Chuang Tzu far surpassed his master. There has never been such a beautiful man as Chuang Tzu. All that he has said is utterly absurd, ridiculous! -- but with profound meaning. First you will laugh and then slowly you will see the point that he is indicating, in a very joyful way, towards certain truths which can only be indicated in a joyful way. If you are serious you cannot make people understand the beauty of existence, the celebration of existence.

Life is not a tragedy, it is a comedy. It is not tragic. But religious people have depended on the very idea of life being tragic: it is misery, utter misery -- what is there to laugh at? Hence they attracted the people who are incapable of laughter, of living, of loving.

My effort here, Amitabh, is just the opposite. I want you to learn as much from Buddha, as much from Lao Tzu, as much from Krishna, as much from Chuang Tzu as possible. I would like you to absorb all the great experiences that have happened in the past, so that a higher synthesis becomes possible. In that higher synthesis laughter is going to be one of the most essential qualities. With truth, courage and virtue, laughter also has its own place.

In that sense Jews are beautiful people. They have the greatest sense of laughter in the whole world. They are on the one extreme; on the other extreme are the British people. So many letters I have received, angry: "Beloved Master, you don't understand the British." Who cares to understand? And why should I understand the British, for what? Is nothing else left to understand?

I have been telling so many jokes about the Italians, but not a single angry letter. They understand that jokes are jokes! If you understand too much you cannot joke. A little bit of misunderstanding is needed.

Now, one of the most British of all the British sannyasins, Prembodhi, has written, "You don't understand the British at all." You simply prove my point!

Somebody else has written, "This is not right. You say that no British woman is a woman; they are all ladies." I was simply paying respect!

And I think it is a well-known fact that nothing should be said against the dead. For the dead you should always show respect. That's what I was doing! Why are you angry about it?

I repeat again: it is very difficult, almost impossible, to find a British woman -- only ladies are there. All men may not be gentlemen; men after all are men, boys are boys! And old boys more so! But as far as women are concerned, they carry the culture, the religion, they are the foundation stones. The British woman has a certain face. No other woman has that kind of nose... they all need plastic surgery!

Amitabh, the only problem with the Jews is when it comes to the question of price. Then they will go on haggling for centuries. Enlightenment will be just in front of them, but they will haggle for the price.

So that is the problem, Amitabh; there you have to be aware.

A Scot went into a tailor's and asked to see a suit.

The Jewish proprietor came back with a nice Harris tweed. "Look at this," he said, "and it's not fifty pounds, not even forty. Thirty pounds and it's yours."

The Scot examined it carefully. "I wouldn't give you twenty-five pounds for it, not even twenty. My price is eighteen pounds."

"Right," said the Jew. "That's the way I like to do business -- no haggling."

Then there were the two Jews who bumped into each other after forty years, and rushed to the nearest pub to celebrate.

"It will be magic to have a drink together after all these years," said one.

"Yeah," said the other, "but don't forget, it's your round."

The rich widow needed a blood transfusion, so a Jew donor saved her life. She was so grateful, she gave him a hundred pounds, but after a relapse she needed another one and this time gave the donor fifty pounds.

The third time he saved her life she had so much Jewish blood in her that she just thanked him very much.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM UTTERLY MISERABLE. HOW CAN I GET OUT OF MY MISERY?

Vandan, I have never come across a person who is utterly miserable. You are tolerating it, you are existing with it, you are living with it. If it is so bad one should stop breathing! Why should one go on living?

It can't be so bad. Maybe you love to exaggerate. There are people who always like superlatives, who magnify everything. Small miseries of course there are, but what big misery can you have? Where will you have it? I cannot conceive of any misery that can be so bad that you can call it absolute; otherwise one will simply die, immediately.

So one thing, remember, stop exaggerating. That is also a way of the ego. The ego is so strange that it wants to exaggerate everything. Even if it is misery it will magnify it, it will make a big fuss about it. There may be nothing much in it: if you go to the roots you may find a mouse, but you are talking about elephants.

And I know you, Vandan. I have never seen you utterly miserable. You look perfectly normal. Unless all normal people are utterly miserable... just the ego has the habit of magnifying.

A boy came running home from school. He was breathing hard, puffing, perspiring. He told his mother, "Somehow God saved me. A tiger is following me, a very dangerous tiger, a very ferocious tiger."

The mother said, "You stop exaggerating! I have told you a million times not to exaggerate, and again you are doing it. Where is that tiger?"

The boy showed her from the window. A very small dog, thin, lean, hungry, was standing outside. And the mother said, "This is the tiger? You go upstairs, pray to God and ask his forgiveness. And never exaggerate again. Enough is enough!"

So the boy went upstairs. After five minutes he went back to the mother, and the mother said, "Did you pray?"

He said, "Yes, I prayed, and do you know what God said? He said, 'You don't be worried. When for the first time I saw that dog I myself thought that it was a ferocious tiger. So nothing to be worried about. I myself was deceived, so what about you? And I am so big, still I thought it is a very dangerous tiger. I was just getting ready to run away, then I had another look and found: oh no, it is just a dog. And you are a small child, so if you got frightened it is natural.'"

Misery is not so big as you make out. So the first thing is to reduce it to the right proportions. Before you can get out of it let the tiger disappear. Be very factual. If you really

want to transform your life, be factual. You cannot get out of fictions. You can get out of facts; facts can be tackled, but fictions cannot be tackled.

But this is the way of the mind, the way of the ego, to magnify everything. It makes everything look big. And then of course you start suffering in a big way. The cause is not so big, but the effect can be very big -- it depends on you.

Look again, consider again, reconsider the whole situation. What is it that you are calling "utterly miserable"? And then you will find ordinary facts of life. But we don't want to be ordinary. The ego hankers to be extraordinary. Even if it is misery we would like to be extraordinary.

Somebody asked George Bernard Shaw, "Where would you like to go when you die, to heaven or to hell?"

He said, "Wherever it is, that does not matter. What matters is: I want to be the first. Even if it is hell, I want to be the first. I don't want to be second to anybody. Hence I think hell will be better, because in heaven Buddha and Jesus and Zarathustra... and there are so many competitors. And I will have to stand in a queue, and that I hate! I am ready to go to hell, I am ready to suffer in hell, but I want to be the first."

The ego is always hankering to be the first. It says, "My misery is bigger than anybody else's. Whatsoever I am, I am bigger, I am special, I am extraordinary."

Once a high court judge came to me. His wife used to come to me. I was surprised, because the wife always used to say that he is very much against me and he does not want her to listen to me or read my books or to go and see me. But whenever I visited that city she was always coming.

So I was surprised. I asked him, "Your wife always says you are very much against me."

He said, "Not that I am very much against you -- I am simply afraid that... My wife is already crazy, and what you are saying, if it gets into her mind, she exaggerates everything. You will create more trouble for me."

I asked him, "Why have YOU come?"

He said, "I have just come to say to you that if she says that she has cancer, reduce it to a headache. Don't be bothered about her cancer. I have suffered my whole life. Then I have learned this lesson: she exaggerates."

And in fact that was the case. Every time she used to come she was talking about cancer. She was telling that she has cancer of the heart and this and that -- and the husband said she had nothing! Just a hypochondriac... she goes on exaggerating.

A hypochondriac died. Before he was dying his wife asked, "Have you some last words?"

He said, "Yes. On my gravestone write in big letters: Now do you believe me or not?"

The first thing for you is to bring things down to the level of reality. It is difficult, Vandan, particularly so for a woman. They live in fancy. When you fall in love you think you have fallen in love with a Greek god, and by the time the honeymoon is finished you know he is nothing but a goddamned Greek! Within seven days the Greek god is nothing but a goddamned Greek.

And again it will happen. Again you will fall in love, and again you will create a great fancy, you will create projections. And all your projections are going to be shattered sooner or later, because reality has no obligation to fulfill your projections.

So first bring down your idea of misery to the fact, to the real. And then it is not difficult

to get out of it. Then the second thing is to be aware of it. Just be aware of it, and you are out of it -- because you can be aware only if you are not it.

That is the miracle of awareness. When you observe something one thing is certain, absolutely certain: that you are not it. The observer is never the observed. The observed is there as an object confronting you. You are the observer, you are the subject.

So misery is there, pain is there or pleasure, or whatsoever experience is there -- you are not it. You are out of it!

Two ham actors were moaning about how tough things were in the motion picture business.

"I haven't had a part for over ten years," one of the thespians sighed.

"That's nothing," the other ham said. "I've not worked since sound pictures came in."

"That's really tough."

"You bet it is. I wish to hell I could figure some way to get out of this business."

For forty years you are not in the business, and you are still figuring out how to get out of it!

Just watch. These two steps, Vandan: first, bring your misery to the level of reality, and then watch it -- because only reality can be observed; fictions cannot be observed, you become identified with them. Once the reality is there, it is objective; watch it, and suddenly a great realization happens. You are the watcher, you are out of it.

You ask me, "How can I get out of it?" Vandan, you ARE out of it. Right now you are out of it! It is only an illusion that you are in it. If you want to believe you can go on believing that you are in it. Otherwise you can snap out of it any moment. Try. Try to snap out of it. Snap your fingers and slap your face and wake up!

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU AGAINST GARLIC? I HAVE BEEN EATING IT SINCE MY CHILDHOOD
AND I DON'T THINK THAT IT STINKS.

Virago, meditate over this story....

Forster sat in the posh offices of Park Avenue's most famous physician.

"I've got this terrible problem," he explained. "Everything I eat turns to gas. I just had steak and potatoes and it turned to gas."

"That could be serious," countered the doctor.

"But fortunately," said Forster, "my gas is noiseless and odorless. Can you cure it?"

"I'm sure that I'll be able to help, but first I'm going to fit you with a hearing aid and then I'm going to fix your nose."

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
RECENTLY YOU MENTIONED THAT THE SPIRITUAL EGO IS MORE DANGEROUS
THAN THE NORMAL EGO. CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

Prem Unmado, all egos are dangerous, because the ego is a false entity. It does not exist,

in fact. It is there because you are not aware of who you are.

The ego is just like darkness. Darkness has no positive existence of its own; it is only the absence of light. Hence you cannot do anything directly with darkness. If you want to remove darkness you cannot remove it directly; you will have to bring light in. If you want to bring darkness in you cannot bring it directly either; you will have to put the light off. Whatsoever you want to do, you will have to do with the light, because the light has existence. Darkness has no existence, and with the nonexistential nothing can be done.

The ego is nonexistential, it is a nonentity. It is the absence of awareness, of alertness. You are not conscious; hence the ego prevails, hence the darkness remains.

All egos are dangerous, because you are living in something which is not. You are living for something which is not, you are sacrificing that which is for something that is not. This is the danger. A real life is being sacrificed at the altar of the nonexistential ego.

You are running after money, after power, after prestige, but in fact nobody is really interested in power, money, prestige. They are just ways of the ego to exist. If you have more money you can have more ego; if you have more power you can have more ego. The basic desire is to expand the ego, but the more your ego becomes strengthened, the more the darkness becomes dense, the less is the possibility of your becoming aware. And without becoming aware you are missing the whole opportunity of life, a golden opportunity, in which God can be realized, in which truth can be lived. A life which can be a constant celebration, an eternal joy, is sacrificed for something absolutely meaningless.

Hence, remember, all egos are dangerous. But the spiritual ego is the most dangerous simply because all other egos are gross. You can see that the politician is after his ego, you can see even the politician in some moments can see it. It is very gross, how can you avoid seeing it? You are bound to stumble on it, it is like a rock.

But the spiritual ego is very subtle, it is like fragrance. You don't stumble, it does not hit you like a rock. You cannot remove it so easily as you can remove a rock. It is a subtle fragrance. The more spiritual you become, the more your ego becomes subtler and subtler. Your ego becomes pious, and when the poison is pious, of course it is more dangerous, because you think it is nectar. Now, the label is nectar; inside the bottle is the same poison.

Hence your saints are more egoistic than your sinners. There is every hope for the sinners, they can reach to God far more easily than your so-called saints. Your saints are living with such egoistic attitudes, they are full of holy cow dung, rubbish.

The man of the world claims that he has so much money and the religious man claims he has so much virtue. The worldly man claims he has so much power, so much prestige, and your so-called holy man claims he also has power, spiritual power. He tries to show his spiritual power.

Once such a so-called spiritual man came to see Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna was sitting on the bank of the Ganges in Dakshineswar, where he used to live. The spiritual man said to Ramakrishna, "I have heard that you are a great saint. If you really are, then come with me and walk on the water. If you can walk on the water then I can believe that you are spiritual." Ramakrishna laughed. He said, "Can you walk...?"

The man said, "Yes, I can walk."

Ramakrishna asked him, "How long did it take you to learn to walk on the water?"

The man said, "It took me eighteen years of tremendous effort, austerities, TAPASCHARYA, fasting, prayer. I lived in a cave in the Himalayas. I sacrificed everything. Then this spiritual power has been given to me."

Ramakrishna said, "I am not spiritual, I am a simple man, very ordinary. But one thing I would like to tell you. When I want to go to the other shore, the ferryman takes me for just one paisa. Your whole eighteen years' effort is not worth much more than that. You wasted your eighteen years. You may be spiritual, but you are a fool, you are utterly stupid! I have never come across such an unintelligent person -- wasting eighteen years just to walk on water! Then what is the point? Okay, you can walk on water, so what?"

This is the spiritual ego, which will go sooner or later to exhibit its powers, to prove that "I am holier than you." That man had come with that idea -- to prove to Ramakrishna that "I am holier than you, I am higher than you."

It is meaningless. Buddha is not reported to have done any miracle. Mahavira is not reported to have done any miracle. And my own understanding is that all the miracles that are talked of in the name of Jesus are inventions.

(the sound fails....)

You see? Some Christian got mad! They are all inventions of the Christians.

I have a totally different approach. When Christians say Jesus turned water into wine it is not a literally factual thing. It simply means that people like Jesus get drunk on simple water. I know it from my own experience. I never mix my soda with whisky; I mix my soda with soda, and I get drunk, so what is the point of mixing it with whisky? Just pure air is enough to get drunk; water is enough. It all carries the essence of God, what more do you need to get drunk? This existence is more than is needed.

But the spiritual man will try to prove in some way that he is spiritual. He will prove it through miracles, he will become an exhibitionist. That's why the spiritual ego is more dangerous. He will not be able to see it, and others will not be able to see it either. Because you cannot see it easily, Unmado, I called it more dangerous.

Drop the very idea that you are separate from existence. And I am not telling you to fight with the ego, that is nonsense. I am telling you to create more awareness in you, become more full of light and consciousness and the ego will disappear on its own. And when it disappears on its own it has a beauty, it has a benediction. When there is no ego in you, no ego worldly or otherworldly -- when there is no ego at all of any kind, you are one with God. The barrier is removed, the last barrier has fallen.

And to experience God is to experience life in its utter simplicity, in its utter beauty. To experience God is to experience truth in its eternity. Then you are beyond death and beyond time.

Ego is the only barrier. But don't fight with it -- spiritual or worldly, it is the same. Create more consciousness, be more meditative. Meditation is the only medicine. Both the words come from the same root: 'meditation' and 'medicine' -- because meditation also is a medicine. It heals you, it cures you from the greatest disease, the disease of the ego.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WILL YOU ONE DAY GO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DISCOURSE TO THE KITCHEN
TO INQUIRE WHAT IS BEING PREPARED FOR YOU?

Pantha, sorry, I cannot do that -- for many reasons. One is, I am not Ramakrishna; I am just myself, I am nobody else.

Secondly, all my kitchen people are here: Vivek is here, Astha is here, Nirgun is here, Pragma is here -- there is nobody to ask.

Thirdly, I eat the same food, morning, evening, year in, year out. In fact, all my kitchen people are bored with preparing it. Except me everybody is bored! This is a device to bore them.

Just think: the same thing they have to prepare, morning, evening, every day. Unless they become enlightened they are going to go crazy.

So there is nothing to ask, I already know. There is no change ever in my food.

Thirdly, I don't know where my kitchen is! So, Pantha, even if I want I cannot find it. I know only my room, and the way from the room to Buddha Hall and back. I will get lost into Lao Tzu House. And after many many lives somehow I have found the way. Please don't make me get lost again.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS THE DIRTIEST FOUR-LETTER WORD IN THE INDIAN LANGUAGE?

Darshan, 'work'!

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU DID NOT FINISH THE STORY OF THE PRIEST AND HIS SUNDAY SERMON. IS IT NOT SO?

Chetan Hari, that is true. Knowingly I did not finish it, but now that you have asked I have to finish it.

When the priest saw the hell, so beautiful, with such ecstatic people, he certainly became infatuated. He knew all the ways to reach to heaven, he had no idea how to go to hell. And now, seeing hell, he wanted to go to hell, not to heaven.

So he inquired of a few people. They said, "Better you ask the Buddha, he is there sitting under the tree."

He went to the Buddha and he asked, "Sir, can you show me the way to hell, because now I don't want to see heaven again. Once is enough. I don't want to go there at all. I have lived my whole life preparing for heaven. I know all the ways and all the methods and means how to reach there. I don't know how to get to hell."

Buddha said, "You go back to the station and buy a ticket to Poona and take sannyas. That is the best and shortest way to go to hell."

The priest is here. Please don't ask me his name, because priests are a little shy, and he will feel embarrassed -- and particularly a Catholic priest. But he is here. If you try a little harder you will find him.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,

OKAY, GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT. CAN GOD REALLY EXIST IN AMERICA? LEAVING TOMORROW, I GET A LITTLE NERVOUS REALIZING HOW SERIOUS THE WORLD TENDS TO BE, AND WELL, YOU KNOW, GOD TOO. SO WOULD YOU GIVE ME ONE OF YOUR FUDDY-DUDDY JOKES TO SHARE WITH HIM JUST IN CASE WE MEET?

Toshen, you forget this word 'him'. God is not a he, God is a she. If you go with this idea that he is a he, you will never find him. That's how people go on missing him. They go on looking for him as if he is a man, and he has changed himself long ago.

Colonel Stanford, a staunch segregationist, died and somehow made his way to heaven. A week later his friend, Colonel Beauregard, departed and was also allowed to get past the Pearly Gates. The two of them met.

"Never had any doubt we would make it," said Colonel Beauregard, "but now that we did, tell me, how are things up here?"

"Not bad," answered Colonel Stanford, "but I would advise you to watch your step. I saw God the other day and she is a Negress."

And not only that he is a she, she is a Negress -- a black woman. So if you are really in search of God in America, remember this.

And then you will have to learn a few things. If you meet a black woman you will have to learn some art, you will have to learn to be a little like a black man, otherwise there will be no communication, no communion.

God has changed. He was tired of being male and white. Everybody gets tired of being the same. And people are still thinking that he is the old. You are worshipping old photographs, you are carrying old albums. No wonder very few people find him.

Now think of God as a woman. And God can only be a woman; the very idea of God being a man is the male chauvinist idea, it is the idea of man. The Christian trinity has not a single woman in it. Look at the nonsense: they have made even a place for the Holy Ghost. Now, who is this Holy Ghost? The trinity would not have missed much if there was no Holy Ghost, but the trinity looks a little ugly without a woman. The father is there, the son is there, and where is the mother? Do you think God is gay?

This is man's egoistic projection. Remember: the she contains he, but the he does not contain she. Man is born out of a woman, but no man can give birth to a woman. It is natural to think of God as woman -- as mother, not as father. That is a fascist idea.

It is not accidental that Germans call their country "fatherland." Nobody calls their country "fatherland." Everybody calls his country "motherland" -- that seems to be right -- except the Germans... they call it "fatherland."

God is a mother, a motherly phenomenon. This whole existence is motherly. And God is far softer than man can ever be, far more vulnerable, far more open. God is the womb of existence. The whole existence comes out of the womb.

So, Toshen, drop this idea of "he" and "him"; think of "she" and "her." And remember: he is tired of being white, he is no longer white. He is black now, and he is enjoying being black, because very few people are able to find him now. Even if you come across him, you think, "It is just a nigger." Even if he knocks on your door you will not open the door.

And if you meet him, you are asking me that you would like to tell him some joke. Tell him this joke:

"What makes you black men such good lovers?" asked the white employer of Kinney, the chauffeur.

"The trouble with you white folks is that you just go in there and rush, rush, rush, and before you know it, it is all over," said Kinney. "Now the way us black folks do it is get in there, take it easy, make long strokes, talk sweet a while, stop a while, take our time, then some more slow long strokes, nice and cool-like."

That night whitey climbed into bed with his wife and began making love to her exactly as Kinney had suggested.

After twenty minutes of sheer delight she gasped, "My God, where did you learn to screw like a black man?"

Enough for today.